

tell me precisely and without fear the purpose of your visit.

4. I am delighted at the hymn sung by you all. I wish to hear why you have all come here and what is the work to be done here.

*Brahmā said:—*

5. O sage, when we were asked by Śiva thus, I, the grandfather of the worlds, spoke to Lord Śiva on being prompted by Viṣṇu.

6. O great lord, lord of Devas, O lord, the ocean of mercy, please listen why we both have come here in the company of devas and sages.

7. O bull-emblemmed deity, we have come here particularly for your sake, along with these suppliants. Otherwise the universe would not be in a proper state always.

8. O great lord, some demons are to be killed by me, some by Viṣṇu and some by you.

9. O great lord, some of them would be killed by your son and some will be killed by me.

10. The devas attain happiness only by your favour. The universe can attain peace and fearlessness only after destroying the demons.

11. Or they cannot be killed by you in as much as you are always merciful, free from love and hate and engaged in Yoga.

12. O lord, Vṛṣadhvaja,<sup>262</sup> how can the activities of creation, sustenance and dissolution be carried on properly for ever, if they are not killed?

13. The activities of creation, sustenance and dissolution are to be persued by us now and then. The difference in our bodies is perceptible only through illusion.

14. Though our real form is one, we are different in as much as our activities are different. If there is no functional difference, the difference in forms is meaningless.

15. The same supreme Ātman, lord Śiva manifests in three different ways due to Māyā. The lord is independent in his divine sports.

<sup>262</sup>. Vṛṣadhvaja (or Vṛṣabhadhvaja) is an appellation of Śiva derived from the fact of his having the emblem of Bull known as Nandin.