

SKANDHA I

CHAPTER 1. ON THE QUESTIONS BY ŚAUNAKA AND OTHERS

1. I meditate on the beginningless Brahmâvidyâ who is Sarvachaitanyarûpâ, of the nature of all-consciousness; May She stimulate our buddhi to the realisation of That (or who stimulates our buddhi in different directions).

2. Śaunaka said :— “O highly fortunate Sûta! O noble Sûta! You are the best of persons; you are blessed inasmuch as you have thoroughly studied all the auspicious Purânas.

3. O sinless one! you have gone through all the eighteen Purânas composed by Krisna Dvaipâyana; these are endowed with five excellent characteristics and full of esoteric meanings¹.

4-5. O Sinless one! It is not that you have read them like a parrot, but you have thoroughly grasped the meaning of them all as you have learnt them from Vyâsa himself, the son of Satyavati. Now it is our good merits that you have come at this divine holy excellent Viśvasan Ksettra (place), free from any defects of the Kali age.

6-10. O Sûta! These Munis assembled here are desirous to hear the holy Purâna Samhitâ, that yields religious merits. So describe this to us with your mind concentrated. O all-knowing Sûta! Live long and be free from the threefold sorrows of existence. O highly fortunate one! Narrate to us the Purâna equivalent to the Vedas. O Sûta! Those persons that do not hear the Purânas, are certainly deprived by the Creator, though they have apparently the organ of hearing, of the power of tasting the sweet essence of words; because, the organ of hearing is

¹Note: The characteristics are to make the mantras reveal to one's own self, to realise, to transfer to others the Śakti, force thereof, to prove the various manifestations of the several effects thereof, etc.

gratified then and then only when it hears the words of the wise men, just as the organ of taste is satisfied then and then only when it tastes the six kinds of rasas (flavour, taste) (sweet, sour, pungent, bitter, salty, and astringent). This is known to all. The serpents that are void of the organ of hearing are enchanted by sweet music; then why should not those persons that have the organs of hearing and are averse to hear the Purānas, be thrown under the category of the deaf?

11-18. O Saumya! Hence all these Brāhmins, being distressed with the fear of this Kali, have come here to this Naimisāranya, eager to hear attentively the Purānas, and are staying here with this one object. Time must be spent away anyhow or other; those that are fools while away their times in sports and other evil practices and those that are learned pass away their times in meditating on the Śāstras; but these Śāstras are too vast and very varied; they contain Jalpas (debates or wrangling discussions to win over the opposite party), Vadas (sound doctrines to arrive at just conclusions), and various Arthavādas (explanations and assertions, recommending Vidhis or precepts by stating the good arising from its proper observance and evils arising from its omission and also by adducing historical instances for its support; praises and eulogies) and filled with many argumentations. And, amongst these Śāstras again, the Vedānta is the Sāttvik, the Mimāmsas are the Rājasik and the Nyāya Śāstras with Hetuvādas, are the Tāmasik; so the Śāstras are varied. Similarly, the Purānas are of three kinds :— (1) Śāttvik, (2) Rājasik and (3) Tāmasik. O Saumya! (one of gentle appearance) you have recited those Purānas endowed with five characteristics and full of many narratives; of these, the fifth Purāna, equivalent to the Vedas and with all the good qualities, the Bhāgavata yields Dharma and Kāma (religion and desires), gives liberation to those who desire for emancipation and is very wonderful; you mentioned this before but ordinarily; you did not dwell on this specially. Now these Brāhmanas are eager to hear gladly this divine auspicious Bhāgavata, the best of the Purānas; so kindly describe this in detail.

19-25. O knower of Dharma! By your faith and devotion to your Guru, you have become Sāttvik and thus have thoroughly known the Purāna Samhitās spoken by Veda Vyās. O Omniscient one! Therefore it is that we have heard many Purānas from your mouth; but we are not satisfied as the Devas are not satisfied with the drinking of the nectar. O Sūta! Fie to the nectar even as the drinking of nectar is quite useless in giving Mukti. But hearing the Bhāgavata gives instantaneous Mukti from this Samsāra or round of birth and death. O Sūta! we performed thousands and thousands of Yajas for the drinking of the nectar (Amrita), but never we got the full peace. The reason being that Yajas lead to heaven only; on the expiry of the period of punya (good merits, the heavenly life ceases and one is expelled, as it were from the Heavens. Thus incessant sojourns in this wheel of Samsāra, the constant rounds of births and deaths never end. O Knower of

every thing! Thus, without Jâna (knowledge, wisdom) Mukti never comes to men, wandering in this wheel of Time (Kâlachakra) composed

of the three Gunas. So describe this holy Bhâgavata, always beloved of the Mumuksas (those that desire Mukti), this secret work yielding liberation, holy and full of all sentiments (rasas).

Thus ends the first chapter of the first Skandha on the questioning about the Purâna by Saunaka and other Rishis in the Mahâpurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

Here ends the First Chapter of the First Skandha of Śrîmad Devi Bhâgavatam on the questions by Śaunaka and other Risis.

CHAPTER 2. ON QUESTIONS PUT BY ŚAUNAKA AND OTHER RSIS

1-5. śrî Sûta said :— “I am highly fortunate; I consider myself blessed and I am purified by the Mahâtmâs (high souled persons); inasmuch as I am questioned by them about the highly meritorious Purâna, famous in the Vedas. I will now speak in detail about this Purâna, the best of the âgamas, approved of by all the Vedas and the secret of all the Śâstras.

O Brahmins! I bow down to the gentle lotus feet, known in the three Lokas, of the Devî Bhagavatî, praised by Brahmâ and the other devas Visnu, MaheŚa and others, meditated always by the Munindras and which the Yogis contemplate as their source of liberation. Today I will devotedly describe, in detail and in plain language, that Purâna which is the best of all the Purânas, which gives prosperity and contains all the sentiments (Rasas) that a human being can conceive, the Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam.

May that Highest Primal Śakti who is known as Vidyâ in the Vedas; who is omniscient, who controls the innermost of all and who is skilled in cutting off the knot of the world, who cannot be realised by the wicked and the vicious, but who is visible to the Munis in their meditation, may that Bhagavatî Devî give me always the buddhi fit to describe the Purâna!

I call to my mind the Mother of all the worlds who creates this universe, whose

nature is both real (taking gross, practical point of view) and unreal (taking a real point of view), preserves and destroys by Her Râjasik, Sâttvik and Tâmasik qualities and in the end resolves all these into Herself and plays alone in the period of Dissolution - at this lime, I remember my that Mother of all the worlds.

6-10. It is commonly known that Brahmâ is the creator of this universe; and the knowers of the Vedas and the Purânas say so; but they also say that Brahmâ is born of the navel-lotus of Visnu. Thus it appears that Brahmâ cannot create independently. Again Visnu, from whose navel lotus Brahmâ is born, lies in Yoga sleep on the bed of Ananta (the thousand headed serpent) in the time of Pralaya; so how can we call Bhagavân Visnu who rests on the thousand headed serpent Ananta as the creator of the universe? Again the refuge of Ananta is the water of the ocean Ekârnavâ; a liquid cannot rest without a vessel; so I take refuge of the Mother of all beings, who resides as the Śakti of all and thus is the supporter of all; I fly for refuge unto that Devî who was praised by Brahmâ while resting on the navel lotus of Visnu who was lying fast asleep in Yoga nidrâ. O Munis! meditating on that Maya Devî who creates, preserves and destroys the universe who is known as composed of the three gunas and who grants mukti, I now describe the whole of the Purânas; now you all better hear.

11-16. The Purâna Śrîmad Bhâgavat (Devî Bhâgavat) is excellent and holy; eighteen thousand pure Ślokas are contained in it. Bhagavân Krisna Dvaipâyan has divided this Purâna into twelve auspicious Skandhas (Books) and three hundred and eighteen chapters. Twenty chapters compose the first Skandha; twelve chapters in the second Skandha; thirty chapters in the third Skandha; twenty-five chapters in the fourth Skandha, thirty-five, in the fifth; thirty-one, in the sixth; forty, in the seventh; twenty-four, in the eighth; fifty chapters in the ninth; thirteen, in the tenth; twenty-four in the eleventh and fourteen chapters are contained in the twelfth Skandha, O Munis! Thus the Dvaipâyan Muni has arranged his chapters in each Skandha.

17-20. Thus the Mahâtmâ Veda Vyâs has divided this Bhâgavata Purâna. into so many Skandhas and into so many chapters; and that the number of verses is eighteen thousand is already stated. That is denominated as Purâna which contains the following five characteristics :- (1) Creation of the universe, (2) Secondary creation, (3) Dynasties (4) Manvantaras and (5) The description of Manus and other kings.

Śiva is beyond Prâkritik attributes, eternal and ever omnipresent; She is without any change, immutable, unattainable but by yoga; She is the refuge of the universe and Her nature is Turîya Chaitanya. Mahâ Lakshmi is Her Sattvikî Śakti; Sarasvati is Her Râjasik Śakti and Mahâ Kâlî is Her Tâmasik Śakti; these are all of feminine forms.

21-25. The assuming of bodies by these three Śaktis for the creation of this universe is denominated as "Sarga" (creation) by the high souled persona (Mahârpurusa), skilled in Śāstras. And the further resolution of these three Śaktis into Brahmâ, Visnu and Maheśa for the creation, preservation, and destruction of this universe is denominated (in this Purâna) as Pratisarga (secondary ereation.) The description of the kings of the solar and lunar dynasties and the families of Hiranya Kasipu and others is known as the description of the lineages of kings and their dynasties. The description of Svâyambhûva and, other Manus and their ruling periods is known as Manvantaras. And the description of their descendants is known as the description of their families. (Thus these are the five characteristics in the Purânas.) O best of Munis! all the Purânas are endowed with these five characteristics.

26-32. So is Mahâbhârata writen by Vedavyâsa, characterised by these five things. This is known as the fifth Veda and Itihâsa (history.) In this are something more than one lakh slokas. Śaunaka said :- "O Śûta! What are those Purânas and how many verses are contained in each? Speak all those in detail in this holy Ksettra; we, the residents of Naimisâranya are all very eager to hear this. (Why we call ourselves as the residents of Naimisâranya, hear; you will realise then that no other place exists in this Kali age for hearing the holy discourses on religion) :- When we were afraid of the Kali age, Brahmâ gave us a Manomaya Chakra (wheel) and I said to all of us :- Follow this wheel, go after it and the spot where the felly of the wheel will become thin (so as to break) and will not roll further, that country is the holy place; Kali will never be able to enter there; you all better remain there until the Satya age comes back. Thus, acording to the saying of Brahmâ, we have got orders to stay here. On hearing the words of Brahmâ, wo went out quickly keeping the wheel go on, our object being to determine which place is best and holiest. When we came here, the felly of the wheel become thin and shorn before my eyes; hence this Ksettra is called Naimis; it is the most sanctifying place.

Kali cannot enter here; hence the Mahatmas, Munis and Siddhas, terrified by the Kali age, have followed me and resorted to this place. We have performed yajas with Purodâsa (clarified butter as is offered in oblations to fire) where no animals are sacrificed; now we have no other important work to do except to pass our time here until the arrival of Satyayuga. O Śûta! we are extremely fortunate in all respects that you have come here; purify us to-day by narrating to us the names of the Purânas equivalent to the Vedas. O Śûta! you are also a learned orator; we, too, are ardent listeners, with no other works to bother our heads; narrate to us to-day the auspicious holy Bhâgavata Purâna. O Śûta! Long live you; and no ailings, internal, external, or from the Devas torment you. (this is our blessing to you). We have heard that in the most sanctifying Purâna, narrated by Maharsi Dvaipâyan, all about Dharma (religion), Artha (Wealth) and Kama (desires) are duly described as well the acquiring of Tattvajnan and liberation are also spoken

of. O Śûta! our desires are not satisfied the more we hear of those beautiful holy words. Now describe to us the highly pure Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam where all the Lilas (the dramatic acts) of the Mother of the three worlds purifying the sins, adorned with all the qualifications are described as yielding all the desires like the Kalpa Vriksha (the celestial tree yielding all desires).

Thus ends the second chapter of the first Skandha on the description of the Purâna (the text) in Mahâ Purâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâs.

Her ends the Second Chapter of Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam on questions put by Saunaka and other Risis.

CHAPTER 3. ON PRAISING THE PURÂNAS AND ON EACH VYÂSA OF EVERY DVÂPARA YUGA

1-11. Sûta said :— “O best of the Munis! I am now telling you the names of the Purânas, etc., exactly as I have heard from Veda Vyâsa, the son of Satyavati; listen.

The Purâna beginning with ”ma” are two in number; those beginning with ”bha” are two; those beginning with ”bra” are three; those beginning with ”va” are four; those beginning respectively with “A”, “na”, “pa”, “Ling”, “ga”, “kû” and “Ska” are one each and “ma” means Matsya Purâna, Mârkandeya Purâna; “Bha” signifies Bhavisya, Bhâgavat Purânas; “Bra” signifies Brahmâ, Brahmânda and Brahmâvaivarta Purânas; “va” signifies Vâman, Vayu, Visnu and Varaha Purânas; “A” signifies Agni Purâna; “Na” signifies Narada Purâna; “Pa” signifies Padma Purâna; “Ling” signifies Linga Purânam; “Ga” signifies Govinda Purânam; Kû signifies Kurma Purâna and “Ska” signifies Skanda Purânam. These are the eighteen Purânas. O Saunaka! In the Matsya Purâna there are fourteen thousand slokas; in the wonderfully varied Markandeya Purânam there are nine thousand slokas. In the Bhavisya Purâna fourteen thousand and five hundred slokas are counted by the Munis, the seers of truth. In the holy Bhâgavata there are eighteen thousand Ślokas; in the Brahmâ Purâna there are Ajuta (ten thousand) Ślokas. In the Brahmânda Purâna there are twelve thousand one hundred Ślokas; in the Brahmâ

Vaivarta Purânam there are eighteen thousand Ślokas. In the Vaman Purâna there are Ajuta (ten thousand) Ślokas; in the Vayu Purânam there are twenty-four thousand and six hundred Ślokas; in the greatly wonderful Visnu Purâna there are twenty-three thousand Ślokas; in the Agni Purânam there are sixteen thousand Ślokas; in the Brihat Narada Purânam, there are twenty-five thousand Ślokas, in the big Padma Purâna there are fifty-five thousand ślokas; in the voluminous Linga Purâna eleven thousand Ślokas exist; in the Garuda Purânam spoken by Hari nineteen thousand ślokas exist; in the Kurma Purâna, seventeen thousand ślokas exist and in the greatly wonderful Skanda Purâna there are eighty-one thousand ślokas, O sinless Risis! Thus I have described to you the names of all the Purânas and the number of verses contained in them. Now hear about the Upa Purânas.

12-17. The first is the Upapurâna narrated by Sanat Kumâra; next comes Narasimha Purâna; then Naradiya Purâna, Śiva Purâna, Purâna narrated by Durvasa, Kapila Purâna, Manava Purâna, Auśanasa Purâna, Varuna Purâna. Kalika Purâna, Samva Purâna, Nandi Keśwara Purâna, Saura Purâna, Purâna spoken by ParâŚara, âditya Purâna, Mahesvara Purâna, Bhâgavata and Vasistha Purâna. These Upa Purânas are described by the Mahatmas.

After compiling the eighteen Purânas, Veda Vyâsa, the son of Satyavati composed Mahabharata, that has no rival, out of these Purânas.

18-24. At every Manvantara, in each Dvâpara Yuga, Veda Vyâsa expounds the Purânas duly to preserve the religion. Veda Vyâsa is no other person than Visnu Himself; He, in the form of Veda Vyâsa, divides the (one) Veda into four parts, in every Dvâpara Yuga, for the good of the world. The Brahmânas of the Kali age are shortlived and their intellect (Buddhi) is not sharp; they cannot realise the meaning after studying the Vedas; knowing this in every Dvâpara Yuga Bhagavân expounds the holy Purâna Samhitas. The more so because women, Śûdras, and the lower Dvijas are not entitled to hear the Vedas; for their good, the Purânas have been composed. The present auspicious Manvantara is Vaivasvata; it is the seventh in due order; and the son of Satyavati, the best of the knowers of Dharma, is the Veda Vyâsa of the 28th Dvâpara Yuga of this seventh Manvantara. He is my Guru; in the next Dvâpara, Yuga Asvatthama, the son of Drona will be the Veda Vyâsa. Twenty-seven Veda Vyâsas had expired and they duly compiled each their own Purâna Samhitas in their own Dvâpara Yugas.

25-35. The Risis said :— “O highly fortunate Sûta! kindly describe to us the names of the previous Veda Vyâsas, the reciters of the Purânas in the Dvâpara Yugas.

Sûta said :— In the first Dvâpara, Brahmâ Himself divided the Vedas; in the second Dvâpara, the first Prajapati Vyâsa did the same; so Śakra, in the third, Brihaspati, in the fourth, Surya in the fifth; Yama, in the sixth, Indra, in the seventh, Va-

sistha, in the eighth; Sarasvata Risi in the ninth, Tridhama, in the tenth; Trivrisa, in the eleventh, Bharadvâja, in the twelfth; Antariksa, in the thirteenth; Dharma, in the fourteenth; Evaruni in the fifteenth; Dhananjaya, in the sixteenth; Medhatithi in the seventeenth; Vratî, in the eighteenth; Atri, in the nineteenth; Gautama in the twentieth, Uttama, whose soul was fixed on Hari, in the twenty-first, Vâjasravâ Vena, in the twenty second; his family descendant Somaiu the twenty-third; Trinavindu, in the twenty-fourth; Bhârgava, in the twenty-fifth; Sakti, in the twenty-sixth, Jâtûkarnya in the twenty-seventh and Krisna Dvaipâyana became the twenty-eighth Veda Vyâs in the Dvâpara Yugas. Thus I have spoken of the 28 Veda Vyâsas, as I heard. I have heard the holy Śrîmad Bhâgavat from the mouth of Krisna Dvaipayana. This removes all troubles, yields all desires, and gives Moksa and is full of the meanings of the Vedas. This treatise contains the essence of all the Śastras and is dear always to the Mamuksas (those who want Moksa or liberation).

36-43. O best Munis! Thus, compiling the Purânas Veda Vyâsa thought this Purâna to be the best; so (without teaching it to other persons) he settled that his own son the high-sould Śuka Deva born of the dry woods used for kindling fire (excited by attrition), having no passion for the worldly things, would be the fit student to be taught this Purâna and therefore taught him; at that time I was a fellow student along with Śaka Deva and I heard every thing from the mouth of Vyâsa Deva and realised the secret meanings thereof. This has happened through the grace of the merciful Guru Veda Vyâsa.

Here ends the Third Chapter of Śrîmad Devi Bhâgavatam on praising the Purânas and on each Vyâsa of every Dvâpara Yuga.

CHAPTER 4. ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE DEVÎ

1-3. The Risis said :— O Saumya! How was Śuka Deva born? Who studied these Purâna Samhitâs; by which wife of Vyâsa Deva? And How? O highly intelligent one! You have just spoken that Śuka Deva was not born from womb, in the natural way; he was born of the dry pieces of wood for Homa sacrifice. But we heard before that the great ascetic was Yogi even in his mother's womb, so a great doubt comes

to our minds. You better remove that to-day; how he studied also these Purânas, as vast in their nature; say this.

4-5. Sûta said :- In long-past days, Satyavati's son Vedas Vyâs, while in his own hermitage on the banks of the river Sarasvati, was greatly wondered to see a pair of Châtakas (Sparrows). He saw the pair putting the beak of their young one, just born of the egg, of beautiful body, red mouth, and greasy body. They do not care at all for their own hunger and toil; all they are caring for is to nurture their young one. He said also that the pair are rubbing their bodies over the body and kissing lovingly the mouth of the young one and feeling the highest pleasure. Seeing this wonderful affection of the two sparrows towards their young, Veda Vyâs became very anxious and thought over the following in his mind.

9-14. Oh! What wonder is there, when the birds have so much filial affection towards their child, that men, who want services from their sons, would show their affection towards their sons! This pair of sparrows will not perform the happy marriage of their young one and will not see the face of their sons wife; nor when they will grow old, that their child would become very religious and serve them to attain great merits in Heaven. Nor do they expect that their child would earn money and satisfy them nor the child would perform when they die, their funeral obsequies duly and help them in their sojourn in the next world; nothing of all these. Nor will the child perform the Śrâdh ceremony at Gayâ; nor will the child offer the oblation of a blue bull on the day of offering the sacrifice to its ancestor (the bull is then let loose and held sacred); yet the pair of sparrows have so much affection towards their young one! Oh! in this world to touch the body of the son, especially to nurture the sons, is the highest happiness in life.

15-27. There is no prospect in the after birth of the sonless; never, never will Heaven be his. Without son, there is none other who can be of help in the next world. Thus in the Dharma Śâstras, Manu and other Munis declare that the man who has sons goes to Heaven and the sonless one can never go to Heaven. The man possessing a son is entitled to the Heavenly pleasures can be vividly seen, rather than imagined. The man with son is freed from sins; this is the word of the Vedas. The sonless man becomes very much distressed even at the time of death and while lying on bed that is ground at that time, mournfully thinks. "This all my vast wealth, various things, this my beautiful house, who will enjoy all these?"

When the sonless man is thus perplexed in his mind at the time of his death and becomes restless, then it is sure that his future career is full misfortunes; unless ones mind is calm and serene at the time of death, can never attain a good goal. Thus thinking variously, the Satyavati's son Veda Vyâs sighed heavily and became unmindful. He thought of various plans and at last, coming to a definite conclusion, went to the Sumeru mountain to perform Tapasyâ. On reaching there, he

thought which Deva he will worship! Visnu, Śiva, Indra, Brahmâ, Surya, Ganeśa, Kârtikeya, Agni, or Varuna? Who will grant him boon quickly and thus satisfy his desires. While thus cogitating in his mind, came there the Muni Nârada, of one mind with lute in hand, accidentally in his course of travels. Seeing Nârada, the Satyavatis son Veda Vyâsa gave him a hearty welcome, with great gladness, offering him Arghya and âsan (seat) and asked about his welfare. Hearing this question of welfare, Nârada Muni spoke :— “O Dvaipâyan! Why do you look so care worn! First speak this out to me”.

28-30. Veda Vyâsa said :— “ The sonless man has no goal; therefore there is no happiness in my mind; I am always anxious to get a son and therefore I am very sorry. To-day my mind is sorely troubled with the one idea, which Deva I may satisfy by my tapasyâ, who will grant me my desires; now I take your refuge. O merciful Maharsi! You are omniscient; say this quickly; which Deva I will take for my refuge, who will grant me a son”.

