

śrī-gaṇeśa-śāradā-gurubhyo namaḥ

ŚRĪMAD DEVĪ BHĀGAVATAM

OF

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa



Translated into English

by

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FOREWORD

What is Śrîmad Bhâgavat is to the Vaiśnavas, the Devî Bhâgavatam is to the Śâktas. The question of the priority of the two Bhâgavatas has been often discussed more in the spirit of partisans rather than that of sober scholars. We reserve our opinion on the subject till the publication of the complete translation of this work.

This translation has been inscribed to the sacred memory of my friend the late Râi Bâhâdur Śrîś Chandra Vidyârnavâ who induced me to undertake the translation of this work. He had thoroughly read the two Bhâgavatas and it was his opinion that the priority of composition belonged to the Devî Bhâgavatam. The other Bhâgavat, according to him, is a modern compilation attributed to Bopadeva the author of Mugdhabodha Vyâkaranam.

BOOK 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

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.

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 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 Purânas, be thrown under the category of the deaf?

11-18. O Saumya! Hence all these Brâhmins, being distressed with the fear of this Kali, have come here to this Naimisâranya, eager to hear attentively the Purânas, 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 Śâstras; but these Śâstras 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 Arthavâdas (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 Śâstras again, the Vedânta is the Sâttvik, the Mimâmsas are the Râjasik and the Nyâya Śâstras with Hetuvâdas, are the Tâmasik; so the Śâstras are varied. Similarly, the Purânas are of three kinds :— (1) Sâttvik, (2) Râjasik and (3) Tâmasik. O Saumya! (one of gentle appearance) you have recited those Purânas endowed with five characteristics and full of many narratives; of these, the fifth Purâna, equivalent to the Vedas and with all the good qualities, the Bhâgavata yields Dharma and Kâma (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 Brâhmanas are eager to hear gladly this divine auspicious Bhâgavata, the best of the Purânas; so kindly describe this in detail.

19-25. O knower of Dharma! By your faith and devotion to your Guru, you have become Sâttvik and thus have thoroughly known the Purâna Samhitâs spoken by Veda Vyâs. O Omniscient one! Therefore it is that we have heard many Purânas from your mouth; but we are not satisfied as the Devas are not satisfied with the drinking of the nectar. O Sûta! Fie to the nectar even as the drinking of nectar is quite useless in giving Mukti. But hearing the Bhâgavata gives instantaneous Mukti from this Samsâra or round of birth and death. O Sûta! 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 Samsâra, 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 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 kuown 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 Śrimad 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 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, iu 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 Prâkritic 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 Turiya 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 Śastras. 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 Tattvajan 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, Śudras, 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, Vasistha, 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-souled 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 Śrîmad 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 liketh. 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

Dânavas 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 Dânavas 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 Dânavas 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 Dânavas, 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 Dânavas trusted and remained far aloof, ready to fight again.

Now the four-armed Vâsudeva, 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 Dânavas, 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 Dânavas 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 Dânavas. "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 Devaś 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 dont 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 Janârdan 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.

Śri 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 Aśvîns, 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 Śûka 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 Śûka 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 Śûka 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 Śûka 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 Śûka Deva, as it reigned in Vyâsa Deva. O Munis! Bhagavân Vyâsa Deva gave the name of the child as Śûka as during the moment of his birth he saw the form of Ghritâchî in the form of the Śûka bird. Śûka 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 Śûka 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 Śûka, 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 Śûka’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 ŚŪka! 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 ŚŪka, making him sit close by, the highly dispassionate ŚŪka 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, ŚŪka 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 Śûka, 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 Vānaprasthāshram (the third stage) and go to a forest and perform the excellent vows and then take up the dharma of the Sannyāsa (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 Śāstras 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 tapasyā during his old age. O fortunate one! In days of yore, the fiery Rājarsi Viśvāmitra practised very severe tapasyā 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 Menakā. And an auspicious daughter was born from the womb of Menakā by Viśvāmitra. My father Parāśara, though a great ascetic, was struck with Cupid's arrows at the sight of the daughter of a fisherman, named Kālī and accepted her in the boat. What more than this, that Brahmā seeing his own daughter Sandhyā was struck by passion and ran after her, when Bhagavān Rudra Deva made him unconscious by his Humkār sound and made Brahmā 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 ŚŪka Deva and the duties of householders in the Mahā Purāna śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Vedavyās.

CHAPTER 15. ON THE DISPASSION OF ŚŪKA AND THE INSTRUCTIONS OF BHAGAVATĪ TO HARI

1-67. Hearing these words of Vyāsa Deva ŚŪka 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 ŚŪka, 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, śŭkdeva, 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 Śûka Deva bowed down mentally to the Devî, Mahâ Mâyâ, who is the Creatrix of Brahmâ 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 Vyâsa 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 Parâśara and you yourself are the instructor of real truth, the tattva jnâna, to all persons; so, O Lord! why are you giving vent to sorrows, like an ordinary bewildered man? O Mahâbhâga! 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 Brâhmin 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 Samsâra” the notion covered with dark darkness of ignorance, caused by desires, this net of Samsâra does not leave me.

When the son Śûka Deva of extraordinary power and intelligence spoke thus, Vyâsa saw that his son was strongly inclined to take to the four âśram, that of Sannyâsa and spoke thus :— O Son! If your mind has become so, then read Bhâgavat Purâna, 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 Purânas 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 súka 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 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 Śûka 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 Śûka, void of any desires, earnestly anxious to go to Mithilâ, gave him a cordial embrace and said :— “O highly intelligent son Śûka! 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, Śûka 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 Śûka 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." Śûka 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 Śûka Deva, the watchman considered Śûka Deva a very wise man and soon led him to a very beautiful compartment. Śûka 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 Śûka, 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 Śūka 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 Śūka Deva and went out of the palace. Śūka, the son of Vyâsa, remained there. Those prostitutes then prepared various dishes, suited to the time and place, and sought the satisfaction of Śūka and then worshipped him duly with greatest devotion. Those ladies, then, residing within the four walls became enamoured to see the beauty of Śūka Deva and showed him the gardens that existed in the inner compound. Śūka 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 Śūka Deva to be the great controller of passions and began to serve him with great care. The pure minded Śūka, born of Arani, looked on them like his mother. Śūka, 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 Śūka 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 Śūka’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. Sûta said :— Mahârsis! When the king Janaka heard of the arrival of ŚŪka 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 ŚŪka, offering him Pâdya, Arghya and an excellent seat, and a cow, yielding milk and then enquired about his welfare. ŚŪka 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.” ŚŪka 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 Vedāntas 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 ŚŪka! 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. ŚŪka 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 Jīva and Brahmā arise. O Mahābhāga! This difference is due to Avidyā and by which this difference vanishes, that is termed Vidyā.

This difference between Vidyā and Avidyā 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 Vidyā is to be experienced if Avidyā 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 ātman 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 Chārvākas; and Dharma will become extinct. When Dharma will become extinct, the Varnāśrama will gradually die out; so the well-wishers should always follow the path of the Vedas.

48-56. Śūka 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 Himsā (act of killing and injuring); and we hear that there is much of Adharma (sin) in the above Himsā.

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 Sautrāmana 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 Dakshinās (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 Bindhyāchal 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 Charmanvatī 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 Śûka Deva in the Mahâpurânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam.

CHAPTER 19. ON THE DESCRIPTION OF THE MARRIAGE OF ŚÛKA

1-4. Śrî Śûka 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 “Divâkara” (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 ŚŪka 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 ŚŪka 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 ŚŪka and the ovum of Pivari; and next a daughter was born named Kîrti of them. Vyâsa's son ŚŪka, 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 ŚŪka 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 ŚŪka Deva, always averse to any company, left his father and went to the beautiful mountain Kailâśa. He began to meditate on the unmoving Brahmâ and thus remained there. After some time the highly energetic ŚŪka 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 ŚŪka arose from the peak, it severed into two and various ominous signs became visible. When ŚŪka 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 ŚŪka did go and wept bitterly. Then ŚŪka 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 .

BOOK II

CHAPTER 1. ON THE BIRTH OF MATSYAGANDHÂ

1-5. The Risis said :— “O Sûta! Your words sound wonderful to us indeed! but you have not as yet definitely spoken to us the original events in detail; so a great doubt has arisen in our minds. We know that the king Śantanu married Vyâsa’s mother, Satyavatî. Now say, in detail in how Vyâsa became her son? How such a chaste woman Satyavatî, remaining in her own house, came to be married again by Śantanu? and how the two sons came to be born of Śantanu’s sperm and Satyavatî’s ovum? Now O highly fortunate Suvrata? Kindly describe in detail this highly sanctifying historical fact. These Risis, who are observing vows, are desirous to hear of the birth of Veda Vyâsa and Satyavatî.”

6-23. Sûta said :— I bow down with devotion to the Highest Primordial Force, the bestower of the four fold aims of existence of human life, who grants to all, their desires when so prayed by the help of the Vâgbhava Vîjamantra with their heart and soul, for the success of all their desires. The above vîja is so potent in its effect that even pronounced very lightly, even under a pretext, it grants all siddhis. So the Devî should be remembered by all means; and now saluting Her, I begin my narration of the auspicious Purânic events. In days gone by there reigned a king, named Uparichara; he ruled over the Chedi country and respected the Brâhmins; he was truthful and very religious. Indra, the lord of the Devas, became very pleased by his asceticism and presented him an auspicious celestial car (going in the air) made of pearls, and crystals, helping him in doing what he liked best. Mounting on that divine chariot, that religious king used to go everywhere; he never remained on earth; he used to remain always in the atmosphere and therefore he had his name as “Uparichara Vasu” (moving in the upper regions). He had a very beautiful wife, named Girikâ; and five powerful sons, of indomitable vigour, were born to him.

The king give separate kingdoms to each of his sons and made them kings. Once on an occasion, Girikâ, the wife of the Uparichara Vasu, after her bath after the menstruation and becoming pure came to the

king and informed him of her desire to get a son; but that very day his Pitris (ancestors) requested him also to kill deer, etc., for their Srâddha (solemn obsequies performed in honour of the manes of deceased ancestors). Hearing the Pitris, the king of Chedi became somewhat anxious for his menstruous wife; but thinking his Pitris words more powerful and more worthy to be obeyed, went out on an hunting

expedition to kill deer and other animals, with the thought of his wife Girikâ in his breast. Then while he was in the forest, he remembered his Girikâ, who was equal in her beauty and loveliness to Kamalâ, and the emission of semen virile took place. He kept this semen on the leaf of a banyan tree and thought “How the above semen be not futile; my semen cannot remain unfruitful; my wife has just now passed her menstruous condition; I will send this semen to my dear wife.” Thus thinking the time ripe, he closed the semen under the leaves of the banyan tree and charging it with the mantra power (some power) addressed a falcon close by thus :– “O highly fortunate one! Take this my semen virile and go to my palace. O Beautiful one! Do this my work: take this semen virile and go quick to my palace and hand it over to my wife Girikâ for to-day is her menstruation period.”

24. Sûta said :– “O Risis! Thus saying, the king gave that leaf with the virile therein to the falcon, who is capable of going quick in the air, took it and immediately rose high up in the air.

25-26. Another falcon, seeing this one flying in the air with leaf in his beak, considered it to be some piece of flesh and fell upon him. Immediately a gallant fighting ensued between the two birds with their beaks.

27. While the fighting was going on, that leaf with semen virile fell down from their beaks on the waters of the Jumnâ river. Then the two falcons flew away as they liked.

28-39. O Risis! While the two falcons were fighting with each other, one Apsarâ (celestial nymph) named Adrikâ came to a Brâhmin, who was performing his Sandhyâ Bandanam on the banks of the Jumnâ. That beautiful woman began to bathe in the waters and took a plunge for playing sports and caught hold of the feet of the Brâhmana. The Dvija, engaged in Prânâyâma (deep breathing exercise), saw that the woman had amorous intentions, and cursed her, saying :– “As you have interrupted me in my meditation, so be a fish.”

Adrikâ, one of the best Apsarâs, thus cursed, assumed the form of a fish Safari and spent her days in the Jumnâ waters. When the semen virile of Uparichara Vasu fell from the beak of the falcon, that fish Adrikâ came

quickly and ate that and became pregnant. When ten months passed, a fisherman came there and caught in a net that fish Adrikâ. When the fish’s belly was torn asunder, two human beings instantly came out the the womb. One was a lovely boy and the other a beautiful girl. The fisherman was greatly astonished to see this. He went and informed the king of that place who was Uparichara Vasu that the boy and the girl were born of the womb of a fish. The king also was greatly surprised and accepted the boy who seemed auspicious. This Vasu’s son was highly

energetic and powerful, truthful and religious like his father and became famous by the name of the king Matsyarâj. Uparichara Vasu gave away the girl to the fisherman. This girl was named Kâli and she became famous by the name of Matsyodarî. The smell of the fish came out of her body and she was named also Matsyagandhâ. Thus the auspicious Vasu's daughter remained and grew in that fisherman's house.

The Risis said :— The beautiful Apsarâ, cursed by the Muni, turned into fish; she was afterwards cut asunder and eaten up by the fisherman. Very well! What happened afterwards to that Apsarâ? How was she freed of that curse? and how did she go back to the Heavens?

Thus questioned by the Risis, Sûta spoke as follows :— When the Apsarâ was first cursed by the Muni, she was greatly astonished; she began to weep and cry like one greatly distressed and afterwards began to praise him. The Brâhmin, seeing her weeping, took pity on her and said :— “O good one! Don't weep; I am telling you how your curse will expire. As an effect of having incurred my wrath, you will be born as a fish and when you will give birth to two human children, you will be freed of your curse.”

The Brâhmin having spoken thus, Adrikâ got a fish-body in the waters of the Jumnâ. Afterwards she gave birth to two human children and became freed of the curse when she, quitting the fish form assumed the divine form and went up to the Heavens. O Risis! The beautiful girl Matsyagandhâ thus took her birth and was nourished in the fisherman's house and grew up there. When the extraordinarily lovely girl of Vasu, Matsyagandhâ attained her youth, she continued to do all the household duties of the fisherman and remained there.

Thus ends the first chapter of the Second Skandha on the birth of Matsyagandhâ in the Mahâpurâna Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 2. ON THE BIRTH OF VYÂSA DEVA

1-10. Once on an occasion, the highly energetic Muni Parâśara went out on pilgrimage and arrived on the banks of the Yamunâ, and spoke to the religious

fisherman who was taking his food then thus :– “O fisherman! Take me on your boat and carry me to the other side of the river.” Hearing this, the fisherman spoke to the beautiful girl Matsyagandhâ :– “O beautiful smiling one! This religious ascetic intends to cross the river; so take the boat and carry him to the other bank.” Thus ordered by her father, the exceedingly beautiful Vasu girl Matsyagandhâ began to steer the boat whereon sat the Muni. Thus while the boat was sliding on the waters of the Yamunâ; the Muni ParâŚara saw the beautiful-eyed damsel Matsyagandhâ and became as if under the command of the great destiny, greatly enamoured of her. He desired to enjoy Matsyagandhâ, full of youth and beauty and with his right hand caught hold of her left hand; the blue coloured Matsya looking askance spoke out smilingly in the following words :– O knower of Dharma! What are you going to do, pierced by the arrows of Cupid? What you desire now, is it worthy of your family or your study of the Śâstras or worthy of your Tapasyâ; see, you are born in the line of VaŚistha and you are well known as of good character. O best of Brâhmins! You are quite aware that the attaining of a man-birth in this world is very rare; and over and above this the attainment of Brâhminhood is, as far as my knowledge goes, particularly difficult.

11-14. O Prince of Brâhmins! You are the foremost and best as far as your family, goodness, and learning in the Vedas and other Śâstras are concerned; you are well versed in Dharma; how is it, then, that you are going to do this act, not worthy of an ârya, though you see me possessed of this bad smell of fish throughout my body. O one of unbaffled understanding! O best of twice-born! What auspicious sign do you see in my body that you are stricken with passion on my account that you have caught hold of my hand to enjoy me? Why have you gotten your own Dharma? Thus saying, Matsyagandhâ thought within herself :– “Alas! This Brâhmin has certainly lost his brains in order to enjoy me; certainly he will be drowned just now in his attempt to enjoy me in this boat; his mind is so much agitated with the arrows of Cupid that no body, it seems, can act against his will.” Thus thinking Matsyagandhâ spoke again to the Muni :– “O highly fortunate one! Hold patience! let me first take you to the other side of the river; then you may do as you please.”

15-19. Hearing these reasonable words, the Muni let loose of her hand and took his seat on the boat and gradually got down on the other bank of the

river. But the Muni, becoming again extremely passionate caught hold of Matsyagandhâ; when the young woman spoke to ParâŚara, in front of her, shuddering :– “O best of Munis! My body is emitting very bad smell; do you not feel this? You know very well that the sexual intercourse between male and female of similar types brings in happiness and comfort.” Thus spoken to, ParâŚara made Matsyagandhâ emit sweet scent like that of musk to a distance of one Yojana (8 miles) and her

body exceedingly lovely and beautiful and, becoming extremely passionate, again caught hold of her right hand.

20-34. Then the auspicious Satyavatî addressed Parâśara Muni, resolved to enjoy her, thus :— “O Muni! Behold! all are looking at us; my father too, is there on the bank of the Yamunâ; so, O Muni! wait till night this beastly act before all is highly unsatisfactory to me. The wise persons declare it a great sin to commit sexual intercourse during day they have ordained night time as the best time of intercourse for men not the day time; the more so that many person’s eyes are in this direction. So, O intelligent one! hold on your passion for a while; for the blame pronounced by the public is horrible.” Hearing these reasonable words, the liberal minded Parâśara created, by his influence of Tapasyâ, a dense fog so that both the banks of the Yamunâ became covered with darkness. Then Matsyagandhâ gently spoke to the Muni :— “O best of Dvîjas! I am not as yet married; I am now a girl; you will go away after enjoying me; your semen virile is not fruitless; so Brâhman! What will be my fate? If I be pregnant today, what shall I say to my father? and what will be my future state? There is no doubt that, after enjoying me, you will go away; what will I do afterwards; kindly say.” Hearing these words of Matsyagandhâ, Parâśara said :— “O beloved! after you have done my pleasant duty, you will remain a girl as you are now; yet, O timid one! ask from me any boon you like; I will grant it to you.” Satyavatî then said :— “O best Brâhman, O giver of one’s honour! grant me these things :— That my father and mother do not know anything of this affair and that my virginity be again as ever the same. Also let an extraordinarily powerful energetic son be born to me like you; let this nice smell continue to remain always in my body and let my youth and beauty remain afresh and increase ever more. Hearing this, Parâśara said :— “O beautiful one! a son, very pure and holy, will be born to you, from Nârâyana’s part! his name will be famous in the three worlds. O beautiful one! never before my heart was agitated with such passion. I do not know why I have become so much passionate for you. I saw the unrivalled beauties of Apsarâs but I never lost my patience; but seeing you, I have become attracted to you; it must be under the

direction of Providence; know it certain that there must be some mysterious cause in this. However Fate is unavoidable to all; otherwise you are full of so bad smell; why shall I be fascinated by your sight? O beautiful one! your son will be famed in the three worlds; will compose the Purânas and will sub-divide the Vedas.

