

58. In the Kṛta age³² Dvaipāyana and others condensed it into four hundred thousand verses which in the beginning of Dvāpara age was separated into eighteen different Purāṇas.

59. Of these the Śivapurāṇa contains twenty-four thousand verses with seven Samhitās and the Purāṇa is on a par with the Vedas (in excellence).

60. The first Samhitā is called Vidyēśvara, the second Rudra, the third Śatarudra and the fourth Koṭirudra.

61. The fifth is Aumī (of Umā), the sixth Kailāsa and the seventh Vāyaviya ; these are the seven Samhitās.

62. Thus the divine Śivapurāṇa with its seven Samhitās stands on a par with the Vedas, according salvation more than anything else.

63. He who reads this Śivapurāṇa complete with the seven Samhitās devotedly is a living liberated soul.

64. Hundreds of other sacred texts as the Vedas, Smṛtis, Purāṇas, Itihāsas, and Āgamas do not merit even a sixteenth of this Śivapurāṇa.

65. Śivapurāṇa is first expounded by Śiva and then condensed by Vyāsa, a devotee of Śiva. It is pure and brief and as such it renders help to all living beings. As a queller of the threefold calamities (physical, extraneous and divine) it is unrivalled. It bestows welfare upon the good.

66—67. Undeceptive virtue is extolled herein; it is, in the main, of the nature of Vedantic wisdom. It contains mantras, and three aims of life and the thing knowable by wise men of unprejudiced mind. The Śivapurāṇa is the best among the Purāṇas, extolling the great Being that glows in Vedānta and the Vedas. He who reads and listens to it with devotion becomes a favourite of Śiva and attains the supreme position (here and hereafter).

32. Yugas : According to tradition, historical time is divided into four ages, viz. the Kṛta (or Satya), Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. This system is the peculiarity of India alone. Kṛta age ended with the destruction of the Haihayas by Rāma Jāmadāgnya; Tretā began with Sagara and ended with Rāma Dāśarathi's consecration at Ayodhyā and closed with the Bhārata war; the Kali began immediately after the passing away of the great heroes of the Bharata war, Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas and with the changes in the political condition of Northern India that ensued.