31-37. Sûta said :— Thus questioned by Krisna Dvaipâyan Veda Vyâsa, the high souled Nârada Muni, well versed in the Vedas, became very glad and spoke thus :— O highly fortunate Parâsarâs son. The question that you have asked me to-day was formerly asked by my father to Nârâyana. At this, Nârâyana Vasudeva, the Deva of the Devas, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the Universe, the husband of Laksmî, the four armed, wearing yellow garment, holding conchshell, discus, club and with the mark Śrîvatsa (a mark or curl of hair on the heart of Visnu) adorning His breast and decorated with Kaustuvagem, the Divinity Himself, became merged in great Yoga; at this my Father became greatly surprised and said :— “O Janârdana! Thou art the Deva of the Devas; the Lord of the Present, the Past and the Future, the Lord of this Universe; why art thou meditating in Yoga? And what is it that Thou art meditating? O best of the Devas! Thou art the Lord of the entire Universe and yet Thou art now merged in deep meditation. At this I am greatly surprised (my surprise is not without foundation; Thou canst Thyself see). What more wonderful than this can happen?

38-43. O Lord of Rama! I am sprung from the lotus from thy navel and have become the Lord of this whole universe; who is there in this universe that is superior to Thee; kindly say this to me. O Lord of the world? Thou art the Origin of all, the Cause of all causes, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer and the capable Doer of all actions. O Maharaja! at Thy will, I create this whole universe and Rudra destroys in due time this world. He is always under Thy command. O Lord! By Thy command the Sun roams in the sky; the wind blows in various auspicious or inauspicious ways and the fire is giving heat and the cloud showers rain. I don't see in the three Lokas any one superior to Thee. Then whom art Thou meditating while being questioned by his very intelligent son Śuka Deva! not born in the usual

way from womb, Dvaipâyana expounded all the secret excellent meanings of the Purâna and thereby I also came to know them also. O saintly persons! Thus Śuka Deva, sincerely earnest to cross this endless bottomless ocean of Śamsara, tasted of the wonderful traits of the Veda, the Kalpa tree, this Śrimad Bhâgavata with its numerous stories and anecdotes with great eagerness and intense pleasure.

38-43. Oh! Who is there in this world that is not freed from this terror of Kali, after he has heard this Bhâgavata. Even if the greatest sinner, void of the right ways of living and Achara as ordained in the Vedas, hears on a pretence this excellent Devî Bhâgavata, the chief of the Purânas, he enjoys all the great enjoyments of this world and in the end attains the eternal place occupied by the Yogis. She who is rare, in Her Nirguna aspect, to even Hari and Hara, who is very dear as Tattva Vidya to the Janins whose real nature can be realised only in Samâdhi, She resides always in the cavity of the heart of the hearers of the Bhâgavata Purâna. He who getting the all qualified human birth and getting the reciter of this Purâna, the boat to cross, as it were, this world, does not hear this blissful Purâna, he is certainly deprived by the Creator. How is it that the way-ward dull-headed persons, getting the vicious ears, can hear always the faults and calumnies of others, that are entirely useless, and cannot hear this pure Purâna that contains the four Vargas :- Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Mokhsa?

This is my main point of doubt. O One of good vows! I am Thy devotee; be merciful to me and speak this to me. There is almost nothing that is secret to Mahâpurusas; this is a well-known fact”.

44-50. Thus hearing Brahmâ's words, Bhagavan Nârâyana spoke :- “O Brahmân! I now speak out my mind to you; listen carefully. Though the Devas, Dânavas and men and all the Lokas know that You are the Creator, I am the Preserver and Rudra is the Destroyer, yet it is to be known that the saints, versed in the Vedas, have come to this conclusion by inference from the Vedas that the creation, preservation, and destruction are performed by the creative force, preservative force and destructive force. The Rajasik creative force residing in you, the Sattvik preservative force residing in me, and the Tamasik destructive force residing in Rudra are the all-in-all. When these Saktis become absent, you become inert and incapable to create, I to preserve and Rudra to destroy.

O intelligent Suvrata! We all are always under that Force directly or indirectly; hear instances that you can see and infer. At the time of Pralaya, I lie down on the bed of Ananta, subservient to that Force; again I wake up in the time of creation duly under the influence of Time.

51-54. I am always subservient to that Maha Śakti; (under Her command) I am engaged in Tapasyâ for a long time; (By Her command) some time I enjoy with

Lakshmî; some time I fight battles, terrible to all the Lokas, with the Dânavas, involving great bodily troubles. O Know of Dharma! It was before Your presence that I fought hand to hand fight for five thousand years before Your sight on that one great ocean in long-past days with the two demons Madhu and Kaitabha, sprung from the wax of my ear, maddened with pride; and by the grace of the Devî, successfully killed the two Dânavas.

55-61. O highly fortunate one! you realised then the great Śakti, higher than the highest and the cause of all causes; then why are you asking again and again that question. By the will of that Śakti, I have got this idea of man and roam on the great ocean; in yuga after yuga, I assume by Her will, the Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, and Dwarf incarnations. No one likes to take birth in the womb of inferior animals (especially birds). Do you think that I willingly take unpleasant births as in the womb of boars, tortoise, i.e., certainly not. What independent man is there who abandons the pleasurable enjoyment with Laksmi and takes birth in inferior animals as fish, etc. or leaves his seat on the seat of Gaduda and becomes engaged in great war-conflicts. O Svayambhu! In ancient days you saw before your eyes that my head was cut off when the bowstring suddenly gave way; and then you, brought a horse's head and by that help, the divine artist Visvakarma, stuck that on to my headless body. O Brahmâ! Since then I am known amongst men by the name of "Hayagrîva". This is well-known to you. Now say, were I independent, would such an ignominy have happened to me? Never. Therefore I am not independent; I am in every way under that Śakti. O Lotus-born! I always meditate on that Śakti; and I do not know any other than this Śakti".

62-66. Nârada said :— Thus spoke Visnu to Brahmâ. O Muni Vedavyâs! Brahmâ spoke these to me. So you, too, better meditate the lotus feet of Bhâgavati calmly in the lotus of your heart for the success of your idea. That Devî will give you all that you wish. Sûta said :— At these words of Nârada, Satyavati's son Veda Vyâsa went out to the hills for Tapasyâ, trusting the lotus feet of the Devî as the all-in-all in this world.

Thus ends the fourth chapter of the first Skandha on the excellency of the Devî in the Mahapurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 5. ON THE NARRATIVE OF HAYAGRÎVA

1-4. The Risis said :– “O Sûta! Our minds are merged in the sea of doubt, hearing your this most wonderful saying, surprising to the whole world. The head of Janârdan Mâdhava, the Lord of all, was severed out of His body! And He was afterwards known as Hayagrîva, the horse-faced! Oh! what more wonder can there be than this? Whom the Vedas even praise, all the Devas rest on Whom, Who is the Cause of all causes, the âdi Deva Jagannath (the Lord of the universe), Oh! how is it that His head came to be severed! O highly intelligent one! Describe all this to me in detail”.

5-9. Sûta said :– O Munis! Hear all attentively the glorious deeds of the supremely energetic Visnu, the Deva of the Devas. Once on a time the eternal Deva Janârdana became tired after the terrible continuous battle for ten thousand years. After this the Lord Nârâyana seated Himself on Padmâsan (a kind of posture) in some lovely place on a level plot of ground and placing his head on the front of his bow with the bow strung and placed erect on the ground fell fast asleep. Visnu, the Lord of Ramâ, was exceedingly tired and thus he fell soon into deep sleep. At this time Indra and the other Devas, with Brahmâ and Mahesâ began a sacrifice.

10-13. Then they, for the sake of success in Deva’s well, went to the region of Vaikuntha to meet with the Deva Janârdana, the Lord of sacrifices. There the Devas, not finding Visnu, came to know by their Dhyân (meditation) where Bhagavân Visnu was staying and thither they went. They saw that the Lord Visnu, the Deva of the Devas was lying unconscious, being under the arms of Yoganidrâ (the yogic sleep). Therefore they took their seats there. Seeing the Lord of the universe asleep, Brahmâ, Rudra and the other Devas became anxious.

14-18. Indra then addressed the Devas :–“O best of the Suras! Now what is to be done! How shall we rouse Bhagavân from His sleep? Now think of the means by which this can be effected”. Hearing Indra’s words Śambhu said :– “O good Devas! Now we must finish our sacrificial work. But if the sleep of Bhagavân be disturbed, He would get angry.” Hearing Śankara’s words, Paramesthî Brahmâ created Vamrî insects (a sort of white ants) so that they might eat up the forepart of the bow that was lying on the ground causing the other end rise up and thus break His sleep. Thus the Deva’s purpose will, no doubt, be fulfilled. Thus settling his mind, the eternal Deva Brahmâ ordered the white ants Vamrîs to cut the bow string.

19-22. Hearing this order of Brahmâ, Vamrî spoke to Brahmâ, thus :— “O Brahmân! How can I disturb the sleep of the Devadeva, Lord of Laksmî, the World Guru? To rouse one from one’s deep sleep, to interrupt one in one’s speech, to sever the love between a couple husband and wife, to separate a child from one’s mother, all these are equivalent to Brahmâhatyâ (murdering a Brahmân). Therefore, O Deva! how can I interrupt the happiiness of sleep of the Devadeva? And what benefit shall I derive by eating the bowstring, so that I may incur this vicious act? But a man can commit a sin if there be any interest of his; I am ready to eat this, if I get a personal interest”.

23-24. Brahmâ said :— We will give you, too, share in this our Yaja (sacrifice); so hear me; do our work and rouse Visnu from His sleep. During the time of performing Homa whatever ghee will fall outside the Homa-Kund (the sacrificial pit) will fall to your share; so be quick and do this.

25-30. Sûta said :— Thus ordered by Brahmâ, the Vamrî insect soon ate away the fore end of the bow that rested on the ground. Immediately the string gave way and the bow went up; the other end became free and a terrible sound took place. The Devas became afraid; the whole universe got agitated; the earth trembled. The sea became swollen; the aquatic animals became startled; violent wind blew; the mountains shook; ominous meteors fell. The quarters assumed a terrific aspect; the Sun went down the horizon. In that time of distress the Devas became anxious what evil might come down. O ascetics! while the Devas were thus cogitating, the head with crown on it of the Devadeva Visnu vanished away ; no body knew where it fell.

31-36. When the awful darkness disappeared, Brahmâ and Mahâdeva saw the disfigured body of Visnu with its head off. Seeing that headless figure of Visnu they were greatly surprised; they were drowned in the ocean of cares and, overwhelmed with grief, began to weep aloud. O Lord! O Master! O Devadeva! O Eternal one! what unforeseen extraordinary mishap occurred to us to-day! O Deva! Thou canst not be pierced nor cut asunder, nor capable of being burnt; how is it then that Thy head has been taken away! Is this the Mâyâ (magic) of some. Deva? O all pervading one! The Devas cannot live when Thy condition is thus; we do not know what affection dost Thou have towards us. We are crying because of our selfish ends; perhaps this therefore has occurred. The Daityas, Yaksas, or Râkhsasas have not done this; O Lord of Laksmî! Whose fault will we ascribe this to? The Devas themselves have committed this loss to themselves?

37-41. O Lord of the Devas! The Devas are. now dependent! They are under Thee. Now where are we to go? What are we to do? There is none to save the dull stupid Devas!

At this juncture, seeing Śiva and the other Devas crying, Brihaspati, supremely versed in the Vedas, consoled them thus :– “O highly fortunate one! what use there will be in thus crying and repenting? it ought you now to consider the means that you should adopt to redress your calamities. O Lord of the Devas! Fate and one’s own exertion and intelligence are equal; if the success comes not through Fate (Luck or chance) one is certainly to show one’s prowess and merit”.

42-46. Indra said :– Fie to your exertion when, before our eyes, the head of Bhagavân Visnu Himself has been carried off! Fie, Fie to your prowess and intelligence! Fate is in my opinion, the supreme.

Brahmâ said :– Whatever, auspicious or inauspicious, is ordained Daiva (Fate), every one must bear that; no one can go beyond the Daiva. When one has taken up a body, one must experience pleasure and pain; there is no manner of doubt in this. See, in long-past days, by the irony of Fate, Śambhu severed my head; His generative organ, too, dropped down through curse. Similarly Hari’s head has, to-day, fallen into the salt ocean. By the influence of time, Indra, the Lord of Sachi, had thousand genital marks over his body, was expelled from Heaven and had to live in the Mânas sarovar in the lotuses and had to suffer many other miseries.

47-50. O Glorious ones! When such personages have suffered pains, then who else is there in the world, that does not suffer! so you all cease sorrows and meditate on the Eternal Mahâmâyâ; who is the Mother of all, who is supporter of all, who is of the nature of Brahmâvidyâ (the Supreme Knowledge) and who is beyond the Gunas, who is the Prime Prâkriti, and who pervades the three Lokas, the whole universe, moving and unmoving; She will dispense our welfare. Sûta said :– Thus saying to the Devas, Brahmâ ordered all the Vedas, that were incarnate there in their forms, for the successful issue of the Deva’s work.

51-54. Brahmâ said :– “O Vedas! Now go on and chant hymns to the Sacred Highest Devî Mahâmâyâ, who is Brahmâvidyâ, who brings all issues to their successful issues, who is hidden in all forms.” Hearing His words, the all-beautiful Vedas began to chant hymns to Mahâmâyâ who can be comprehended by Jân, and who pervades the world.

The Vedas said :– Obeisance to the Devî! to the Mahâmâyâ! to the Auspicious One! to the Creatrix of the Universe! We bow down to Thee, who is beyond the Gunas, the Ruler of all the Beings! O Mother! Thou givest to Śankara even His desires. Thou art the receptacle of all the things; Thou art the Prâna of all the living beings; Thou art Buddhi, Laksmî (wealth), Śobhâ, Kśhamâ (forgiveness), Śânti (peace), Sraddhâ (faith), Medhâ (intellect), Dhriti (fortitude), and Smriti (recollection).

55. Thou art the vindu (m) over the Prânava (om) and thou art of the nature of

semi-moon; Thou art Gâyatri, Thou art Vyârhiti; Thou art Jayâ, Vijayâ, Dhâtri (the supportress), Lajjâ (modesty), Kîrti (fame), Ichchâ (will) and Dayâ (mercy) in all beings.

56-57. O Mother! Thou art the merciful Mother of the three worlds; Thou art the adorable auspicious Vidyâ (knowledge) benefitting all the Lokas; Thou destroyest the Universe and Thou skilfully residest (hidden) in the Vîja mantras. Therefore we are praising Thee. O Mother! Brahmâ, Visnu, Maheśvara, Indra, Sûrya, Fire, Sarasvatî and other Regents of the Universe are all Thy creation; so none of them is superior to Thee. Thou art the Mother of all the things, moving and non-moving.

58-61. O Mother ! When Thou dost will to create this visible Universe, Thou createst first Brahmâ, Visnu and Maheśvara and makest them create, preserve and destroy this universe; but Thou remainest quite unattached to the world. Ever Thou remainest constant in Thy one form. No one in this Universe is able to know Thy nature; nor there is any body who can enumerate Thy names. How can he promise to jump across the illimitable ocean, who cannot jump across an ordinary well.

O Bhagavatî! No one amongst the Devas even knows particularly Thy endless power and glory. Thou art alone the Lady of the Universe and the Mother of the world.

62-68. The Vedas all bear testimony how thou alone hast created all this unreal and fleeting universe. O Devî! Thou without any effort and having no desires hast become the cause of this visible world, thyself remaining unchanged. This is a great wonder. We cannot conceive this combination of contrary varieties in one. O Mother! How can we understand thy power, unknown to all the Vedas even, when thou thyself dost not know thy nature! We are bewildered at this. O Mother! It is that thou dost know nothing about the falling off of the Visnu's head! Or knowingly thou wanted to examine Visnu's prowess. Is it that Hari incurred any heinous sin. How can that be! Where is sin to thy followers who serve Thee! O Mother! Why art Thou so much indifferent to the Devas! It is a great wonder that the head of Visnu is severed! Really, we are merged in great misfortunes. Thou art clever in removing the sorrows of Thy devotees. Why art Thou delaying in fixing again the head on Visnu's body.

O Devî! Is it that Thou taking offence on the gods hast cast that on Visnu! or was it that Visnu became proud and to curb that, Thou hast played thus! or is it that the Daityas, having suffered defeat from Visnu went and practised severe tapasya in some beautiful holy place, and have got some boons; and so Visnu's head has thus fallen off!

Or is it, O Bhagavatî! that Thou wert very eagerly interested to see Visnu's

headless body and therefore Thou hast seen thus! O Prime Force! Is it that Thou art angry on the daughter of the Sindhu (ocean); Laksmî Devî! Else, why hast Thou deprived Her of Her husband? Laksmî is born as a part of Thine; So Thou oughtest to forgive Her offence.

Therefore dost Thou gladden Her by giving back Her husband's life.

The principal Devas, engaged in Thy service, always make their Prânams (bow down) to Thee; O Devî! Beest Thou kind enough and make alive the Deva Visnu, the Lord of all and crossest us across this ocean of sorrows. O Mother! We cannot make out anything whatsoever where Hari's head has gone. We have no other protectress than Thee who canst give back His life? O Devî! Dost Thou give life to the whole world as the nectar gives life to all the Devas.

69-73. Sûta said :— Thus praised by the Vedas with their Angas, with Sâmagânas (the songs from the Sâma Veda), the Nirgunâ Maheśvari Devî Mahâmâyâ became pleased. Then the auspicious voice came to them from the Heavens, gladdening all, and pleasing to the ears though no form was seen: “O Suras! Do not care anything about it; you are immortal (what fear can you have?) Come to your senses. I am very much pleased by the praise sung by the Vedas. There is no doubt in this. Amongst men, whoever will read this My stotra with devotion, will get all what he desires. Whoever will hear this devotedly, during the three Sandhyas, will lie freed from troubles and become happy. When this stotra has been sung by the Vedas, it is equivalent to the Vedas.

74-75. Does anything take place in this world without any cause? Now hear why Hari's head was cut off. Once on a time, seeing the beautiful face of His dear wife Laksmî Devî, Hari laughed in presence of Her.

76-82. At this Laksmî Devî came to understand that “He has seen surely something ugly in my face and therefore He laughed; otherwise why my Husband would laugh at seeing me. But what reason can there be as to see ugliness in my face after so long a time. And why shall He laugh without seeing something ugly, without any cause. Or it may be, He has made some other beautiful woman as my co-wife”. Thus arguing variously in her mind, Mahâ Laksmî gradually got angry and Tamo guna slowly possessed Her. Then, by turn of Fate, in order that gods work might be completed, very fierce Tamas Sakti entered into Her body. She got very angry and slowly said :— “Let Thy head fall off”. Thus, owing to feminine nature and the destiny of Bhagvan, Laksmî cursed without any thought of good or bad, causing Her own suffering. By the Tâmasî Śakti possessing Her, she thought that a co-wife would be more painful than Her widowhood and thus She cursed Him.

83-86. Falsehood, vain boldness, craftiness, stupidity, impatience, over-greediness, impurity, and harshness are the natural qualities of women. Owing to that curse,

the head of Vasudeva has fallen into the salt ocean. Now I will fix the head on His body as before. O Sura Sattamas! There is another cause, also, regarding this affair. That will bring you great success. In ancient days a famous Daitya, named Hayagrîva practised severe tapasya on the bank of the Sarasvatî river.

87-92. Abandoning all sorts of enjoyments, with control over his senses and without any food, the Daitya did Japam of the (repeated) one syllabled Mâyâ-Vija-mantra and, meditating the form of the Utmost Sakti of Mine, adorned with all ornaments, practised very terrible austerities for one thousand years. I, too, went to the place of austerities in My Tâmasî form, meditated by the Daitya and appeared before him. There, seated on the lion's back, feeling compassion for his tapasya I spoke to him :- "O glorious One! O one of good vows! I have come to grant boon to Thee!" Hearing the words of the Devî, the Daitya instantly got up and falling down with devotion at Her feet, circumambulated Her. Looking at My form, his large eyes became cheerful with feelings of love and filled with tears; shedding tears, then, he began to chant hymns to Me.

93-95. Hayagrîva said :- "Obeisance to the Devî Mahâmaye! I bow down to Thee, the Creatrix, the Preserver, and the Destructrix of the universe! Skilled in shewing favour to Thy devotees! Giver of the devotee's desires! Obeisance to Thee! O Thou, the giver of liberation! O Thou! The auspicious one! I bow down to Thee. Thou art the cause of the five elements – earth, water, fire, air, and Akasa! Thou art the cause of form, taste, smell, sound and touch. O MaheŚvari! the five jânendriyas (organs of perception) eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin and the five organs of action Karmendriyas :- hands, feet, speech, arms, and the organ of generation are all created by Thee.

96-100. The Devî said :- "O child! I am very much satisfied with your wonderful tapasya and devotion. Now say what boon do you want. I will give you the boon that you desire". Hayagrîva said :- "O Mother! grant me that boon by which death will not come to me, and I be invincible by the Suras and Asuras, I may be a Yogi and immortal".

The Devî said :- "Death brings in birth and birth brings in death; this is inevitable." This order of things is extant in this world; never its violation takes place. O best of the Râksasas! Thus knowing death sure, think in your mind and ask another boon.

Hayagrîva said :- "O Mother of the universe! If it be that Thou art not willing at all to grant me immortality, then grant me this boon that my death may not occur from any other than from one who is horse-faced. Be merciful and grant me this boon that I desire."

101-105. O highly fortunate one! "Go home and govern your kingdom at your ease;

death won't occur to you from any other beings then from one who is horse-faced." Thus granting the boon, the Devî vanished. Becoming very glad on getting this boon, Hayagrîva went to his residence. Since then the wicked Daitya is troubling very much all the Devas and Munis. There is none in the three worlds to kill him. So let Visvakarmâ take a horse's head and fix it on the headless body of Visnu. Then Bhagavân Hayagrîva will slay the vicious wicked Asura, for the good of the Devas".

106-112. Sûta said :- Thus speaking to the Devas, Bhagavatî Śarvânî remained silent. The Devas became very glad and spoke this to Visvakarmâ :- "Kindly do this Deva work and fix Visnu's head. He will become Hayagrîva and kill the indomitable Dânava." Sûta said :- Hearing these words, Visvakarmâ quickly cut off with his axe, the head of a horse, brought it before the Devas and fixed it on the headless body of Visnu. By the grace of Mahâmâyâ, Bhagavân became horse-faced or Hayagrîva. Then, a few days after, Bhagavân Hayagrîva killed that proud Dânava, the Deva's enemy, by sheer force. Any man, hearing this excellent anecdote, becomes freed, certainly of all sorts of difficulties. Hearing or reading Mahâmâyâ's glorious deeds, pure and sin destroying, gives all sorts of wealth.