Thus saying, the Muni Parâśara enjoyed Matsyagandhâ, who became quite submissive; and after bathing in the Yamunâ, quickly went away. On the other hand, the chaste Satyavatî, too, became pregnant and immediately gave birth on the island of Yamunâ to a son beautiful, as if the Second Kâmadeva, the god of Love, Kâmadeva. No sooner that son, very fiery and highly potent, was born than he

devoted his mind to tapasyâ and spoke to his own mother Satyavatî thus :—“O Mother! now go wherever you like; I will also go to perform tapasyâ. O highly fortunate one; No sooner you remember me, I will come to you. O Mother! where you will have any onerous duty, remember me and I will instantly come to you. Let all good be unto you; now I go. Avoid all cares and live happily. Thus saying, Vyâsadeva went out. Matsyagandhâ, too, went back to his father. Vyâsa was named also Dvaipâyan (born in an island, a Dvîpa) in as much as Satyavatî gave birth to him in a Dvîpa island); and as he was born of Visnu’s parts, he grew up no sooner he was born.

The Muni Dvaipâyana bathed in every Tîrtha and performed the highest asceticism. Thus Dvaipâyan Vyâsa was born of ParâŚara in Satyavatî’s womb. Seeing the advent of Kali Yuga, he adorned the tree of the Vedas with many Śâkhâs (branches). It is because he expanded the Vedas many Śâkhâs, that he is denominated also as VedaVyâs; he composed eighteen Purânas, Samhitas, the excellent Mahâbhârat, subdivided the Vedas and made his disciples Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, Vaisâmpâyan, Asita, Devala and his son Śuka to study them.

Sûta said :— “O Munis! Thus I have described to you the birth of the holy Vyâsa, the son of Satyavatî and all the causes. O Munis! Do not allow any doubt enter your mind as regards his birth; for it is always advisable to take up only the good things as far as the lives of great persons and Munis are concerned. There must be some extraordinary mysterious cause owing to which Satyavatî was born of a fish, and she was first united to ParâŚara and then to Sântanu. Otherwise how can one account for the fact of the Muni ParâŚara being so much agitated by passion and why he would behave like a mean low person in the committal of a grossly blameable act? Now has been spoken the wonderful birth story of Vyâsa Deva together with all incidents, and enveloped under the great mystery. If any man hears this holy narrative, he will be freed from sins and will never fall into difficulties and will always be happy.

Thus ends the Second Chapter of the Second Skandha on the birth of Vyâsa Deva in the Mahâpurânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 3. ON THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CURSE ON GANGĀ, MAHĀBHISA AND VASUS

1-8. The Risis said :— “O Sinless Sûta! You have described to us in detail the birth of Vyâsa, of unrivalled fire, and of Satyavatî; but we have one great doubt in our minds though, O Knower of Dharma! which is not being removed by your words. O Sinless one! First, as regards the mother of Vyâsa, the all auspicious Satyavatî, we have this doubt how she came to be united to the virtuous Śantanu? The king Śantanu, of the family of Puru is a greatly religious man; how could he have married Satyavatî knowing her to be a fisherman’s daughter and born of a low family? Now say who was the first wife of Śantanu and how Bhîsma, the intelligent son of Śantanu came to be born of the parts of Vasu? O Sûta! You have told before that Bhîsma, of indomitable valour, made the Satyavatî’s son, the brave Chitrângada, king; and subsequent to his death made his younger brother Vichîtravîrya king. But when the elder brother Bhîsma, the greatly religious and beautiful was present, how was it that Chitrângada and Vichîtravîrya having been installed by Bhîsma himself could have reigned.”

9-12. Again on the demise of Vichîtravîrya, Satyavatî became very much grieved and got two sons born of her two son’s wives by Vedavyâsa? How can we explain this fact? Why did she do this? Why did she not give to Bhîsma the kingdom? Why did Bhîsma not marry? And how was it that the elder brother Vyâsa Deva, of indomitable valour, did such an irreligious act as to beget two (Goloka) sons from the wives of the brothers? Vyâsa composed the Purânas and knew everything of religion; how then did he go to other’s wives, especially, of his brother’s wives?

13-14. O Sûta! Why did Vyâsa Deva do such a hateful act, in spite of his being a Muni? The actions of Vedas are inferred from their subsequent good conducts; how can this act of Vyâsa be calculated as one amongst them? O Intelligent one! You are the disciple of Vyâsa; therefore you are the best man to solve our doubts. We all of this Dharmakshetra Naimisâranya are very eager to hear this.

15-39. At this Sûta said :— In ancient days there reigned a king named Mahâbhisa, in the family of Iksâku endowed with all the qualities of a great king; he was the foremost of all the kings, truthful and religious. That highly intelligent king performed thousand horse-sacrifices (Asva

medhas) one hundred Vâjapeya sacrifices and thereby satisfied Indra, the king of the Devas and went to Heavens. Once, on an occasion, that king went to the

abode of Brahmâ; the other gods also went there to serve Prajâpati. The great river, Gangâ Devî, too, assuming the feminine form, went to Brahmâ to serve him. Now, in the interval, violent winds arose and the clothing of Gangâ Devî went off; at this the Devas did not look at her; rather kept their faces downwards; but the king Mahâbhisa continued gazing at her. Gangâ also came to know the king and that he had become attached to her. Brahmâ, seeing that both of them are love-stricken and are shameless, became angry and cursed them immediately :— O king! you better take your birth again in the human world and practise great meritorious deeds and come again to this Heaven. Thus saying, Brahmâ looked at Gangâ, who was attached to the king, and addressed her :— “You too better go to the human world and become his wife.” Both of them, the king as well as Gangâ, came out of Brahmâ’s abode, very much grieved in their hearts. The king Mahâbhisa thought of coming to this world and reflected on the kings thereof and settled to make the king Pratîpa of Puru’s family his father. At this time the eight Vasus with their wives wandering in various places and enjoying as they liked came to the hermitage of Vaśistha. Amongst the aforesaid eight Vasus Prithu and others, one Vasu Dyau’s wife seeing Nandini, the sacrificial cow (Kâmadhenu) of Vaśistha asked her husband :— “Whose is this excellent cow that I see? Vasu then replied as follows :— “ O Beautiful one! This is Vaśistha’s cow. Whoever, be he a man or woman drinks her milk gets his longevity extended to ten thousand years and his youth never ends.” Hearing this, the Vasu’s wife said :— “There is a very beautiful comrade (Sakhî) of mine, the daughter of the Rajarsî-Uśîna in the world, of auspicious qualities. O Mahâbhîga! Kindly bring to me from Vaśistha’s hermitage that auspicious sacrificial milch cow Nandini together with her calf that yields all desires; my Sakhî will then drink her milk and be thereby free from disease, old age and become the chief amongst all mankind. Hearing thus, his wife’s word, the Vasu Dyau, though sinless, stole away together with Prithu and the other Vasus the cow Nandini in utter defiance to the self-controlled Muni Vaśistha. When the cow Nandini had been stolen, the great ascetic Vaśistha came quickly to the hermitage with abundance of fruits.

The ascetic Muni Vaśistha, not finding, in his hermitage, his cow with her calf, searched for her in many forests and caves; but he, the son of Varuna, could not find out his cow even after prolonged searches; he, then, took recourse to meditation and came to know that the Vasus had stolen the cow and became angry. He expressed :— “When the Vasus have stolen this my cow in utter defiance to my self, they must be born

amongst men.” When the religious Varuna’s son Vaśistha thus cursed the Vasus, they became very sorry and absent-minded; all of them went to Vaśistha’s hermitage and saw him there; they began to supplicate him as much as they could; and took refuge under him. Seeing the Vasus standing before him in an extremely

distressed condition, the virtuous Muni VaŚistha said :— “You all will be free from the curse within one year; but the Vasu Dyau will dwell amongst men for a long, long period as he had stolen direct my Nandini with her calf.”

40-60. While the Vasus, thus cursed, were returning, they saw on the way the chief river Gangâ Devî also cursed and therefore distressed; all of them bowed down to her simultaneously and said: “O Devî! A serious thought is troubling our minds, how can we, who live on nectar, take our birth in human wombs; so, O best river! You better be a woman and give birth to us. O Sinless one! You better be the wife of the sage King Śantanu and no sooner we be born of your womb, kindly throw us in the river Gangâ (your water). If you do thus, O Gangâ we will certainly be freed of our curse.” Gangâ Devî replied “Well; that will be.” Thus spoken, the Vasus went to their respective places; and Gangâ Devî, too, thinking on the subject again and again, went out of that place. At this time Mahâbhisa became born as a son of the king Pratîpa and became known as Śantanu. He was exceedingly religious and true to his promise. One day while the King Pratîpa was praising the Sûrya Devî (the sun) of unequalled energy, Gangâ Devî assumed an extraordinarily beautiful feminine form and came out of the waters and sat on the right thigh, resembling like a sâl tree, of the king Pratîpa. The sage king Pratîpa spoke out to the lady sitting on his right thigh, thus :— “O beautiful faced one! Why, unasked, have you sat on my auspicious right thigh?” The lovely Gangâ then replied :— “Hear why I have sat here. O best of Kurus! O king! Becoming attached to you, I have sat on your thigh; so please accept me.” At this the king Pratîpa spoke to the beautiful lady, full of youth and beauty, “I never go, simply out of passion to another’s wife. There is another point; you have sat on my right thigh; that is the seat of sons and son’s wives; so, when my desired son will be born, you will then, be my son’s wife. And certainly, by your good will, my son will be born.” The lady, of divine form, said, Well; that will be done! and went away. The king returned to his palace, thinking of the lady. After some time, he had a son born to him and when the son attained his teens, the king desired to lead a forest life and communicated this matter to his son. He said also, if the aforesaid beautifully smiling girl comes to you to marry, then marry her. And I am also ordering you not to question her anything “who are you” and so forth. If you take her as your legal wife, you will certainly be happy. Thus

saying to his son, the king Pratîpa handed over all his kingdom to his son and gladly retired into the forest. The king practised tapasyâ in the forest and worshipped Ambikâ; on quitting his mortal coil, he went by his sheer merit to the Heavens. The highly energetic king Śantanu, on getting his kingdom, began to administer justice according to the laws of Dharma and governed his subjects.

Thus ends the third Chapter of the Second Skandha on the description of the curse

on Gangâ, Mahâbhisa and Vasus in the Mâhapurânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 4. ON THE BIRTH OF THE VASUS

1-8. Sûta said :- On the king Pratîpa, ascending to the Heavens, the truly hero-king Śantanu went out a hunting tigers and other forest animals. Once, while he was roaming in a wild wilderness, on the banks of the Ganges, he saw a fawn-eyed well decorated beautiful woman. No sooner the king Śantanu saw her than he became addicted to her and thought within himself thus :- “Certainly my father spoke of this beautiful faced woman who is looking like a second Laksmî, endowed with beauty and youth.” The king could not rest satisfied simply with seeing the lotus-like face. The hairs on his body stood on their ends and his heart was very much attracted to her. Gangâ Devî, too, knew him to be the king Mahâbhisa and became, in her turn, very much attached to him. She then went smiling towards the king. Seeing the blue-coloured lady looking askance at him, the king became very happy and consoled her in sweet words and said :- “O, one of beautiful thighs! Are you Devî; Mânusî (human kind) Gandharvî; Yakshî, the daughter of Nâgas (serpents), or a celestial nymph? Whoever you may be, O beautiful one! be my wife; your sweet smiles, it seems, are brimful of love; so be my legal wife to-day.”

9-26. Sûta said :- The king Śantanu could not recognise the lady to be Gangâ; but Gangâ knew that he is the king Mahâbhisa and is born as Śantanu. Hearing the above words of the king, Gangâ, out of her previous affections, spoke out to the king, smiling :- “O king! I know that you are the son of the king Pratîpa. Behold! Though it is inevitable that woman will get their husbands, yet who is that beautiful lady that does not husband according to her liking and qualifications? But I can take you as my husband, if you make a certain promise to me. Hear my resolve afterwards I will marry you. O king! Whatever I will do, be it good or bad, auspicious or inauspicious, you must not hinder or interrupt me

nor ever say that is not to your liking and satisfaction. Whenever you will break this my resolve, I will instantly quit you and go to another place wherever I like. The king Śantanu, then, said :- “Well! That will be” and promised to the above effect; then Gangâ Devî recollected within herself Vasu’s words and thought of the

attachment of the king Mahābhīṣa and accepted Śāntanu as her husband. Thus married to the king Śāntanu, the beautiful Gangā in human form went to his abode. The king, on having got possession of her, began to enjoy in pleasant gardens. The lady, too, appreciated his mental feelings and began to serve him to his satisfaction. Thus many years elapsed in lovely enjoyments and intercourses between the couple who looked like Indra and his pair Sachī; and they did not feel at all how the time passed. The lady endowed with all qualities and the clever king, well-versed in the art of loving, began to enjoy incessantly like Laksmī and Nārāyaṇa, in their divine palace.

Thus many years passed when the lovely eyed lady became pregnant of the king Śāntanu's sperm and, in due time, gave birth to a son who was a Vasu. No sooner the son was born than Gangā Devī threw it in the waters of the Ganges. Thus the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh sons were thrown successively on the waters. Then the king became very anxious and thought within himself :— "What am I to do now? How my family be preserved? This my wife, incarnate of sin, has killed my seven sons; if I now desist her, she will instantly leave me and go away. Now this is the eighth pregnancy as desired by me. Now if I do not interrupt her, she will certainly throw my son in the Ganges. Whether a son will be born again or not is doubtful; and even if that be born, it is doubtful whether she will preserve that child; now what am I to do in this doubtful point? However I will try my best to continue the thread of my family line."

27-46. Now, in due time, the Vasu who, having been influenced by his wife had stolen Vaśīṣṭha's cow Nandini, became born as the eighth son of Gangā Devī; the king Śāntanu, seeing this son fell unto Gangā's feet and said :— "O thin-bodied woman! I pray to you to give my life to-day; better nourish this my one son. O beautiful one! You killed in succession my seven exceedingly beautiful sons. O one of beautiful hips! I now fall at your feet. O beautiful one! save the life of this child of mine. If you ask from me any other thing to day, even that be very rare, I will give it to you; but you better now keep the thread of my family line. The Pundits, versed in the Vedas, say that he who has no issues cannot go to Heaven; so, O Beautiful one! To-day I pray to you to keep the life of this my eighth son." Though thus spoken by Śāntanu,

Gangā Devī was eager to take away the son to throw in the waters; the king became very sorrowful and angrily spoke out "O vile and vicious woman! What are you going to do? Do you not fear hell! of what villain are you the daughter, that you are always doing this vicious deed? O Sinner! go away wherever you will or remain here as you like, it matters little; but my son will remain here. When you attempt to bring my family to extinction, what use is there in living with you?" When the king thus spoke to the woman who was ready to take away the son she

angrily spoke as follows :— O King! When you have acted against my promise, my word is broken and my connection with you has stopped from to-day. Therefore I will take this son to the forest, where I will nourish him. I am Gangâ; to fulfil God's work I have come here. The high-souled Vaśistha cursed before the eight Vasus :— “Better be born as men”; they became very anxious; and seeing me they prayed :— “O Sinless one! let you be mother of us all.” O best of kings! I granted them what they desired; and then for the purpose of serving god's ends, I became your wife. Know this my history. The seven Vasus already were born and were freed; now this is the last Vasu and he will remain here for sometime as your son. O Śantanu! now take this son offered by Gangâ. Know this to be the Deva Vasu and enjoy the pleasure of having a son. O highly fortunate one! This son will be famous by the name of Gângeya (Gangâ's son) and will be the most powerful of all. O King! To-day I will take this son to the place where I chose you as my husband; I will nourish him and when he attains his youth, I will return him to you. For, this son, if deprived of mother, will not be happy nor will he live.” Thus saying, Gangâ vanished with the son; the King Śantanu became very sorrowful and passed away his time in his palace. The king thought always of the separation from his wife and son and thus painfully governed his kingdom.

47-69. Thus some time passed on, when, once on an occasion, the king Śantanu went out a hunting and killed, with arrows, buffaloes, boar, and other wild animals and came to the banks of the Ganges. Here he saw with great wonder that a boy was playing with a great bow and was shooting arrows after arrows. The king's attention was more attracted towards the boy, but whether that boy was his or not, did not at all come to his mind. Looking at his extraordinary feats, his agility in shooting arrows with ease and quickness, his learning that can have no equal and his beautiful form, as if of Cupid, he became greatly surprised and asked him :— “O Sinless one! whose son are you?” The hero boy did not reply anything but went away shooting his arrows. The king thought within himself “Who is this boy? Whose son is he? What to do now? To whom

shall I go now?” Thus pondering, he recollected within himself and began to recite verses in praise of Gangâ; Gangâ, assuming her beautiful form as before, became visible to the king. Seeing her, the king said :— “O Gangâ! Who is this boy that has just gone? Will you show him once more to me now?” Hearing these words of Śantanu, Gangâ said :— “O king of kings! He is your son, he is that eighth Vasu. So long I have nourished him and now I hand him over to you. O Suvrata! This is the great ascetic Gângeya. He is the illustrious scion of your family. The glory of your line will be enhanced. I have taught him the whole science of archery. This pure son of yours dwelt in the hermitage of Vaśistha and has become versed in all the Vidyâs and skilled in all the actions. Your this son knows everything that Jamadgni Paraśurâm knew. So, O king of kings! Take now

your son and be happy. Thus saying, Gangâ gave him his son and vanished; the king also became very glad and embraced his son; he smelled his head and took him to his chariot and drove towards his own city. On returning to Hastinâpur, the king held a great festival (utsab) in honor of the arrival of his son; he called all his astrologers and enquired what day was auspicious. He then called all his subjects and ministers and installed Gângeya as the Crown Prince. The religious Śantanu became very happy on making Gângeya, the Crown Prince; he forgot the pains due to Gangâ's bereavement. Sûta said :— “Thus I have described to you the cause of the curse on Vasus, the birth of Bhîsma from the womb of Gangâ, the union of Gangâ and Śantanu, etc., He who hears in this world this holy story of Gangâ's birth and the birth of the Vasu, is freed of all sins and gets mukti. O Munis! I have described these meritorious holy accounts, as I heard from the mouth of Vyâsa. Any body who hears this holy Śrîmad Bhâgavatam, endowed with five characteristics and filled with various anecdotes, that came out of the mouth of Vyâsa, finds all his sins destroyed and attains peace and blessedness. O Munis! Thus has been described completely to you this holy history.

