

21. Even if he performs holy rites, a person succumbing to the viles of women is always impure. The manes, the gods and all men despise him.

22. Of what avail is knowledge, penance, repetition of sacred mantras, sacrifice, adoration, learning and charitable gift to him who is henpecked ?

23. Since you spoke to me viewing me with the feelings that I am your wife although I ought to have been viewed as your mother, you will have a gradual decline as a result of my curse.

*Vasiṣṭha said:—*

24. On hearing the curse of the chaste woman, O lord of mountains, Dharma cast off the guise of a king and assumed his real form. Tremblingly he spoke thus—

*Dharma said:—*

25. O mother, know me as Dharma elderly and venerable to men of wisdom and preceptors. O chaste lady, I always consider other's wives as mothers.

26. It was to know your innermost feelings that I approached you. I knew your mind, still I was urged by fate.

27. Only proper suppression, not the contrary, is carried out by you. Chastisement of those who go astray from the right path is carried out by Śiva Himself.

28. Obeisance to Śiva who distributes happiness, misery, boons, prosperity or adversity on all.

29. Obeisance to Śiva who can make people enemies or friends, create affection or quarrel, to generate or destroy things.

30. Obeisance to Śiva who has made milk white, who has bestowed chillness on water and heat on fire.

31. Obeisance to Śiva, by whom the primordial nature, the principles Mahat etc, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Siva and others are created.

*Brahmā said:—*

32. After saying thus Dharma, the most venerable god