Thus ends the fifth chapter of the first Skandha on the description of the narrative of Hayagrîva in the Mahâ Purâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 6. ON THE PREPARATION FOR WAR BY MADHU KAITABHA

1-44. The Rîsis said :- "O Saumya! Just now you have spoken of the fight for five thousand years, in that great ocean, between Bhagavân Śauri and Madhu Kaitabha. How was it that the two greatly powerful Dânavas, invincible of the Devas came to be born there? And why did Bhagavân Hari kill them? O highly intelligent one! Kindly describe that greatly wonderful event. We all are extremely eager to hear it, and you are the great Pundit and speaker, present before us. It is our good luck that we have come across you here. As the contact with the illiterate is very painful, so the contact with the literate is very happy like nectar. The animals in this world live like illiterates; they eat, call for their nature, void

urines and faeces, and know wonderfully well the sexual intercourse. Only they want discriminative knowledge of right and wrong, of the real and unreal, and a knowledge of discrimination, leading to Moksa or final liberation; this is the only point of difference. Therefore the persons that have no liking to hear of Bhâgavata and books like it, are like beasts; there is no doubt in this. Behold! Deer and some other animals can enjoy well the sense of hearing like men; and the serpents, though wanting in the organ of hearing, become charmed quite like men, as if tasting the pleasure of hearing sweet sounds. Verily out of the five organs of perception the organ of hearing and the organ of sight are benefitting, for the knowledge of things arises from hearing and the heart is pleased by seeing. Therefore the Pundits divide in three classes, the objects of hearing, as :— (1) Sâttvik, (2) Râjasik and (3) Tâmasik. The Vedas and other Śâstras are Sâttvik; the literature Sahitya is the Râjasik and war news and finding fault with others is Tâmasik. The wise persons again sub-divide the Sâttvik in three sub-classes :— good, middling and worst. That which gives Moksa is good or excellent; that which gives Heavens is middling and that which gives this worldly pleasure is worst. In the same way, the literature Sahitya is of three kinds :— That which describes the people to live with their legitimate wives is the best; which describes about prostitutes is the middling; and that which makes people live with other's wives is the worst.

The seers of Śâstras, the learned men divide the subjects of the Tâmasik hearing into three classes :— That in which fight with the enemies is described is best; where the fight, as of the Pandavas, with the enemies out of hatred, ill-feeling, is described is middling; and that where fighting is described without any cause is worst. Therefore, O highly intelligent one! Hearing the Purânas is far superior to hearing other Śâstras, for thereby sins are destroyed, intellect is increased and Punyam (good merits) is stored. So, O intelligent one! Kindly describe to us, the Purânas, fulfilling all the requirements of life, that you heard before from the mouth of Krisna Dvaipâyana". Hearing these words of the Risis, Sûta said :— "O highly fortunate ones! When you all are desirous to hear the Purânas and I am ready to tell them, then both of us are blessed on the surface of the earth".

In days of yore, in the time of Pralaya (universal dissolution) when the three lokas and the entire universe dissolved in water, when the Devadeva Janârdana was lying asleep on the bed of Ananta, the thousand headed serpent, arose from the was of the ear of Bhagavân Visnu, the two very powerful Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha; they grew in the waters of the ocean and played around in the waters and thus passed some of their time. Once, on a time, when the two huge bodied Dânavas were playing with each other like two brothers, they thought that the general rule of the universe is that no effect takes place without a cause and nothing can rest without the receptacle thereof. But we cannot understand what is our receptacle or who is resting on us. Whereon rests this pleasant expanse of wide ocean? Who

was it that created this? How was this created? Why are we living here merged within the water? Who created us? and who are our father and mother. Nothing of a these we know. Thus thinking, when they could not come to any conclusion, Kaitabha spoke to Madhu, beside him, within the waters :– “O Brother! It seems to me the great immoveable force that makes us rest in this water is the cause of all. This whole mass of water, too, pervaded by that force, rests on that; that Highest Devî must be the Cause of us”.

When the two Asuras, merged in this thought, understood this, they heard in the air the beautiful Vâgvîja (the seed mantra of Vâk, the speech, the Devî Sarasvatî). They then began to pronounce repeated the Vâgvîja mantra and practised it with the great steadfastness. Next they saw, risen high up in the air, the auspicious lightning and thought that certainly our mantra that we are repeating has made Herself visible in this form of light and thus we have seen certainly in the air, the saguna form (form with attributes) of Sarasvatî, the goddess of Speech. Thus thinking in their minds they, without any food, with their minds controlled, constantly thought of that, with their whole mind collected on that, and repeating and meditating the mantra became one with that. Thus they passed one thousand years in practising that great tapas; when the Highest âdyâ Śakti became pleased with them and seeing the two Dânavas, steadfast in the practice of Tapas, tired, address them, invisibly in the way of celestial voice thus :– “O two Dânavas! I am exceedingly pleased with your tapasyâ; so ask boon whatever you desire; I will grant it.” Hearing, then, the celestial voice, thus the two Dânavas said :– “O Devî! O Suvrate! Grant us that we will die when we will.” Hearing this, Vagdevî said :– “O two Dânavas! Certain by My grace, you two will die when you will and you two brothers will be invincible of all the Suras and Asuras. There is no doubt in this”.

Sûta said :– When the Devî granted them this boon, the two Dânavas, puffed up with pride, began to play with the aquatic animals in the ocean. O Brâhmins! Some days thus passed away when the two powerful Dânavas saw the Brahmâ, the Prajâpati, seated on the lotus of navel of Hari. Doubt came on their minds and they told him with a view to fight :– “O Suvrata! Either fight with us, or leave off this lotus seat and go any where you like. If you be so weak, this auspicious lotus seat not fit for you. For this should be enjoyed by the heroes. So if you be a coward, leave it quickly”. Hearing these words of the Dânavas, Prajâpati, engaged in the practice of Tapasyâ, saw the two great powerful heroes and began to think anxiously “What should be done now” and waited there.

Thus ends the sixth chapter of the first Skandha on the preparation for war by Madhu Kaitabha in the Mahâpurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 7. ON THE PRAISE OF THE DEVÎ

1-26. Sûta said :— Seeing the two Dânavas very powerful, Brahmâ, the knower of all the Śâstras, thought of the means Sâma, Dâna, Bheda, Danda (conciliation, gifts, bribe, or sowing dissensions and war or punishment); which of these four he should apply. He thought thus :— “I do not know their strength and it is not advisable to enter into war without knowing their strength. Again if I offer praises to them puffed up with pride, it will be simply displaying my own weakness; and when they will come to know this, only one of them will be sufficient to kill me and this they will do certainly. To offer bribes is not also advisable; and how can I sow dissensions. Therefore it is best that I should rouse the four armed Janârdana Visnu, who is very powerful, from his sleep on the thousand headed Ananta serpent. He will remove my difficulties”.

Thus thinking in his mind, Bhagavân Brahmâ, the lotus-born remained in the tubular stalk of the lotus from Visnu’s navel and thence took refuge mentally of Visnu, the remover of difficulties and began to chant auspicious hymns composed of various metres to Jagannâth Nârâyana, involved in deep Yoganidrâ (meditative sleep). He said :— “O Refuge of the poor! O Hari! O Visnu! O Vâmana! O Mâdhava, Thou art the Lord of the universe and omnipresent. O Hrisikeśa! Thou removest all the difficulties of Thy devotees; therefore leave your Yoganidrâ and get up. O Vâsudeva! O Lord of the Universe! Thou residest within the hearts of all and knowest their desires.

O Thou, holder of the disc and club! Thou always destroyest the enemies of Thy devotees; O Omniscient One! Thou art the Lord of all the Lokas and all-powerful; no one can know what is Thy form; O Lord of the Devas! Thou art the destroyer of all pains and sufferings! So get up and protect me. O Protector of the Universe! nothing is concealed from Thy eyes! Every one becomes pure by hearing and chanting Thy name. Thou art Nirâkâra (without any form); yet Thou createst, preservest and destroyest the Universe. O Cause of the world! O Supporter of all! Thou art shining as king of kings over all and yet Thou dost not understand that the two Dânavas, puffed up with pride have become ready to kill me. If thou dost neglect me, seeing me very much distressed and under your protection then Thy name as Preserver will become quite useless. Thus praised, when Visnu did not get up, Brahmâ thought that ”Bhagavân Visnu is now surely under the influence of sleep of the Primal Force âdyâ Śakti and is not therefore getting up; what am I to do now, thus distressed! These two Dânavas, elated with pride are ready to kill me;

now what am I to do and where shall I go? I don't find any body who can protect me any where." Thus thinking, Brahmâ came to the conclusion and decided to chant hymns to Yoga Nidrâ Herself with one pointed heart. Discussing in his mind, He thought that that âdyâ Śakti (the Prime Force) which kept Bhagavân Visnu, senseless and motionless would alone be able to save him. As a dead man cannot hear any sound so Hari, merged in deep sleep, knows not anything. When I have praised Him so much and when He has not awakened, then it is certain that sleep is not under Hari, but Hari is under sleep, and he who is under another becomes his slave; so this Yoga Nidrâ is now exercising Her control over Hari. Again she, too, who brought Hari under control, that daughter of the Krsîra (milk) ocean is now under the control of Yoga Nidrâ; so it seems that that Bhagavatî Mahâmâyâ has brought the whole Universe under Her control.

Whether it be Myself, or Visnu or Śambhu, or Sâvitri or Ramâ or Umâ, all are under Her control; there is nothing to be doubted here? What to speak of other high souled persons! Now I will chant hymns to Yoga Nidrâ, under whose influence Bhagavân Hari even is lying, under deep sleep, inert like an ordinary man. When the eternal Vâsudeva Janârdana will be dispossessed by Her, He will no doubt fight with the Dânavas. Thus deciding, Bhagavân Brahmâ, seated on the tubular stalk of the lotus, began to chant hymns to Yoga Nidrâ, residing on the body of Visnu, thus :-

27-32. Brahmâ said :- "O Devî! I have come to understand on the authority of all the words of the Vedas, that Thou art the only One Cause of this Universal Brahmânda. The more so when Thou hast brought the best Purusa Visnu, endowed with discrimination above all beings, under the control of sleep, then the above remark is self-evident.

O Thou, the Player in the minds of all beings! O Mother! I am extremely ignorant of the knowledge of Thy nature; when Bhagavân Hari is sleeping inert by Thy power, then who is there amongst Kotis and Kotis of wise men, who can understand completely the Pastime, Leelâ, full of Mâyâ of Thine, who art beyond the Gunas. The Sâmkhya philosophers say (that the Purusa (the male aspect of Śakti)

is the pure, conscious being and that Thou art the Prakriti, without any consciousness, material inert, Creatrix of the universe; but, O Mother! art Thou really inert like that? Never like that; had it been like that, how is it that Thou hast made Bhagavân Hari, the receptacle of the world quite unconscious like this? O Bhavâni! Thou, being beyond the Gunas art displaying like a dramatic performance these various dramatic plays by the conjunction with the three Gunas. It is Thy three qualities, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas that the Munis meditate every day in the morning mid-day, and evening, the three Sandhyâs; but no one is aware of Thy ways of doings. O Devî! Thou art of the nature of the judgment and

understanding giving rise to knowledge of all the beings in the Universe; Thou art always the Śrī (wealth and prosperity) giving pleasures to the Devas. O Mother! Thou art reigning in all as Kîrti (fame), mati (intellect), Dhriti (fortitude). Kânti (beauty) Śraddhâ (faith) and Rati (enjoyment). O Mother! Now I am put to great difficulties and therefore I have got eye witness of Thy nature; no need of further reasoning and discussing about it.

27-50. I have now known that verily, verily Thou art the only Mother of all the worlds as Thou hast brought Hari under the influence of sleep. O Devî! Now when it is evident that all the worlds, etc., have come from Thee, then the Vedas have also come from Thee; what doubt is there? So the Vedas, too, do not know fully Thy nature; for the effect can never know its cause. So, it is very true that Thou art incomprehensible of the Vedas, O Mother! When I, Hari, Hara and the other Devas and my son Nârada and other Munis have not able to realise Thy nature fully, then who else can be so intelligent in this world that will realise all Thy nature? So Thy glory is beyond the speech of all beings. O Devî! If, in the place of sacrifice, the ritualists, the knowers of the Vedas, do not utter Thy name Svâhâ, then the Devas, participators of the offerings in Yaja, do not get their share, however hundreds of oblations be offered; so Thou art also the giver of sustenance allowances to the Devas. O Bhagavatî! In previous Kalpas, Thou hadst saved me terrified from the fear of the Dânavas. O Devî Varade! now, too, I am terrified at the sight of the terrible forms of Madhu and Kaitabha and take Thy refuge. O high-minded one! Now I thoroughly see that by Thee, by Thy power Yoganidrâ the whole body of Bhagavân Visnu is senseless; but how is it that Thou dost not realise my sufferings. So, either dost Thou leave possession of this âdi-Deva, or destroy Thyself these two Danavendras – lost do either of the two as Thou likest. O Devî! Those that do not know Thy extraordinary powers, those stupid ones meditate Hari, Hara, etc. But, O Mother! By Thy grace, I realise to-day, as eye-witness, that Visnu even is to-day lying unconscious in deep sleep, totally senseless of anything outside by Thy force. O Bhagavatî! Now, when Kamalâ, the daughter of Sindhu is unable to rouse Her husband Hari, by her effort, or rather Thou hast made Her, too, perforce, sleep unconsciously, it seems she is without any effort and does not know anything of what is going on outside. O Devî! Verily those are blessed who worship Thy lotus feet with their whole heart full of devotion and without any hope of getting rewards, abandoning the worship of other Devas and knowing Thee as the Creatrix of the whole world and the giver of all desires. Alas! now the intelligence, beauty, fame, and all good qualities have forsaken Hari and fled away to some unknown quarters. O Bhagavatî! Thou art really adorable in the three worlds for, by Thy power of Yoganidrâ, Hari has been kept in prison, as it were, in this way. O Mother! Thou art the Śakti of all this universe and endowed with all prowess and energy; all other things are Thy

creation. As a dramatic player, though one, plays in the theatre, assuming many forms, so Thou, too, being one, playest always in this charming theatre of world, created by Thy Gunas, in various forms.

O Mother! Thou, in the beginning of the Yugas, dost manifest first the Visnu form and givest him the pure Sattrik Sakti, free from any obscuration and thereby madest Him preserve the Universe; and now it is Thyself that hast kept Him thus unconscious; therefore, it is an undoubted fact that Thou art doing whatever Thou wilt, O Bhagavatî! I am now in danger; if it be Thy desire not to kill me, then dost break the silence, look on me and show Thy mercy. O Bhavâni! If it be not Thy desire to kill me, then why hast Thou created these two Dânavas, my death incarnate; or is it that Thou wantedest to put me to ridicule. I have come to know of Thy wonderful acts; Thou createst this whole Universe, and Thyself remaining aloof, playest always and in the time of Pralaya resolvest everything again into Thee. Therefore, O Bhavâni, what wonder is there, that Thou wouldst want to kill me in this way? But, O Mother! I won't feel any pain if Thou willingly killest me but this is to my great dishonour that being given power over these beings, I would then be made an object to be killed by the Daityas; this, indeed, is hard to me. So, O Thou Leelâmayî like a sportive girl! get up! O Devî! assumest the wonderful form Thyself and killest me or the two Daityas, as Thou wilt; or rouse Hari who will then kill the Daityas. All these are in Thy hands."

Sûta said :- Thus praised by Brahmâ, the Nidrâ Devî (the goddess of sleep), of the nature of Tamo Gunas, quitted the body of Bhagavân Hari and stood by him. When thus left completely by the Devî Yoga Nidrâ, of unequalled brilliance and splendour, for the destruction of Madhu Kaitabha, Visnu began to move his body and at this Brahmâ became very glad.

Thus ends the seventh chapter of the First Skandha on the praise of the Devî in the Mahâ Purânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses, by Maharsi Vedavyâs.

CHAPTER 8. ON DECIDING WHO IS TO BE WORSHIPPED

1-7. The Risis said :- "O highly fortunate one! A great doubt has arisen on your statement. This is ascertained by all the wise men as written in the Vedas,

Purânas and other Sâstras that Brahmâ, Visnu and Maheśvar, these three Devas are eternal. None is superior to them in this Brahmânda. Brahmâ creates all the beings, Visnu preserves and Maheśvar destroys all in due time. These are the causes of creation, preservation and destruction. The Trinity Brahmâ, Visnu and Maheśa are really one form, indeed, Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity.

Being endowed respectively with Sattva, Raja and Tamo Gunas they do their respective works. Amongst these, again, Purushottam âdideva Jagannâth Hari, the husband of Kamalâ is the best; for he is capable of doing all the actions; no other than the Visnu, of unrivalled prowess is so capable. How is it, then that Yogamâyâ has overpowered Hari with sleep and made him altogether senseless? O highly fortunate one! whither did, then, go that extraordinary self knowledge and power, etc., of Hari while alive? This is our greatest doubt; so kindly advise us that our this doubt be removed and our well-being be thus ensured.

8-30. What is that Śaktî? Which you mentioned to us before; as well by whom Visnu is conquered? Whence is She born? What is the power of that Śaktî and what is Her nature? O Suvrata! explain to us these fully.

How was it that Yogamâyâ overpowered with sleep the Highest Deity Bhagavân Visnu who is everlasting-intelligence bliss! who is the God of all, the Guru of the whole world, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, who is omni-present, an incarnate of purity and holiness and beyond Rajoguna; how was such a personage brought under the control of sleep? O Sûta! You are very intelligent and the pupil of Vyasa Deva; destroy our this doubt by the sword of wisdom.

Hearing this, Sûta said :—“O highly fortunate Munis! There is none in the three Lokas who can clear your this doubt; the mind-born sons of Brahmâ, Nârada, Kapila and other eternal sons get bewildered by these questions; what can I, then, say on this very difficult point! See, some persons call Bhagavân Visnu omnipresent, the preserver of all and the best of all the Devas; according to them all this universe moving and non-moving, is created by Visnu; they bow down before the Highest Nârâyan Hrisikeśa Janârdana Vâsudeva and worship Him, whereas others worship Mahâdeva Śankara, having Gauri for the other half of his body, endowed with all powers, residing in Kailâśa, surrounded by hosts of bhutas, that destroyed the Daksha’s sacrifice, who is mentioned in the Vedas as Śaśîśekhara (having moon on his forehead), with three eyes and five faces and holding trident in his hand and known as Vrisadhaja and Kaparddi. O highly intelligent ones! There are some other persons, that know the Vedas and worship the Sun everyday in the morning, mid-day and in the evening with various hymns.

In all the Vedas, it is stated that the worship of the sun is excellent and they have named the high-souled sun as Paramâtmâ (the Highest Deity). Whereas there are

other Vedavits (the knowers of the Vedas) who worship the Devas, Fire, Indra, and Varuna. But the Maharsis say, that as Gangâ Devi (the river Ganges), though one, is expressing Herself by many channels, so the one Visnu is expressing in all the Deva forms. Those who are big Pundits, declare perception, inference, and verbal testimony as the three modes of proofs. The Naiyâyik Pundits add to the above three, a fourth proof which they call upamâ, resemblance, similitude and some other intelligent Pundits add another fifth proof called Arthâpatti, an. inference from circumstances, presumption, implication. It is deduction of a matter from that which could not else be; it is assumption of a thing, not itself perceived but necessarily implied by another which is seen, heard or proved; whereas the authors of the Purânas add two other, called Sâksî and Aitijhya, thus advocating seven modes of proofs. Now the Vedânta Śâstra says that the supreme being (Param Brahmâ), the Prime cause of the Universe, cannot be comprehended by the above-mentioned seven proofs. Therefore, first of all, adopt the reason leading to sure belief, the Buddhi, according to the words of the Vedas and discriminate and discuss again and again and draw your inference about Brahmâ. And the intelligent person should adopt what is seen by perception as self-evident and what is inferred by the observance of good conduct. The wise persons say, and it is also stated in the Purânas, that the Prime Force is present in Brahmâ as the Creative Force; is present in Hari as the Preservative Force; is present in Hara as the Destructive Force; is present in Kurma (tortoise) and in Ananta (the thousand headed Snake) as the earth supporting Force; is present in fire as the Burning Force, is present in air as the moving Force, and so is present everywhere in various manifestations of forces.

31-51. In this whole Universe, whoever he may be, all are incapable of any action if he be deprived of his force; what more than this, if Śiva be deprived of Kula Kundalinî Śaktî, He becomes a lifeless corpse; O great ascetic Risis! She is present everywhere thus in every thing in this universe from the highest Brahmâ to the lowermost blade of grass, all moving and non-moving things. Verily everything becomes quite inert, if deprived of force; whether in conquering one's enemies, or in going from one place to another or in eating – one finds oneself quite incapable, if deprived of force. Thus the omnipresent Śaktî, the wise call by the name of Brahmâ. Those who are verily intelligent should always worship Her in various ways and determine thoroughly the reality of Her by every means. In Visnu there is the Sattviki Śaktî; then He can preserve; otherwise He is quite useless; so in Brahmâ there is Rajasi Śaktî and He creates; otherwise He is quite useless; in Śiva, there is Tamasi Śaktî and He destroys; else He is quite useless. Thus, arguing again and again in one's mind, everyone should come to know that the Highest âdya Śaktî by Her mere will creates and preserves this Universe and She it is who destroys again in time the whole Brahmânda, moving and non-moving; no

one is capable to do his respective work be he Brahmâ, Visnu, Maheśvar, Indra, Fire, Sun, Varuna or any other person whatsoever; verily all the Devas perform the respective actions by the use of this âdya Śaktî. That She alone is present in cause and effect and is doing every action, an be witnessed vividly. The intelligent ones call that Śaktî twofold; one is Sagunâ and the other is Nirgunâ. The people, attached to the senses and the objects, worship the Sagunâ aspect, and those who are not so attached worship the Nirguna aspect. That conscious Śaktî is the Lady of the fourfold aims of life, religion, wealth, desires, and liberation. When She is worshipped according to due rules, She awards all sorts of desires. The worldly persons, charmed by the Mâyâ of this world, do not know Her at all; some persons know a little and charm others; whereas some stupid and dull-deaded Pundits, impelled by Kali, start sects of heretics, Pâsandâs for the sustenance of their own bellies. O highly fortunate Munis! In no other Yugas were found acts as prevalent in this Kali Yuga, based on various different opinions and altogether beyond the pale of the Vedic injunctions. Behold again, if Brahmâ, Visnu and Maheśa be the supreme Deities, then why do these three Devas meditate on another One beyond speech, beyond mind and practise, for years, hard austerities; and why do they perform Yajas (sacrifices) for their success in creation, preservation, and destruction? They know, verily, the Highest Supreme Being, Brahmâni Devî Śaktî eternal, constant and therefore they meditate Her always in their minds. Therefore the wise man, knowing this firmly, should serve in every way the Highest Śaktî. O Munis! This is the settled conclusion of all the Sâstras. I have heard of this great hidden secret from Bhagavân Krisna Dvaipâyan. He heard it from Nârada, and Nârada heard it from his own father Brahmâ. Brahmâ heard this from Visnu. O Munis it is well that the wise even should not hear or think anything to the contrary from other sources; they should with their concentrated heart serve the Brahmâ Sanâtani Śaktî. It is clearly witnessed in this world that if there be any substance wherein this conscious Śaktî does not exist, that becomes inert, quite useless for any purpose. So know this fully that it is the Highest Divine Mother of the Universe that is playing here, residing in every being.

Thus ends the eighth chapter of the first Skandha on deciding who is to be worshipped in the Mahapurâna Sri Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Vedavyâsa.