Thus ends the fourth Chapter on the birth of the Vasus in the Mahâpurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 5. ON THE MARRIAGE OF SATYAVATÎ

1-20. The Risis said :— “O son of Lomaharsana, O Sûta; you have described to us how the eight Vasus, cursed by Vaśîstha, took their birth and how Bhîsma was born. O knower of Dharma! Now describe to us in detail how the greatly religious king Śantanu married the auspicious Yojanagandhâ, the chaste Satyavatî, the mother of Vyâsa,

knowing full well that she was a fisherman's daughter? O Suvrata! Remove our this doubt. Sûta then said :— The sage king Śantanu always used to go to forests on hunting expeditions, with his heart addicted to hunting buffaloes, deer and various other wild animals.

Thus, for four years that king went out a hunting, with his son Bhîsma, deer and

other wild animals and got the highest happiness as Mahâdeva finds in company with Kârtikeya. Once, on an occasion, while he was shooting arrows at rhinoceros and boar, etc., he went so far as to reach a forest on the banks of the Yamunâ, the chief of the rivers. There he began to smell an excellent nice smell that could not be described in words; he tried to find out the source and wandered here and there, and on all sides of the forest; and thought that this enchanting smell was not that of Mandâra flowers, musk, champaka nor that of Mâlatî nor that of Ketaki flower; the air was blowing saturated with peculiar fragrant smell that he never experienced before. Thus thinking of that smell, the king Śantanu, being enchanted with that, followed to its source in that forest. At last he came to a spot on the banks of the Yamunâ the chief of the rivers, where a very beautiful girl, calm and quiet and with feminine gestures and posture amorous, lovely but ill-clad, was sitting; and he found out that the above beautiful smell was coming out of her body. The form of the lady was extremely beautiful; the smell was very wonderful, and captivating the hearts of all; her age then entered to youth and she was very auspicious. The king was greatly surprised and was eager to know who the lady was; whence she had come; whether she was a Deva girl, or a human or a Gandarbha daughter or a Nâga daughter? But, being unable to come to a definite conclusion and becoming passionate, he remembered Gangâ and asked that lady sitting on the bank of the Yumnâ, thus :— “O dear! Who are you? Whose daughter are you? Why are you alone in this lovely forest? O beautiful eyed! Are you married? Or are you as yet unmarried? So answer to all these. O lovely eyed one! Seeing your lovely enchanting form I am become extremely passionate. So, O dear! Describe in detail to me, who are you? and what do you intend to do?” When the king spoke thus the lotus eyed nice-teethed lady replied as follows :— “O king! Know me as a fisherman’s daughter and I am completely under my father’s command. O king of kings! For Dharma’s sake I carry ferry across this Yumnâ river. My father has gone to-day to our house. O Master of wealth! Thus I have spoken truth to you.” Thus saying the lady desisted; the passionate king then spoke to her :— “I am the foremost hero of the Kuru family; so choose me as your husband; then your this youth will not go in vain.

21-32. O fawn-eyed one! I have no other wife existing; so you will be my legal wife. O Dear! Passion is giving much pains to me; therefore I am now become your obedient servant for ever. O Beloved! My former dear wife has abandoned me and gone away; but I have not married since then. Now seeing you beautiful, in all respects, I cannot bring my mind under control.”

Hearing these nectar-like beautiful words of the king, the sweet scented fisherman’s daughter, though also turned extremely passionate, held patience and exclaimed :— “O king! I also desire that which you have expressed; I am of opinion to act according to your wishes. But, what am I to do? I am not dependent. You are

to know this. My father alone can give me in marriage to you. So better ask my father for me. Though I am a fisherman's daughter, still I am not wanton and wilful. I am always obedient to my father; if my father wills, you can marry me. And I will be obedient to you. O king! The god of love is tormenting me, who is endowed with youth; he does not torment you so much. Still I must regard my family manners and customs coming down from ancient times. I must hold my patience." Sûta said :— Thus passionately pleased with these fascinating words of the lady, the king went to the fisherman's house for the lady. Seeing the king coming, the fisherman was greatly bewildered and astonished and bowed down with great devotion and said :— "O King! I am Thy servant. I am blessed by Thy presence. O great King! Now be graciously pleased to order me the cause of Thy arrival." Hearing the fisherman's words, the King said :— "O sinless one! This I tell you truly that if you give me your daughter in marriage I will certainly make her my legal wife." The fisherman replied :— "O king! What must be given ever, how can I say that is not to be given. Therefore if Thou askest for my daughter, I will certainly give her to Thee. But, O great King! Thou wilt have to make her son, the king of Thy kingdom; no other son of Thine could be king, after Thy absence."

33-40. Hearing these words of the fisherman, the king Śantanu became very anxious. He remembered Gângeya and could not speak anything. He, being sick with love anxiously returned home; but he abandoned bathing, fooding, sleeping, etc. At this, the son Gângeya Bhîsma whose vow was equal to that of the gods, marking that the king was being troubled with some thought, went to him and asked why he was anxious :— "O king! Say truly what is your anxiety; who is your enemy that is not conquered; whom do you want to bring under your control? O king! What use is there of having a son who does

not understand the difficulties of his father, or does not try to remove these difficulties. A son can be called really the son, who is born to repay the debts incurred by him in previous births; there is no manner of discussion in this. See, Raghu's son Dâsarathî Râm abandoned his kingdom under the orders of his father and repaired to Chitrakûta forest with his brother Laksman and wife Sîtâ. The son of king Haris Chandra, Rohîta, ready to repay the debt of his father and sold by his father, worked as a servant at a Brâhmana's house. So the famous ŚunahŚephah, sold by his high souled father Ajigarta was tied for sacrifice in a sacrificial post; but he was afterwards freed by the Gâdhi's son ViŚvâmitra.

41-59. It is well known that, in ancient days, the Jamadagni's son ParaŚurâm cut off his mother's head under the orders of his father. He considered the father's words more important, and hence could do such an unjust act. O king! This my body is at your disposal; I can certainly do what you order me to do. So say

what am I to do? as long as I am living, you need not express any sorrow; if you permit, I will do what is even hardly practicable to do. O king! Say why you are anxious; I will remove that at once with this bow in my hand. If my body goes in carrying your mandate know that your desire will be fructified. Fie to that son, who, being capable, is averse to do what his father desires! What use is there in having a son who does not remove the cause of his father's anxiety? Hearing the words of the son, the king Śantanu felt much ashamed in his heart and said :— "O son! This is now my gravest care that you are my only son; besides you are a hero very powerful, honoured and never showing your back in battles; therefore, if, out of ill-luck you become dead in some battlefield, I will become issueless; under such circumstances what am I to do? So, O son! My life is fruitless when I have got only one son; this is my gravest care; therefore I am sorry. O son! I have no other cares that I can mention to you." Hearing these words of the father, Gângeya called the old ministers and said that the king was too ashamed to speak out to me the real matter; so I ask you all to know exactly the king's cares and communicate them to me as they are; I can carry them out, without any hitch, then. At these Bhîsma's words, the ministers went to the king, and learned the true cause, and spoke to Bhîsma; learning this, he began to think what ought to be done.

The Gangâ's son Bhîsma, then, accompanied by the ministers, quickly went to the house of the fisherman, and with words of humility and affection, spoke :— "O tormentor of foes! I pray to you to give your beautiful daughter in marriage to my father. Your daughter will

be my mother and I will be her servant." The fisherman, then, said :— "O highly lucky prince! Then the king's son will not be able to become king, in your presence; so kindly marry yourself my daughter." At this Bhîsma again said :— Let your daughter be my mother; I will never accept the kingdom. The son of your daughter will, no doubt, become king. The fisherman said :— "I know your words are true; but if your son be powerful, he can take forcibly the kingdom for himself." At this Bhîsma again said :— "O Sire! Know my words as true; I will never marry; from to-day I have accepted this difficult vow." Sûta said :— Hearing this firm resolve of Bhîsma; the fisherman gave over his beautiful daughter to the king Śantanu. Thus Śantanu married the dear Satyavatî; but he was quite unaware of the wonderful birth of Vyâsa Deva.

Thus ends the fifth Chapter of the second Skandha on the marriage of Satyavatî in the Mahâpurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 6. ON THE BIRTH OF THE PÂNDAVAS

1-12. Sûta said :Thus Śantanu married Satyavatî; two sons were born to her and they died in course of time. Out of Vyâsa Deva's semen, Dhritarâstra was born. Ambikâ Devî, the mother of Dhritarâstra closed her eyes on seeing Veda Vyâsa; hence Dhritarâstra was born blind. Seeing Dhritarâstra blind Satyavatî asked Vyâsa to go to Ambâlikâ (Pându's mother); the princess Ambâlikâ, mother of Pându turned pale at the sight of Vyâsa; hence her son became of a pale colour out of Vyâsa's wrath. Hence the name of the son was Pându. Next the maid servant, expert in the science of amorous pleasures, satisfied Vyâsa; hence her son Vidura was born of Dharma's part and became truthful and holy. Though Pându was younger, the ministers installed him on the throne. Dhritarâstra could not become king, as he was blind. By the permission of Bhîsma the powerful Pându obtained the sovereignty; and the intelligent Vidura became his minister. Dhritarâstra had two wives Gândhârî and Sauvali; this Sauvali was Vaishyâ; she was engaged in the household affairs. The king Pându had two wives, too; the first was Kuntî, the daughter of Sûrasena; and the other was Mâdri, the daughter of the Madra king. Gândhârî gave birth to one hundred beautiful sons; VaiŚyâ Sauvali gave birth to one beautiful son named Yuyutsu. While Kuntî was a virgin, she gave birth, through the medium of the Sun, the lovely Karna; next he became the wife of Pându. Hearing this, the Risis said :— "O Muni Sûta! What are you saying ? First Kuntî brought forth a child and afterwards she was married to Pându; this is wonderful, indeed! How was Karna, born of Kuntî, unmarried? and how came Kuntî to be married afterwards? describe all these in detail."

13-35. Sûta then said :— "O Dvija! While Sûrasena's daughter Kuntî was a virgin girl, the king Kuntibhoja asked for Kuntî that she might become her girl and Sûrasena gave her to the king Kuntibhoja who brought up this beautifully smiling girl. He put to her the service of Agni of Agnihotra. Once, on an occasion, Durvâsâ Muni, engaged in the vow, lasting for four months, came there; Kuntî served him during that period; the Muni became greatly pleased and gave her a very auspicious, mantra, by virtue of which any Deva, when called upon by that mantra will come to Kuntî and satisfy her desires. When the Muni went away, Kuntî, remaining in her house, wanted to test the accuracy of the mantra and asked within herself "What Devatâ to call upon." Seeing the God Sûrya had arisen in the sky, Kuntî uttered the Mantra and invoked him. The Sun, then, assuming an excellent human form, came down from the Heavens and appeared before Kuntî in

the same room. Seeing the Deva Sun, Kunti became greatly surprised and began to shudder and instantly became endowed with the inherent natural quality of passion (had menstruation). The beautiful-eyed Kunti, with folded palm; spoke to Sûrya Deva standing before :- “I am highly pleased to-day seeing Thy form; now go back to Thy sphere.”

Sûrya Deva said :- “O Kunti! What for you called me, by virtue of the Mantra? Calling me, why do you not worship me, standing before you? O beautiful blue one! Seeing you, I have become passionate; so come to me. By means of the mantra, you have made me your subservient so take me for intercourse.” Hearing this, Kunti said :- “O Witness of all! O knower of Dharma! You know that I am a virgin girl. O Suvrata! I bow down to you; I am a family daughter; so do not speak ill to me.” Sûrya then said :- “If I go away in vain, I will be an object of great shame, and, no doubt, will be laughed amongst the gods; So, O Kunti! If you do not satisfy me, I will immediately curse you and the Brâhmin who has given you this mantra. O Beautiful one! If you satisfy me, your virginity will remain; no body will come to know and there will be born a son to you, exactly like me.” Thus saying Sûrya Deva enjoyed the bashful Kunti, with her mind attracted towards him; He granted her the desired boons and went away. The beautiful Kunti became pregnant and began to remain in a house, under great secrecy. Only the dear nurse knew that; her mother or any other person was quite unaware of the fact. In time, a very beautiful son like the second Sun and Kârtikeya, decked with a lovely Kavacha coat of mail and two ear-rings, was born there. Then the nurse caught hold

of the hand of the bashful Kunti and said :- “O Charming one! What care can you possibly have as long as I am living.” Kunti then, placed the son in a box and said :- “O son! What shall I do? Being afraid of shame, I am leaving you, though you are dear to me as my life itself! I am exceedingly fortunate that I am casting aside this all auspicious son. May the attributeless Bhâgavatî Ambikâ, the World Mother and the Lady of all, endowed with attributes, protect Thee! May Kâtyâyani, the giver of all desires, feed you with Her milk! Alas! I am quitting you, born of Sûrya’s semen in this solitary forest like a vitiated wanton woman. I do not know, when shall I see your lotus like beautiful face, dearest to me like my self. Alas! I never worshipped in my former birth Śivânî, the mother of the three worlds; I never meditated Her lotus like feet, the Giver of all happiness; hence I am so very unfortunate. O Dear son! I must perform great tapasyâ to expiate for this terrible sin, that I knowingly commit in relinquishing you in the forest.”

36-48. Sûta said :- Thus saying to the son within the casket, Kunti gave over that to the hands of her nurse, terrified, lest some one might see her. Kunti then bathed and remained with a fearful heart in her father’s house. A carpenter (charioteer?) named Adhiratha got accidentally that casket floating in the Ganges.

The carpenter's wife Râdhâ, prayed for the son and nourished him under her care. Thus nourished in the carpenter's house, the famous Kunti's son Karna became a very powerful warrior. The king Pându then married Kunti in a Svayamvara, a marriage in which the girl chooses her husband from among a number of suitors, assembled together. And the all auspicious daughter of the king of Madra became also the second wife of Pându. Once, on an occasion, the powerful Pându, while hunting in the forest killed a Muni, in the form of a deer, engaged in the act of co-habitation, thinking it to be a deer. The dying Muni became inflated with wrath, cursed Pându :— "If you co-habit, certainly you will die." Thus cursed by the Muni, Pându became very sorrowful and abandoned his kingdom and began to live in the forest. O Munis! His two wives Kuntî and Mâdrî, followed their husband as chaste women do, to serve him in the forest. Dwelling in the hermitage of the Munis, Pându listened to the Dharma Śâstras and practised severe penance. Once while he was listening to the religious discourses of the Munis, he heard unmistakeably the Munis telling that the man who is sonless can never go to the Heavens; so he must get a son somehow or other. The Pundits declare that the sons born of the father's semen, the sons born of their daughters, the Ksettraja, the Goloka, the Kunda, the Sahoda, the Kânîna, the Krîta¹, one obtained in the forest, or one offered by another father, unable to nourish his son, all are entitled to inherit the wealth of the father; but the sons, enumerated successively are more and more inferior.

49-52. Hearing this, Pându spoke to the lotus-eyed Kunti to procreate sons for him soon by a great ascetic Muni :— "By my order, you will not incur any sin in doing this. I heard that in ancient times the high souled kin Saudâsa got son from VaŚistha." Kunti, then spoke to the king :— "O Lord! I know one Siddha mantra; it was given to me before by the Muni Durvâsâ. Whichever Devatâ I will invoke by that Mantra, he will instantly come to my side, controlled by that Mantra."

53-71. At the request of the husband, Kuntî invoked Dharma, the best of the Devas; and after being impregnated by him, gave birth to Yudhisthira. Then she got through Pavana Deva, the son Vrikodara; and through Indra the Lord of the Devas, Arjuna. Thus, in every year, Kunti gave birth to one son and so in three years she gave birth to three very powerful and mighty sons. At this Mdri spoke to her husband :— "O king, the best of the Kurus! What shall I do now? Kindly suggest to me the means of procreating sons; O Lord, remove my pain." Pându asked Kunti for this; Kunti, moved with pity, gave her the mantra, so that she might get one son. Then the beautiful Mâdrî, invoked the twin AŚvin under the

¹N.B.—*Ksettraja* - of a son, the off spring of the wife by a kinsman appointed to procreate issue to the husband. *Goloka* - Bastard child of a widow. *Kunda* - a child born in adultery. *Sahoda* - the son of a woman pregnant at the time of marriage. *Kânîna* - the son born of a young and unmarried woman. *Krîta* - purchased.

advice of her husband and got a pair of twins Nakula and Sahadeva through them. O Munis! Thus five Pândavas were born successively in every following year to the wives of Pându by the seed of the Devas. Once on a time Pându, whose end was drawing nigh became very passionate at the sight of Mâdrî in that solitary hermitage. He, though forbidden repeatedly by Mâdri, warmly embraced her, as if dictated by the great destroyer, and fell to the ground. As the creeper falls down when the tree is felled, so Mâdrî dropped on the ground and began to cry violently. Having heard the wailings of Mâdrî, Kunti and the five sons of Pându came there weeping and crying; a tumult then ensued and the great Munis also appeared on the scene. Then those Munis, practising great vows, knew that Pându was dead and performed duly, on the banks of the Ganges, the ceremony of burning the dead.

At that time Mâdri gave over to Kunti the charge of her two sons and followed the Satî practice along with her husband to go to Satyaloka.

The Munis, then, performed Tarpana ceremonies in honour of Pându and Mâdri and took Kunti and the five sons to Hastinâpur. Knowing that Kunti has come, Bhîsma, Vidura and the relatives of Dhritarâstra within the city, all came to Kunti. They all asked Kunti :- “O beautiful one! Whose are these five sons?” Kunti, then, remembered the curse on Pându and sorrowfully expressed :- “ These are the Deva’s sons born in Kuru family.” In order to convince the people assembled there, Kunti invoked the Devas who came in the celestial space above and said :- “Yes, these are the sons born of our seeds.” Bhîsma, then, paid respect to the words of the Devas and honoured duly the boys. Bhîsma then took the five sons and Pându’s wife to Hastinâ and gladly nourished them. O Munis! The sons of Prithâ were thus born and nourished by Bhîsma.

Thus ends the sixth chapter of the second Adhyâya on the birth of the Pândavas in the Mahâpurânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam.

