

25. It is my directive that you should preserve this form and maintain all the activities of the created worlds by means of these different Guṇas so long."

26. On hearing these words of Śiva the lord Viṣṇu, of controlled senses, spoke slowly to Śiva after duly bowing to Him.

*Viṣṇu said :—*

27. "O Śaṅkara, the ocean of mercy, the lord of the universe, be pleased to hear. I shall do all these things strictly adhering to your behests.

28. I shall always meditate upon you. I would not act otherwise. Your omnipotency has already been experienced by me.

29. O lord, let not the meditation of your form be ever far removed from my mind even for a moment.

30. O lord, if anyone of my devotees were to censure you, you will please assign perpetual residence in hell to him.

31. O lord, whoever be your devotee shall also be my favourite. He who knows and realises this shall not find salvation inaccessible to him.

32. My greatness has been further heightened by you certainly. If ever I am found deficient in qualities I may be excused.

33. (Brahmā said :—) Then, on hearing the excellent words of Viṣṇu, Śiva said to him "Of course the deficiency shall be excused lovingly."

34. After saying this mercifully the lord, the ocean of mercy, stroked us all over the body with His hands.

35. With a desire to do what is wholesome to us He instructed us in various sacred rites and conferred on us many boons.

36. Even as we were watching, the lord Śiva, favourably disposed towards devotees, vanished immediately.

37. The rite of the worship of the liṅga is instituted ever since in the world. Śiva installed in the liṅga bestows worldly pleasures and salvation.

38. The great goddess is the pedestal for the liṅga. The liṅga is Lord Śiva Himself. Since the whole universe finally merges into in, it is called Liṅga.