CHAPTER 9. ON THE KILLING OF MADHU KAITABHA

1-49. Sûta said:—O Munis! When the excellent Tâmasi Śakti, the Goddess presiding over sleep came out from the eyes, mouth, nose, heart, etc., of the body of the World-Guru Visnu and rested in the celestial space, then the powerful Lord Visnu began to yawn and got up. He saw the Prajâpati Brahmâ, terrified and spoke to him in words, deep like rumbling in the clouds :— “O Bhagavân Padmayone! What makes you come here, and leave your tapasyâ? Why do you look so terrified and anxious?” Hearing this, Brahmâ said: “O Deva! The two very powerful and very terrible Daityas, Madhu Kaitabha sprung from the wax of Thy ears approached to kill me; terrified thus, I have come to Thee. So, O Lord of the Universe! O Vâsudeva! now I am quite out of senses and terrified; save me.” Visnu, then, said :— “Now go and rest in peace, without any fear; let those two stupids, whose life has been well nigh exhausted, come to me for battle; I will certainly kill them.”

Sûta said :— While Bhagavân Visnu, the Lord of all the Devas, was thus saying, those two very powerful Dânavas, elated with pride, came up there, in their search for Brahmâ. O Munis! The two proud Daityas stood there in the midst of the Pralaya water without anything to stand on and with calm attitude. They then spoke to Brahmâ as follows :— O You have fled and come here? You cannot escape. Go on and fight. I will kill You before this one.

Then I will kill him also who sleeps on this bed of serpent. Either give us battle or acknowledge yourself as our servant. Hearing their words, Janârdan Visnu addressed them as follows:— “O two Dânavas, mad for war! Come and fight with me as you like; I will surely curb your pride. O two powerful ones! If you trust me, come and fight”. Hearing this, the two Dânavas in the midst of that mass of water resting without any support, came up there to fight, with their eyes rolling with anger. The Daitya, named Madhu, became very angry, came up quickly to fight while Kaitabha remained where he stood. Then the hand-to-hand fight ensued between the two mad athletes; Bhagavân Hari and Madhu became tired; Kaitabha came up and began to fight. After that Madhu and Kaitabha joined and, blind with rage, began to fight again and again hand to hand with the very powerful Visnu. And Bhagavân Brahmâ and the Prime Force âdyâ Śakti witnessed this from the celestial Heavens. So the fight lasted for a long, long, time; yet the two Dânavas did not feel a bit tired: rather Bhagavân Visnu became tired. Thus five thousand years passed away; Hari then began to ponder over their mode of death. He thought :— “I fought for five thousands of years but the two formidable

Dānavas have not been tired anything, rather I am tired; it is a matter of great surprise. Where has gone my prowess? and what for the two Dānavas were not tired; What is the cause? This is a matter, now, seriously to be thought over". Seeing Bhagavân Hari thus sunk in cares, the two haughty Dānavas spoke to him with great glee and with a voice like that of the rumbling of cloud :— "O Visnu ! If you feel tired, if you have no sufficient strength to fight with us, then raise your folded palms on your head and acknowledge that you are our servant; or if you can, go on fighting. O intelligent one!

We will take away your life first; and then slay this four-faced Brahmâ". Hearing the words of the two Dānavas, resting there without any support in the vast ocean, the high-minded Visnu spoke to them in sweet consoling words :— "See, O heroes! no one ever fights with one who is tired, afraid, who is weaponless, who is fallen and who is a child; this is the Dharma of the heroes. Both of you fought with me for five thousands of years. But I am single handed; you are two, and both equally powerful and both of you took rest at intervals. I will therefore take rest for a while, and then fight with certainty. Both of you are very powerful and very much elated in vanity. Therefore rest a while. After taking rest for a while I will fight with you according to the just rules of warfare." Hearing these words of Hari, the two chief Dānavas trusted and remained far aloof, ready to fight again.

Now the four-armed Vāsudeva, seeing them at a sufficient distance, began to ponder in his mind thus :— "How their death can be effected? Thinking for a time, he came to know that they have been granted, by the Supreme Śakti Devî, death at their will (Ichchâmrityu); and therefore they are not getting tired. I fought so long with them uselessly; my labour went in vain. How then can I now fight, with this certain knowledge. Again if I do not fight, how these two Dānavas, elated with their boon and giving troubles to all, be destroyed? When the boon is granted by the Devî their death is also well nigh impracticable. Who wants his own death, even placed in very great distressed circumstances. Attacked by terrible diseases, reduced to indigent poverty no one wants to die; so how can it be expected that these two haughty Dānavas would want their death themselves? Therefore it is advisable me to take refuge of that âdyâ Śakti, the giver of the fruits of all desires. No desires can ever be fructified unless She is thoroughly pleased. Thus thinking, Bhagavân Visnu saw the beautiful Devî Yoga Nidra Śiva, shining in the air. Then the supreme Yogi, Bhagavân Visnu, of immeasurable spirit began to praise with folded palms that great Bhuvaneśvarî Mahâ Kâlî, the giver of boons for the destruction of the Dānavas. "O Devî! I bow down to Thee O Mahâmâyâ, the Creatrix and Destructrix! Thou beginningless and deathless! O auspicious Chandike! The Bestower of enjoyment and liberation I do not know Thy Saguna or Nirguna forms; how then can I know Thy glorious deeds, innumerable as they are. To-day Thy undescribable prowess has been experienced by me, I being made

senseless and unconscious by Thy power of sleep. Being tried again and again by Brahmâ with great care to bring me back to my consciousness, I could not become conscious, so much my senses were contracted down. O Mother! By Thy power, Thou didst keep me unconscious and Thou again hast freed me from sleep, and I also fought so many times. O giver of one's honour! Now I am tired; but Thou hast granted boon to the two Dânavas and therefore they are not getting tired. These two Dânavas, puffed up with pride, were ready to kill Brahmâ; and therefore I challenged them to fight with me and they too are fighting fiercely with me in this vast ocean. But Thou hast granted them the wonderful boon that they will die whenever they will; and therefore I have now come to Thy refuge, as Thou protectest those that come under Thy shelter. Therefore, O Mother, the remover of the Deva's troubles! These two Dânavas are become exceedingly elated by Thy boon and I, too, am tired. Therefore dost Thou help me now. See! those two sinners are ready to kill me; without Thy grace, what can I do now? and where to go?"

50-59. Thus praised by the eternal Vâsudeva Jagannâtha Hari, with humility and pranams, the Devî Mahâ Kâli, resting in the air, said smiling :— "O Deva deva Hari! Fight again; O Visnu! These two heroes, when deluded by My Mâyâ, would be slain by you; I will delude them certainly, by My side long glance; O Nârâyana! then slay quickly the two Dânavas, when conjured by My mâyâ".

Sûta said :— Hearing these loving words of Bhagavatî, Bhagavân Visnu went to the scene of battle in the middle of that ocean, when the two powerful Dânavas of serene tempers and eager to light, became very glad on seeing Visnu in the battle and said :— "O four-armed one! we see your desire is very lofty indeed; well stand! Stand! now be ready for battle, knowing that victory or defeat is surely dependent on Destiny. You should think now thus :— Though it is generally true that the more powerful one wins victory; but it also happens sometimes that the weak gets the victory by queer turn of Fate; so the high souled persons should not be glad at their victories, nor should express their sorrows at their defeat; so don't be glad, thinking, that you on many former occasions fought with many Dânavas who were your enemies, and got the victory; nor be sorry that now you are defeated by the two Dânavas". Thus saying, the powerful Madhu Kaitabha came up to fight. Seeing this, Bhagavân Visnu struck them immediately by fist with great violence; the two Dânavas, elated with their strength, struck Hari in return with their fists. Thus fighting went on vigorously.

60-87. Now seeing the two Dânavas of great powers, fighting on incessantly, Nârâyana Hari cast a glance expressive of great distress, towards the face of the Devî Mahâkâli. Seeing Visnu thus distressed, the Devî laughed loudly and began to look constantly with eyes somewhat reddish and shot towards the two Asuras

side-long glances, of love and amorous feelings which were like arrows from the Cupid. The two vicious Daityas became fascinated by the side-long glances of the Devî and took great pleasures in them; being extremely agitated by these amorous darts, looked with one steady gaze towards the Devî, of spotless lustre. Bhagavân Hari, too, saw the wonderful enchanting pastime of the Devî. Then Hari, perfectly expert in adopting means to secure ends, began to speak smiling and in voice like that of the rambling cloud, knowing the two Dânavas enchanted by Mahâmâyâ, thus :—

O two heroes! I am very glad at the mode of your fighting. So ask from me boons. I will grant that to you. I saw many Dânavas before, fighting; but never I saw them expert like you, nor I heard like this. I am therefore, very much satisfied by your such unrivalled powers. Therefore, O greatly powerful pair of Dânavas! I wish to grant both of you any boon that you want. Seeing the Devî Mahâmâyâ, the gladdener, of the Universe, the two Dânavas felt themselves amorous; and therefore they became proud on hearing Visnu's those words and told Visnu, with their lotus-like eyes wide open, thus :—

O Hari! what do you like to give us? We are not beggars; we do not want anything from you. O Lord of the Devas! Rather we will give you whatever you desire; we are donors; not receivers. So O Vâsudeva! Hrisi Kesa! We are glad to see your- wonderful fight; so ask from us any boon that you desire. Hearing their words, Bhagavân Janârdana said :— “ If you both are so much pleased with me, then I want this that both of you be killed by me.” Hearing these words of Visnu, Madhu Kaitabha became very much wondered and thinking “we are now cheated” remained for some time merged in sorrow. Then reflecting that there is water everywhere and solid earth nowhere, they said :—

“O Janârdana Hari! We know that you are truthful; therefore now we want this desired boon from you that you wanted to grant us before now grant us this desired boon of ours. O Madhusûdana! We will be slain by you; but kill us, O Mâdhava! on a solid earth, free from any water; and thus keep your word.

Śrî Bhagavân Hari laughed and remembering His Sudarsan disc said :— “O two highly fortunate ones! Verily, I will kill both of you on the vast solid spot without any trace of water. Thus saying, the Devadeva Hari expanded His own thighs and showed to those Dânavas the vast solid earth on the surface of water and said :—

“O two Dânavas! See, here is no water. Place your two heads here; thus I will keep my word and you would keep your word.” Hearing this, Madhu Kaitabha thought over in their minds and expanded their bodies to ten thousand Yojanas. Bhagavân Visnu Hari also extended his thighs to twice that amount. Seeing this, they were greatly, suprised and laid their heads on the thighs of Visnu. Visnu of

wonderful prowess, then cut off quickly with His Sudarsan disc the two very big heads over His thighs. Thus the two Dânavas Madhu Kaitabha passed away; and the marrow (meda) of them filled the ocean. O Munis! For this reason, this earth is named Medinî and the earth is unfit for eatable purpose.

Thus I have described to you all that you asked. The sum and substance is this that the wise persons should serve Mahâmâyâ with all thei hearts. The Supreme Śakti is worshipped by all the Devas. Verily verily, I say unto you that this is decided, in all the Vedas and other Śāstras that there is nothing higher than this âdyâ Śakti. Therefore this Supreme Śakti should be worshipped anyhow; either in Her Saguna form or in Her Nirguna state.

Thus ends the ninth Chapter of the first Skandha on the killing of Madhu Kaitabha in the Mahâpurana Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâs.

CHAPTER 10. ON ŚIVAS GRANTING BOONS

1-37. The Risis said :- “O Sûta! You told before, that Vyâsa Deva, unrivalled spirit, composed all the Purânas and taught them to his own Śuka Deva; but how did Vyâsadeva, who was incessantly engaged in tapasyâ, procreate Śuka? Describe to us in detail what you heard direct from Krisna Dvaipâyana Vyâsa”. Sûta said :- “O Risis! Hear how Śuka Deva, the best of the Munis and the foremost of the Yogis, was born of Vyâsa Deva, the Satyavati’s son.

On the very beautiful summit of Mount Meru, Vyâsa, the son of Satyavati, firmly determined, practised very severe austerities for the attainment of a son. Having heard from Nârada, he, the great ascetic, repeated the one syllabled mantra of Vâk and worshipped the Highest Mahâmâyâ with the object of getting a son. He asked, Let a son be born to me as pure and as spirited and powerful as fire, air, earth, and âkâśa. He thought over in his mind that the man possessed of Śakti is worshipped in this world and the man devoid of Śakti is censured here, and thus came to the conclusion that Śakti is therefore worshipped every where; and, therefore, worshipped Bhagavân Maheśvara coupled with the auspicious âdyâ Śakti and spent away one hundred years without any food. He began his tapasyâ

on that mountain summit which was ornamented with the garden of Karnikâr, where all the Devas play, and where live the Munis highly ascetic, the âdityas, Vasus, Rudras, Marut, the two Áśvîns, and the other mindful Risis, the knowers of Brahmâ and where the Kinnaras always resound the air with their songs of music, etc.; such a place Vyâsa Deva preferred for his tapasyâ.”

The whole universe was pervaded with the spirit of asceticism of the intelligent Parâsara’s son Vyâsa Deva; and the hairs of his head were clotted and looked tawny, of the colour of flames. Seeing the fire of his asceticism, Indra, the lord of Śachi became exceedingly terrified. Bhagavân Rudra, seeing Indra thus afraid, fatigued and morose, asked him :— “O Indra, why do you look so fear-stricken to-day? O Lord of the Devas! What is the cause of your grief? Never show your jealousy and anger to the ascetics; for the mindful ascetics always practise severe asceticism with a noble object and worship Me, knowing Me to be possessed of the all powerful Śakti; they never want ill of any body”. When Bhagavân Rudra said this, Indra asked him :— “What is his object?” At this Śankara said :— For the attainment of a son, Prasâra’s son is practising so severe austerities; now one-hundred years is being completed; I will go to him, and give him to-day the auspicious boon of a son. Thus speaking to Indra, Bhagavân Rudra, the Guru of the world, went to Vyâsa Deva and, with merciful eyes, said :— “O sinless Vâsavi’s son! Get up; I grant to you the boon, that you will get a son very fiery, luminous and spirited like the five elements fire, air, earth, water and âkâśa, the supreme Jânî, the store of all auspicious qualities, of great renown, beloved to all, ornamented with all Sattvik qualities, truthful and valorous.

Hearing these sweet words of Bhagavân Śûlapâni Maharsi Krisna Dvaipâyana bowed down to Him and went back to his own hermitage. Tired with the labour of penance for many years, he wanted to kindle fire by rubbing two fuels (Aranî) with each other. While doing this the high souled man suddenly began to think strongly in his mind about procreating a son. He thought :— “Will it be that my son will be born as this fire is produced by the friction of the two churning sticks? I have not got the wife, which the Pundits designate a “Putrârani”, the youthful wife endowed with beauty, born of a noble family, the chaste one I have not got with me. But the wife, though chaste and fit to beget a son, is undoubtedly a chain to both the legs so how can I get such a one for my wife? This is known to all that a chaste wife, though clever in doing all household duties, beautiful and giving happiness to one’s desires, is yet always a sort of bondage. What more than this, that the ever Bhagavân Maheśvara is always under the bondage of woman. How, then, knowing and hearing all these I can accept this difficult householder’s life? While he was thinking thus, the extraordinarily beautiful Apsarâ Ghritâchi fell to his sight close to him in the celestial air.

Though Vyâsa Deva was a Brahmâchâri (holding in control the secret power of generation) of a very high order, yet seeing suddenly the agile Apsarâ (a celestial nymph) coming close to him and looking askance at him, he became soon smitten with the arrows of cupid and feeling himself distressed, began to think what shall I do in this critical moment.

Unbearable amorous feelings now have come over me; now if I take this celestial nymph, knowing that Dharma is everywhere looking, and woman has come to take away my precious fire of spirit acquired by my tapasyâ, then I will be laughed at by the high souled ascetic Munis who will think that I have lost my senses altogether. Alas! Why I who have practised for one hundred years the most terrible ascetism, have become so powerless by the mere sight of this Apsarâ! The Pundits declare the household life as the source of getting son, one's hearts desire and the source of all happiness; so much so that it leads all the virtuous souls to the pleasures of Heaven, and ordains Moksa (liberation) to those who are Jânins; and if I get such unrivalled happiness from this householder's life, I can have this Deva Kanyâ (the celestial nymph) though blameable. But again that happiness will not occur to me through her; there is no doubt in this. So how can I take her. I heard from Nârada how, in ancient days, a king name Pururavâ fell under the clutches of Urvaśî and ultimately felt great pain, being defeated by her.

Thus ends the tenth chapter on Śiva's granting boon in the Mahapurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâs.

CHAPTER 11. ON THE BIRTH OF BUDHA

1-86. The Risis said :— “O Sûta! Who is that King Pururavâ? and who is the Deva girl Urvaśî? And how did that high-souled King Pururavâ come into trouble? O son of Lomaharsana! Kindly describe now all these to me. We are now desirous to hear sweet words from the lotus of your mouth. O Sûta! Your words are sweeter and more full of juice than nectar even; so we are not satiated by hearing them as gods are not satiated with the drink of nectar.”

Hearing this Sûta said :— O Munis! I am now telling you, as far as my intelligence goes, what I heard from the mouth of śrî Vyâsa. Now hear that beautiful divine

incident.

Once on a time the exceedingly beautiful dear wife of Brihaspati, named Târâ, full of youth and beauty, of the most beautiful limbs and intoxicated with pride went to the house of Chandra Deva (the Moon), the yajamân (Employer of priest Brihaspati at any sacrifice) of Brihaspati. Seeing Târâ of beautiful face like Moon, the Moon became very passionate; Târâ also fell amorous at the sight of Moon. Thus both of them became very much passionately attached to each other. Then they, the Moon and Târâ, being smitten by the arrows of Cupid and intoxicated with amorous passions began their sexual intercourse with reciprocal feelings of passionate love. Some days passed in this state. Brihaspati, then, being distressed with the pang of separation from his wife, sent his pupil to bring back Târâ; but Târâ was then submissive of Chandra and therefore refused to come. Brihaspati sent over and over again his pupil and when Chandra Deva returned the messenger, Brihaspati became very angry and went personally to Chandra's house and spoke angrily to the Moon who was puffed up with arrogance and somewhat smiling :— "O Moon! Why are you committing this vicious act, contrary to Dharma? Why are you keeping my beautiful wife in your house? I am your Guru; you are my client; O stupid! why are you enjoying your Guru's wife and keeping her in custody in your house? Do you not know that he who kills a Brâhman, who steals gold, who drinks, who goes to wife of one's Guru are Mahâpâtakis (great sinners) and those who keep company of these are the fifth Mahâpâtakis? Therefore if you had enjoyed my wife, you are exceedingly vicious, blameable and a Mahâpâtaki (great sinner); you are not fit to live amongst the Devas. O wicked one! Now I say that even now you better forsake Târâ, who is of a blue colour and whose look is askance; I won't go from here without having Târâ. And if you do not give back Târâ, then you are certainly with her and undoubtedly I will curse you. When Brihaspati said so, Chandra, the husband of Rohinî, spoke to his Guru Deva, who was very angry, sorry and afflicted at the separation from his beloved wife, thus :— In this world, the Brâhmins that know the Dharma śâstras, that are devoid of anger, are fit to be worshipped; and those that are not so, they are objects of disrespect and not to be worshipped by all for their anger. O sinless one! The beautiful one will surely go to your house; what harm is there to you, if she waits here for a few days?

She is staying here of her own accord to enjoy pleasures and will go back of her own will. One word more :— You gave out before this opinion of the Dharma śâstras that as a Brâhman though guilty of committing vicious deeds, becomes pure again by the practice of Karmas as enjoined in the Vedas, so a woman, too, though guilty of adultery, becomes pure again when she is again in the period of her menstruation. At these words of Chandra Deva, Brihaspati, the Guru of the Devas, became exceedingly sorry and anxious and went back immediately to his

own house, with a grievous heart, full of amorous feelings. After staying in his own house for some days Brihaspati, worn out with anxiety, came again quickly to the house of Chandra; but, no sooner he was to enter the gate, he was stopped by the door-keepers; he became very angry and stopped at the gate way. And when he saw that Chandra did not make his appearance, he became exceedingly angry and thought :– “Oh! What a wonder is this? this irreligious Chandra, being my disciple, has done this vicious act and took by violence the wife of his Guru, who is reckoned as the mother; and I will now teach him a good lesson.”

Standing on the entrance gate way Brihaspati began to speak aloud :– “O stupid, vicious, vilest of the Devas! Why do you now sleep in your inner room? Do return quickly my wife; else I will curse you at once. In case you do not bring me back my wife at once, I will now reduce you to ashes.” Hearing these foul words of Brihaspati, Chandra Deva the king of the Dvijas, quickly came out of the house and said smiling :– “O Brâhmin! Why are you spending your stock of words for nothing? That all-auspicious lady, of a blue colour and looking askance, is not fit for you; therefore take another comparatively uglier woman for your use. Exceedingly youthful and lovely woman like her is not fit for a beggar’s house. O stupid one! I see, you don’t know anything about the Kâma sâstra (the book that dwells on amorous passion); those wise men who are skilled in this sâstra assign for the women, their lovers equivalent to their beauty in matters of amorous dealings. So, O stupid man! go away wherever you like. I won’t give you back your wife. Do whatever lies in your power. I won’t return your wife. When you have become passionate, your curse won’t affect me in any way. This I say finally unto you :– “O Guru! I will not give you back your wife; do what you wish.” Thus spoken by Chandra, Brihaspati became very anxious and angry; he then went away quickly to the Indra’s house.

Seeing Guru Deva morose and sorry, the very liberal minded Indra Deva worshipped him duly with pâdya, arghya, and âchamaniya and asked :– “O highly fortunate one! Why do you look so anxious? O great Muni! Why are you grievous and sorry? You are my Guru; is it that you are insulted by any one in my kingdom; say freely. All the Regents of the several quarters (the Lokapâlas) and all the Deva armies are under your command. Brahmâ, Visnu, and Maheśvar and other Devas are ready to lend you every assistance, no doubt. So say what is the cause of your anxiety?” Hearing these words of Indra, Brihaspati said :– “Chandra has stolen my beautiful-eyed wife. I asked for her, again and again, but that wicked soul is not returning me my wife at all. O Lord of the Devas! What am I to do now? You are my help and guide. O śatakratu! You are the lord of the Devas; therefore I pray to you with a very grievous heart, help me in this matter.” Hearing this, Indra said :– “O knower of Dharma! Do not be sorry. O Suvrata! I am your servant. O highly intelligent one! Surely I will bring you back your wife. I will

send a messenger and even then if Chandra, mad with pride, do not return your wife, I will wage war with him and fight against him, with all our Deva armies.” Thus consoling Brihaspati, Indra sent a very clever man, who was a good speaker and wonderful in his capabilities, to Chandra. The clever and wise messenger went to the Chandra Loka (the region of the Moon) and spoke to Chandra, the husband of Rohinî, thus :— “O Mahâbhâga! Indra has sent me to you to communicate his message to you. So O intelligent one! I will tell you what he has ordered me; hear.” He said :— “O highly fortunate one! You know well Dharma and Nîti sâstra (the science of morals); the more so, because the virtuous Maharsi Atri is your father. Therefore, O Suvrata! You ought not to commit such blameable act. See, all beings should protect their own wives always without remaining idle to the best of their powers; therefore, no doubt, quarrels would ensue necessarily on that point. O Sudhânidhi! as far as this point of protecting one’s wife is concerned, your Guru Deva ought also to do his best. You ought to consider all persons like your own self.