CHAPTER 7. ON SHEWING THE DEPARTED ONES

Sûta said :- The chaste Draupadi was the common wife of all the five very beautiful sons of Kunti; and she bore five sons, one to every husband. Arjuna had one

wife more; she was Subhadrâ, the sister of Śrî Krisna. By the order of Śrî Krisna, Arjuna stole her away (took her by force). The great hero Abhimanyu was born of Subhadrâ. This Abhimanyu and the five sons of Draupadi were killed in battle. Abhimanyu's wife Uttarâ was the charming daughter of the king Virât. She gave birth to one dead child, after all the boys, the descendants of the family were extinct. The above child died out of the arrows of Aśvatthâmâ. The extraordinarily powerful Śrî Krisna Himself made alive again this his sister's dead grandson. As this son was born after the family had become extinct, he became known in the world by the name of Parîksit. When the sons were all destroyed, Dhritarâstra became very sorry, and, tormented by the arrow-like words of Bhîma, remained in the kingdom of the Pândavas. Gândharî, too, exceedingly distressed on the bereavement of the sons, remained there also. Yudhisthira, day and night, served Dhritarâstra and Gândhârî. The greatly religious Vidura always used to console, by the advice of Yudhisthira, his brother Dhritarâstra, who possessed the eye of wisdom and he remained by his brother's side. Dharma's son Yudhisthira used to serve his uncle Dhritarâstra in such a way as he might forget the pain of the death of his sons. But Bhîma used to pierce his heart by

his arrow-like words that he pronounced so loud as to reach the ears of the old king Dhritarâstra. Bhîma used to say :— “In the battle field I killed all the sons, of the wicked blind king (Dhritarâstra) and it was I that sucked well and drunk, full to the brim, the blood of the heart of DuhŚâsana. Now this blind king eats shamelessly like a crow and a dog, the mass of food (Pinda) given by me, and thus is bearing uselessly the burden of life. Daily Bhîma used to tell, thus, harsh words to him; whereas the religious Yudhîsthira used to console him, saying “Bhîma is a quite illiterate brute” and so forth. The king Dhritarâstra remained there with a grieved heart for eighteen years; the one day he proposed to the Dharma's son Yudhîsthira about his intention to dwell in forest thus :— “To-day I wish to perform Tarpanas in the names my sons. True it is, that Bhîma performed the funeral obsequies of them all; but, having in view of the former enmity, he did not do anything for my sons. If you give me some money, I will, then, perform the funeral obsequies of my sons and then retire to the forest to perform tapasyâ that I can go to Heaven.” Vidura also asked Yudhîsthira privately pay to Dhritarâshtra the sum that he wanted; Yudhîsthira also intended to pay the required money. Then Yudhîsthira, the lord of the world call his younger brothers and addressed them as follows :— “O highly fortunate ones! Our revered uncle is desirous to perform the funeral obsequies of his sons; so we will have to give him some money for the purpose.” Hearing these words of his elder brother of indomitable valour, Pavana's son, the mighty armed Bhîma became very angry and spoke out follows :— “O highly lucky one! Is it that we will have to give wealth for the spiritual benefit of Duryodhana and others? What a great stupidity can there be than the

fact that such a malevolent blind king is deriving so great happiness at your hands? O rya! It is by your bad counsel that we suffered endless troubles in the forest and the extremely good Draupadi was brought before the public in the hall by DuhŚâsana. O one of good vows! It is for your satisfaction alone that we, though we were very mighty, had to remain in the house of Matsya Râj Virât as servants. Had you not been our elder brother and not been addicted to the gambling, would it have been possible I, who killed Jarâsandha, would have been a cook to Virât Râj! Never we had been put to so great a trouble! Never would the mighty armed Arjuna, the Vâsava's son, have acted the part of an actress (a dancer), dressing himself in a female garb, under the name Vrihannalâ. Alas! What more painful could there be by assuming a human birth that the hands of Arjuna, that wielded always the Gândîva bow, would have worn bracelets befitting a woman? I would have been happy then

had I, seeing the braid of hair on Arjuna's head and the collyrium in his eyes, cut off the head of Dhritarâstra!

O Lord of the earth! Without asking you, I set fire on the house, named Jatugriha (a lac-house, as built by Duryodhana in order to burn up the Pândavas) and therefore the vicious Virochana, who wanted to burn us, was himself burnt up. Again, O Lord of men! similarly, without asking you, I slew Kichaka; this is now the one thing I regret that I could not have killed in the same way the sons of Dhritarâstra before the public hall. O king of kings! It was simply your stupidity that you liberated Duryodhana and other sons, the great enemies of the Gandarbhas, when they had been imprisoned by them. Again to-day you are willing to give wealth for the spiritual benefit of those Duryodhana and others! But, O Lord of the earth, I would never give wealth, even if you request me specially to do this.

Thus saying, Bhîma went away. Dharma's son Yudhisthira then consulted with the other three brothers and gave abundance of wealth to Dhritarâstra. With this sum, the Ambikâ's son Dhritarâstra duly performed the Srâdh ceremony of his sons and gave away lots of things to the Brâhmanas. The king Dhritarâstra, thus performing all the funeral obsequies, became ready to go early to the forest with Gândhârî, Kunti and Vidura. By the help of Sanjaya, the highly intelligent Dhritarâstra became informed of the roads of the forest, and then went out of the house. Sûrasena's daughter Kunti, though stopped by her sons, followed them. Bhîma and other Kauravas went along with them weeping up to the banks of the Ganges and thence returned to Hastinâpura.

The ascetics went to the auspicious Śatayûpa hermitage on the banks of the Ganges and building a hut practised tapasyâ with their hearts concentrated. Thus six years elapsed when Yudhisthira, troubled by their bereavements, said to his younger

brothers :— “ I dreamt that our mother Kunti got very lean and thin. Now my mind wants bitterly to see mother, uncle, aunt, the high souled Vidura and the highly intelligent Sanjaya. If you approve, I want to go to there.” Then the five brothers, Pându’s sons, became desirous to see Kunti, and taking with them Draupadî, Subhadrâ, Uttarâ, and other persons went to the Satayûpa hermitage and saw the persons there; but not seeing Vidura, Yudhisthira asked :— “Where is Vidura?” Hearing this Dhritarâstra said :— “Vidura has taken up Vairâgyam (dispassion) and has gone alone to a solitary place and is meditating in his heart the eternal Brahmâ.” Next day while the king Yudhisthira was walking along the banks of the Ganges, he saw in the forest Vidura, engaged in his vow and become lean and thin by his tapasyâ; he then exclaimed :— “I am the king Yudhisthira;

I am saluting you.” The holy Vidura heard and remained motionless like a log of wood. Within an instant a wonderful halo came out of Vidura’s face and entered the mouth of Yudhisthira, both of them being Dharma’s parts. Vidura then died; Yudhisthira expressed great sorrow. When the Vidura’s body was going to be set on fire, a celestial voice was heard :—“O king! He was very wise; so he ought not to be burnt; you can go away as you like.” Hearing this, Yudhisthira bathed in the pure Ganges and returned to the Aśrama and informed everything in detail to Dhritarâstra. While the Pândavas were staying in the hermitage with the other inhabitants of the city, Vedavyâsa, Nârada, and other high-souled Munis came there to Yudhisthira. Kunti then spoke to the auspicious Vyâsa :— “O Krisna! I saw my son Karna, only just when he was born; my mind is being very much tormented for him; so, O great ascetic! Show him once to me. O highly fortunate One! You alone can do this; so O Lord! Satisfy my heart’s desire.” Gândhârî said :— “O Muni! I did not see while Duryodhan went to battle; so, O Muni! Show me Duryodhana with his younger brothers.” Subhadrâ said :— “O Omniscient one! I want very much to see the great hero Abhimanyu, dearer to me than my life even; O great ascetic! Show him once to me.” (33-57.)

Sûta said :— Satyavatî’s son Vyâsa Deva, hearing their words, held Prânâyama (deep breathing exercise) and meditated on the eternal Devî, the force of Brahmâ. When the evening time came, the Muni invited Yudhisthira and all others to the banks of the Ganges. He then bathed in the Ganges and began to chant hymns in praise of the Devî Brahmâmâyî Prakriti, resting on the Purusa, the Dweller in the Mani Dvîpa, with attributes, at the same time transcending them, thus :— “O Devî! When Brahmâ was not, Visnu was not, Maheśvara was not, nor when existing Indra, Varuna, Kuvera, Yama, and Agnî, Thou alone existed then; my salutation to Thee.

When there existed not water, Vâyû, ether, earth and their Gunas, taste, smell, etc., when there were no senses, mind, Buddhi, Ahamkâra; when there existed no

Sun, Moon nor anything, Thou alone existed then; so, O Devî! I bow down again and again to Thee. O Mother! Thou holdest all these visible Jîva lokas in the cosmic Hiranyagarbha; again Thou bringest this Hiranyagarbha, the sum-total of Linga Sarîras (the subtle bodies), with the Gunas Sattva, Rajas and Tamas to a state of equilibrium named Sâmyâvasthâ and remainest quite independent and apart for a Kalpa period. At that time even those that are possessed of the power of great discrimination and dispassion cannot fathom Thy nature. O Mother! These persons are praying to me to see their dead

ones; but I am quite incapable to do that. So kindly shew them their departed ones early.” While Vyâsa praised thus the Devî, the Devî Mahâmâyâ, the Lady of the Universe, of the nature of Universal Consciousness called all the departed ones from the Heavens and showed them to their relatives. Then Kunti, Gândhârî, Subhadrâ, Uttarâ, and the Pandavas became very glad to see their relatives come to them again. Vyâsa, of indomitable valour, again remembering Mahâmâyâ, bade good bye to the departed ones; it seemed then, a great magic had occurred. The Pandavas and the Munis bade good bye to each other and went to their respective places. The king Yudhisthira talked on the way about Vyâsa and ultimately came to Hastinâ. (58-68.)

Thus ends the seventh chapter of the Second Skandha on shewing the departed ones in the Mahâpurânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 8. ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE FAMILY OF YADU AND ON THE ANECDOTE OF PARÎKSIT

1-23. Sûta said :— On the third day after the Pândavas had returned to Hastinâpur, the king Dhritarâstra was burnt up together with Gândhari and Kunti, by the conflagration of fire in the forest. Sanjaya went away at that time, leaving Dhritarâstra in the forest, on a tour on pilgrimage. The king Yudhisthira heard all this from Nârada and was very sorry. Now after thirty six years after the Kuru family had become extinct, all the descendants of Yadu in the Prabhâs tîrtha were destroyed by the Brâhmana’s curse. The high-souled descendants of Yadu, intoxicated by drinking wine, fought against each other and were extirpated in the presence of

Krisna and Balarâm. Balarâm then quitted his mortal coil; the lotus-eyed Bhagavân Krisna quitted his life, struck by the arrows of a hunter, to pay respect to a Brâhmin's curse. Vasudeva heard of Hari's quitting his mortal coil, and meditated the Goddess of the Universe within his heart and left his holy life. Arjuna became very sorry; he went to Prabhâsa and performed the funeral obsequies of all duly. Seeing the dead body of Hari, Arjuna collected fuel and burnt his body together with his eight principal wives; he burnt also Balarâm's body with that of his wife Revatî. Arjuna, then, went to the Dvâarakâ city and removed all the inhabitants of the city when the whole Dwârkâ city of Vâsudeva was drowned in the waters of the ocean. While Arjuna was taking all the persons with him after getting out of Dwârkâ, he felt himself very weak on the way; and therefore a band of robbers, known by the name of bhîras plundered all the wealth and all the wives of Krisna. Arjuna, of indomitable valour, after his arrival at Indraprastha made Vajra, Aniruddha's son, the king of the place.

Then the highly powerful Arjuna informed Vyâsa of his powerlessness when Vyâsa said :—"O highly intelligent one! When Hari and you will reincarnate in another Yuga, then your heroic strength will again be manifested. Hearing all these words, Prithâ's son Arjuna returned to Hastinâ with a sorrowful heart and informed everything to Yudhishthira, the Dharmarâja. Hearing the extinction of the Yâdavas and Hari's quitting His mortal coil, Yudhishthira wanted to go to the Himâlayâs. He installed Parîksit, Uttarâ's son who was then thirty six years old on the throne and went out of his palace in company of his brothers, and Draupadi to the forests of the Himâlayâs. Thus the Pândavas, Prithâ's son, reigned for thirty six years in Hastinâ and quitted their mortal coils in the Himâlayâs. Here the greatly religious sage-king Parîksit governed with vigilance all his subjects for sixty years. After this, Parîksit went once on an hunting expedition to a dense forest and shot a deer. He then searched for the deer and it became noon and he felt very thirsty, hungry, quite fatigued with his body, perspiring, when he saw a Muni merged in meditation; he asked the Muni "Where can water be had?" But the Muni held at that time the vow of silence; so he did not answer anything. Seeing this, the thirsty king, influenced by Kali, became angry and raised a dead serpent by the fore-end of his bow and coiled it round the Muni's neck. Even thus coiled with a snake round his neck the Muni remained as before motionless in his state of enlightenment and spoke nothing. The king also returned home.

24-49. Then the Muni's son, born from the cow's womb, Śringî, a great ascetic, a fiery devotee of MahâŚakti, heard of the above event, while he was playing in the forest. His friends spoke to him :—"O Muni! Some body has now enclosed a dead serpent around the neck of your father." Hearing their words, Śringî became very angry and taking water in his hands, cursed thus :—"He who has coiled to-day a dead serpent around my father's neck, let that villain be bitten by the serpent

Taksak within one week from this day”. One disciple of the Muni then went to the king in his house and informed him of the Muni’s curse. Abhimanyu’s son Parīksit heard of the curse pronounced by a Brāhmin, and knowing infallible, spoke to the aged councillors :—

”O Ministers! Certainly it is through my fault that I have been cursed by a Brāhmin’s son. Now find out and settle what is to be done though the persons versed in the Vedas say that death is inevitable under these circumstances; yet the wise ones should try their best to thwart this according to the Śāstras. Many sages who are the advocates of taking steps to redress any act, say that all the actions of wise persons are fructified by proper means; their solution does not remain unsolved.

Therefore I am saying that the powers of manis, mantrams and herbs (osadhis) are indescribable; if applied duly, do you think that they will bear no fruit in this case? I heard that when a Muni’s wife died out of snake-bite, the Muni gave away the half of his life to his wife Apsarâ and made her alive again. It is not proper for the learned to depend on the maxim that what is inevitable must come to pass; one must try one’s best to act for the living present. O Ministers! Have you seen any person in the Heavens or in the world who remains idle, depending on fate alone? The Sannyâsins have renounced the world; but they must have to go to the houses of the house-holders, whether they be invited or not invited. See again. supposing that the food of a person is brought to him unasked and suppose it is thrown into the mouth by some one, can you conceive that food would go down into the belly, from the mouth without one’s effort? Therefore one should exert one’s own prowess from the very outset; though the intelligent ones should be satisfied with the thought “What can be done? It is not ordained in my fate.” When Parīksit said thus, the ministers asked :— “Which Muni made his dead wife alive again, by giving her half his own life? And how did his wife die? Kindly describe all these in detail to me.” The king said :— Bhrigu Muni had a very beautiful wife Pulomâ. In her womb the world renowned Chyavana Muni was born. Sukanyâ, the daughter of Śaryâti was the wife of Chyavana. In her womb was born a beautiful son named Pramati; he was very famous. Pramati had his famous beautiful wife Pratâpî. In her womb was born the great ascetic son Ruru. At this time a person named Sthûlakeśa, a religious truthful man of great name, was practising tapasyâ. O Ministers! In the meanwhile, the chief Apsarâ Menakâ held sexual intercourse with Visvâvasu Gandharva on the banks of a river and became pregnant. She went out from that place to the hermitage of Sthûlakeśa on the river bank and gave birth to a very beautiful daughter. Seeing this girl quite an orphan and very beautiful, the Muni Sthûlakeśa began to rear up her and named her Pramadvarâ. This all-auspicious girl Pramadvarâ attained youth in due course when the Muni Ruru saw her and became smitten with passion.

Thus ends the eighth chapter of the Second Skandha on the extinction of the family of Yadu and on the anecdote of Parîksit in the Mahâpurânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 9. ON THE ACCOUNT OF RURU

1-17. Parîksit said :— When the Muni Ruru went to his room to sleep, his mind having become perturbed with passion, his father Pramati seeing him sorrowful, asked him :— “O Ruru! Why do you look so

absent minded?” Ruru was passionate then; so he said to his father :— “I saw a girl named Pramadvarâ in the hermitage of SthûlakeŚa; I wish that she might become my wife.” Hearing this, Pramati went immediately to the hermitage of SthûlakeŚa, and pleased him by various conversations and asked for her beautiful daughter when SthûlakeŚa promised that he would give her daughter in marriage on an auspicious day. Then both the high-souled persons Pramati and SthûlakeŚa began to work in co-operation and make arrangements for marriage ceremony and collected various articles in that hermitage when the fair eyed girl Pramadvarâ, while playing in the courtyard in the house, trod on a serpent and was bitten by it and consequently died. Seeing then Pramadvarâ dead, all the Munis of the place assembled and cried and wept with sorrowful hearts, when a great tumultuous uproar ensued. Though the life departed from Pramadvarâ’s body, yet seeing the brilliant lustre of her lifeless body lying on the ground, her nourisher and father SthûlakeŚa became very sorry and wept aloud. Hearing this cry of his, Ruru came there to see what had happened and perceived the girl, though lifeless, yet seeming alive and lying on the ground.

Seeing SthûlakeŚa and other Risis weeping, Ruru went out from that place and with a grievous heart, began to cry aloud. “Alas! Fate has certainly sent this serpent as the cause of all my miseries and to mar all my happiness. Alas! What am I to do now? Where to go? When my beloved has fallen unto the jaws of death, I do not want to live any longer, bereft of my wife. Oh! What an unfortunate creature I am? I have not been able to embrace this beautiful darling of mine. I am deprived of kissing her face and marrying her. Alas! Fie to my human birth! Let my life get out just now in as much as I could not, out of mere shame, throw myself

on the burning pyre along with my beloved! Oh! When death comes not to the sorrowful person, even when prayed for, how then can I expect divine happiness in this world? So let me now drop myself down in a lake or enter in to a burning fire or drink venom or strangle myself by tying rope round my neck!"

