

62. O sage, at the end of the dalliance Lord Śiva vanished from the place accompanied by his wife, the Gaṇas and the gods.

CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

(The story of Ūṣā)

Sanatkumāra said:—

1. Listen to another story of Śiva the great soul which bestows the highest pleasure and wherein his endearment to his devotees can be seen.

2-3. Formerly the Asura Bāṇa had pleased Śiva by performing the Tāṇḍava dance. By adverse fate he became haughty. On realising that Śiva, the lover of Pārvatī, was delighted in mind, the Asura Bāṇa joined his palms in reverence, bent his shoulders and spoke.

Bāṇa said:—

4. O great god, lord of the gods and crest-jewel of all the gods, I am very strong, thanks to your favour.

5. A thousand hands have been given to me by you. They are only a burden to me, since except you I do not find any match to oppose me having an equal strength.

6. O bull-bannered lord, what can I do with these thousand mountain-like hands without a fight.

7. When my hands itch for war I desire to fight the elephants of the quarters. By hitting the cities and mountains I reduced them to powder. Being frightened they fled away.

8. Yama has been made a combatant with me and the great fire-god too, similarly. Varuṇa has been made a cowherd looking after my cows.

9. Kubera has been made the in-charge of couches, Nirṛti a chaperon. Indra has been defeated and forced to pay tribute.

10-11. Please suggest a fight unto me wherein my hands may fall shattered by the weapons hurled by the