O Sudhâkara! You have got twenty-eight exceedingly beautiful wives, who are the daughters of Daksa; why then do you desire to enjoy the wife of your Guru? The beautiful Apsarâs (celestial nymphs) Menakâ and others are always residing in the Heavens; you can enjoy them to your heart’s content; leave off the wife of your Guru. In case any powerful man commits an unworthy act out of egoism, the illiterate ones would follow them; so the Dharma will decline. Therefore, O highly lucky one! Do such as does not lead, for nothing, quarrels amongst the gods and leave your Guru’s wife, even beautiful.” Hearing these words from the messenger, the Moon (Chandra Deva) became somewhat angry and, making gestures, replied to the messenger, as if to Indra, thus :—

O mighty armed one! As you yourself are the lord of the Devas and the knower of Dharma, so your priest, too, has become like you; the head of both of you are the same. You will find many that can show their learning and give advice to others, but you will find always very rare such persons as will act themselves to their own advices when occasion arises and wants them to fulfil their own words. O Lord of the Devas! All the persons take the opinion of the sâstras framed by Brihaspati then why the quarrel would ensue with me and the Devas when I am enjoying, according to his dictates, a woman who is herself willing? See also, that the rule in this world is might is right; all things go to the powerful man who can take by force; nothing falls to the lot of the weak; moreover this woman is mine and that woman is of another, this false notion comes to those whose brains are weak. When Târâ, is so much attached to me and is not at all attached to Brihaspati, the above rule applicable to me all the more; how then can I quit the lady so much attached to me, according to the laws of Dharma and the morals? You can see also, that happiness reigns in that family where the wife is according to the will

of the husband; how, then, can the household happiness exist when the lady of the house is always dissatisfied? Therefore the household happiness of the Guru is impossible as Târâ is dissatisfied with Brihaspati since he enjoyed the wife of his younger brother Samvarta. Then the result comes to this, O thousand eyed one! How have you come to be thousand eyed! However that may be, you are the lord of the Devas; you can do whatever you like. O messenger! go and tell your lord of the Devas all that I have spoken; I will not return by any means that beautiful Târâ.

When Chandra spoke thus, the messenger went back to Indra and communicated to him all that Chandra Deva had spoken. Hearing this, Indra became angry and ordered all the Deva forces to be ready at once. Hearing this news of war, śukrâchârya, out of enmity to Brihaspati, went to

Chandra and spoke thus :- “O highly intelligent one! never return Târâ; in case if war ensues between you and Indra, I will help you by my Mantra-śakti.” On the other hand, Bhagavân śankara, hearing of the vicious act of Chandra’s, taking his Guru’s wife, and knowing that śukrâchârya was the enemy of Brihaspati, came to the assistance of the Devas. The great war, then, ensued between the Devas like the terrific war of Târakâsura; it continued for many years. Then the grandfather Brahma, seeing the great havoc in the lives of the Devas and Asuras, came there on his vâhan Hamsa, to secure peace and talked to Chandra :- “Quit the Guru’s wife; if not, I will call Visnu and destroy all of you party.” He also desisted the son of Bhrigu, śukrâchârya, saying :- “O highly intelligent one! why has this wicked idea possessed your mind? Is it due to the bad association?” Then śukrâchârya also told Chandra, the lord of the medicinal plants, not to wage war and said :- “Better quit you now the Guru’s wife. Your father Maharsi Atri has sent me to you for this purpose.” Chandra, then, hearing the strange words of śukrâchârya, returned to Brihaspati his wife Târâ, though she was not satisfied with him and became herself pregnant.

Brihaspati returned with joy to his house, accompanied by his wife; the Devas and Dânavas went away to their respective places. Brahmâ went to Brahmaloka and śankara went to Kailâśa.

Brihaspati began to pass his time happily with his beautiful wife; Some days went away when the wife of Brihaspati, Târâ, gave birth to an all-auspicious son, having all the qualities of Chandra, on an auspicious day and under the influence of an auspicious star; seeing this new-born child, Brihaspati gladly performed the natal ceremonies of the child. Hearing that a son is born to him, Chandra sent a messenger to Brihaspati saying that “That the child is not his; but it is born out of the semen of mine; why, then, have you performed the natal ceremonies out of your own will?” Hearing these words of Chandra’s messenger, Brihaspati

said :— “No, this child is mine, no doubt, as he resembles quite like me.” When Brihaspati said this, war again ensued. The Devas and Dânavas met each other again in battle field; and councils of war were held. Then, for the preservation of peace, Prajâpati Brahmâ went there; and before all desisted the Devas; and Dânavas, mad for war, and ready to fight against each other. Brahmâ, then, asked Târâ :— “O auspicious one! say truly whose child is this? O beautiful one! if you say truly, then this war resulting in the loss of so many lives, will cease.” The handsome Târâ, looking askance, lowered her head with shame and gently spoke to Brahmâ :— “This is the Chandra’s child” and went inside. Chandra Deva, then, became very glad and took the child, put down its name as Budha and carried it, to his own house. Bhagavân

Brahmâ, Indra and the other Devas went back to their respective places. All the spectators went also to their own places whence they came. O Munis! I have now described the birth of Budha, as the son of Chandra and in the womb of Brihaspati’s wife, as I heard it from the mouth of Vyâsa Deva, the son of Satyavatî.

Thus ends the eleventh chapter of the 1st Skandha on the birth of Budha in the Mahâpurâna śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâs.

CHAPTER 12. ON THE BIRTH OF PURURAVÂ

1-53. Sûta said :— O Mahârsis! The son of the above mentioned Budha is the greatly religious Pururavâ, of a very charitable disposition, and always ready to perform sacrificial acts; he was born of a kshattriya woman named Ilâ; and I will now describe how this Pururavâ was born of Ilâ and Budha, kindly listen.

In days of yore there was a king named Sudyumna, very truthful and highly capable in keeping his senses under control. Once on a time, wearing beautiful ear-rings, with extraordinary bow named âjagab and holding the arrow-case full of arrows on his back, he went out on hunt to a forest, riding on a horse, born of the country Sindhu, surrounded by a few of his ministers. Going about in the regions of forest, the king got for his shikâr, buck, hare, boar, rhinoceros, bison, buffalo, young elephant, Srimar deer, wild fowl and various other animals fit for sacrificial purposes; thus he went on deep into the interior of the forest. This divine forest was adorned

with rows of Mandâra trees and situated at the bottom of the mount Sumeru. Various trees and flowers were spreading the beauty of the forest all around; at places were Asoka creepers, Vakula, Sâl, Tâl, Tamâl, Champak, Panasa, mangoe, Nîp, Madhûka, pomegranate, cocoanut, Yûthikâ, plantain, kunda creeper, and various other trees and flowers; at some other places the bowers formed of Mâdhavi creepers enhanced the beauty and shed the lustre all around. There were tanks and reservoirs of water in the forest filled with swans, kârandavas, and other aquatic birds. The bamboo trees on their banks becoming filled with air were emitting sweet musical sounds; and at many places of that all blissgiving forest, there were bees humming sweetly and delighting the minds of people there. Now the Râjarsî Pradyumna became highly gladdened in his heart to see this interior of the forest, resonated with the cooing of the cuckoos and beautified by various lovely flowers; and no sooner he entered there than he was turned into a female and his horse, also, turned into a mare; the king, then, became seriously anxious. He began to think over and over again "What is this? How has this come to pass?" and became very ashamed and sorry and pondered over thus :—"What am I to do now? How can I in this woman condition go back to my house and how shall I govern my kingdom? Alas! Who has deceived me thus!" Hearing these astounding words of Sûta, the Risis said :—"O Sûta! You have mentioned that the king Sudyumna equal to god has been turned into a woman; this is very strange indeed! Therefore, O Suvrata! What is the reason of his being turned into a mare? Kindly describe fully what that beautiful king did in the forest?"

Sûta, said :— Once on a time, Sanaka and other Risis went to this forest to pay a visit to śankara, illuminating the ten quarters by their holy aura. But then Bhagavân śankara was in amorous dealings with śankarî. The beautiful Devî Ambikâ was then naked and sitting on the lap of śankara and therefore became very much ashamed at their sight; She got up hurriedly, and putting on her cloth, remained there shuddering, with great shame and sensitiveness. The Risis, also, seeing them engaged in amorous dealings, went away quickly to the hermitage of Nara Nârâyana.

Then Bhagavân śankara, seeing śankarî too much sensitive, said :—"Why are you so much bashful and shy? I am doing just now what will give you pleasure. O Beautiful one! Whoever male will enter from to-day and hereafter, within the precincts of this forest, will be instantly converted into a woman." O Munis! Though the forest gave all delights to all, yet, having this defect, all the persons that know of this curse, carefully avoid the forest. No sooner did the King Sudyumna enter into the forest, out of ignorance, than he, as well as his attendants, were instantly turned into women; there could be no doubt in this. The king became overpowered with great care and anxiety and did not go back, out of shame, to his palace; but he began to wander to and fro on the outer skirts of that forest. He became known

afterwards as the woman Ilâ. Now, once on an occasion, Budh, while he was wandering at his will, came up there and seeing the beautiful Ilâ with gestures and pastures and surrounded by women, became passionately attached towards her; and Ilâ, too, seeing the beautiful Budh, the son of Chandra deva, became desirous to have him as her husband. They became so very much tied in love towards each other, that intercourse took place there. Thus Bhagavân Budh generated, in the womb of Ilâ, Pururavâ; and Ilâ gave birth, in due time, the son Pururavâ in that forest. She then, with an anxious heart, recollected, while in the forest, her (rather his), family priest Vasistha Deva. Now then Vasistha Deva, seeing the distressed condition of the king Sudyumna became affected with pity and pleased Mahâdeva, Śankara, the most auspicious Deva of all, by hymns and praises. When Bhagavân Śankara wanted to grant him the boon that he desired, Vasistha Deva wanted that the king would be turned again into man as before. At this Bhagavân Śankara said, in recognition of His promise, that the king Sudyumna would be alternately one month a man and the second month a woman and so on. Thus, by the favour of Vasistha Deva, the king Sudyumna got this boon and returned to his kingdom and began to govern it. When he used to be turned into a woman, he used to remain in the interior, and when he used to become a man, he governed his kingdom. At this the subjects became very anxious and did not welcome the king as they used to do before. Some days passed away in this way when the prince Pururavâ grew up into manhood. Then the king Sudyumna gave over to him the kingdom and made him the king of the new capital named Pratisthân; and started out to an hermitage to perform tapasyâ. He went to a beautiful forest, variegated with all sorts of trees, and got from the Devarsi Nârada the excellent mantra of the Bhagavatî Devî, consisting of nine letters. He began to repeat it incessantly, with an heart filled with love. Thus some days passed away when the all-auspicious Devî Bhagavatî, the Saviour of the whole Universe, became pleased with the king and appeared before the king, assuming the divine beautiful form, composed of attributes, intoxicated with the drink, and with eyes rolling with pride, and riding on vâhana, the lion. Seeing this divine form of the Mother of the Universe, the king Ilâ (in this form) bowed down before Her with eyes filled with love and gladly praised Her with hymns thus :— “O Bhagavatî! What a fortunate being I am! That I have seen today the extraordinary world renowned benignant form of Thine granting grace and benefit to all the Lokas, I, therefore, bow down to Thy lotus-feet, granting desires and liberation, and served by the whole host of the Devas. O Mother! What mortal is there on this earth, who can fully comprehend Thy glories when all the Devas and Munis get bewildered in trying to know of them.

O Devî! I am thoroughly astonished to see Thy glories and Thy compassion towards the distressed and poor and helpless people. How can a human being, who is

devoid of attributes comprehend Thy attributes when Brahmâ, Visnu, Maheśvara, Indra, Chandra (moon), Pavana (wind), Sûrya, Kuvera, and the eight Vasus know not Thy powers. O Mother! Bhagavân Visnu, of unrivalled brilliancy, knows Thee as a part of Thine only, as Kamalâ of Sattva Gunas and giving one all one's desires; Bhagavân Brahmâ knows Thy part only as the form made of Rajo guna and

Bhagavân Śankara knows Thee as Umâ only made of Tamo Guna; but, O Mother! none of them knows Thy tūrīya form, transcending all the Gunas.

O Mother! where is my humble self, that is of very dull intellect and powerless, and where is Thy extremely propitious serenity and graciousness! Indeed such a gracious favour on me is certainly beyond expectation. Therefore, O Bhavâni! I have come to realise, in particular, that Thy heart is full of unbounded mercy; for Thou dost certainly feel compassion for these Bhaktas that are full of Bhakti towards Thee. O Mother! what more shall I say than this, that Bhagavân Madhusûdan Visnu, though married to Kamalâ, born from only a part of Thine, considers Himself unfit of Her and is therefore not happy; then the fact that He, the âdi Purusa gets his feet shampooed by Kamalâ merely corroborates the fact that He wants His feet to become pure and all auspicious to the world by the holy touch of Kamalâ's hands. O Mother! It seems to me that the ancient Purusa Bhagavân Visnu wants gladly to be kicked by Thee like Aśoka tree, for his own improvement and pleasure; and therefore it is that Thou dost want, as if Thou hast become angry to kick (beat with one's legs) Thy husband, stricken by Smara (cupid, love) and worshipped by all the Devas, who lies prostrate below Thy feet.

O Devî; when Thou always residest on the calm broad chest, as if on a great cot, adorned beautifully of Bhagavân Visnu, as lightning in deep dense blue clouds, then it is without doubt that He, becoming the Lord of the Universe, has surely become Thy vâhan (vehicle) (on account of carrying Thee on His breast), O Mother! If Thou forsakest Madhusûdana, out of wrath, He becomes at once powerless and is not worshipped by any body; for it is seen everywhere that persons, though calm and serene, if devoid of Śrî (wealth and power) are forsaken by their relatives as reduced to a state having no qualities. O Mother! I am not to be ignored by Thee, on account of my being a woman, for was it not the fact, that Brahmâ and the other Devas who always take shelter of Thy lotus feet, had not all to assume once youthful feminine forms, while in Manidvîpa, and I know this surely that Thou again didst make them of male forms. Therefore, O Thou of unbounded power! What shall I describe about Thy power? Indeed, there is great doubt in my mind whether Thou art masculine or feminine? O Devî! Whoever Thou mayst be, whether with attributes on transcending the attributes, whether male or female, I always bow down to Thee, with heart full of devotion towards Thee. O Mother! I want that I may have one unflinching devotion, towards Thee in my final state."

Sûta said :— Thus praising the Devî, the king Sudyumna, in the form of the feminine Ilâ, took refuge of the World Mother; and the Devî, becoming greatly pleased, gave to the king, then and there, union with Her own

Self. Thus the king got the highest steady place, so very rare even to the Munis, by the grace of the Prime Force, the Devî Brahmâmayî.

Thus ends the Twelfth Chapter of the first Skandha on the birth of Pururavâ, in the Mahâpurânam śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâs.

CHAPTER 13. ON URVAŚÎ AND PURURAVÂ

1-34. Sûta said :— O Maharsis! When the king Sudyumna had gone up to heavens, the religious king Pururavâ, endowed with great beauty and many qualities, and able to please the minds of his subjects began to govern his kingdom well, according to Dharma, with his heart intent on governing his people. No body knew what his counsel was, but he was very clever in knowing others' counsels. He was always highly energetic and his lordly power was great. The four methods of warfare, (1) con-ciliation, (2) giving gifts, (3) sowing dissensions and (4) war, were fully under his control. He saw that his subjects practised religion according to Varnâśram (Colours and stages of life), and thus he began to govern his kingdom. Pururavâ, the lord of men, performed various sacrifices with abundance of Dakṣinâs (sacrificial fees) and also gave away much in various charities, causing great wonder and astonishment. His extra-ordinary beauty and qualities, liberality and good nature, his unbounded wealth and prowess made the Apsarâ UrvaŚî (celestial nymph) think of him often and she wanted him to satisfy her. Some time passed when that procud UrvaŚî had to descend on this earth, due to a curse pronounced on her by a Brâhmin; and she chose the king Pururavâ as her husband, thinking him to be endowed with all the qualities. She then addressed the king and made the following contract :— “O king, giving honour due to every body! I keep these two young sheep in trust and deposit with you; kindly look after these and, then, my honour will be preserved by you. O king! I will take ghee daily and nothing else for my food; and there is one word more; O king! Let me not see you naked, except when you hold sexual intercourse. O king I say this truly,

that, in case there be any breach in this contract I will instantly leave you and go away.” The king accepted this contract of UrvaŚî. UrvaŚî, too, remained there according to the above contract and also with a view to pass away the period of her curse. During this time the king was fascinated with the love of UrvaŚî and became so very much attached to her, that he left all his duties and dharma and remained long for many, many years in enjoying UrvaŚî. The king’s mind was so deeply absorbed in her, that he could not remain alone without her, even for a moment. Thus many years passed away, when, once on a time, Indra, the lord of the Devas, not seeing UrvaŚî, asked the Gandarbhas and said :– “O Gandarbhas! Better go and steal away the two young sheep in a proper time from the palace of Pururavâ, and then bring UrvaŚî here. My Nandana garden is now void of all beauty without UrvaŚî; so bring the lady here any how or other.” Thus spoken by Indra, Viśvâvasu and other Devas went to Pururavâ’s palace; and when it was dark in the night, and when Pururavâ was holding sexual intercourse with UrvaŚî, stole away the two young sheep. They, when being carried away in the sky, cried out so piteously that UrvaŚî came to hear that as if of her two sons, and angrily spoke to the king :– “O king! Now the contract that I made with you is verily fulfilled! It is that I placed my implicit confidence on you that this my misfortune has befallen on me; See! the thieves are stealing away the two sheep, my sons as they were! How then are you sleeping here like a woman? Alas! I am ruined in having an impotent husband who vainly boasts of his prowess!

Where are my two young sheep to-day that are dearer to me than my life?” Thus seeing UrvaŚî wailing, the king Pururavâ, the lord of the Universe, ran after the Gandharvas instantly without any sense as it were, left in him, naked. The Gandharvas, then, cast rays of lightning in that room, and UrvaŚî, willing to leave, saw the king naked when the Gandharvas left the two young sheep there and went away. The tired king brought the two sheep back to his house in that naked state. Then UrvaŚî, too, seeing the husband naked, went away immediately to the Devî loka. Seeing UrvaŚî going away, the king wailed very much with a very grievous heart. Then, being very much bewildered by the bereavement of UrvaŚî, with his senses beyond control, and deluded by passion, wandered about in various countries, crying and giving vent to sorrow. Thus, wandering all over the globe, he came once to Kuruksettra and saw UrvaŚî; then with a gladdened face said :– “O beloved! Wait, wait for a moment; my mind is all absorbed in you; it is quite innocent and submissive to you. So you ought not to forsake me in such a dire difficult time. O Devî! For the sake of you, I have travelled very far. O Beautiful one! The body that you embraced before, will now, forsaken by you, fall here and will be devoured by crows and wolves, and other carnivorous animals.” Seeing the king, tired and passion stricken, greatly distressed and with a very sorrowful heart and wailing, UrvaŚî spoke out :– “O king! You are certainly a quite senseless man;

whither has gone your extraordinary knowledge now? O king! Do you not know that the pure unalloyed love of women cannot take place with any other as the love of a wolf cannot fall on any man. Therefore the earthly men ought never to trust a bit to women and thieves. So go back to your palace and enjoy the pleasures of the kingdom; do not drown your mind further in sorrows.” The king Pururavâ, though thus brought to senses by UrvaŚî, was so much fascinated by her love that his heart did not feel any consolation; rather he felt indescribable pain, being held up in bondage by the love of UrvaŚî. O Munis! Thus I have described to you the character of UrvaŚî; it is described, in detail, in the Vedas; I have stated this in brief.

Thus ends the thirteenth chapter of the 1st Skandha of the characters UrvaŚî and Pururavâ; in the Mahâpurânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 14. ON THE BIRTH OF ŚŪKA DEVA AND ON THE DUTIES OF HOUSEHOLDERS

1-70. Sûta said :— O Maharsis! (Now hear the main topic). Seeing the dark-blue lady looking askance at him, Vyâsa Deva thought :— “Indeed! What is to be done now? This Devakanyâ Apsarâ Ghritâchî is not fit for my household.” Then, seeing Vyâsa Deva thus thoughtful, the Apsarâ thought that the Muni might curse her and got terrified. Confounded by terror, she assumed the form of a ŚŪka bird and fled away; Vyâsa, too, became greatly surprised to see her in the form of a bird. The moment Vyâsa saw the extraordinary beautiful form of Ghritâchî, the Cupid entered then, into his body, and his mind was filled with the thought of sweet feminine form and was gladdened and all his body was thrilled with pleasure so that the hairs of the body stood on their ends. The Muni Vyâsa Deva tried his best and exerted his power of patience to its utmost, but failed to control his restless mind to enjoy the woman. Though he was very energetic, and he tried repeatedly to control his heart, enchanted with the beautiful form of Ghritâchî, yet he could not, as due to a state of things pre-ordained by God, control his mind. At this state, when he was rubbing the fire sticks to get the sacred fire, the two pieces of wood used in kindling the fire, his seed (semen) fell upon the Aranî (the two

pieces of wood used in kindling the sacred fire). But he did not take any notice of that, and he went on rubbing the firesticks when arose from that Aranî the wonderfully beautiful form of ŚŪka deva, looking like a second Vyâsa. This boy, born of Aranî fuel, looked there brilliant like the blazing fire of the sacrificial place, whereon oblations of ghee are poured. Seeing that son, Vyâsa Deva was struck with great wonder and thought thus :— “What is this? How is it that my son is born without any woman.” Thinking for a while, he came to the conclusion, that this had certainly come to pass as the result of boon granted to him by śiva. No sooner the fiery ŚŪka Deva, was born of Aranî, he looked brilliant, like fire, by his own tejas (spirit). At that time Vyâsa Deva began to look with one steady gaze the blissful form of his son as a second Gârhapatya Fire, brilliant with the Divine fire. O hermits! The river Ganges came there from the Himalayas and washed all the inner nerves of the child ŚŪka Deva, by her holy waters and showers of flowers were poured on his head.