18-31. Thus Ruru wailed much on the bank of the river and long reflecting in his mind found out a way and thought what would be the advantage in death? "Rather an irretrievable sin would be incurred in committing suicide; and my father and mother would be sorry. Seeing me commit suicide, my bad luck and enemies will be gladdened; there is no manner of doubt; in this. What benefit will my beloved gain if I commit suicide or if I be distressed for her bereavement. Suppose

I die, even then my beloved will not become mine in the next world; so there are many faults in my committing suicide but there is no fault if I preserve my life." Thus coming to a conclusion Ruru bathed, performed chaman and became pure. He then took water in his hand and said :- "Whatever good works, worshipping the gods, etc., that I have done and if I have performed, with devotion, the service to my preceptors and teachers and superiors, homa ceremonies, Japam, tapasyâ, if I have studied all the Vedas and if I have recited Gâyatri and worshipped the Sun then let my beloved have life and get up as an outcome of my Punyam. If my beloved does not get back her life, I will certainly quit my life." Thus saying, he worshipped the Devas mentally and threw that water of his hands on the ground. Thus Ruru, with a sorrowful heart, was weeping. The Deva's messenger came down and said :- "O Brâhman! Don't make this bold attempt; how can your beloved get back her life? The life-period of this beautiful girl, born of Gandharva's sperm and Apsarâ's ovum is now exhausted; now look for another beautiful woman. O one of very dull understanding! Why are you crying in vain? Where is the affection between you and this girl; she died in an unmarried state (without marrying you)." At this Ruru said :- "O Deva messenger! I won't marry any other lady, whether my beloved gets back her life or does not get back her life; in case she does not regain this life, I will also forego my life at this instant." At this greatest importunity of Ruru, the Deva messenger became glad and spoke the following truthful beneficent yet beautiful words :-

32-51. "O Brâhmana! I will suggest one way to you; kindly hear. The Devas ordained this long, long ago. You can give up your half life period, and with that you can make this girl alive soon."

Ruru said :- "O Deva messenger! I give half my life-period to this girl; there is no doubt in this. Let my beloved get back her life soon and get up."

The king said :- O Ministers! At this time Visvâvasu, knowing that his daughter

Pramadvarâ is dead, descended from the Heavens in a celestial car and came to the place; then the Gandharva king and the Deva messenger both went to Yama, the Dharmarâj, and spoke thus :— “O Dharmarâj! This Visvâvasu’s daughter Pramadvarâ, the wife of Ruru, the RisiŚ son was bitten by a snake and has now come to your place. The Dvija Ruru is now desirous to quit his life; so, O Sun’s son! Now let the girl again get her life through the influence of Ruru’s brahmacharya (purity) as a consequence of his giving away half his life period for the girl.”

Dharma said :— “O Deva messenger! if you want to make the girl alive again, let her get life as a consequence of half the life-period of Ruru being subtracted. Go immediately and give the girl to Ruru.”

The king said :— “O Ministers! Yama having said thus to the Deva messenger, he went away immediately and made Pramadvarâ alive and handed her over to Ruru.

Thus, on an auspicious day, Ruru married her. Thus the RisiŚ daughter Pramadvarâ though fallen dead, got again her life by proper means. So, O Councillors! to save life, one should resort one’s best duty according to the Śâstras, by the use of gems, mantras, and herbs and plants.”

Thus speaking to the ministers, the king Parîksit had a fine building of seven floors in height erected, placed the principal guards around it and stationed also the most powerful men well versed in the knowledge of mani (gems), mantrams, and plants for protection and immediately ascended to this building. To appease the wrath of the Muni Śringî, the king sent the Muni named Gaurmukha to him and requested him repeatedly “Let the crime of the humble devotee be forgiven.” Then, for self preservation, the king brought from all sides the Brâhmanas, who are perfect in their knowledge and application of the mantras. The minister’s son placed the elephants in proper places so that no body can ascend to the top of the building; what more can be said than the fact that even air could not find entrance there when once ordered “no admission” what to speak of others! The king Parîksit remained there and counted the number of days of the serpent Taksaka’s coming there; he performed his bath, Sandhyâ Bandanams and fooding; even he consulted with his ministers and governed his kingdom from there. O Risis! At this time a Brâhman named KaŚyapa, versed in the mantras, heard of the curse of the king and thought that he would get abundant wealth if he could free the king from Taksaka’s poison and proposed to himself that he would go to the place where the cursed king Parîksit was staying with the Brâhmanas. Pondering thus, the Brâhmana went out of his house, on the expectation of wealth from the king.

Thus ends the ninth chapter of the second Skandha on the account of Ruru in the Mahâpurânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 10. ON THE DEATH OF KING PARÎKSIT

1-3. Sûta said :— “O Risis! On that very day when the Brâhmin KaŚyapa went out of his house, Taksak, knowing the king Parîksit cursed, assumed an aged Brâhmin’s form and went out of his abode.

The serpent Taksak met the Brâhmin KaŚyapa on the way. Seeing the Brâhmana, versed in the Mantras, Taksak asked him “Where are you going so in haste, and what for are you taking this trouble?”

4-17. Thus questioned, KaŚyapa replied :— I heard that the serpent Taksak will bite the king Parîksit; therefore I am going in haste to the king Parîksit to cure him of the serpent’s poison. I know the mantra (mystic verse) that can destroy the effect of poison. If his life-period is not exhausted, I will certainly give him back his life. Taksak then. Said :— “O Brâhmana! I am that Taksak; I will bite him and take away his life. So you better desist. Will you be able to treat him whom I bite; certainly you will not.” KaŚyapa said :— “O chief of snakes! When you will bite the king who has been cursed by the Brâhman, I will no doubt make him alive by the power of my mantra.” Taksak said :— “O chief of Brâhmanas! If you have so thought that you will make the king alive after I bite him, then shew me your strength before hand. O sinless one! I will bite this Nyagrodha tree (the Indian fig-tree); just now make it alive.”

KaŚyapa said :— “Certainly I will make this tree alive, that will be burnt away by the venom of your teeth.” Sûta said :— “The snake Taksak then bit the tree, which was reduced to ashes; and asked KaŚyapa to bring back that tree to life.” Seeing the tree reduced to ashes by the fire of venom of the snake, he collected all the ashes and said :— “O highly venomous serpent. See to-day the power of my mantra. Behold! While you are witnessing, I will enliven this tree. Thus the great mantra-knower KaŚyapa took water in his hand, and impregnating it with his mantra power, sprinkled the water on the ashes. Immediately, on the sprinkling of the mantra saturated water, the Nyagrodha tree got back its life as before. Taksak became greatly astonished to see the tree enlivened again and said to KaŚyapa :— “O chief of Brâhmans! What is your object in taking so much pains? Speak out what you want and I will fulfil your desires.” KaŚyapa said :— “O chief of serpents! Knowing the king cursed, I am going to do good to him by my knowledge and to get in return abundant wealth.” Hearing this, Taksak said :— “I will give you the amount of wealth that you desire; take that and go back to your house, and let

my desire be also fulfilled.”

18-26. Kaśyapa, the knower of the highest state, heard Taksaka's words and pondered in his mind again and again. “What is to be done now? If I take this wealth and go back to my house, my name and fame will not be known in this world, simply for my greed; but if the king be made alive again, my undying fame, abundant wealth, and greater

Punyam will accrue to me. Again fie to that wealth with which there is no fame; so one must try one's best to preserve one's fame. The king Raghu, in ancient days, gave away everything of his to the Brâhmanas for fame; the king Harischandra and Karna did not hesitate a bit to give away endless property. There is one point again to take into account, how can I trifle away the matter, seeing the king burnt up by the venomous fire?

If I can bring back the king's life, everyone will become happy. If the kingdom be without its king, the subjects will, no doubt, be ruined. So, following the king's death, sin will also incur on me due to the ruin of the subjects; and infamy will come on my head that I am a very greedy man.” Thus meditating in his mind, the highly intelligent Kaśyapa began to meditate, and plunged himself in Dhyân; he thereby came to know that the king's life period was spent up. Thus knowing the king's death imminent, the virtuous Kaśyapa took the desired wealth from Taksak and returned home.

27-48. Thus making Kaśyapa to retire to his house on the seventh day Taksak went on to Hastinâpur to bring death and destruction on to Parîksit. When he went close to the city, he heard that the king Parîksit was staying on the upper story of the palace; and the palace had been preserved by various gems, mantras, herbs and plant. Taksak became very anxious; and fearing, lest the curse of the Brâhmanas, will fall on his head, became very much agitated and thought. “How shall I now enter the palace? How can I cheat this stupid hypocrite vicious king, cursed by the Brâhmana, who causes troubles to the Brâhmanas. Not a single man has taken birth in the Pandava family ever since that he coiled a dead serpent round the neck of an ascetic Brâhmin. The king has committed a very heinous crime and knowing the course of time to be in fallible, has placed sentries on all sides of the palace and has ascended to the top-most story of the building, thinking thereby to deceive Death and is staying in a peaceful mind. How can then he be smitten, in accordance with the Brâhmana's word? The king, of dull intellect, knows not that death cannot be prevented; for that reason he has placed guards and sentinels round the building, and himself has got up the house and is happily whiling away his time; but he is quite ignorant that when Fate who can never be violated, ordains the death, how can it be prevented though thousands of attempts are made to thwart it? This scion of Pandu family knows that his death is at hand

and yet wants to live and therefore is staying in his own place with a tranquil mind. The king ought now to make charities and other meritorious works; it is only by acts of Dharma that disease is destroyed and life is prolonged.

And if that be not the object then a dying man ought to take bath, to make charities and to await his time of death; he thereby attains heaven; otherwise hell is inevitable. The king committed great sin in the act of causing pains and trouble to the Brâhmin or other similar acts and therefore death is so close that the Brâhmin curse has fallen thus on his head. Is there no such Brâhmin who can make him understand this; or the Creator has ordained his death now as inevitable." Thus meditating, the chief serpent made other serpents following him assume then form of ascetic Brâhmanas and gave them roots and fruits to be taken to the king. The serpent Taksak himself entered within the fruits in the form of an insect. Then the ascetic serpents took the fruits and quickly went out of the place. They came to the palace where Parîksit was resting. Seeing them, the guards asked :— "What for have you come here?" Hearing this, "We are coming from the hermitage to prolong the life of the hero king, the son of Abhimanyu and the son of the Pândava family, by chanting the mantras of the Atharvavedas, and we want to have an interview with the king; now you better go and inform the king that some Munis have come to see you. We will sprinkle water on him and give him some sweet fruits and then depart. We have never come across such gatekeepers in the family of Bharat as disallow the ascetic Muni visitors to go and see the king. We will ascend to the place where the Parîksit is staying and we will bless him, and wish him long life; we will communicate to him our orders and then depart to our own places."

49-68. Sûtâ said :— Hearing these words, the sentinels spoke as previously ordered by the king, as follows :— "O Brâhmanas! We think verily you won't be able to have an interview with the king to-day; you, all ascetics can come to-morrow to this palace. O Munis! Owing to the Brâhmana's curse, the king has built this place; then it follows, as a matter of course, that the Brâhmanas are not allowed to get up to the palace." Then the serpents, in the form of the Brâhmanas, spoke :— "O good sentinels! Then take these roots and fruits and offer them to the king and communicate to him our blessings."

The sentinels went to the king, and informed him of the arrival of the ascetic Brâhmanas. The king replied :— "Bring here the roots and fruits offered by them and ask what for they have come. Give them my pranâms; to-day I cannot meet with them; let them come to-morrow morning." The sentinels went to the ascetics and got from them their roots and fruits and offered them with great respect to the king. When the serpents in the guise of the hypocrite Brâhmins went away, the king took those fruits and spoke to his ministers :—

“Take these fruits and let all my friends eat them. I will take only this one fruit given by the Brâhmanas and will eat it.” Saying this, the Uttarâ’s son Parîksit gave away fruits to the friends and took one ripe fruit for himself, broke it and saw within it a very fine copper-coloured black eyed insect. At this the ministers were astonished; the King spoke to them :– “The sun has set; so there is no further chance of any fear from any poison to-day. I speak then to-day, fearing the Brâhman’s curse, let this insect bite me.” Thus saying the king took that insect and placed it on his neck. That Taksak in the form of an insect, when placed, during the sun-set, on the neck by the king, immediately assumed the form of the terrible Kâla (Death), coiled round the king and beat him. The Ministers were greatly surprised and began to weep and cry with great pain and sorrow. Seeing that terrible serpent, the ministers, overwhelmed with terror, fled away on all sides. The guards cried out loudly. The terrible out-cry was raised on all sides. Then Uttarâ’s son, the king Parîksit, coiled by the serpent, saw that all his efforts were rendered fruitless, and remained silent and held fast to his patience. From the mouth of the serpent Taksak the terrible venomous flames came out burning all and immediately killed the king. Thus taking away the life of the king, Taksak went up in the celestial atmosphere; the people then saw that the serpent was ready as if to burn the world. The king fell down lifeless like a burnt tree; and all the persons cried out seeing the king dead.

Thus ends the tenth Chapter of the Second Skandha on the death of the king Parîksit in the Mahâpurânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 11. ON THE SARPA YAJÑA

1-4. Sûta said :– “O Munis! seeing now the king lifeless, and his son a mere boy, the ministers themselves performed all his funeral ceremonies. First they burned the king on the banks of the Ganges without uttering any Mantra, as his death was an accidental one due to snake bite, afterwards they had an effigy of the king made of kuśa grass and placed it on a funeral pyre and burned it, with sandal and scented wood. The priest then performed and completed his funeral obsequies, repeating duly the Vedic mantras, and distributed various things in charities to the Brâhmins, together with sufficient quantity of gold, and varieties of food and

clothings so that the king may attain heaven.

5-7. Next, on an auspicious moment, the ministers installed the boy prince on the throne that gladdened the hearts of the subjects and all the popu-

lace of the city, towns, and villages acknowledged the boy prince Janamejaya, endowed with all royal qualities as their king. The Dhâtreyi gave all instructions to the king about his duties. The boy prince gradually grew in years and became endowed with great intellect.

8-15. When Janamejaya became eleven years old, the family priest initiated him duly with the Gâyatrî mantra and he also studied it duly. Then Kripâ châr्या taught him perfectly the science of archery (Dhanurveda) as Dronâchâr्या taught Arjuna and ParaŚurâma taught Karna. Janamejaya learnt by and by all the sciences and became very powerful and indomitable to his enemies as he was skilled in the science of archery, he was similarly in the other branches of the Vedas. Truthful, self-controlled, religious, the king Janamejaya acquired full knowledge in the DhârmaŚâstras (philosophies and law books) and ArthaŚâstras (economics) and governed his kingdom like the Dharma's son Yudhisthira.

The king of KâŚî gave his all-auspicious daughter Vapustamâ in marriage to the king Janamejaya wearing golden coat of armour. The king Janamejaya, with the beautiful VapuŚamâ casting side-long looks, looked very happy as was the king Vichîtravîrya, when he got for his wife the daughter of Kâshirâj and also when Arjuna got his Subhad୍ରâ. Then the king began to enjoy his lotus-eyed Vapustamâ in forest, and gardens like Śatakratu and Śachî. The able ministers conducted satisfactorily the reins of government; and the subjects, well governed passed away their time with cheerful hearts.

16-32. In the meanwhile, a Muni, named Uttanka, being much troubled by Tak-saka, thought who could help him in his taking revenge on Taksak and, seeing the king Parîksit's son the king Janamejaya a proper person came to Hastinâ to the king and spoke out thus :- "O good king! Thou dost not know when to do a thing that ought to be done; Thou art doing at present what ought not to be done; and thou art not doing what should be done now. There is nothing of anger or energy within Thee; Thou dost things as a child does; so Thou dost not know the meaning of the Śâstras nor dost Thou know Thy former enemy; so what shall I pray before Thee?" Hearing this Janamejaya said :- "O highly fortunate one! I do not know who is my enemy; what wrong is there to be redressed? please speak out what I am to do." Uttanka said :- "O king! the wicked Taksak killed Thy father; ask about the death of Thy father from Thy councillors." Hearing these words, the king Janamejaya asked his ministers; they replied "Thy father died out of the snake Taksaka's bite." Then the king spoke :- "The cause of my father's

death is the Brâhmin's curse; what is the fault of Taksaka in this matter; please say." Uttanka said :— It was Taksaka that

gave abundance of wealth to Kâśyapa who was coming to cure Thy father of Taksaka's poison and made him desist from his purpose; so O king! Is not that Taksaka, then, Thy father's great enemy and his slayer?

O King! In former days, when Pramadvarâ, the dearest wife of the Muni Ruru, died of snake bite in her unmarried state, Ruru made her alive again. But Ruru made then the promise "whichever serpent will see, I will take away its life by striking it with a club." O King! Thus making the resolve, he began to kill snakes wherever he found with his club, and thus, in his course of travel all round the earth, he saw within a forest an aged terrible water-snake (Dhonda serpent) and immediately lifted his club to kill it and angrily struck a blow on it, when the snake replied :— "O Brâhmana! Why are you striking me thus? I have not caused any offence to you." Ruru said :— "O serpent! My dearest wife died of snake bite; since then I have made this resolve, under great provocation and sorrow, to kill snakes." Hearing thus, the water-snake Dundubha replied :— "I do not bite; those who bite are a different class of snakes; simply on account of my bearing a body similar to them that you will strike me is not quite proper." Hearing these beautiful humane words from the mouth of a serpent, Ruru asked :— "Who are you? Why have you become this Dundubha snake?"

33-45. The snake replied :— "O Brâhmana! I was formerly a Brâhman; there was a friend of mine named Khyâs, very religious, truthful and self-controlled. Once he was staying in his Agnihotra room and I foolishly terrified him much by placing before him an artificial snake created by me of the leaves of trees. He became so much bewildered with fear and shuddered so terribly that he at length cursed me saying :— "O one of blunt intellect! As you have terrified me by this snake, having no poison, so you better be a snake of that type." Immediately I turned into a snake and when I much entreated that Brâhmana, his anger abated a little and he said again :— "O snake! Pramati's son Ruru will no doubt free you of this curse." I am that snake; and you are also that Ruru; now hear my words in conformity with Dharma. The highest Dharma of the Brâhmana, is non-killing. There is no doubt in this. The wise Brâhmanas ought to show mercy to all. No harm or killing is to be committed anywhere except in Yajña (sacrifice); killing is only allowed in a Yajña; for at the sacrifice, the animal killed attains the highest goal; hence killing in sacrifice is not reckoned as an act of killing. Uttanka said :— That Brâhmana was then freed of the serpent body; and Ruru, too, desisted from killing since then. O King! Ruru gave life back to that girl and married her but even then, remembering the former enmity he killed the snakes. But, O chief of Bharata's family! Thou art staying without

any care, without any anger to the snakes and without any revenge to the previous wrong. O king of kings! Thy father died high up in the air without any bath or charity due to be done at the time of death. So rescue thy father by killing his enemies, the snakes. That son is dead, though living, who does not consider the act of his father's enemy as inimical. Until Thou dost kill the snakes, Thy father's enemies, Thy father's hell life will not be freed. O king! Now remember the wrong done to Thy father and perform the sacrifice to the Great Mother, denominated as the Sarpa Yajña (the sacrifice of snakes).

