

a terrific battle. Śiva embraced her and then entered the cavern. The numerous women that had gathered were dismissed. Pārvatī honoured Vīraka by hundreds of gifts and appointed him as the keeper of the gate.

45. Then the Asura chief, very clever in statesmanship, unable to see either Pārvatī or Śiva sent his emissary Vighasa immediately to Śiva.

46. He was one whose limbs were shattered by the weapons hurled by the gods and the Gaṇas. He entered the cavern, bowed to Śiva and spoke these words haughtily.

*The messenger said:—*

47. "I have been sent by him and so I have entered this cavern. You have nothing to do with a woman. Surrender this young and beautiful lady.

48. Usually you are an ascetic. Carry on that. Thinking "Should a sage be offended?" I have observed forbearance within my tender mind. But O sage, you are not a real ascetic but only my enemy.

49. You are extremely inimical to the Daityas. Show your might in fighting with me. O wicked ascetic, I shall send you to Yama's abode befitting the nether worlds."

*Sanatkumāra said:—*

50. On hearing these words conveyed by the emissary, the great three-eyed lord, the goal of the good, the destroyer of the pride of the wicked, the wearer of skull-garlands spoke furiously burning with grief.

*Śiva said:—*

51. Manifestly your words are fierce. Hence hasten. Fight with me if you have the might.

52. Of what avail are the wives and riches, be they ever so beautiful, to a feeble man in the world? Let the haughty Daityas proud of their strength come. I have already thought of this and acted accordingly.

53. How can a feeble man maintain even his physical body? Let them do whatever they are ordained to do. I