Vyâsa Deva next performed all the natal ceremonies of the high-souled child; the celestial drums were sounded and the celestial nymphs began to dance and the lords of the Gandharvas Visvâvasu, Nârada, Tumburu and others began to sing with great joy for the sight of the son. All the Devas and Vidyâ Dharas began to chant hymns with gladdened hearts at the sight of the Divine form, the son of Vyâsa, born of aranî. O twice born ones! Then were dropped down from the sky the divine rod (Danda), Kamandalu, and the antelope skin. No sooner the extraordinarily brilliant ŚŪka Deva was born than he grew up, and Vyâsadeva, who is master of endless learning and how to impart them to others, performed the son’s Upanayana ceremony. No sooner the child was born than all the Vedas with all their secrets and epitomes began to flash in the mind of ŚŪka Deva, as it reigned in Vyâsa Deva. O Munis! Bhagavân Vyâsa Deva gave the name of the child as ŚŪka as during the moment of his birth he saw the form of Ghritâchî in the form of the ŚŪka bird. ŚŪka then accepted Brihaspati as his guru and began devotedly, with his whole head and heart to perform duly the Brahmacharya vow (the life of studentship and celibacy). The Muni ŚŪka remained in the house of his Guru and studied the four Vedas with their secrets and epitomes and all the other Dharma śâstras and gave Dakṣinâ to the Guru duly according to proper rules, and returned home to his father Krisna Dvaipâyan. Seeing his son ŚŪka, Vyâsadeva got up and received him with great love and honour and embraced him and took the smell of his head. The holy Vyâsa asked about his welfare and about his studies and requested him to stay in that auspicious âśrama. Vyâsa then thought of ŚŪka’s marriage and he became anxious and began to enquire where a beautiful girl of a Muni can be found. And he spoke to his son :— “O highly intelligent one! You have now studied all the Vedas and Dharma śâstras. Therefore, O sinless one! better marry now. O son! Take a beautiful wife, and leading a householder’s life,

worship the Devas and Pitris, and free me from debt. There is no other way of issueless persons; he can never go to heaven; so O highly fortunate son of mine! Now enter into the life of a householder and make me happy. O highly intelligent one! I have big expectations from you; now try to fulfill them. O greatly wise Śûka! After a very severe asceticism, I have got you who are verily a Deva born without any womb. I am, therefore, your father; save me.” When Vyâsa spoke thus to Śûka, making him sit close by, the highly dispassionate Śûka at once made out that his father was terribly attached to the world and replied :— “O knower of Dharma! you have, by the power of your great intelligence, divided Veda into four parts; why are you therefore advising me so now? I am your disciple; so give me true advice. Certainly I will obey your order.” At this Vyâsa deva said :— “O son! I have got you after I had performed very severe tapasyâ, for one hundred years, and worshipped Bhagavân śankara in the sole object of having you. O highly wise one! I will ask some king and will give you sufficient wealth for your family expenses. So that you, having attained this much desired youth, enjoy the householder’s life.” Hearing these words of the father, Śûka Deva said :— “O father! Kindly say this to me what pleasure is there in this earth that is not mixed with pain. The happiness, that is mixed with pain, is not called happiness by the wise. O highly fortunate one! when I will marry, I will become certainly submissive to that woman; see then how happiness can be possible to one who is dependent; especially to one, dependent on one’s wife. Rather freedom can be obtained one day when one is tied to an iron or wooden pillar; but never freedom will come to that man who is tied by his wife and children. As the body of man is full of urine and faeces, so is the body of the woman. The more so, when I am born of no womb, how can I find happiness there; not only in this birth, but in my previous birth, too, I had no desire to be born of any womb. How can I desire now to enjoy the pleasure of urine and faeces in the face of the bliss of self that has got no other bliss equal to it? The high-souled persons, that find pleasure in their selves, never go after the sensual pleasures of the objects of enjoyments? When I studied first, the Veda in detail, it struck me that the Vedas dealt with the śâstra of Karma mârگا (the way of action); and it is all full of Himsâ (injury to others). Then I took Brihaspati as my Guru to shew me the way to true wisdom; but soon I found that he, too, was attacked with the dreadful disease Avidyâ (ignorance) and plunged in the terrible ocean of world, full of Mâyâ. So it became quite clear to my mind, how could he save me? If the physician be diseased himself, how can he effect cures to other diseases? When I am desirous of liberation, how can I get it from a Guru who is himself deeply attached to the world; how can such a one treat my case to free me, from the disease of attachment to this world? It would be merely a farce. I bowed down to the Guru and now I am come to you to save me, frightened by this terrible serpent of Samsâra. Day and night the Jîvas

travel in this awful wheel of Samsâra, this constellation of Zodiac; they are moving like the Sun and never get any rest. O father! If we discuss about the truth of âtman, we will at once find that there is no trace of happiness in this Samsâra. As the worms enjoy pleasures in the midst of faeces, so the ignorant persons find pleasures in this Samsâra. Those who have studied the Vedas and other Śâstras and yet are attached to the world, are certainly deluded and blind like horses, pigs and dogs; no one is more stupid and ignorant than those persons. Getting this extremely rare human birth and studying the Vedanta and other Śâstras, if they be attached to this world, then who are the men that will attain freedom? What more wonder can you find in this world than the fact that persons, attached to wives, sons and houses; are denominated as Pundits? That man who is not bound by this Samsâra, composed of the three Gunas of Mâyâ, is Pundit; that man is intelligent and he has understood the real import of the Śâstras. What use can there be in studying the Śâstras, in vain, that teach how to bind men more firmly in this Samsâra, full of Mâyâ.

That Śâstra ought to be studied, which tells how a man would be liberated. The house is called "Griha" because it catches hold of a man firmly. So what happiness can you expect from the house which is like a prison? O father! I am therefore afraid. Those Pundits are certainly stupid and they are certainly deceived by the Creator, who having the birth even of men, become again imprisoned." Hearing these words of ŚŪka, Vyâsa spoke as follows :— "O Son! The house is never a prison, nor is it the cause of any bondage; the householder whose mind is unattached, can get Moksa, in spite of his being such. Truthful, holy, earning wealth by just means and performing, according to rules the rites and ceremonies, as stated in the Vedas and doing śrâddhas duly, a householder can certainly get Moksa. See a man who is a Brahmachâri, who is an ascetic, who is a Vânaprasthî or follows any other method or vow, all have got to worship the householder after mid-day. The religious householder, too; welcomes them all, with sweet words, and gives them food, with great love and respect, and thus does them an amount of good. For this reason the householder's stage is the most excellent of all; and I have not seen or heard of any other âśrama superior to it. For this reason Vâsistha and other âchâryas resorted to householder's life, in spite of their being endowed with great wisdom O highly fortunate one! If one performs duly the rites and ceremonies of the Vedas, there is nothing that is impracticable to him. Be it the birth in a good family, or the enjoyment of heavens say, or be it Moksa, whatever desires, it is fructified to success. Also there is no such rule that one will have to remain in one and in the same âśrama throughout his life. The Pundits who know Dharma say that pupils can go from one âśrama to another, Therefore, O child! accept Agni (the householder's fire) and try your best to do unremittingly your duties. O Son! Enter into a householder's life and appease the Devas, Pitris and

men; procreate sons and enjoy the pleasures of household life. When old age will come, quit the house and take up the Vânaprasthâshram (the third stage) and go to a forest and perform the excellent vows and then take up the dharma of the Sannyâsa (renunciation of everything).

O Fortunate one! He who does not take a wife, is certainly maddened by these indomitable five organs of action, five organs of senses and mind. Therefore, the makers of the Śâstras say, that to save one self from the pernicious influences of these vicious senses, one is to take wife during his youth time and then be engaged in performing tapasyâ during his old age. O fortunate one! In days of yore, the fiery Râjarsi Viśvâmitra practised very severe tapasyâ without any food for three thousand years, and thought he was very strong and shining like fire, he was fascinated by the charm of the celestial nymph Menakâ. And an auspicious daughter was born from the womb of Menakâ by Viśvâmitra. My father Parâśara, though a great ascetic, was struck with Cupid's arrows at the sight of the daughter of a fisherman, named Kâli and accepted her in the boat. What more than this, that Brahmâ seeing his own daughter Sandhyâ was struck by passion and ran after her, when Bhagavân Rudra Deva made him unconscious by his Humkâr sound and made Brahmâ desist from the attempt.

So, O fortunate one! Take my word pregnant of good issues and marry a lady, born of a good family, and follow the path presented in the Vedas.”

Thus ends the fourteenth Chapter of the 1st Skandha, on the birth of Śûka Deva and the duties of householders in the Mahâ Purâna śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Vedavyâs.

CHAPTER 15. ON THE DISPASSION OF ŚÛKA AND THE INSTRUCTIONS OF BHAGAVATÎ TO HARI

1-67. Hearing these words of Vyâsa Deva Śûka Deva said :— O Father! I do not like at all to take to a householder's life; as I see clearly that it fastens men, as a cord fastens animals, and is a source of incessant pain. O Father! Where can you expect happiness from a householder who is always loaded with anxiety how and whence to get wealth? Those, who have greed for wealth, oppress their poor

relatives, even; and extort money. Even one who is the lord of the three worlds, who is their Indra, he also is not so happy as a beggar, that has no desires. See, then, who else can be happy in this world? Whenever an ascetic is seen to practise severe asceticism, Indra, the lord of the Devas becomes anxious and sorry, and raises various obstacles in his way. See also that Brahmâ is not happy with his big samsâra (his creation which is his house). Bhagavân Visnu, though He has got His beautiful Kamalâ, the presiding Deity of all wealth and prosperity, is always suffering, since He is incessantly engaged in fighting with the Asuras; and though He is the husband of Laksmî and full of prosperity, He practises, almost, every now and then, terrible asceticism with great care and earnestness. So who else is there, who is possessed of constant happiness? I know also Bhagavân śankara, too, suffers incessant troubles and has to fight against the Daityâs. So, then, O Father: how can a poor householder be happy when the rich householder cannot sleep happily, with his constant care for wealth. O highly fortunate one! Knowing full well this truth of the world, why are you plunging me, your son, in this terrible Samsâra, full of pains and agonies.

O Father! What shall I say to you about the miseries of the world! There is pain in birth, pain in old age, pain in death, and pain in the life in the womb full of urines and faeces; but the pain, arising from desire and greed, is more terrible than all the pains mentioned above; and then, the pains experienced while asking for them are greater than the pangs of death. Alas! There is no other way for the Brahmâns to earn their livelihood than to accept gifts from others. Therefore the Brahmâns have to suffer daily death-like pangs in having to wait in expectation from others; can there be anything more regrettable than this? The Brahmânas, studying all the Vedas and Dharma śâstras and acquiring wisdom, have got at last to go to the rich and praise them (in expectation of some money) carefully. O Father! if one does not become a householder, then what care is there to feed one's own belly? If there be contentment in the mind, any how the belly can be filled with leaves, roots and fruits; but if there be wife, sons and grandsons and many dependent relatives, then to feed them all, much trouble and anxiety are experienced. So how can you expect, O Father! perfect happiness in the world? So teach me, O Father! the Śâstras on Yoga and eternal truth that will give perfect happiness; no advice in karma kânda (the series of actions) will bring me pleasure. Now advise me how the karmas can be exhausted; how the root of the three sorts of karmas, Sanchita, Prârabdha, and Vartamâna, giving torments of birth, death, etc., the Avidyâ, the great ignorance, can be destroyed? The fools do not understand how the women suck the blood out of persons like leeches, for they get themselves deluded by their gestures and postures! The lady of the house, whom the people call kântâ, the beautiful one, steal away the semen virile, the strength and energy in the way of giving them happiness as sexual intercourse, and their minds and wealth and

everything by their crooked love conversations; so see what greater thief can there be than a woman? In my opinion, those that are ignorant are certainly deluded by the Creator; they accept wife to destroy their own pleasure of happiness. They can never understand that the women can never be the source of pleasure; they are the source of all miseries. Hearing these words of Śûka, Vyâsa became merged in the deep sea of cares and anxieties, thinking what to do then. The incessant tears of pain flowed from his eyes; his whole body began to shiver and his mind became too much worried.

Seeing this distressed and sorrowful state of his father, śûkdeva, with eyes full of wonder, said :— Oh! What a power has Mâyâ got?

Oh! He, whose words are accepted by all, with great love and care as equivalent to the Vedas, who is the author of the Vedânta Darśana, and before whom nothing is veiled in ignorance, Oh! that greatest Pundit, the knower of all the Tattvas, is now deluded by Mâyâ? Oh! what is that Mâyâ who has been able to delude Vyâsa Deva, the son of Satyavati, so skilled in the knowledge of Brahmâ Vidyâ; I also do not know how, with what great care, one is to practise Sâdhanâ towards Her.

Alas! He who has composed eighteen Mahâ Purânas and the great Mahâ Bhârata, who has divided the Vedas in four parts, the same Veda Vyâs has today been deluded by the power of Mâyâ! What to speak of other persons! Oh! Mâyâ has deluded Brahmâ, Visnu, Maheśvara and others and the whole universe; then who is there in the three worlds that is not fascinated by Her influence! I therefore, take refuge unto the Internal Governess, the Devî Mahâ Mâyâ. Oh! what wonderful power She wields? By her own Mâyic power, She has kept God even under Her control, who is omniscient and the Controller of all. The Pundits, who know the Purânas say, that Vyâsa Deva is born of the part of Visnu; but, see the wonder, that he is today plunged in the sea of delusion like a merchant whose ship has been wrecked. Alas! How great is the wonderful power of Mâyâ! The all-knowing Vyâsa is today under the control of Mâyâ and is weeping like an ordinary man! So I have come to the firm conclusion that the wise Pundits are incapable to surpass the strength of Mâyâ. What a great error arises through the power of Mâyâ! See! indeed!! who is he and who am I? What for we have come here? There is no certainty, nothing whatsoever, about that. And, see, also, how he has got the nice idea of “father” on his body and the idea of “his son” in my body, that are composed of five elements.

This is now quite evident to me that, when the Brâhmin Maharsi Krisna Dvaipâyan is weeping under the influence of Mâyâ, She is the strongest of all; even those who are skilled in the great Mâyâ fall under Her prey.

Then ŚŪka Deva bowed down mentally to the Devī, Mahā Mâyā, who is the Creatrix of Brahmā and the other Devas and who is the Controller of them all; and then began to speak the following auspicious words pregnant with reason, to his father Vyāsa Deva, greatly distressed and plunged in the sea of sorrows :— “O Father! you are exceedingly fortunate, for you are the son of the high souled Parāśara and you yourself are the instructor of real truth, the tattva jñāna, to all persons; so, O Lord! why are you giving vent to sorrows, like an ordinary bewildered man? O Mahābhāga! why are you plunging yourself in this great error, though you are a high souled personage! See, it is quite true that now I am born as your son; but this I don’t know what relation existed between you and me in my previous birth? So, O highly intelligent one! Open your eyes of wisdom, and be patient; do not throw yourself, in vain, in the sea of sorrows. All this universe is like a net of delusion; knowing this, abandon all your grief; why are you feeling yourself so much weak and distressed, for your attachment towards your son? Hunger is satisfied by eating something, and thirst is satisfied by the drinking of water; hunger is not satisfied by seeing the son. So the organ of scent is satisfied by smelling sweet scents; and the organ of hearing is satisfied by hearing sweet music; and when thirst arises to enjoy women, that is satisfied only by sexual intercourse; but what satisfaction can a son give? So what shall I do to you by remaining as your son? The son, in fact, is not the cause of any satisfaction to one’s self. For this reason, in ancient days, the poor Brahmin Ajigarta gave his son to the king Harischandra, for necessary equivalent price in money, who wanted a man for his sacrifice where human beings are to be sacrificed as victims. In fact, those things that are urgently required as necessities give happiness; and all these articles can be obtained by wealth; so if you want to enjoy happiness, then earn money; of what use shall I be to you as your son? O Muni! you can see subtle things and you are greatly intelligent; so I pray to you, to look upon me as your son and open my eyes of wisdom, that I can be free for ever from this womb of birth. O Sinless one! To get a human birth in this land of Karma (in India) is very difficult; again to get a Brāhmin birth is extremely rare; so when I have got this so very rare birth, why shall I spend my time in vain? O Father! Though I have served many spiritual teachers, fraught with wisdom, for many years, yet the firm idea “I am, as it were, bound up in this net of Samsāra” the notion covered with dark darkness of ignorance, caused by desires, this net of Samsāra does not leave me.

When the son ŚŪka Deva of extraordinary power and intelligence spoke thus, Vyāsa saw that his son was strongly inclined to take to the four āśram, that of Sannyāsa and spoke thus :— O Son! If your mind has become so, then read Bhāgavat Purāna, composed by me, highly auspicious, voluminous, and the second Vedas.

In this you have the chapters on Creation (Sarga) and secondary creation (upa sarga), etc., the five characteristics as in other Purānas and it is sub-divided into

twelve Skandhas. Hearing of this Bhâgavata brings up to the mind that Brahmâ alone is real and all the universe is unreal and knowledge both intuitive and indirect springs up. For this very reason, the Bhâgavata treatise is considered as the ornament of the Purânas. Therefore, O highly intelligent one! you better study the Purâna. O Child! In days of yore, at the end of a Kalpa, Bhagavân Hari was lying, as a small child on a floating leaf of a banyan tree, and was thinking thus :— “Who is the Intelligent One that has created me a small child? What is His object? Of what stuff am I made of? and how am I created? whence can I know all this?” At this moment the Devî Bhagavatî Who is all chaitanya, seeing the high-souled Bhagavân Hari musing thus, spoke out in the form of a celestial voice in the following half-stanza:— “All this that is seen is I Myself; there is existent nothing other that is eternal.” Bhagavân Visnu, then, began to think deeply the above celestial voice :— “Who has uttered this word, pregnant of truth, to me? How shall I come to know the speaker, whether that is female, male or a hermaphrodite?” Pondering over this for a long time, when he could not come to a definite conclusion, he began to repeat (make japam) frequently that word of Bhagavatî with a whole heart. When Hari, lying on a banyan tree leaf, became very anxious to know what the above words implied, then the all-auspicious Devî Bhagavatî with a beautiful face, calm and quiet appearance, appeared before Bhagavân Visnu, of unrivalled splendour, in the form of Mahâ Laksmî, who is all of Sattva Guna, surrounded by Her Vibhûtis, Her manifestations of attendants, Her smiling companions of the same age, decked with ornaments, and wearing divine clothings, and holding each in their four divine hands, conch shell, disc, club, and lotus.

The lotus eyed Visnu was very much surprised to see that beautiful Devî, standing without anything to rest on that water; He saw that on four sides of the Devî, were staying Rati, Bhûti, Buddhi, Mati, Kîrti, Smriti, Dhriti, śraddhâ, Medhâ, Svadhâ, Svâhâ, Kshudhâ, Nidrâ, Dayâ, Gati, Tusti, Pusti, Ksamâ, Lajjâ, Jrimbhâ Tandrâ and other personified forces, each possessing a clear distinct form, and endowed with a clear distinct feeling. In the hands of them all were divine weapons; on their necks, necklaces and garlands of

Mandâra flowers; and all the limbs of their bodies were decorated with divine ornaments. Seeing in that one mass of ocean the Devî Laksmî and Her śaktis, Bhagavân Janârdan, the soul of all, became greatly astonished and thought within Himself thus :— “What is this? Is this Mâyâ that I am witnessing? Whence have appeared these women? and whence have I come here, lying on this banyan leaf? How has the banyan tree come to existence in this one mass of ocean? And who is it, that has placed me here in the form of a child? Is this my Mother? Or is this some Mâyâ that can create impossible things?

Why has She made Herself manifest before me now? Or is there some hidden motive that She has appeared thus? What ought I to do now? Or shall I go to some other place? or shall I continue remaining here in this form of the child, silent and with vigilance.

Thus ends the fifteenth chapter of the 1st Skandha on the dispassion of śūka and the instructions of Bhagavatî to Hari in the Mahâpurâna Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 16. ON ŚŪKAS DESIRING TO GO TO MITHILÂ TO SEE JANAKA

Vyâsa spoke :— Then the Devî Mahâ Laksmî, seeing the Deva Janârdana lying on a banyan leaf and surprised, spoke to him, smiling :— O Visnu! Why are you becoming so much astonished? Before this, since times immemorial (without any beginning) there had been many dissolutions (Pralayas); and many Sristis (creations); and at the beginning of every creation You came first into existence and every time I was united with You; but now You have forgotten me under the spell of that Mahâ śakti.

That Highest Mahâ śakti is transcendent of all the Gunas; but you and I are with Gunas. Know me as the Śakti, all of Sattva Guna who is widely known as Mahâ Laksmî. After this the Prajâpati Brahmâ, full of Rajo Gunas, the creator of all the Lokas, will come into existence from your navel lotus and will create the three worlds. Then he will perform severe tapasyâ and acquire the excellent power to create, and will create the three worlds by his Rajo Guna. That highly intelligent Prajâpati will create first, the five Mahâ bhûtas (great elements), all endowed with Gunas and then create mind with sensory organs and the presiding deities of the senses, and thus with all the ingredients, fit for creation, will create all the worlds. Therefore He is denominated by all as the Creator of Brahmânda. O highly fortunate one! You will be the Preserver of this Universe. When the Prajâpati Brahmâ will be angry at the beginning of the creation on his four mind-born sons, Rudra Deva will appear.

He will appear then from the centre of his eye brows. On being born this Rudra

Deva will practise very severe tapasyâ and will get the Samhâra Śakti, who is all of Tamo Guna and at the end of the Kalpa will destroy all this universe of five elements. O highly intelligent one! So I have come to you for this work of creation, etc. So take me to you as your Vaisnavî Śakti full of Sattva Guna. O Madhusûdana! I will take refuge at your breast and will remain always with you. Hearing all this, Bhagavân Visnu spoke :— “O beautiful Devî! The half stanza was ere long heard by me, in clear words; by whom was that spoken? Kindly speak to me on this great auspicious secret first. For a great doubt has come and possessed my mind. What more shall I say than this that as a poor man always thinks of wealth, so I am thinking of that again and again.” Hearing these words of Visnu, the Devî Mahâ Laksmî smilingly said, with great affection :— “O Strong and Energetic one! I am now speaking in detail on this; listen. O Four-armed one! It is because I have come to you with form and endowed with Gunas that you have come to know me; but you have not known that âdya Śakti, the Prime force, transcending all the Gunas, though She is the substratum of all the Gunas. O highly fortunate one! That Devî Bhâgavatî, transcendant of all the Gunas, uttered that all auspicious, highly sanctifying semistanza, the essence of all the Vedas. O destroyer of the enemies! I think that there is the highest grace of that Highest Śakti on you, that She spoke the greatest secret to you for your benefit. O one performing good vows! know those words uttered by Mahâvidyâ, as the essence of all the Śâstra. So firmly retain them within your heart; never forget them. There is no other thing, save that, worth being known in earnest. Because you are most beloved by the Devî! that She has spoken this to you.” Hearing the words of the Devî Mahâ Laksmî, the four-armed Bhagavân took that semi stanza as a Mantra to be repeated in right earnest within his mind and cherished that for ever within his heart. After some time, Brahmâ born of the lotus of the navel of Visnu, became afraid of the two Daityâs Madhu and Kaitabha, took refuge of Bhagavân Visnu; Visnu killed the two demons and began to do distinctly the japam of the semi-stanza. Brahmâ, born of the lotus, then asked Visnu with a gladdened heart :— “O Lord of the Devas! what japam are you doing? Lotus eyed! Is there any other body more powerful than you? O Lord of the Universe! whom do you think and thus feel yourself so happy?” Hearing Brahmâ, Bhagavân Hari said :— “O highly fortunate one! Think out yourself once of the Primordial Force, the auspicious Bhâgavatî âdya Śakti who is reigning everywhere as the cause and effect and you will be able to understand everything. My presiding Deity is that immeasurable eternal Mahâ Śakti

Brahmamyî; on whose Śakti, as a receptacle with form on this ocean rests the whole Universe; I am thinking of that, by which is created (often and often) this entire Universe, moving and non-moving. When the Devî Bhâgavatî, the giver of boons, become graciously pleased, the human beings become freed of this bondage

of Samsâra; and again that highest Eternal Wisdom, the cause of Mukti, becomes the source of bondage to this world, of those who are deluded by Her.