46-55. Sûta said :— Hearing the words of Uttanka, the king Janamejaya sadly wept and shed tears, and thought within himself :— “Alas! Fie to me! I am a great stupid; hence I feel myself proud but in vain. Where can his honour be whose father, bitten by a snake, has gone down to hell. Now I will, no doubt, commence the Sarpa Yajña and ensure the destruction of all the snakes in the blazing sacrificial fire and thus deliver my father from hell.” Thus coming to a conclusion, he called all his ministers and said :— “O ministers! Better make arrangements duly for a great sacrifice. Have a suitable holy site on the banks of the Ganges, selected and measured by the Brâhmanas and have a beautiful sacrificial hall built up on one hundred pillars and prepare a sacrificial altar within this. O Ministers! When all these preliminaries will be completed, I will commence with great eclat the great Sarpa Yajña (sacrifice of snakes). In that Yajña, the snake Taksak will be the animal victim; and Uttanka, the great Muni, will be the sacrificial priest; so invite early the all-knowing Brâhmanas, versed in the Vedas. Thus at the command of the king, the able ministers collected all the materials of the sacrifice and prepared a big sacrificial altar. When the oblations were offered on the sacrificial fire, calling on the snakes, Taksak became greatly distressed with fear and took refuge of Indra saying “Save my life”. Indra, then, gave hopes to Taksaka, trembling with fear, and made him sit on his sana, encouraged him with words “No fear”. O! snake do not fear any more.

56-65. The Muni Uttanka, seeing that Taksak had taken Indra's protection and that Indra had given him hopes of “no fear”, called on Taksaka with Indra to come to fire with an anxious heart; Taksak, then, seeing no other way, took refuge of the greatly religious stik, the son of the Muni Jarat Kâru, born of the family of Yâyâvara. The Muni's son stik came to the sacrificial hall and chanted hymns in praise of Janamejaya; the king, too, seeing the Muni boy greatly learned worshipped him and said :— “What for have you come? I will give you what you desire.” Hearing this, stika prayed :— “O highly enlightened one! Let you desist from this sacrifice.”

The truthful king, prayed thus again and again, stopped the Sarpa Yajña to keep the Muni's word. VaiSampâyana then recited the whole Mahâbhârata to the king

to cheer up his heart. But the king, hearing the whole Mahâbhârata could not find peace and asked Veda Vyâsa “how can I get peace; my mind is constantly being burned with sorrow; say what am I to do? I am very miserable; hence my father Parîksit the son of Abhimanyu has died an unnatural death. O lucky one! See that a Ksatriya’s death in a deadly battlefield or in an ordinary battle is praiseworthy; even his death in his own house, if followed up according to natural laws and Vidhis (rules) is commendable; but my father did not die such a death; under the Brâhmana’s curse why did he, quite senseless, quit his life high up in the air? O son of Satyavatî! Now advise me so that my father who is now in hell can again go up to the heavens, and that my heart may find its way to peace.”

Thus ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Second Skandha on the “Sarpa Yajña” in the Mahâpurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

CHAPTER 12. ON THE BIRTH OF ÂSTIKA

1-4. Sûta said :— Hearing these words of the king, Vyâsa Deva, the son Satyavatî addressed to him before the assembly, thus :— “O king! I am now reciting to you a Bhâgavata Purâna, holy, wonderful, filled with many anecdotes, and leading to auspicious results; listen. Before I made my son Śuka study this Purâna; O king! I will now recite before you that highest Purâna, with all the secrets contained therein. I have extracted this from all the Âgamas; it brings in Dharma (religion), Artha (wealth), Kâma (fructification of desires) and Moksa (liberation); hearing this gives always happiness and good results.

5-6. At this Janamejaya said :— “O Lord! Whose son is this Muni Âstika? Why did he come as an obstacle in my Sarpa Yajña (sacrifice of snakes)? And what object had he in preserving the snakes? O highly fortunate one! Kindly describe all this in detail; after this recite the Purâna, also, in detail to me.”

7-18. Vyâsa Deva said :— “O king! In former days there lived a Muni named Jaratkâru. He always remained in the path of peace; and did not marry. Once he saw, in a cave in a forest, his fathers and forefathers pendant. They spoke to Jaratkâru thus :— “O son! Marry; we will thereby be greatly pleased; if there be a son of good character born to you, we all will be freed from all troubles and we

would then able to go to Heavens.” Hearing this Jaratkâru said :– “O Forefathers! If I get a girl of my name, without begging and asking and if she be entirely obedient to me, I will marry and lead a householder’s life; thus

I have spoken truly to you.” Thus saying to his forefathers, Jaratkâru went on tour to the holy places. Now it happened so, that at that very time Kadru, the mother of snakes cursed her sons, saying “May you be burnt by fire.” The matters of this incident run as follows :– “At that moment Kadru and Vinatâ, the two co-wives of Kaśyapa saw the horses yoked in the chariot of the sun and thus argued with each other :– Kadru, seeing the sun’s horse, first asked Vinatâ “O good one! Tell me soon, what is the colour of this horse?” Vinatâ said :– “O auspicious one! What do you think?” I said, the colour of the horse is white; you also better say before hand what is its colour? We will then lay a wager (and challenge). Kadru said :– “O Smiling one! I think the the horse is black. Now come; let us challenge; whoever will be defeated will become the slave of the other.” Thus saying, Kadru told her sons that were obedient :– “Cover by your bodies all the pores of the body of the horse of the chariot of the Sun, so it may look black; go and do it.” At this some snakes replied “That cannot be.” Kadru then cursed them saying :– “Let you fall on the sacrificial fire of Janamejaya.” Then the other snakes tried to please their mother and coiled round the back of that horse so that the horse began to look black. Kadru and Vinatâ, the two co-wives went together and saw the horse. Vinatâ saw it black and became very sorry.

19-21. Now, Garuda, Vinatâ’s son, very powerful and devourer of snakes was passing that way and seeing his mother very distressed asked her :– “O Mother! Why do you look so very sorry? It seems as if you are weeping. Aruna, the charioteer of the Sun and I myself are your two sons living. Fie to us that, while we are living, you will have to suffer pains. O beautiful one! If mother suffers while the son is living, then what use is there in having such a son? So, O Mother, give out the cause of your grief and I will remove it at once.”

22-31. Hearing this Vinatâ said :– “O son! What shall I say to you of my misery; I am now become the slave of my rival wife. By some pretext she defeated me and is now telling me to carry her on my back. O son! For this reason I am sorry.” Hearing these words of the mother, Garuda said :– “Very well I will carry her on my shoulders wherever she wishes to go. O auspicious one! You need not be sorry; I will remove all your cares.” Vyâsa Deva said :– Thus spoken to by Garuda, Vinatâ went to Kadru. At that time the highly powerful Garuda went there also to free his mother of her slavery and carried Kadru with all her sons on his back to the other side of the ocean. When Garuda went across the ocean, Garuda spoke to Kadru :– “O mother! I bow down to thee; kindly say how my mother can be freed

of your slavery. Hearing this Kadru said :— “O son! If you can bring to-day by your sheer force nectar from the Deva loka and give it to my sons then you will be able to free your helpless mother. When Kadru said so, the highly powerful Vinatâ’s son, Garuda immediately went to the abode of Indra and, fighting hard, stole away the jar of nectar and brought and gave it to Kadru and freed his mother Vinatâ from the slavery of Kadru. In the meantime, the snakes went for their bath, after which they would drink the nectar. Indra stole away that jar which contained nectar. O king! Thus, by the sheer strength of arms of Garuda Vinatâ was freed of her slavery. On the other hand, when the snakes returned from their bath and found that there was no jar of nectar, they began to lick the Kusa grass over which the jar of nectar was kept, thinking that they would thereby get some drops of nectar which might have trickled over; and the result was that by the sharp edges of kusa grasses, the tongues of all the snakes were cut asunder into two; hence the snakes are called Dvijihva.

32-36. The snake Vâsuki and others, whom Kadru, the mother of snakes, cursed, went to Brahmâ and took his refuge and informed all of the cause of their terror, the curse from their mother; when Brahmâ spoke to them :— “Go and give the sister of Vâsuki, named Jaratkâru, in marriage to the great Muni Jarat Kâru, (both of the same name). In her womb, a son named Âstika will be born; and he will certainly deliver you from your difficulties. Hearing those beneficial words of Brahmâ, Vâsuki went to the forest and requested humbly the great Muni Jarat Kâru to accept in marriage her own sister when the Muni, knowing the girl to be of his name, spoke out thus :— “But when your sister will act against my wishes, I will forsake her at once.”

37-46. Under these conditions, the Muni married her. And Vâsuki, after giving her sister in marriage according to her own wishes to the Muni, returned to her own abode. O Tormentor of foes! Then the Muni Jaratkâru built a white hut of leaves in that great forest and began to pass his days happily in enjoyment with his wife. Once, on an occasion, after he had taken his dinner he slept and told his wife not to awaken him under any circumstances and fell fast asleep. The beautiful sister of Vâsuki sat by his side. When the evening time came and the sun began to set, the Vâsuki’s sister Jaratkâru became afraid at the thought that the evening Sandhya might not be performed by the Muni and thought thus :— “What am I to do now? My heart finds not rest if I do not awaken him; and if I awaken him, he will forsake me at once. Now if I do not awaken him, the evening will pass away to no purpose. Whatever it be, if he quits me or if my death ensues, that is better than the non-observance of Dharma; for when Dharma is destroyed, hell ensues.

Thus thinking, the girl awakened him saying :— “O One of good vows! It is evening time; so get up; etc.” The Muni got up in great anger and addressed his wife :—

“When you have disturbed my sleep, I now go away from you; you also better go to your brother’s house.” When the Muni said so, Vâsuki’s sister spoke out, trembling :– “O One of indomitable lustre! How will the object be served for which my brother has given me in marriage with you.”

47-50. The Muni then spoke firmly to his wife Jaratkâru :– “That is within your womb.” Jaratkâru then, forsaken by the Muni, went to the abode of Vâsuki. When her brother Vâsuki asked her about her son, she said :– “The Muni has forsaken me, saying that the son is within your womb.” At this Vâsuki trusted; and said :– “The Muni won’t ever tell lieŚ’ and gave shelter to his sister. O Kurusattama! After some time, a famous boy named the Muni Âstika was born.

51-56. O king! That Muni boy, the knower of truth, had desisted you from your sacrifice of snakes for the preservation of his mother’s family. It is well and good, befitting you, that you respected the words of the Muni Âstika, born of Yâyâvara family and the cousin of Vâsuki. O Mighty-armed! Let all auspiciousness come to you; you have heard the whole Mahâbhârata and gave away lots of things in charities. You have worshipped innumerable Munis. But, O king! Though you have done so many good things, yet your father has not attained heaven and you have not been able to sanctify your family. So, O king Janamejaya! Now install a capacious temple of the Devî with the highest devotion; then all your desires will be fulfilled. The all auspicious Devî, the Giver of all desires, makes the kingdoms more stable and increases the family, if She be always worshipped with the highest devotion.

57-64. O king! You better perform duly the Devîmakha Yajña Yotistoma and others, pleasing to the Devî, and hear the great Purâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam, filled with accounts of the glorious deeds of the Devî. I will make you hear now that Divine Purâna, filled with various sentiments, highly sanctifying and capable to carry one across this ocean of world. O king! There is no other subject in this world worthy to be heard than the above Purâna and there is no other thing to be worshipped than the lotus feet of the Devî. O king! Those are certainly fortunate, those are intelligent and blessed, in whose hearts of love and devotion reign always the Devî Bhagavatî. O illustrious scion of Bharata’s family! Know them to the always afflicted with troubles who do not worship in this world the great Mother Mahâmâyâ. O king! Who is there that will not worship Her when Brahmâ and all the Devas are always engaged in Her devotional service. O king! He who hears always this Purâna gets all his desires fulfilled; in former days Bhagavatî Herself spoke this excellent Purâna to Visnu. O king! Your heart will be appeased and become peaceful when you hear this; and, as a result of your hearing this Purânam, all your ancestors will attain endless Heavenly life.

Thus ends the Twelfth Chapter of the Second Skandha on the birth of Âstika in

the Mahâpurânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa. Here ends as well the Second Book.

Book III

CHAPTER 1. ON THE QUESTIONS PUT BY JANAMEJAYA

1-10. Janamejaya said :— “O Bhagavân! What is that great Yajña (sacrifice) named Ambâ Yajña about which you referred just now? Who is the Ambâ? Where was She born? From whom and what for did Her birth take place? What are Her qualities? What is Her form and nature? O Ocean of mercy! You are all-knowing; kindly describe everything duly. Along with this, describe in detail the origin of Brahmânda. O Brahmâna! You know every thing of this whole Universe. I heard that Brahmâ, Visnu and Rudra are the three Devatâs, who are successively originated to create, preserve, and destroy this Universe. Are these three highsouled entities independent? or Do they do their respective duties, being subservient to another Person? Now I am very eager to know all these. So Pârâsara’s son! Describe all these to me. Are these highly powerful Brahmâ, Visnu and Maheśvara subject to Death like ordinary beings? Or are they of the nature of everlasting Existence, Intelligence and Bliss? Are they subject to the three fold pains arising from their own selves from elements and from those arising from gods? Are they subject Time? How and wherefrom were they originated? Do they feel the influence of pleasure, pain, sleep or laziness? O Muni! Do their bodies consist of seven Dhâtus? (blood, etc.) or are they of some other kinds? A great doubt has arisen in me on all these points. If these bodies be not made up of five elements, then of what substance are they built of? And of what gunas are their senses built also? How do they enjoy objects of enjoyments? How long is their longevity? O Brâhmaṇa! where do they, Brahmâ, Visnu, and Maheśvara, the best of the gods live? And of what nature are their powers and prosperities? I like very much to hear all these. So describe all these in detail to me.”

11-24. Vyâsa said :— “O highly intelligent king! The questions that you have asked me today whence and how Brahmâ, etc., were born ? etc., are

very difficult. In ancient days, once, on an occasion, I asked many questions like you to the Muni Nârada. At first he was greatly suprised to hear my queries, afterwards he gave due replies to them. O king! I will answer to you in the same way; listen. Once I saw that the all-knowing, peaceful Nârada, the knower of the Vedas was sitting on the banks of the Ganges. I became very glad and fell at his feet. By his order I took one excellent seat. Hearing, then, of his welfare and seeing him sitting on the sands I asked him :— “O highly intelligent One! Who is the Supreme Architect of this widely extended Universe? Whence is this Brahmânda born? Is it eternal or temporary? When it is an effect, then it is natural that it

cannot be created without a cause. Now when the cause, the creator, is certain, is he one or many? O sage! as regards this wide Samsâra, I have expressed my doubt; now answer me what is the Real and True, and thus remove my doubts. Many believe Mahâ Deva, the Lord of all the other Devas as the Supreme God, the Cause of all. He is the source of deliverance to all the Jîvas; devoid of birth and death; always auspicious; peaceful in Himself and the controller of the three gunas. He is the one and only cause of creation, preservation and destruction. Some Pundits believe Visnu as the God of all and praise Him as such. It is Visnu that is the powerful Supreme Self, the Lord of all and the First Person dipurusa. It is He that has no birth nor death, the Deliverer of the whole Jîvas, Omnipresent; His faces are everywhere; He is the Granter of enjoyments and liberation to the devotees. Some others call again Brahmâ, the Cause of all. It is He that is omniscient and the Stimulator of all beings.

The four-faced Brahmâ, the best of all the Devas is born from the navel lotus of some One of endless force. He resides in Satyaloka; He is the Creator of all and the Lord of all the Devas. Again some other Pundits call the Sun, Srya as God. In the morning and in the evening they chant His hymns, without any lack of slackness and laziness. Again there are some others, who say that Indra is the lord of all the Jîvas; He is thousand-eyed; it is Indra, the husband of Śachî, that is the God of all. Those who perform Yajñas (sacrifices) worship Vâsava, the king of the Devas. He drinks Soma juice Himself and those who drink Soma are his beloved. He is the one and only Lord of Sacrifices. Thus all men worship, according to their respective wishes, Varuna, Soma, Agni, Pavana (wind), Yama (the god of Death), Kuvera, the lord of wealth; there are some again who worship the elephant-faced Ganapati, the Fructifier of all actions, the Granter of desires of all the devotees, and the Giver of success to all in all enterprises, no sooner He is remembered. Some châr্যas (professors) say again that the All auspicious the di Mâyâ, the Great Śakti Bhavânî, the Giver of everything, Who is the nature of with and without attributes

Who is not different from Brahmâ, who is both Purusa and Prakriti, the Creatrix, the Preservatrix and the Destructrix of all, the Mother of all the gods, beings and lokas, is the Great Goddess of this Brahmânda. She is without beginning and end, full, present in all the beings and everywhere. It is this Bhavanî that assumes the various endless forms such as Vaisnavî Śânkarî, Brâhmî, Vâsavî, Vârunî, Vârâhî, Nara Simhî, Mahâ Laksmî the one and secondless Vedamâtâ, and others. It is this Vidyâ nature that is the One and the only Root of this tree of Samsâra (universe).

The mere act of remembering Her destroys heaps of afflictions of the devotees and fulfills all their desires. She gives Moksa to those who are desirous of liberation and gives rewards to those who want such. She is beyond the three Gunas and

still She emanates them. Therefore the Yogis that want rewards meditate Her, Who is of the nature of Vidyâ and Who is devoid of attributes. The best Munis, the knowers of the truths of Vedanta meditate on Her as formless, immutable, stainless, omnipresent Brahmâ devoid of all Dharma. She is described in some Vedas and Upanishads as full of Light (Tejas). Some intelligent persons describe God as of infinite hands, infinite ears, infinite legs, infinite faces, peaceful, Virât Purusa and describe sky as the Pada (place) of Visnu. Other knowers of the Purânas describe Him as Purusottama. There are some others again who declare that this creation cannot be done by a single individual. Some atheists say that this inconceivable infinite Universe can never be created by one God. So there is no such definite God that can be called its Creator. Though without any creator, this Brahmânda is sprung from the Nature and conducted by Her. The followers of the Sâmkhya system say that Purusa is not the creator of this Universe; they declare that Prakriti is the Mistress of this Universe O Muni! Thus I have expressed to you what the Muni Kapila, the Achârya of the Sâmkhyas and the other philosophers declare as their opinions; various doubts, thus, reign always in my breast. Owing to these doubts my mind is so confused that I cannot arrive at any definite conclusion. My mind is very much unsettled as to what is Dharma and what is Adharma. What are the characteristics of Dharma? I cannot make out them. For the Devas are all sprung from the Sattva Guna and are always attached to the true Dharma; yet they are frequently troubled by the sinful Dânavas. How, then, can I place my confidence on the permanence of the Dharma? My forefathers, the Pândavas were always endowed with good behaviours and good actions and they remained always in the path of the Dharma; yet they suffered a good deal of troubles and sufferings. In these cases it is very difficult understand the greatness of Dharma. So, O Father! Seeing all these, my mind is thrown into a sea of doubts and troubles. O Great Muni!

