

food offering. At the end of worship he shall always keep the phallic image on his head.

## CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

*(The glorification of the Rudrākṣa and of the names of Śiva)*

*The sages said :—*

1-2. O Sūta, Sūta the fortunate disciple of Vyāsa, obeisance to thee. Please explain again the glorification of the holy ashes, of the Rudrākṣa and of Śiva's names. Lovingly explaining the three, please delight our minds.

*Sūta said :—*

3-4. It is good that you have referred to this matter that is highly beneficent to the world. You are blessed, holy and ornaments to your families since you own Śiva as your sole great favourite deity. The anecdotes of Śiva are dear to you all for ever.

5. Those who adore Śiva are blessed and content. Their birth is fruitful and their family is elevated.

6. Sins never touch those from whose mouth the names Sadāśiva, Śiva etc. come out for ever, as they do not touch the burning charcoal of the khadira wood.

7. When a mouth utters "Obeisance to Thee, holy Śiva" that mouth (face) is on a par with holy centres destroying all sins.

8. It is certain that the benefit of making pilgrimages to holy centres accrues to one who lovingly looks at His holy face.

9. O brahmins, the place where these three are found is the most auspicious one. A mere contact of the place accords the benefit of taking a holy dip in the sacred Trivenī

10. Śiva's name, the ashes and the Rudrākṣa beads—the three are very holy and are on a par with Trivenī\* (the

\*The place of confluence (Prayāga, now Allahabad) of the Ganges with the yamunā and the subterranean Sarasvatī.