She is the îsvarî of the îśvaras of this universe. O Brahmâ! You, I and all other things of the entire Universe are born of the Chit Śakti (the power of consciousness) of Her and Her alone; there is no manner of doubt in this. The semi-stanza by which She has sown within me the seed of Bhâgavata will get expanded by the beginning of the Dvâpara Yuga. While Bhagavân Brahmâ was resting on the navel lotus of Visnu, He got the seed of Bhâgavata. Then He gave it to His own son Nârada, the best of the Munis. Nârada gave it to me and I have expanded that into twelve Skandhas. Therefore, O Mahâbhâga! You now study this Bhâgavata Purâna, equal to the Vedas and endowed with five characteristics. In this the wonderful glorious deeds and life of the Devî Bhâgavatî, the hidden meanings of the Vedas and the wisdom, the truth are all described; hence this is the best of all the Purânas and sanctifying like the Dharma Śâstra. It is the substratum of Brahmâ Vidyâ; therefore if men study this, they will easily cross this sea of world; and those that are stupid and deluded get pleasure in hearing the death of Vritrâsura and many other narrations that are interspersed in this book. Therefore, O Mahâbhâga! hear this sanctifying Bhâgavata Purânam and retain it firmly within your heart. O best of persons! You are the foremost of those that are intelligent; so you are worthy to read this Purâna. Eighteen thousand ślokas are in that Purâna and you better get them by heart; for if anybody reads or bears this Purâna, fit to be praised in every way, all-auspicious, capable to increase posterity by the addition of sons and grandsons, giving long life, happiness and peace, he sees the Sun of Wisdom, resting in his breast and dispelling all darkness of ignorance. Thus speaking to his son Śûka Deva, Krisna Dvaipâyan, my Guru, studied us the Purâna and thought it was voluminous. I got the whole of it by heart. śûka studied the Purâna and stayed in Vyâsa's âśrama. But he was naturally dispassionate like Sanat Kumâra, etc., the mind-born sons of Brahmâ; therefore he could not get peace in studying the contents of the Purâna which deal with Karma-Kânda (actions) fit for the house-holders. He remained in a solitary place, his heart being troubled very much. He appeared, as if, with his heart void. He did not mind much for his food and he did not fast also. Once Vyâsa Deva seeing his son śûkdeva so thoughtful, said :— "O Son! What do you think constantly? And why are you troubling yourself so much? Like an impoverished man, entangled in debt, you are always disturbed by your thoughts. O child! When I your father is living, what for do you care? Leave aside your inmost sorrows and be happy. Cast off all other thoughts and think of the wisdom contained in the Śâstras and try your best to acquire Vijâna, the essence of wisdom. O Suvrata! If you do not get peace by my words then go, at my word to Mithilâ, the city of the King Janaka. O Mahâbhâga! That king Janaka, who is liberated while living,

whose soul is religious and who is the ocean of truth will cut asunder the net of your delusion. O Son! Go to the king and question him on Varnâśram Dharma (Dharma relating to caste and stages of life) and remove your doubts.

That royal sage Janaka, the greatest Yogi, the knower of Brahmâ and liberated while living, is of pure soul, truthspeaking, of a calm and quiet heart and always fond of Yoga.” Hearing these words of Vyâsa Deva, the highly spirited Śûka deva of unrivalled energy replied :— “O virtuous one! Your word can never turn out false; but when I hear that the king Janaka is gladly governing his kingdom still he is liberated while living, and disembodied while he has body – this your word appears to me quite contradictory like light and darkness at one and the same place and time, and seems that these two epithets simply indicate vanity and nothing else. O Father! This is my greatest doubt how can the royal sage Janaka govern his kingdom, being disembodied. It appears that your word about Janaka is quite false as the son of a barren woman. O Father! I have now got a desire to see the disembodied king Janaka; for my mind is plunged in great doubt how can he remain in samsâra unattached like a lotus leaf in water? O Greatest Orator! Is the liberation of Janaka according to Buddhistic doctrines or like the opinions of the materialistic Chârvâkas! O highly intelligent one! How can the royal sage Janaka, in spite of his being a householder, quit the usages of his senses? I cannot comprehend this. How can the things enjoyed by him appear to him, as if, unenjoyed and and how can his doings be his non-doings? How can the ideas of mother, wife, son, sister, prostitutes and various persons having different relations, arising within him vanish again altogether? And if that be not the case, how can his Jivanmuktahood be possible? If his taste be present of pungent, sour, astringent, bitter, and sweet things, then it is clear that he is enjoying all the most excellent things, O Father! This is my greatest wonder and doubt, that if he has got the sense of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, how can he be a Jivanmukta? That king is thoroughly expert in reigning his kingdom; how then the ideas of enemy, friend, taste and distaste, remaining absent in him, he can govern his state? How can he look with the same eyes a thief and an ascetic? And if he makes any distinction, how then is his liberation effected? I have never seen such a man, that is liberated while living and at the same time an expert king in governing his subjects. For these reasons, great doubt has arisen in me. I cannot understand how can the king Janaka be liberated, while he is remaining in his house? Whatever it be, I desire now greatly to see him after his Jivanmuktahood; so I desire to go to Mithilâ to solve my doubts.”

Thus ends the Sixteenth Chapter of the first Skandha on Śûka’s desiring to go to Mithilâ to see Janaka, in the Mahâpurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 17. ON ŚŪKAS DISPLAYING HIS SELF-CONTROL AMIDST THE WOMEN OF THE PALACE OF MITHILÂ

Sûta said :— Thus speaking to his father about his intention to go to Mithilâ, the high-souled ŚŪka Deva fell prostrate at his feet and with folded palms said :— O highly fortunate one! Your word must be obeyed by me; now I desire to see, as you say, the kingdom of Janaka; kindly give me permission. O father! Again the doubt is coming within me how the king Janaka is governing his kingdom without sentencing any body? And if there be no punishment within his kingdom, no one will remain in the path of virtue. It is for the sake of preserving religion that Manu and the other sages have always prescribed for punishment; how, then, religion can be preserved without inflicting punishment. O Mahâbhâga! What you have spoken to me appears to me true like the sentence “My mother is barren.” So, O destroyer of foes! Permit and I will start for Mithilâ. Seeing the greatly wise son ŚŪka, void of any desires, earnestly anxious to go to Mithilâ, gave him a cordial embrace and said :— “O highly intelligent son ŚŪka! Peace be on you! Have a long life. O child! Speak truly before me and go. O son! Say that after going to Mithilâ you will come back again to this âśrama; never that you will go anywhere else. O son! Seeing the lotus face of yours, I am passing my days happily; if I do not see you, I will suffer extreme pain. What more than this, that you are my life and soul. I am saying, therefore, after seeing Janaka and clearing your doubts come here again and remain at peace, and study on the Vedas.”

Vyâsa having spoken thus, ŚŪka bowed down and circumambulated his most worshipful father, and went out; he began to walk very fast like an arrow, leaving the bow, and when it has left the bow. On his journey he saw various countries, various classes of persons, earning money, various gardens and forests, various trees; in some places he saw fields with green grains and grains standing on them; at others he saw ascetics practising asceticism, and initiated Yâjniks (performing yajas, or sacrifices); in some places he saw yogis practising yoga, the high-souled Vânaprasthîs (in the third stage of life) residing in the forest, and at others he saw devotees of śiva, Śakti, Ganeśa, Sûryâ and Visnu and many others. Thus he went on in his journey, in great wonder, towards his destination. In his passage he crossed Meru in two years and the Mount Himâlayâs in one year and then reached the city Mithilâ. Going there he found the place, full of wealth, corn, grains, etc., and all prosperities and the people were all very happy and they observed the rule of conduct as in the śâstras. When he was about to enter into the city the

guard in front of the gate stopped him, asking “Who are you? Sir. What for are you come here?” When the guard asked him thus, he replied nothing and went away to a distance and with great wonder could not help laughing in his mind and remained motionless like a statue. At this the guard said :— “O Brâhman! Why have you remained silent? Kindly say what for you have come here? I know this well that no body goes anywhere without having something to do? The king has forbidden strangers whose parentage and character are unknown. Therefore O Brâhmin! Every one has to take the king’s permission before he goes into the city.

It seems that you are a very energetic Brâhman and that you know the Vedas; so O giver of honour! speak out to me your object-in-view and go into the city as you like.” Hearing these words of the guard, Śûka Deva began to say :— “I have come to see the city of Videha Janaka; but now I see that persons like me find great difficulty to enter here; so O Gatekeeper! I have got the answer from you. I was a great fool that I was so much deluded that to see the king I crossed many countries and over topped the two mountains and have come here. O Mahâbhâga! What blame can I put on others? It is my father that has deluded me; or my karma done in my previous birth is now making me wander about. Alas! In this world greed for money is the sole cause to make a man knock about; but I have not got that even; my erroneous idea has brought me so far. I now realise that a man, having no desires, gets constant happiness if he be not plunged in the net of delusion; else he cannot have any such. O Mahâbhâga! Though I have no desire of anything, yet I am plunged in the sea of Moha. Alas! Where is Meru? and where is Mithilâ (a great distance intervenes) I have walked so great a distance on foot; alas! this is this the result of my so long a journey! Therefore I am thoroughly convinced that the Creator has deceived me. One must have to suffer for his Prârabdha karma, be it auspicious or inauspicious. One must make ones effort, being always under the control of this Law of Karma. Though there be no apparent desire or cause, yet this Prârabdha Karma always puts a man into different actions.

This place is not a Tîrath (holy place) nor there are the Vedas personified here, that I have taken so much pains and trouble to come here – only there is one thing here and that is the king Janaka; but there is no chance to see him even; for I have not been able to enter even within his kingdom.” Thus saying, Śûka remained silent and began to stay as one who has taken the vow to remain silent. The guard then took him to be a very wise Brâhman and spoke in sweet words :— “O Brâhman! Go to the place, as you like, where you have got your work. O Brâhman! I stopped you; so please excuse me for any offence incurred by me. Free persons like you have mercy alone as their greatest strength.” Hearing this Śûka Deva said :—What is your fault? you are dependent on another; the servant ought to obey the words of his master and serve him by all means; and there is no fault

of the king, too, in your not allowing me to enter; for the wise persons ought to ascertain by all means, whether the new comers are enemies or thieves? Hence when I am quite a stranger suddenly come to this place, that the fault is wholly mine. Every person knows that it is lowering oneself to go to another's house. The guard then said :— "O great Brâhman! what is happiness? and what is pain? what ought to be done to by your well wisher? who is your enemy? and who is your benefactor? Now advise me on all these points." Hearing this ŚŪka Deva said :— Everywhere men are divided, as far as their internal natures are concerned, into two classes; they are called attached or unattached. And the minds of these two classes are again of two kinds. The "attached" man is stupid and cunning and the "unattached" is sub-divided into three classes knowing, unknowing and middling. The cunning man is divided again into two classes :— Whether his cunningness is according to the dictates of Śâstras or arising from his intellect. Again intellect is sub-divided into two whether it is Yukta (one-pointed) or Ayukta (Diverted) The guard spoke :— "O Learned one! I cannot understand what you say; so explain them to me what they mean." ŚŪka Deva said :— Those who are attached to this world are said to be "attached" persons. These attached persons feel frequently various pleasures and pains. When they get wives, sons, wealth, honour, rise, etc., they get pleasures; and if they do not get any of these they feel at every moment intense pain. Now the attached person sought to take such means as will secure them the pleasures of this world; so whoever acts against those means are denominated as breakers of their happiness and so they are enemies; and whoever aids in their acquiring pleasures are denominated as their friends. Of these the attached but at the same time cunning man does not get confounded and bewildered by them; whereas stupid attached man gets always bewildered everywhere. The man that is dispassionate and engaged in determining the "self" dwells in a solitary place, meditates on "self", finds pleasure in studying the Vedânta Śâstras and feels pain in all the topics on worldly affairs. The wise man that wants his real welfare and is averse to the worldly enjoyments finds that he has many enemies; lust, anger, palaces, etc., are his so many enemies. Contentment is his only friend in the three lokas and no one is his real self.

Hearing these words of ŚŪka Deva, the watchman considered ŚŪka Deva a very wise man and soon led him to a very beautiful compartment. ŚŪka Deva then began to see that the town was full of three sorts of men, good, middling, and bad; and the shops were filled with various articles of merchandise. The many things were being incessantly purchased and sold there. Within that town, filled with many men, money and all sorts wealth and prosperities, almost everywhere were seen instances of attachment, hatred, lust, anger, greed, vanity and delusion; at some parts there were seen persons quarrelling with each other. Seeing thus the three sorts of persons, the highly energetic ŚŪka, blazing like a second Sun

went to the royal palace when the gateman stopped him. He stood there like a log of wood and began to meditate on “Moksa” (Liberation). He began to think the light and darkness as same; the greatly ascetic Śûka became merged in Dhyâna (meditation) and remained at one place motionless. In an instant, a royal minister came out and saluting him with folded hands, took him to a second compartment. Here the minister showed him beautiful divine gardens adorned nicely with rows of divine trees bearing fruits and gave him a good reception and took him to a very beautiful palace. The minister next ordered the public women in royal service, expert in music and playing with instruments, and skilled in Kâma-Śâstra (the science of amorous dealings) to attend on Śûka Deva and went out of the palace. Śûka, the son of Vyâsa, remained there. Those prostitutes then prepared various dishes, suited to the time and place, and sought the satisfaction of Śûka and then worshipped him duly with greatest devotion. Those ladies, then, residing within the four walls became enamoured to see the beauty of Śûka Deva and showed him the gardens that existed in the inner compound. Śûka was young and beautiful; over this he was extremely lovely, of nice limbs; his speech was soft and gentle; so he looked like a second Cupid (the god of love); all the ladies, struck with Cupids arrows, lost their consciousness. Then recovering, they considered Śûka Deva to be the great controller of passions and began to serve him with great care. The pure minded Śûka, born of Arani, looked on them like his mother. Śûka, finding pleasure in self and the controller of anger was not pleased or displeased with anything; so though he saw that the ladies were disturbed with amorous feelings, he remained quite undisturbed, calm and quiet. The ladies, then prepared a very nice bed whereon Śûka Deva would sleep; it was spread over with nice clean bed sheet; many nice pillows were placed. He, then, washed his feet and with vigilance, put on his finger the ring prepared of Kuśa grass, and completing his evening Sandhyâ, became merged in Dhyâna. Meditating on Supreme Brahmâ for three hours (one Prahara), slept for 6 hours and getting up, again became merged in Brahmâ Dhyâna for the last three hours of the night. Then at the Brahmâ mûhurta (one hour preceding the sunrise) he took his bath and completing his morning duties, became immersed in Samâdhi (inner enlightenment) and sat at ease.

Thus ends the 17th chapter of the 1st Skandha on Śûka’s displaying his self-control amidst the women of the palace of Mithilâ in the Mahâpurâna Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam.

CHAPTER 18. ON JANAKAS GIVING INSTRUCTIONS ON TRUTH TO ŚŪKA DEVA

1-22. Sŭta said :— Mahârsis! When the king Janaka heard of the arrival of Śŭka Deva, the son of his Guru, he took his priest before him and attended by his ministers came before him in pure spirit. Then he duly worshipped Śŭka, offering him Pâdya, Arghya and an excellent seat, and a cow, yielding milk and then enquired about his welfare. Śŭka Deva accepted duly all the things offered by the king; and informed him of his well-being and asked the king in return, of his welfare and took his seat at ease on the âsana. The king Janaka asked the son of Vyâsa, full of peace :— “O Mahâbhâga Muni Sattama! You are devoid of any attachment and you have no desires. May I enquire why such a person as your honoured self has come to me.” Śŭka Deva said :— O great king! my father told me thus :— O child; take a wife; for the house-holder’s life is the best of all the âśramas but I thought that will be the source of my bondage to this world and therefore did not obey his word, though he was my highest Guru. He then again said to me :— If one takes a household life, it does not at once follow that he will be held in bondage; yet I did not agree to that. Then the Muni, thinking me still to be in some doubt, spoke this word of advice to me :— “O Son! Do not be sorry; go to Mithilâ and have your doubts solved. There my disciple the king Janaka, is governing his kingdom without any source of danger. He is Jivanamukta (liberated while living) and is free from the ideas of body, etc., so everybody knows. When that royal sage, Janaka, though governing his kingdom, is not seen tied up by Mâyâ, then O Son! why are you afraid of this Samsâra, when you are living this forest life.

Therefore, O Mahâbhâga! Trust me and marry; and in case you doubt very much, then go and see the king Janaka; ask him and remove your doubts. He will certainly solve your doubts. But, O Son! After hearing him, come again quickly to me.” O king! When my father spoke thus, by his permission I have come now to your capital. O king! I don’t want any thing, save Moksa (liberation); therefore O Sinless one! Kindly advise what am I to do, so that I attain Moksa. O Lord of kings! Practising asceticism, going to the holy places of pilgrimage, holding vratas (vows), performing sacrifices, studying the Vedas, or earning wisdom, whatever is the cause of Moksa, kindly say that. Hearing this, Janaka said :— “O son of my Guru! I am telling what ought to be done by the Brâhmanas, following the path of Moksa; listen. After having the holy thread, a Brâhmin should live in the house

of his Guru to study the Vedas, the Vedântas and pay the Dakshinâ (the fee) to the Guru according to rules; he will then return home and marry and enter into the householder's life; he should lead a life of contentment, be free from desires, sinless and truthful and earn his livelihood with a pure heart and according to the sanction of justice and conscience. He is to perform the Agnihotra and other sacrifices; and after getting sons and grandsons, he is to leave his wife under the care of his son and then to take the life of a Vânaprastha (3rd stage of life). That Brâhman, the knower of Dharma, must practise tapasyâ and become master of his six passions (enemies); and when he gets disgusted with the world and when the Vairâgyam (dispassion) will arise within him, he would enter into the fourth âśrama. For, the man is first to enter into the householder's life and when he will be quite dispassionate towards the world, he will then have a right to take the âśrama of Sannyâsa (Renunciation). A course contrary to this can never entitle one to the âśrama of Sanyâsa.

This is the beneficial word of the Vedas and it must hold true; it cannot be false; this is my firm belief. O Śûka! In the Vedas are mentioned forty-eight Samskâras (consecrations; purificatory rites); out of which the learned Mahâtmas have reserved forty Samskâras for the householders and the last eight Samskâras (śama, Dama, etc.,) for the Sannyâsins. And this good usage is heard to come down from very ancient times. A Brâhmana ought to complete his previous âśramas successively and then enter into the succeeding âśrama.

23-30. Śûka said :— If the pure Vairâgyam (dispassion) arising out of knowledge and wisdom (jân and Vijân) already arises (before taking to the grihasth âśram), is it still necessary to pass through house holders life, Vânaprastha life, etc., or is one entitled then to take up at once the Sannyâsa âśrama, quit everything and reside in the forest? Janaka said :— O! One giving honour to the Śâstras and Gurus! Though the powerful passions seem to be under control in the period of unripened Yoga (the imperfect yogic state), yet one ought not to trust them; for, it is generally seen, many imperfect Yogins find themselves disturbed by one or other of the senses. If the mind of one who has already entered into the Sannyâsa âśram gets perturbed in his course, then, how can he, you can see this for yourself, satisfy desires of eating good things, sleeping nicely, seeing his son, or wishing any other desires, knowing them to lead to his degradation? He is then in a very serious state. The net of desires is very difficult to be conquered by men; that can never die out. Therefore, to put an end to them, the advise is to cut them slowly and slowly. He who sleeps on an elevated place has the danger of tumbling down; but one who sleeps in a low place has no such danger. So any man who has once taken the highest dharma Sannyâsa, and if he be fallen, then he never gets hold of the real track. As an ant begins to get from the root of tree, and, by and by, gets to the topmost part of the branches, so human beings go by degrees from one

âśrama to another till they go to the highest; then and then only they are able to get easily their desired truth. The birds without anticipating any danger, get up to the skies very quickly and soon they get tired and cannot go to their desired place but the ant goes with rest to its desired place. This mind is very difficult to be controlled; for this reason the men of unripened minds, cannot conquer it all at once; and are advised to conquer it, by and by, observing the laws of one âśrama after another.

31-37. See also if anybody, remaining in his household life be of a quiet temper and of good intellect, and if he takes success and failure in the same light, and be not elated in times of pleasure and not depressed in times of pains and does his duty for dutys sake without troubling his mind with cares, and anxieties, then that householder acquires pure happiness by the realisation of his self and acquires Moksha. There is no manner of doubt in this. O Sinless One! See, I am liberated while living, though I am engaged in preserving kingdom; if any source of pain or pleasure arises, I am not in any way affected by them. As I will attain in the end Videha Mukti (liberation from bodies) though I am always wandering at my free will, enjoying various things as I like and do various things as it pleases me, so you can do your duties and then be liberated in the end.

O Son of my Guru! When this material world, the cause of all error according to the Vedanta Śâstras, is simply an object of sight then how can this material substance, an object of sight, be the source of bondage to the âtman, the Self? O Brâhman! Though the five material elements can be seen, their qualities or Gunas can be known only by inference, so the self is to be inferred; it can never be an object of sight; and also this self, known by inference, changeless and without any impurity or stain can never be bound by the visible changeful material thing. O Brâhman! This impure heart is the source of all pleasure and pains; so when the heart becomes pure and quiet, all the things then become fully pure, O Brâhmana!

38-41. If going often and often to all Tiraths and bathing there, do not make one's heart pure and holy, then all one's troubles are taken in vain. O Destroyer of enemies! It is the mind that is the cause of bondage or freedom; and not the body, nor the Jivâtmâ (the embodied soul), nor the senses. The Self or âtman is always pure consciousness and is ever free so, truly speaking, it can never be bound. Bondage and freedom reside on in the mind; so when the Mind gets peace, the bondage of Samsâra is also at an end. He is an enemy, he is a friend, he is neither an enemy nor friend, all these different thoughts reside in the mind and arise out of duality; how can the ideas of differences exist, when everything has become all one pervading self?

42-47. Jîva is Brahmâ; I am that Brahmâ and nothing else; there is nothing to be discussed here. It is owing to the dualities that monism appears not clear and

differences between Jîva and Brahmâ arise. O Mahâbhâga! This difference is due to Avidyâ and by which this difference vanishes, that is termed Vidyâ.

This difference between Vidyâ and Avidyâ ought to be always kept in view, by those that are clever.

How can the pleasure from the cooling effect of the shadow, be felt, if the heating effect of the rays of the Sun be not previously experienced? So how Vidyâ is to be experienced if Avidyâ be not felt before? Sattva, Rajas and Tamo Gunas reside naturally in things, made of Gunas; and the five principal elements reside naturally in substances made up of elements; so the senses reside naturally in their own forms, etc.; so how can there be any stain to the âtman which is unattached? Yet to teach humanity, the high souled persons preserve always with greatest care the respect of the Vedas. If they do not do this, then, O Sinless One! the ignorant persons would act lawlessly according to their wishes, like

the Chârvâkas; and Dharma will become extinct. When Dharma will become extinct, the VarnâŚrama will gradually die out; so the well-wishers should always follow the path of the Vedas.