There is nothing impracticable with you; so remove my doubts. O Muni! I am always plunged and raised and plunged again in this sea of delusion. So save me by lifting me on a boat of wisdom and carry me across this ocean of samsâra (this world).

Thus ends the first chapter on the third Skandha on the questions put by Janamejaya in the Mahâpurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhagâvatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâs.

CHAPTER 2. ON RUDRAS GOING TOWARDS THE HEAVENS ON THE CELESTIAL CAR

1-19. Vyâsa said :— O mighty armed Kuru! What you have asked me just now, I also asked the same thing to Nârada, the lord of the Munis and he gave me the following reply :— O Vyâsa! What shall I say to you on this point more than this that a doubt occurred to me also in my former days. The question that you have put to me today rose in my mind before; and I went to my father Brahmâ, of endless energy and asked to him thus :— O Lord! O Father! Whence is this whole Brahmânda born? Have You created it? Or is it Visnu or Maheśvara? O all pervading soul! Who is there in this Brahmânda fit to be worshipped? O Lord of the world! Who is the top-most Lord ruling over everything? Kindly say. O Brahmân! I am plunged in this sea of Maya and perils; my heart is agitated with doubts; hence it is not appeased in any place of pilgrimage ; or in thinking any Deva or in practising any Sâdhan or in any other object. O Sinless one! Give me the answers duly and thus remove my doubts. O Tormentor of foes! Unless the highest truth is not known, peace is not found. This heart, distracted in various ways, cannot rest fixed on one subject. Whom am I to remember? Whom to worship? Where to go? Whom to praise? Who is the Supreme God this Universe? I do not understand these things. O Satyavatî's son! Hearing these my serious queries, Brahmâ, the grand-Sire of beings, replied to me as follows :— O highly illustrious son! What more shall I say to you than this that even Visnu is unable to answer your questions; so difficult are they indeed! O great intelligent one! Nobody that is attached to the world knows anything about this. Those who are unattached to this world, who are free from any envy, these who are without desires and calm, those highsouled ones know the secret of all this. In former days when all was water, water everywhere and all things, moving and non-moving were destroyed, when five elements were sprung, then I was also born from the lotus navel of Visnu. Then not seeing Moon, Sun, trees, or mountains or anything and sitting on the centre (Karnikâ) of the lotus thought thus :— When I am born in this great ocean of waters? Who has created me? Who is now my protector?

And Who will be my Destroyer when this cycle ends? There is no earth distinctly visible anywhere here; on what, then, this mass of water rests? Lotus is termed Pankaja because it springs from mud and dirt; so unless there exists the earth underneath with mud and dirt, how this lotus will come out here! Now let me try and find out where is the root of this lotus, where is the mud and dirt? If

this be found, then the earth will be also certainly there. Thus thinking, I dived underneath the water and searched for one thousand years but could not find earth anywhere, when the celestial voice entered my ears “Practise tapasyâ (austerities).” Hearing this celestial voice, I sat on the lotus, my birth place, and practised tapasyâ for one thousand years.

20-30. Next, the celestial voice came again “Create.” Hearing this, I became quite confounded and began to think within myself “now what am I to create? What to do?” After this, the two terrible Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha came to me and affrighted me saying “Fight with us.” I became quite terrified and holding the stem of the lotus, I got down within the water. There I saw a wonderful person, sleeping on the Ananta serpent. He was of a deep blue colour like a rain-cloud, wearing yellow clothes, four-armed, garlanded with forest flowers, and the Lord of this whole Universe. On the four arms of this Mahâ Visnu there were conch-shells, disc, club, and lotus and other weapons. I saw this Achyuta Purusa, sleeping on the Ananta serpent bed, motionless and under the influence of Yoga Nidrâ. I then thought within myself “What am I to do?” Not being able to find out any other way, I recollected the Devî who was then of the nature of sleep and began to praise Her. The auspicious Devî Yoga Nidrâ, whose form could not be determined, immediately left the body of Visnu and decorated with divine ornaments, began to shine in the air. After She left the body of Visnu, Visnu immediately got up. And He fought terribly for five thousand years with the Dânavas Madhu Kaitabha; then by the grace of the Bhagavatî, He extended His own thighs and then, on those thighs, He slew the two demons. Where Visnu and myself were standing, Rudra Deva came also and joined with us. Then we three saw the beautiful Devî in the celestial space.

31-40. We three, then, commenced to chant hymns to Her and She gladdened our hearts by Her gracious look and said :— “O Brahmâ! O Visnu! O Rudra! The two great Daityas are slain. Now forsake your laziness and do your respective works of creating, preserving, and destroying the Universe; create your own abodes, and live in happiness; create by your respective lordly powers, the fourfold beings.” Hearing the Devî’s gentle sweet words, we spoke :— “O Mother! There is no wide earth here; all is one mass of infinite ocean. No five elements, no five tanmâtrâs, no sensual organs, no Gunas, nothing exist here; how can we then execute the works of creation, etc. Hearing our words, the Devî smiled. Immediately there came from the sky overhead a beautiful aerial car. The Devî said :— “O Brahmâ! O Visnu! O Rudra! Get in this car without any fear. To-day I will show you one wonderful thing.” At Her word, we got into the beautiful car without any fear. It was decorated with various gems and jewels, bedecked with pearls, emitting sweet tinkling sounds of bells and looking as the abode of the celestials. Seeing us seated

without any fear, She made the car get high up in the sky by Her force.

Thus ends the second chapter of the third skandha on Brahmâ, Visnu and Rudra's going towards the heavens on the celestial car, given by the Devî in the Mahâpurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâs.

CHAPTER 3. ON SEEING THE DEVÎ

1-5. Brahmâ said :— “We were very much astonished not to find water where our beautiful aeroplane landed us. We saw earth resonated with the sweet cooings of the cuckoos, filled with beautiful fruit-laden trees, forests and gardens. Big rivers, wells, tanks, ponds, water-springs, small pools, women, men all are there. Next we saw, in front of us, a nice city enclosed by a divine wall, containing many sacrificial halls and various palatial buildings and magnificent edifices. Oh! We thought :— It is Heaven! What a great wonder! Who built this?

6-11. Next we saw a king looking like a Deva is going out on a hunting excursion in the forest. The Devî Ambikâ, Whom we saw before, is staying on the chariot. In an instant, our aeroplane, propelled by air got high up above the sky and reached in the twinkling of an eye at a lovely place. We saw there a divine Nandana garden. There Surabhi, the cow of plenty, was staying under the shade of the Parijâta tree. Close by her, there was an elephant having four tusks; and Menak and other hosts of Apsarâs were there with their various gestures and postures, playing, dancing and singing. There were hundred of Yaksas, Gandharbhas, Vidyâdharas within that Mandâra garden playing and singing. Within this there was the Lord Satakratu with Śachî, the daughter of Pulomâ.

12-34. Next we saw with great wonder, Varuna, the lord of the aquatic animals, Kuvera, Yama, Srya (sun), fire and the other Devas; then we saw that in our front, Indra the Lord of the Devas, was coming out from a well decorated city. He was there situated in his palanquin, calm and quiet and carried by men. Then the car, where we were situated, began to

get up high in the sky, and in the twinkling of an eye, we reached Brahmâ loka, that is saluted by all the Devas. There Śambhu and Keśava were greatly bewildered to see Brahmâ of that place. In the council hall of Brahmâ, the Vedas with their

Angas, the serpents, hills, oceans and rivers were seen. Seeing all these, Visnu and Maheśvara asked me :— “O Four-faced one! Who is this eternal Brahmâ? I replied :— I do not know who is this Brahmâ? Who am I? and who is He? why has this error come over me? You, too, also are gods so you can better ponder over it.” Next our car, going with the swiftness of mind went, in the twinkling of an eye, to the beautiful all auspicious Kailâśa mountain surrounded by bliss-giving Yaksas. It was beautified by the Mandâra garden, resonated by the sweet cooings of Śukas and cuckoos and the sweet sounds of lutes and small drums and tabors. When we reached there we saw the five faced, three-eyed Bhagavân Śashi Śekhara, with ten hands, wearing tiger skin, and the upper garment of the elephant skin. He was then, getting out of his abode, riding on a bull. His two sons, the great heroes, Ganeśa and Kârtikeya, beautifully adorned, were attending Him as His body guards. Nandi and all other hosts were following Him, chanting victories to Him. O Muni Narâda! we were greatly wondered to see another Śankara, surrounded by the Matrikâs. So much so, that perplexed with doubts, I sat down there. Next our aeroplane went on with the force of wind; and in an instant reached the abode of Vaikuntha, the amusement court of Laksmî. O Sta! There at Vaikuntha, we saw a wonderful manifestation of power. Our companion Visnu was greatly surprised to see that excellent city. We saw there four-armed Visnu, of the colour of tasi flower, wearing yellow garments, adorned with divine ornaments sitting on Garuda. Laksmî Devî is fanning wonderful chowry to Him. Struck with wonder at the sight of the eternal Visnu, we took our seat on the car and looked at one another’s face.

Next the balloon ascended with the swiftness of wind; and, in the twinkling of an eye, reached to the ocean of nectar, the Sudhâ-Sâgar, with waves playing sweetly on it. This ocean Sudhâ Sâgara is filled with aquatic animals and agitated with ripples. We saw and went along and came to a very wonderful place called the Mani Dvîpa (the island of gems) in the midst of the Ocean. It was adorned with Mandâra and Prijâta an other heavenly flower trees (plants?), with various beautiful carpets, with variegated trees Aśoka, Vakula, Ketakî, Champaka, Kuravaka, etc., adorned with lustrous gems and pearls. It was resonated with the sweet cooings of the cuckoos and the humming sounds of bees; and it presented the sight of a sweet harmonious music playing there.

35-67. Sitting on our aeroplane, we saw, from a distance, within that

Dvîpa, a beautiful cot known as Śivâkâra (i.e. whose four legs represent Brahmâ, Visnu, Rudra, etc., and whose top portion represents Sadâ Śiva looking like a rainbow, with exquisitely beautiful carpet spread over it and decked with various gems and jewels and inlaid with pearls. We saw a Divine Lady, sitting on the cot, wearing a red garment and a garland of red cloth and bedewed with red sandal

paste. Her eyes were dark-red; that beautiful faced red-lipped lady looked more beautiful than ten millions of lightnings and ten millions of Laksmîs and lustrous like the Sun. The Bhagavatî Bhuvaneśvarî was sitting with a sweet smile on Her lips and holding in Her four hands noose, goad, and signs indicating as if She was ready to grant boons and asking Her devotees discard all fear. We never saw before such a form. Even the birds of that place repeat the mystic incantation Hrim and serve that Lady, Who is of the colour of the rising Sun, all merciful, and in the full bloom of youth. That lotus-faced smiling lady was adorned with all the beauties of Nature. Her high breasts defied the lotus bud. She was holding various jewelled ornaments, e.g., armplates, bracelets, diadems, etc.

Her lotus-face looked exceedingly beautiful with jewelled ear-rings of the shape of the Śrî Yantra (yantra of Tripurâ Sundarî). Hrillekhâ and other Deva girls were surrounding Her. There were Sakhis on the four sides – always chanting hymns to Maheśvarî, the Lady of the world. She was surrounded on Her all sides by Ananga kusuma and other Devîs. She was sitting in the middle of the Satkona (six angled) Yantra. We were all wondered at the sight of this Wonderful Form never seen before and we thought :– “Who is this Lady? What is Her name? we know nothing of Her, from such a distance.” Thus while we were gazing at Her, that four armed Lady became gradually thousand eyed, with thousand hands and thousand feet; so it seemed to us. O Nârada! We became very much embarrassed with doubts and thought within ourselves “Is She Apsarâ (nymph) or a Gandharva daughter or any other Deva Girl? who is She ?” At this juncture Bhagavân Visnu saw closely the sweet smiling Devî and by his intelligence came to a definite conclusion and spoke to us :– “This is the Devî Bhagavatî Mahâvidyâ Mahâ Mâyâ, undecaying and eternal; She is the Full, the Prakriti; She is the Cause of us all. This Devî is inconceivable to those who are of dull intellects; only the Yogis can see Her by their Yoga-powers. She is eternal (Brahmâ) and also non-eternal (Mâyâ). She is the Will-force of the Supreme Self. She is the First Creatrix of this world.

This Devî with wide eyes, the Lady of the Universe, has produced the Vedas. The less-fortunate persons cannot worship Her. During the time of Pralaya, She destroys all the Universe, draws within Her body all

the subtle bodies (Linga-Sarîras), and plays. O two Devas! At present She is residing in the form of the Seed of the Universe. Behold! On Her sides are seen duly all the Vibhîs (manifestations of powers). They are all adorned with divine ornaments and anointed with divine scents and are serving Her. O Brahmân! O Śankara! To-day we are blessed and highly fortunate that we have got the sight of this Devî. The tapasyâ (asceticisms) that we practised of yore have yielded to us this fruit. Else why Bhagavatî has shown so carefully Her own form? Those who are highly meritorious by tapasyâs and gifts of abundant wealth, those high

souled persons are able to see this all-auspicious Bhagavatî. The person attached to sensual objects can never see Her. It is She that is the Mlâ Prakriti, united with the Chidânanda Person. It is She that creates this Brahmânda and exhibits it to the Paramâtmâ (the Supreme Self). O two Devas! This whole Universe and all the Seers and Seen and other things contained therein owe to Her as their sole cause. She is the Mâyâ assuming all forms; She is the Goddess of all. Where is I myself! Where are the Devas! Where are Laksmî and the other Devîs! We cannot compare to one-hundred thousandth part of Her. It is this all-excellent Lady, Whom I saw in the great Ocean when She reckoned Me who was baby then with greatest gladness. In former days, when I was sleeping on the cot made of immoveable fixed leaves of a banyan tree and licking my toe, making it enter within my mouth and playing like an ordinary baby, this Lady rocked my gentle body to and fro on the banyan leaves singing songs like a Mother. Now I recollect all what I felt before at Her sight and recognise that She is the Bhagavatî. These very things I now communicate to you. Hear attentively that She is this Lady and She is our Mother.”

Thus ends the third chapter of the Third Skandha on seeing the Devî in the Mahâ Purânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâs.

CHAPTER 4. ON THE HYMNS TO THE GREAT DEVÎ BY VISNU

1-20. Brahmâ said :— Thus speaking, Bhagavân Janârdana Visnu spoke to me again :— “Come, let us bow down to Her again and again and let us go to Her. We shall reach at Her feet fearlessly and we will chant hymns to Her; Mahâ Mâyâ will be pleased with us and will grant us boons. If the guards at the entrance prevent us from going, we would stand at the gateway and we will chant hymns to the Devî with one mind.”

Brahmâ said :— When Hari addressed us in the above way, we two became choked by intense feelings of joy; our voice became tremulous and

we waited there for some time; our hearts were elated with joy to go to Her. We then accepted Hari’s word said “Om” and got down from our car and went with hastened steps and with fear to the gate. Seeing us standing at the gateway, the

Devî Bhagâvatî smiled and within an instant transformed us three into females. We looked beautiful and youthful women, adorned with nice ornaments; thus we greatly wondered and went to Her. Seeing us standing at Her feet in feminine forms, the beautiful Devî Bhagâvatî, looked on us with eyes of affection. We then bowed to the great Devî, looked at one another and stood before Her in that feminine dress. We three, then, began to see the pedestal of the great Devî, shining with the lustre of ten million Suns and decorated with various gems and jewels. We next discerned that thousands and thousands of attendants are waiting on Her. Some of them are wearing red dress; some blue dress, some yellow dress; thus the Deva girls, variously dressed were serving Her and standing by Her side. They were dancing, singing on and playing with musical instruments and were gladly chanting hymns in praise of the Devî. O Nârada! We saw there another wonderful thing. Listen. We saw the whole universe, moving and non-moving within the nails of the lotus feet of the Devî. We saw there myself, Visnu, Rudra, Vâyû, Agni, Yama, Moon, Sun, Varuna, Tvastâ, Indra, Kuvera and other Devas, Apsarâs, Gandarbhas, rivers, oceans, mountains, Visvâvasus Chitraketu, Sveta, Chitrângada, Nârada, Tumburu, Hâ Hâ H H and other Gandarbhas, the twin Aśvins, the eight Vasus, Sâdhyas, Siddhas, the Pitris, Ananta and other Nâgas, Kinnaras, Urugas, Râksasas, the abode of Vaikuntha, the abode of Brahmâ, Kailâsa mountain, the best of all mountains; all were existing there. Within that nail of the toe were, reflected all the things of the Universe. The lotus whence I was born, the four faced Brahmâ like myself on that lotus, Bhagavân Jagannâth lying on that bed of Ananta, the two Demons Madhu Kaitabha, all I saw there.

21-31. Seeing all these wonderful things within the nails of Her lotus feet, I became greatly surprised and thought timidly :- “What are all these!” My companions Visnu and Śankara were struck with wonder. We three, then, made out that She was our Mother of the universe.

Thus full one hundred years passed away in seeing the various glories of the Devî in the auspicious nectar-like Mani Dvîpa; as long we were there, Her attendants, the Deva girls adorned with various ornaments gladly considered us as Sakhîs. We, too, were greatly fascinated by their enchanting gestures and postures. For that reason, we saw always their beautiful movements with great gladness. Once, on an occasion, Bhagavân Visnu, while He was in that feminine form, chanted hymns in praise of the great Devî Śrî Bhuvanes‘varî.

Śrî Bhagavân said :- Salutation to the Devî Prakriti, the Creatrix; I bow down again and again to Thee. Thou art all-auspicious and grantest the desires of Thy devotees; Thou art of the nature of Siddhi (success) and Vridhhi (increase). I bow down again and again to Thee. I bow down to the World Mother, Who is of the nature of Everlasting Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. O Devî! Thou createst,

preservest and destroyest this Universe; Thou dost the Pralaya (the great Dissolution) and showest favour to the created beings. Thus Thou art the Authoress of the above five fold things that are done; so, O Bhuvaneśvarî, I bow down to Thee! Thou art the great efficient and material cause of the changeful. Thou art the Unchangeable, Immoveable Consciousness; Thou art the half letter (Ardhamâtrâ), Hrillekhâ (the consciousness that ever pervades both inside and outside the Universe); Thou art the Supreme Soul and the individual soul. Salutation again and again to Thee.

