

bering the lotus-like feet of Śiva, He frankly uttered these words intended to quell the arrogance of Nārada.

Viṣṇu said :—

44. “O dear Nārada, foremost among sages, you are blessed. I am sanctified by your visit. May I know where you come from and why you have come?”

45. On hearing these words of Viṣṇu, the sage Nārada felt elated. He narrated his story in the same haughty manner.

46. On hearing the arrogant words of the sage, Viṣṇu remembered the lotus-like feet of Śiva again and understood the true cause.

47. Viṣṇu, a leading devotee of Śiva, with his soul dedicated to Śiva, bowed his head and eulogised Parameśvara, the lord of the holy mountain, with his palms joined in reverence.

Viṣṇu said :—

48. “O Lord, O Lord Mahādeva, Parameśvara, be pleased. O Śiva thou art blessed. Thy Māyā enchants everyone.”

49. Having thus chanted the prayer to Śiva, the supreme Ātman, he closed his eyes and meditated on His lotus-like feet and stopped.

50. On coming to know what Śiva was about to do, through Śiva’s bidding, he addressed the great sage pleasantly.

Viṣṇu said :—

51. O foremost among sages, you are blessed. You are the storehouse of austerities and large-hearted. O sage, lust and delusion rise only in the heart of that man who is devoid of the three types of devotion.¹⁷⁶

52. Base passions that bring in their wake all sorts of miseries crop up in him instantly. But you are vowed to perpetual celibacy. You are ever endowed with knowledge and devoted to non-attachment.