

comes full-fledged devotee by means of worship. A man who worships both the phallic emblem of Śiva and the devotees of Śiva attains salvation.

117. O brahmins, stable devotion can be found firmly established and flourishing only in that person who reads this chapter or listens to it attentively.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

(The glorification of the syllable Om and the five-syllabled mantra)

The sages said:—

1. O lord, tell us the greatness of the syllable Om and that of the six līṅgas, O great sage. Also please tell us the worship of the devotees of Śiva in order.

Sūta said:—

2. All of you, sages, have now requested for a good thing. Only Śiva can explain this properly. No one else.

3. Still I shall explain the same with Śiva's grace. May Śiva increasingly guard us, you and every one else.

4. The syllable Om means an excellent boat to cross the ocean of worldly existence. [Pra=of the Prakṛti i.e. the world evolved out of it. Navam—Nāvām Varam—an excellent boat]

5. Or Praṇava may mean: "there is no world for you" or it may mean "That which leads to salvation".

6-8. Or it may mean "that which leads to new knowledge." After annihilating all actions it gives the persons who repeat the mantra or worship, a fresh knowledge of the pure soul. This Praṇava is two-fold (1) the subtle (2) the gross.

9. The subtle one is of a single syllable where the constituent five syllables are not differentiated clearly. The gross one is of five syllables where all the constituent syllables are manifest.

10. The subtle one is for the liberated living soul (jīvanmukta). The need for the contemplation of the