48-56. Śûka said :— “O King! I have now heard all that you have said; still my doubt remains; it is not solved. O King! In the Dharma of the Vedas, there is Himsâ (act of killing and injuring); and we hear that there is much of Adharma (sin) in the above Himsâ.

So how can the Dharma of the Vedas give Moksha? O King! One can see before one's eyes that the drinking of Soma rasa, the killing of animals, the eating of fish and flesh and so are advised in the Vedas; so much so that in the sacrificial ceremony named Sautrâmana the rule of drinking wine and many other vratas are clearly mentioned; even gambling is advised in the Vedas. So how can Mukti be obtained by following the Veda Dharma? It is heard that, in ancient times, there was a great king, named śaśavindu, very religious, truthful, and performing sacrifices, very liberal; he protected the virtuous, and chastised those that were wicked and going astray. He performed many Yajas, where many cows and sheep were sacrificed according to the rules of the Vedas and abundant Dakshinâs (sacrificial fees) were presented to every one that performed their parts in the sacrifices. In these sacrifices, the hides of the cows that were sacrificed as victims, were heaped to such an enormous extent that they looked liked a second Bindhyâchal mountain. Then the rains fell and the dirty water coming out of that enormous heap of skins flowed down and gave rise to a river which was thence called the Charmanvatî river. And what a wonder? That cruel king left behind him an ineffaceable fame and went to Heavens. Whatever it may be, it can never come to my head that I should perform the Veda Dharma, filled with so many acts of killing and cruelties.

Again, when the man find pleasure in sexual intercourses and when they do not have that intercourse, they experience pain, how can you expect such persons to attain liberation.”

57-61. Janaka said :— “The killing of animals in a sacrificial ceremony is not killing; it is known as Ahimsâ; for that himsâ is not from any selfish attachment; therefore when there is no such sacrifice and the animals are killed out of selfish attachment, then that is real himsâ; there is no other opinion in this. Smoke arises from a fire when fuels are placed in it; and smoke is not seen when no fuel is added. So, O Munisattama! The himsâ, as prescribed in the Vedas, is free from all blemishes, selfish attachment, etc., and therefore it is unblameable. So it follows the himsâ committed by persons attached to objects, is the real himsâ; that can be blamed, but the himsâ of those persons who have no desires is not that sort of himsâ. Therefore the learned men that know the Vedas declare that the himsâ done by the dispassionate persons, with their hearts free from egoism, is no himsâ done at all. O Dvija! Really speaking, the killing of animals done by the house-holder attached to senses and their objects, and done under their impulses can be taken into account as a real act of killing; but, O Mahâbhâga of those whose hearts are not attached to anything of those self controlled persons, desirous of moksa, if they do an act of Himsâ out of a sense of duty, with no desires of fruits and with their hearts free from egoism that can never be reckoned as a real act of killing.”

Thus ends the 18th Chapter of the 1st Skandha on Janaka’s giving instructions on truth to ŚŪka Deva in the Mahâpurânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam.

CHAPTER 19. ON THE DESCRIPTION OF THE MARRIAGE OF ŚŪKA

1-4. Śrî ŚŪka said :— O king! This great doubt arises in my mind how a man can be free from desires and the rewards of their actions, when he lives in the midst of this Samsâra, that is all full of Mâyâ? When even by the acquiring of wisdom of the Śâstras and the capability to judge which is real and which is unreal, the delusion of the mind is not dispelled until one resorts to the practice of Yoga, how then can freedom from desires and liberation come to a householder? The

darkness of a room is not destroyed by the mere mention of lamp, light; so the wisdom acquired by reading the Śâstras can never dispel the darkness of delusion that reigns in the inside of a man. O lion of kings! If one wants Moksa, one ought not to commit any act of revenge or injury or killing any being; how can this be possible to a householder?

5-17. Your desires to acquire wealth, to enjoy royal pleasures and to get victory in battle have not yet subsided; how then can you be a Jivan mukta? O king! You consider yet a thief, thief and a saint, saint; you consider a man as your relative or other than that; these ideas have not vanished from you; how then can you be called Videha? O king! You feel the pungent, bitter, astringent, sour tastes and the like; you feel good and bad rasas respectively; you become glad when success comes to you and you feel sorrow when you happen to fail; and you experience the three states, waking, dreaming, and deep sleep as an ordinary man does, how then can you be called to attain the Turiya (fourth) state? May I ask :— Whether you cherish this idea that all these infantries, cavalries, chariots, and that all these elephants are mine; I am the lord of all the wealth and things? Or whether you do not cherish this idea? O king! I think you eat sweet and good things, and, at times, feel pleasure and, at other times, feel pain! So, O king! How can you look on the garland of flowers and the snake as one and the same? O king! He who is a Muktapurusa considers a lump of earth, a piece of stone, and gold as of one and the same value; he considers everything to be the same âtmân and does good to all the beings. Whatever that may be, I do not find any pleasure at present with houses, wife, etc., or with anything, in fact. What my hearts desire is that I roam alone always without any desires in my heart. Therefore I like not to have any companion; to be free from any attachment and to be peaceful, and calm; I do not wish to accept anything from anybody; I will forego all pleasures and pains from cold, warmth, etc., and I will sustain my life on roots, fruits, and leaves, obtained without any effort and will roam, as I like, like a deer. When I have not got the least attachment to the household life and when I am beyond all the attributes, what necessity have I then of house, wealth or a suitable wife? And when you think of various things with loving heart, and yet say that you are a Jivan mukta, that is nothing but a mere vanity of yours! O king! When you think and become anxious about your enemies, about your wealth or sometimes about your army, how then can you be said to be free from cares? What more can be said than the fact that many Munis, eating moderately and controlling their senses, and leading an anchorite's life, and knowing the unreality of the world, fall victims to the Mâyâ!

18-27. Then what need there is to talk of you? O king! know that the hereditary title “Videha” to your line of kings indicates downright insincerity; nothing can be other than this as the name “Vidyâ Dhara” (holder of knowledge) is applied to

an illiterate man; as the name “Divākara” (sun) is given to a born-blind man, as the name “Laksmîdhara” (holder of wealth) is given to even a poor man, as these names are quite useless to me. I have heard that the kings of your family who were your predecessors were called “Videha” in name only and not in deed. O king! In your family there reigned a king named “Nimi.” Once on a time that royal sage invited his Guru Vaśistha to perform a sacrifice, when Vaśistha said :– “I am already invited by Indra, the lord of the Devas, to perform his sacrifice; so O king! let me first finish his work; I will then take up your work. Better go on collecting the sacrificial materials till my that work is complete.” Thus saying, Vaśistha went away to perform Indra’s sacrifice; on the other hand, the royal sage Nimi selected another priest and made him his Guru and began his sacrifice. Hearing all this, Maharsi Vaśistha became angry and cursed him thus :– “O forsaker of your Guru! For the crime of forsaking your Guru, let thy body be destroyed today!” At this, the royal sage, too, cursed Vaśistha in his turn “Let your body fall off also.” Then the bodies of both the persons fell. But, O king! this curiosity came to my mind, how the royal sage, whose body fell before, cursed his own Guru afterwards.

28-35. Janaka said :– O Lord of Brâhmins! what you have said is, in my opinion, all quite true; nothing is false. Still hear. Know what my most worshipful Guru Deva has spoken to me is, in fact, true (and nothing else). You are now intending to quit the company of your father and go to the forest; well and good! but even then you will undoubtedly have the company of deer, etc.; see, also, that when the five elements, earth, water, air, etc., are present, encompassing everywhere, how, then, can you expect to be free from all companions? So, O Muni! when you will have to think always of your food, how, then, can you be said to be free from all cares? Again, even if you go to the forest, you will have to think there also for your staff, deer skin, etc.; so you can take my case, too, of thinking of my kingdom, whether I think or not, as your thinking of staff, deer skin, etc., your heart is tainted with Vikalpa Jân (knowledge of doubt, duality, etc.); and therefore you have come here from a far-off country. But my heart is free from any such doubt and I am remaining quite cheerful here. O best of Brâhmins! I have got no doubt whatsoever on any point, and therefore I take my food and go to sleep with great pleasure. “I am not bound up by this world” this idea gives me constant happiness of the highest degree. But you consider that you are bound and therefore you feel always constant pain. So leave off your idea that you are bound, and be happy. “This body is mine” this knowledge leads to my bondage; and “This body is not mine” this knowledge leads to freedom so know this verily that all this wealth, kingdom, etc., are not mine.

36-45. Sûta said :– Hearing these words of the royal sage, Śûka Deva became exceedingly glad and pronounced “Sadhu” “Sâdhu” (true saint, indeed a true saint, well said) and went away without any delay to the pleasant âśrama of Vyâsa.

Vyâsa, too, seeing his son come back, became very glad and embraced him and took the smell of his head and asked about his welfare again and again. Then Śûka Deva, well conversant with the Śâstras and ever ready in studying the Vedas, sat by the side of his father, with an enlightened mind, in his lovely âśrama and thinking of the state of the highsouled Janaka in his kingdom, began to feel the highest peace. Though Śûka adopted the path of Yoga, yet he married the daughter of a Muni, named Pivarî, very beautiful, fortunate, enhancing the glory of her father's family. Then were born first the four sons named Krishna, Gauraprabha, Bhûri, and Devaśruta out of the sperm of Śûka and the ovum of Pivari; and next a daughter was born named Kîrti of them. Vyâsa's son Śûka, endowed with the fire of asceticism gave the daughter Kîrti in marriage in due time with the high-souled Anûha, the son of Vibhrâja. As time passed on, a son was born of the womb of Kîrti and the sperm of Anûha, a son who became the powerful king Brahmadata, the knower of Brahmâ and endowed with wealth and prosperity. Some time elapsed when Anûha, the son-in-law of Śûka Deva, getting from Nârada the Mâyâvîja and highest knowledge of Yoga handed over his kingdom to his son and went to the hermitage of Vadarikâ and became liberated.

The Devarsî Nârada gave him the mantra, the vîja of Mâyâ; and by the influence of that mantra and by the grace of the Devî, the knowledge of the Supreme Brahmâ, arose in him without any obstacle and gave him liberation.

46-51. On the other hand Śûka Deva, always averse to any company, left his father and went to the beautiful mountain Kailâsa. He began to meditate on the unmoving Brahmâ and thus remained there. After some time the highly energetic Śûka Deva attained Siddhi (supernatural powers) Animâ, Laghimâ, etc., rose up high in the air from the top of the mountain and began to roam there, and then he appeared like a second Sun. When Śûka arose from the peak, it severed into two and various ominous signs became visible. When Śûka Deva, appearing like a second Sun by the dazzling brilliancy of his body, suddenly vanished away like air and became diluted in the Paramâtman, entering into everything and became invisible, then the Devarsis began to chant hymns to him. On the other hand, Vyâsa Deva became very much distressed with the separation from his son and cried out frequently "Oh, my son! Alas! my son Where are you gone?" and went to the summit of the mountain where Śûka did go and wept bitterly. Then Śûka Deva, who was then residing as the Paramâtman, the Internal controller of all the beings and with all the beings, knowing Vyâsa Deva as very much fatigued, distressed, and crying, spoke out as an echo from the mountains and trees thus :— "O Father! There is no difference between you and me, considered in the light of âtman; then why are you weeping for me?"

52-59. Even today the above echo is clearly heard (almost daily). Seeing Vyâsa

Deva grieved very much for the separation from his son and always crying “Oh! my son! Oh! my son!” Bhagavân Maheśvara came there and consoled him saying “O Vyâsa Deva! your son is the foremost of the Yogis; he has attained the highest state, so very rare to the ordinary persons that are not self controlled. So do not be sorry any more. O Sinless One! when you have realised the Brahmâ-tattva, then you ought not to express any sorrow for your Śûka who is now stationed in that Brâhman. Your fame is now unrivalled, only on account of your having got a son like him.” Vyâsa Deva said :— “O Lord of the Devâs! O Lord of the world! What am I to do now? My grief does not quit my heart anyhow or other. My eyes are as yet satisfied in seeing my son; they like still to see the son.” Hearing these sorrowful words of Vyâsa, Bhagâvan Mahâdeva said :— “O Muni Sârdula! I grant this boon to you that you will see the form of your son abiding in shadow, very beautiful, by the side of you. O Destroyer of enemies! Now abandon your grief by seeing that shadow form of your son.” When Bhagavân Maheśvara said so, Vyâsa began to see the bright shade form of his son. Granting thus the boon, Bhagavân Mahâdeva vanished then and there. When He vanished away, Vyâsa became very much distressed with sorrow for the bereavement of his son and returned with heavy heart to his own hermitage.

Thus ends the nineteenth chapter of the first Skandha on the description of the marriage of Śûka in the Mahâpurâna śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 20. ON VYÂSA DOING HIS DUTIES

1-8. The Risis said :— “O Sûta! What did Veda Vyâsa do, when the highest Yogi Śûka, Deva-like, acquired all the excellent supernatural powers? Kindly describe all these in detail.”

Hearing this question, Sûta spoke :— O Rishis! Vyâsa already had with him many disciples Asita, Devala, Vaiśampâyana, Jaimini, Sumantu and others, all engaged in the study of the Vedas. After their studies were over, they all went out to propagate Dharma on the earth. Then Vyâsa , seeing that the disciples went to the earth and his son Śûka Deva had got to the next world, became very much distressed with sorrow and wanted to go to some other place. He then decided to go to his birth place and went to the banks of the Ganges and there remembered

his auspicious mother Satyavatî, forsaken by him before, very sorrowful, and the daughter of a fisherman. He then quitted that heaven-like mountain, the source of all happiness and came to his own birth place. Reaching the island where he was born, he enquired the whereabouts of the beautiful faced, the fisherman's daughter as well the wife of a king. The fishermen replied that their king had given her in marriage to the king śantanu. Then the king of fishermen, seeing Vyâsa there, gladly worshipped him and gave him a cordial welcome and spoke with folded palms, thus :—

9-16. O Muni! When I have become so fortunate as to see you, rare even to the Devas, then my birth has been sanctified today and you have purified my family. O Brâhmin! Kindly say what for have you come?

My wife, son and all my riches and every other thing that I have are at your disposal. Thus hearing the history of his mother Satyavatî, Vyâsa erected an âśrama on the beautiful banks of the river Sarasvatî and remained there in tapasyâ with an enlightened mind.

Some time elapsed when the highly energetic Śantanu got through his wife Satyavatî two sons. Vyâsa Deva considered them as his two brothers and became very glad, though he himself used to live in the forest. The first son of the king Śantanu was Chitrângada, endowed with all auspicious qualities, exceedingly beautiful, and tormenting his foes; the second son was Vichitra-vîrya; he was endowed with all qualities. The king Śantanu became very happy to get these children. Śantanu had one son before through his wife Gangâ; he was a great hero and very powerful; and the two sons of Satyavatî were equally powerful. The high souled Śantanu now seeing the three sons, all endowed with all auspicious qualities, began to think that the Devas were incapable to defeat him.

17-34. After some time, the religious Śantanu quitted his worn-out body as a man quits his clothes worn out in due time. After the king Śantanu had ascended the Heavens, the energetic Bhîśma performed duly his funeral obsequies and gave various things in charity to the Brâhmanas. He did not accept the kingdom himself; but placed Chitrângada on the throne and became known by the name of Devavrata (truthful in vow like the Devas). The pure souled Chitrângada, born of Satyavatî became so much powerful by sheer force of his arms, and became so great a hero that the enemies felt endless troubles. Now once on an occasion, the greatly powerful Chitrângada, surrounded by a great army, went on an hunting excursion to the forest in quest of rurû deer, etc., when the Gandarbha Chitrângada, seeing the king on the way, alighted from his chariot.

O ascetics! A fierce battle then ensued for three years on that sacred and wide expanse Kuruksettra between the two heroes, both equally powerful. In the battle,

the king Chitrângada, the son of Śantanu was slain by the Gandarbha Chitrângada and went up to Heavens. Bhîśma, born of the womb of Gangâ, hearing the above news, expressed his sorrows and, being surrounded by the ministers completed all the funeral obsequies and installed Vichitravîrya on the throne. The beautiful Satyavatî became very much agitated by the death of her son; but when the ministers and the highsouled spiritual teachers consoled her, she became glad when she saw that her youngest son became king. Vyâsa Deva, too, felt himself glad to hear that his youngest brother had been made king. After some time when the all auspicious, Satyavatî's son Vichîtravîrya attained his youth,

Bhîśma began to think of his marriage. At this time the king of Kâśî (Kâśîrâj) called an assembly Svayamvara (where the kings are invited and the bride selects the bridegroom) for the marriage of her three daughters, endowed with all auspicious qualities, at one and the same time. Thousands and thousands of kings and princes from various countries were invited there in the assembly; and, worshipped duly, they went and decorated the hall. At that time the highly energetic fiery Bhîśma alone, mounting on his chariot, attacked the infantry and cavalry, and defeated all the kings assembled there, and perforce carried away the three daughters of Kâśîrâj and took them to Hastinâpur. Bhîśma behaved towards those three daughters as if they were mothers, sisters or daughters and informed Satyavatî without any delay of everything that had happened.

35-39. Then he called for the astrologers and Brâhmins, versed in the Vedas and enquired about the auspicious day for their marriage. When the day was fixed and when every preparation was made, the religious Bhîśma wanted Vichitravîrya to marry them. At this time, the eldest daughter, beautiful-eyed spoke out modestly to the Gangâ's son Bhîśma :— "O Gangâ's son, the illustrious son of your family and the best of the Kurus! You are the best knower of Dharma; therefore what more shall I say to you. In the Svayamvara assembly I mentally selected sâlva and it struck me that he, too, looked on me with a very loving heart towards me. So, O tormentor of foes! Now do what is fit for that sacred family; O Gangâ's son! Not only you are extraordinarily powerful but you are also the foremost of the religious. Sâlva mentally wanted to marry me; now do as you like."

40-44. When the eldest daughter spoke thus, Bhîśma asked the aged Brâhmanas, ministers and his mother "What ought to be done now" and, taking the opinions of all, spoke to that daughter :— "O beautiful one! You can go wherever you like." Thus saying, Bhîśma released her. Then the beautiful daughter of Kâśîrâj went to the house of Sâlvarâj and expressed to him her heart's desire :— "O great king! Knowing me attached to yourself, Bhîśma has quitted me according to the laws of Dharma; I have therefore come to you now; marry me. O best of the kings! I will be your legal wife, for already I used to think you as my husband and you, too,

must have thought me your wife.”

45-47. śâlva replied as follows :— “O beautiful one! When Bhîśma caught hold of your arm before me and took you to his chariot, then I won’t marry you. You can say yourself what intelligent man can marry a woman touched by another? Therefore I won’t marry you, though

Bhîśma has quitted you, in the light of another.” Hearing these words of Śâlva, the daughter of Kâsîrâj wept bitterly; yet Śâlva quitted her. Therefore, finding no other way, she went back to Bhîśma weeping, and said as follows :—

48-50. O great warrior! Śâlva did not consent to marry me, as you first took me to the chariot and afterwards left me. So, O Mahâbhâga! You better look to Dharma and marry me, as you know best what is Dharma. If you do not marry me, I will certainly quit my life. Hearing her words Bhîśma said :— O beautiful one! How can I accept you, when your mind has become attached towards another. So, O fair one! You better go back soon to your own father with a calm, clear mind. When Bhîśma said thus, that daughter of Kâsîrâj did not go back, out of sheer shame, to her father’s house, but went to a forest and in a greatly solitary place of pilgrimage began to practise asceticism.

51-56. Now the other two daughters of Kâsîrâj, beautiful and all auspicious Ambâlikâ and Ambikâ became the wives of the king Vichîtravîrya. Thus the powerful king Vichîtravîrya began to enjoy various pleasures in the palace and in the gardens and thus passed his time. For full nine years the king Vichîtravîrya enjoyed the sexual pleasures and became attacked with consumption and fell into the jaws of death. Hearing the death news of her son Vichîtravîrya, Satyavatî became very sorry and surrounded by her ministers, performed his funeral obsequies. Then she spoke privately to Bhîśma with a grievous heart :— “O highly fortunately son! now you better govern your father’s kingdom and see that the family of Yayâti does not become extinct. So better take your brother’s wife and try your best to continue your family line.

57-74. Bhîśma then said :— ”O Mother! Did you not hear of the promise that I already made before my father? So I cannot ever marry and govern the kingdom.” Hearing these words of Bhîśma, Satyavatî became anxious. She began to think as follows :— “How now the continuity of the family be kept! And it is not advisable to remain idle when the kingdom has become kingless; no happiness can be derived in this state.” Thus thinking, she became exceedingly distressed; then the Gangâ’s son, Bhîśma spoke to her :— “O respected one! Do not worry your mind with cares; now take steps so as to secure a son from Vichîtravîrya’s wife. Call some best Brâhmin, born of a good family and unite him with Vichîtravîrya’s wife. There is no fault, as far as I know, in doing thus to keep up the family line. O sweet smiling

one! Thus having begotten the grandson, give him this kingdom; I will also obey his commands.” Hearing these reasonable words of Bhîsma, Satyavatî remembered her own son, the sinless Vyâsa Deva, who was born to her during her virginity. As soon as Vyâsa was remembered, he, the great ascetic and effulgent like the sun, came there and bowed down to his mother. The highly energetic Vyâsa was then worshipped duly by Bhîsma and welcome by Satyavatî and began to rest there like a smokeless fire. The mother Satyavatî then spoke to the chief Muni :– “O son! Now procreate a beautiful son from your sperm and the ovum of Vichîtravîrya’s wife.” Hearing the mother’s words, Vyâsa considered them as Veda’s injunction and thought they must be obeyed and promised before her that he must obey and fulfil her orders. He remained there, waiting for the menstruation period. When the due period of menstruation arrived, Ambikâ bathed and had a sexual intercourse with Vyâsa and begot a very powerful son, but a blind one (since she closed her eyes at the sight of Vyâsa during her intercourse). Seeing the son born blind Satyavatî became exceedingly sorry; she, then, asked her other son’s wife :– “Go soon and get a son born of you in the aforesaid manner.” When the menstruation period arrived, Ambâlikâ during the night time went to Vyâsa and mixed and became pregnant. In due time a son was born; that child became of a very pale colour; so Satyavatî thought the new child, too, unfit for the kingdom; therefore at the end of the year again asked her son’s wife Ambâlikâ to go to Vyâsa . She asked Vyâsa also for the same purpose and sent Ambâlikâ to his bed room. But Ambâlikâ became afraid, and could not go herself but sent her maid servant for the purpose. Thus from the womb of the maid servant the high souled Vidura was born, having Dharma’s parts and the most auspicious towards all. Thus Vyâsa begot three very powerful sons Dhritarâstra, Pandu and Vidura for the continuity of the family line. O sinless Maharsis! Thus I have described to you how my Guru Vyâsa Deva, who knows well all the Dharmas, kept up the continuity of his family and how he begot sons in the womb of his brother Vichîtravîrya’s wives, according to the laws of Dharma, to keep up a family.

Thus ends the twentieth chapter of the 1st Skandha as well as the first Skandha on Vyâsa doing his duties in the Mahâpurânam śrî Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa .