

59. I am childless now since that wicked fellow has defiled the whole family. Get up and fetch me some water. Let me offer libations to him with gingelly seeds.*

60. Better to be issueless than have a wicked son who defiles the entire family. It is the traditional policy to abandon one to save the family.

61. The Brāhmaṇa took his bath, performed his daily rites and married the daughter of a Vedic scholar the same day.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

(*The Redemption of Guṇanidhi*)

Brahmā said:—

1-2. Guṇanidhi, the son of the Dikṣita Yajñadatta, came to know of this. Regretfully he cursed himself and set off from that place. After wandering aimlessly for a long time, he, the wicked fellow, felt the abandonment keenly and losing all hopes halted at a place.

3-7. He thought to himself : “Where am I to go ? What shall I do ? I have not studied much, nor am I rich enough. Only a wealthy man can be happy in a foreign land, although he has to face the fear of thieves there. Of course this fear is present everywhere. I am born in the family of priests officiating in sacrifices. Why am I reduced to this wretched plight ? Fate is powerful indeed, controlling all our future actions. I cannot even beg as I have no acquaintance, no money. Where shall I seek refuge ? Everyday, even before sunrise, my mother used to feed me with sweet pudding. Today whom shall I beg ? My mother too is away from me.”

8. O Nārada, even as he was musing like this woefully, sitting at the foot of a tree, the sun set.

9. In the meantime a certain devotee of Lord Śiva came out of the city taking with him various articles of offering.

*It is customary among the orthodox Hindu families in India to offer libations of water mixed with gingelly seeds to the manes on particular days.