

citizens thus, the sage with his disciples spoiled the Vedic rites in a determined manner.

50. He then criticised the womanly virtues of chastity and manly virtues of continence etc.

51. Similarly he attacked and repudiated the divine rites, Śrāddhika rites, sacrificial rites and holy observances and festivals, pilgrimages and anniversaries.

52. Worship of Śiva, propitiation of his phallic form, adoration of Viṣṇu, Sun, Gaṇeśa and other deities in accordance with the sacred texts were repudiated by him.

53. The heretic sage, an expert in wielding magic art, foremost among the deceptive, criticised the ceremonial ablutions and charitable gifts that are made on auspicious occasions.

54. O foremost among brahmins, why shall I dilate upon this topic ? Suffice it to say that in the three cities every type of Vedic rites was completely stopped by that deceptive heretic sage.

55. The women of the three cities who were hitherto devotedly attached to their husbands were deluded and misguided and they abandoned their noble inclinations to serve their husbands.

56. The fascinated men practised rites of seduction and winning over and made their artifices fruitful in gaining other men's wives.

57. The attendant maids in the harems, the princes, the citizens and the ladies were perfectly enchanted by him.

58. Thus when the citizens became averse to virtuous rites and actions, evil reigned supreme.

59. At the bidding of lord Viṣṇu, his magic art and evil fortune visited the three cities.

60. The glory that they had acquired by the boon of Brahmā, the lord of the gods, went out forsaking them, at the behest of Brahmā.

61. Blessing them with the utter delusion of their intellect, perpetrated by the illusion of Viṣṇu, Nārada became contented.

62. Though Nārada and the heretic sage had been in that guise for long, they were not defiled, thanks to the benediction of lord Śiva.