O Mother! I now realise fully well that this whole Universe rests on Thee; it rises from Thee and again melts away in Thee. The creation of this Universe shews Thy infinite force. Verily, Thou art become Thyself all these Lokas (regions). During the time of creation Thou createst the two formless elements akâsâ and Vâyû and the three elements with form, fire, water, and earth; then with these Thou createst the whole Universe and shewest this to the Enjoyer Purusa, who is of the nature of consciousness, for His satisfaction. Thou again dost become the material cause of the twentythree (23) Tattvas, Mahat, etc., as enumerated in the Sâṅkhya system and appearest to us like a mirage.

32. O Mother! Were it not for Thee, no object would be visible, Thou pervadest the whole Universe. It is for this reason that those persons that are wise declare that even the Highest Purusa can do no work without Thy aid.

33-34. O Devî! Thou createst and art giving satisfaction to the whole Universe by Thy power; again at the time of Pralaya Thou swallowest forcibly all these that are seen. So, O Devî! Who can fathom Thy powers? O Mother! Thou didst save us from the hands of Madhu and Kaitabha. Then Thou hast brought us to this Mani Dvîpa and shewed us Thy own form, all the extended regions and immense powers and given us exquisite delight and joy. This is the highest place of happiness.

35-37. O Mother! When I Myself, Śankara and Brahmâ or any one of us is unable to fathom Thy inconceivable glory, who else can then ascertain? O Bhavânî! Who knows, how many more than the several regions that we saw reflected in thy nails of Thy feet, exist in Thy creation. O One endowed with infinitely great powers! O Devî! we saw another Visnu, another Hara, another Brahmâ, all of great celebrity in the Universe exhibited by Thee; who knows how many other such Brahmâs,

etc., exist in Thy other Universes! Thy glory is infinite. O Mother! I bow down again and again to Thy lotus feet and pray to Thee that may Thy this form exist always in my mind. May my mouth always utter Thy name and may my two eyes see always Thy lotus feet.

38-43. O Revered One! May I remember Thee as my Goddess and may'st Thou constantly look on myself as Thy humble servant. O Mother! What more shall I

say than this :— May this relation as mother and son always exist between Thee and me. O World-Mother! There is nothing in this world that is not known to Thee for Thou art omniscient. So O Bhavânî! What more shall my humble self declare to Thee! Now dost Thou do whatever Thou desirest. O Devî! The rumour goes that Brahmâ is the Creator, Visnu is the Preserver, and Maheśvara is the Destroyer! Is this true? O Eternal One! It is through Thy Will power, through Thy force, that we create, preserve and destroy. O Daughter of the Himalaya mountain! The earth is supporting this Universe; it is Thy endless might that is holding all this made of five elements. O Grantress of boons! It is through Thy power and lustre that the Sun is lustrous and becomes visible. Though Thou art the attributeless Self, yet by Thy Mâyic power Thou appearest in the form of this Prapancha Universe. When Brahmâ, Maheśa, and I myself take birth by Thy power and are not eternal, what more can be said of Indra and other Devas than this that they are mere temporary things and created. It is only Thou that art Eternal, Ancient Prakriti and the Mother of this Universe. O Bhavânî! Now I realise from my remaining with Thee, that it is Thou that dost impart, out of mercy, the Brahmâ vidyâ to the ancient Purusa; and thus He can realise His eternal nature. Otherwise He will remain always under delusion that He is the Lord, He is the Purusa without beginning, that He is good and the Universal Soul, and thus suffers under various forms of egoism (Ahamkâra).

Thou art the Vidyâ of the intelligent persons and the Śakti of the beings endowed with force; Thou art Kîrtî (fame), Kânti (lustre), Kamalâ (wealth) and the spotless Tusti (peace, happiness). Amongst men, Thou art the dispassion, leading to Mukti (complete freedom from bondage). Thou art the Gâyatri, the mother of the Vedas; and Thou art Svahâ, Svadhâ, etc. Thou art the Bhâgavatî, of the nature of the three Gunas; Thou art the half mâtrâ (half the upper stroke of a letter), the fourth state, transcending the Gunas. It is Thou that givest always the Śâstras for the preservation of the Devas and the Brâhmanas. It is Thou that hast expanded and manifested this whole phenomenon of the visible Universe for the liberation of the embodied souls (Jîvas), the parts of the pure holy Brâhman, the Full, the Beginningless, the Deathless, forming the waves of

the Infinite expanse of ocean. When the Jîva comes to know internally and becomes thoroughly conscious that all this is Thy work, Thou createst and destroyest, that all this is Thy Mâyic pastime, false, like the parts of an actor in a theatrical play, then and then only he desists for ever from his part in this Theatre of world. O Mother! O Destroyer of the greatest difficulties! I always take refuge unto Thee. Thou dost save me from this ocean of Samsâra, full of Moha (delusion). Let Thou be my Saviour when my end will come, from these infinitely troublesome and unreal pains arising from love and hatred. Obeisance to Thee! O Devî! O Mahâ vidyâ! I fall prostrate at Thy feet. O Thou, the Giver of all desires! O Auspicious

One! Dost Thou give the knowledge that is All-Light to Me.

Thus ends the fourth chapter of the Third Skandha on the hymns to the Great Devî by Visnu in the Mahâpurâna Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâs.

CHAPTER 5. ON THE CHANTING OF HYMNS BY HARA AND BRAHMÂ

1. Brahmâ said :— O Nrada! Thus speaking, Visnu stopped; Sankara, the Destroyer, then stepped in and, bowing down to the Devî said :—
2. Śiva said :— O Devî! If Hari be born by Thy power and the lotus-born Brahmâ have come into existence from Thee, why, then, I who of Tamo Guna be not born of Thee! O Auspicious One! Thou art clever in creating all the Lokas! What wonder is there in My being created by Thee.
3. O Mother! Thou art the earth, water, air, âkâsa and fire. Thou art, again, the organs of senses and the organs of perception; Thou art Buddhi, mind and Ahankâra (egoism).
4. Those who say that Hari, Hara, and Brahmâ are respectively the Preserver, the Destroyer and the Creator of this whole Universe do know anything. All the three, above mentioned, are created by Thee; then they perform always their respective functions; their sole refuge being Thyself.
5. O Mother! If the Universe be created of the five elements, earth, air, ether, fire, and water, having the properties of touch, taste, etc., then how these five elements possessing attributes and of the nature of effects, can come into manifestation, without their being born from Thy Chit portion (Intelligence)?
6. O Auspicious Mother! It is Thou in the shape of Brahmâ, Visnu and Śiva, That art creating this Universe and it is Thou that hast assumed the form of this whole Universe, moving and non-moving. Thus Thou playest, as it wills Thee, under various forms, again and again. Thou dost cease from play (during pralaya) as it likes Thee.

7. O Mother! When Brahmâ, Visnu and I become desirous to create the world, we execute our duties by taking the dust (earth, etc.) of Thy lotus feet.

8. O Mother! If it were not Thy mercy, then how Brahmâ could have become endowed with Rajoguna, Visnu with Sattvaguna and I with Tamoguna?

9. O Mother! If there were no differences observed in Thy mind, then why hast Thou created in this world rich and poor, king and councillors, servants, etc., various classes of beings? Why hast Thou not created all alike happy or all alike miserable?

10. So Thou wilt have to show Thy mercy towards me. Thy three gunas are capable at all times to create, preserve and destroy the world; then Hari, Hara and Brahmâ, whom Thou hast created as the cause of the three worlds, is simply Thy will.

11-12. O Bhavâni! If Thy Gunas had no power in the acts of creation, etc., then how can the fact that while we three Hari, Brahmâ and I were coming in the aeroplane, we saw on our way new worlds created by Thee, become possible? Kindly dost Thou say on this. O World-Mother! It is Thou that desirest to create, preserve, and destroy this world by Thy part Mâyik power. Thou art always enjoying with Purusa, Thy husband. O Śiva! We cannot fathom Thy inscrutable ways.

13-15. O auspicious one! How can we understand Thy sport? O Mother! We are transformed into young women before Thee; let us serve Thy lotus feet. If we get our manhood, we will be deprived from serving Thy feet and thus of the greatest happiness. O Mother! O Sire! I do not like to leave Thy lotus feet and get my man-body again and reign in the three worlds. O Beautiful faced one! Now that I have got this youthful feminine form before Thee, there is not a trace of desire within me to get again my masculine form. What use is there in getting manhood, what happiness is there if I do not get sight of Thy lotus-feet!

16-18. O Mother! Let this unsullied fame of mine be spread over in the three worlds that I have got, in this young womanly form, the chance of serving Thy lotus feet that has got this effect that the idea of world goes away. Who is there that will leave Thy service and desire to enjoy the foeless kingdom in the world? Oh! even a moment appears a Yuga to him who has not got Thy lotus feet with him! O Mother! Those that

leave the worship of Thy lotus feet and become engaged in performing tapasyâ are certainly deprived of the best thing by the Creator, though their minds be pure and holy. Their power from their Tapasyâ may be acquired and they be entitled for Mukti; yet they get dire defeat from not having Thee.

19. O Unborn One! Austerities, control of passions, enlightenment or performance of sacrifices, as ordained in the Vedas, nothing can save, from this ocean of Samsâra. It is the devotional worship only of Thy lotus feet that can make one attain the Beatitude. O Devî! If Thou be extremely merciful towards me, then initiate me in that wonderful holy mantra of Thine; I will repeat that omnipotent par-excellent nine-lettered mantra of the Chandikâ Devî and be happy.

20-26. O Mother! In my former birth I got the nine-lettered mantra but now I have forgotten it O Tarinî! O Saviour! Give me today that mantra and save me from this ocean of world. Brahmâ said :— When Śiva of wonderful fire and energy, said this, the Devî Ambikâ clearly uttered the nine lettered mantra. Mahâdeva accepted the mantra and became very glad. He fell down at the feet of the Devî, and then and there began to repeat the nine-lettered mantra together with Vîja (seed) that yields desires and liberation and can be easily pronounced. When I saw Śankara, the Auspicious One to all the Lokas, in that state, I fell down also at the feet of the Devî and spoke to Mahâ Mâyâ :— O Mother! It is not that the Vedas are unable to ascertain Thy nature; for, in the performances of sacrifices and other minor actions, they do not mention Thy full Nature, the Ordainer of all but mention simply Indra and minor deities and Svâhâ Devî, a portion of Thy essence as the presiding deities of the sacrificial offerings and oblations. So, O Devî! It is Thou that hast been extolled in this Universe as the Universal Consciousness, all knowing and transcending all the Devas and all the Lokas.

Note :— The nine lettered mantra is “Om Hrîm Śrîm Chandikâyai namah.”

27. I have created this greatly wondrous Universe; I am the Lord of this Brahmânda. Who is there more powerful than me in these three worlds? When I am Brahmâ, transcending all the Lokas, then I am blessed; there is no doubt in this. By reason of this vanity I am plunged in this widely extended ocean of Samsra.

28-31. That now I have been able to get the dust of Thy lotus feet, has now made me really proud; and truly I am blessed today and by Thy grace this manifestation of pride on my part has become quite justified. Thou destroyest the fear of this Samsâra and givest Mukti. So, O Goddess! pray unto Thee that Thou dost cut asunder this iron chain of my delusion,

full of great troubles and make me devoted to Thee. O Auspicious One! I am born from the lotus discovered by Thee; now I am extremely anxious how I can get Mukti. I am Thy obedient servant; I am merged in the delusion of this ocean of world. Save me O Śiva! from this Samsâra. Those who do not know Thy character, think that I am the Creator and Lord of this Universe; those, who do not worship Thee and worship Indra and other Devas and perform sacrifices to attain Heaven are certainly ignorant of Thy glory. O Prime Mâyâ! Thou art the Eternal Mahâ

Mâyâ! It is Thou that dost want to play this worldplay, and for that purpose hast created me as Brahmâ. Then I created these four sorts of beings, engendered by heat and moisture (said of insects and worms), those that are oviparous, those that are sprung from germs or shoots, and those that are born from womb, viviparous and exhibit my pride "That I am omniscient" So forgive this sin of mine, this my pride.

32-37. O Mother ! Those ignorant persons blinded by passion, who take recourse to the eight-fold Yoga and Samâdhi and labour under it, do not know for certain, they would get Moksa, if they utter Thy name, even under a pretext. O Bhavânî! are they not deluded by error and blinded by passion for this world, who discriminate only the Tattvas (essences) and forget Thy name? For it is Thou that dost give Mukti from this world. O Thou Unborn! Can Hari, Hara, etc., and other ancient persons who have realised the highest Truth, forget, even for a second Thy holy character and Thy names Śiva, Ambikâ, Śakti, Isvarî and others? Canst Thou not create, by Thy glance merely, this fourfold creation? In fact, for mere recreation and will, it is Thou that hast made me as a Creator from the earliest times. Is it not that Thou didst save Hari in the ocean from the two Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha? Is it not again the fact that Thou destroyest Hara even who is the great destroyer, when Thou dissolvest the creation? Otherwise why is it that Hara becomes born from my eye-brows at the time of fresh creation? So Hari is not the Preserver of all. Hara is not the Destroyer of all. Had they been such, why would they be preserved and destroyed respectively by Thee? So Thou alone art the Creatrix and Preservatrix of all. O Bhavânî; no one has heard of or seen Thee taking birth; nobody knows whence Thou art born. Thou art, indeed, the One and only Śakti! Only the four Vedas can make one understand Thy Nature. O Mother! It is only by Thy help that I am able to create this creation; Hari, to preserve; and Hara, to destroy.

Without Thy aid, we are able to do nothing. There is nobody, in this world, born or that was born or that will be born, who does not become doubtful as we are. This Thine wondrously variegated Universe, full of Thy Lîlâ, consisting in variety, is the common ground of dispute of the imperfect intellects; who are not deluded here! In this Samsârâ, full

of things, visible and invisible, there is another one who is more ancient than Thee; there is another Highest Person who is Thy substratum. If it be argued nicely, it will be seen that there is no other third Person that can be proved as far as evidences or proofs go to measure it. The wise persons, knowing all the laws, declare that there is the One God attributeless, inactive, without any object in view, without any upâdhis or adjunct without any parts, who is the witness of Thy widely extended Leelâ "One alone exists; and that is Brahmân, and there is

nothing else.” This is the saying of the Vedas. Now I feel in my mind a doubt as to the discrepancy with this Veda saying. I cannot say that the Veda is false. So I ask Thee :— Art Thou the Brahmân, the one and the secondless that is mentioned in the Vedas? or Is the other Person Brahmâ? Kindly solve this doubt of mine. My mind is not completely free from doubts; this little mind is still discussing whether the Reality is dual or one; I cannot solve myself. So dost Thou say from Thy mouth and cut my doubts asunder. Whether Thou art male or female, describe in detail to me. So that, knowing the Highest Śakti, I be freed from this ocean Samsâra.

Thus ends the fifth chapter of the Third Skandha on the chanting of hymns by Hara and Brahmâ in the Mahâ Purânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 6. ON THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVÎ’S VIBHUTIS (POWERS)

1-10. Brahmâ said :— When I thus asked with great humility, the Devî Bhâgavatî, the Prime Śakti, She addressed me thus in the following sweet words :— There is oneness always between me and the Purusa; there is difference whatsoever at any time between me and the Purusa (Male, the Supreme Self). Who is I, that is Purusa; who is Purusa, that is I. The difference between force and the receptacle of force is due to error. He who knows the subtle difference between us two, is certainly intelligent; he is freed from this bondage of Samsâra; there is no manner of doubt in this. The One Secondless Eternal ever-lasting Brahmâ substance becomes dual at the time of creation. As a lamp, though one, becomes two by virtue of adjuncts; as a face, though one, becomes two, as reflected in a mirror; as one man becomes double by his shadow, we become reflected into many, by virtue of different Antah Karanas (mind, buddhi, and ahankâra) created by Mâyâ. The necessity of creation, again and again, after the Prâkriti Pralayas is due to the fructification of those Karmas of the Jîvas, whose fruits were not enjoyed before the Pralayas ; so when creation again commences, the above said dif-

ferences are found to appear; Brahmâ is the material cause of these changes;

without Brahmâ as the basis, the existence of Mâyâ is simply impossible. It is therefore that in Mâyâ and Mâyâ's action, Brahmâ is interwoven. For this reason as many differences are found in Mâyâ, so many differences exist in Brahmâ.

The Mâyâ and Brahmâ appear as two and hence all the differences, visible and invisible, have come forth. Only during creation are these differences conceived. When everything melts away, i.e., there comes the Pralaya or general dissolution, then, I am not female, I am not male, nor I am hermaphrodite. I then remain as Brahmâ with Mâyâ latent in it. During the time of creation I am Śrî (wealth), Buddhi (intellect), Dhriti, (fortitude). Smriti (recollection), Sraddhâ (faith), Medhâ (intelligence), Dayâ (mercy), Lajjâ (modesty), Kshudhâ (hunger), Trishnâ (thirst), Kshamâ (forgiveness), Akshamâ (non-forgiving), Kânti (lustre), Sânti (peace), Pipâsâ (thirst), Nidrâ (sleep) Tandrâ (drowsiness), Jarâ (old age), Ajarâ (non old-age), Vidyâ (knowledge), Avidyâ (non-knowledge), Sprihâ (desires), Vâñchâ (desires), Śakti (force), Aśakti (non-force), Vasâ (fat), Majjâ (marrow), Tvak (skin), Dristi (sight), Satyâsatya Vākya (true and untrue words) and it is I that become Parâ, Madhyamâ, Paśyanti, etc., the innumerable Nâdis (tubular organs of the body, e. g., arteries, veins, intestines, blood vessels, pulses, etc.); there are three koti and a half Nâdis (35 millions of Nadis).

11-13. O Brahmâ! See what substance is there in this Samsâra, that is separate from Me? And what can you imagine with which I am not connected? So know this as certain that I am these all forms. O Creator! Say, is there any such thing, where you will not see my above mentioned positive form? So, in this creation, I am one, and I am many as well, in various forms. Know this as certain that it is I, that assuming the names of all the various Devas, exist in so many forms of Śaktis. It is I that manifest power and wield strength.

14-27. O Brahmâ! I am Gaurî, Brâhmî, Raudrî, Vârâhî, Vaisnavî, Śiva, Vâruni, Kauverî, Nâra Sinhî, and Vâsavî Śaktis. I enter in every substance, in everything of the nature of effect. Making that Purusa the instrument, I do all the actions (rather Purusa is the efficient cause, the immediate agent). I am the coolness in water, the heat in fire, the lustre in the Sun, the cooling rays in the Moon; and thus I manifest my my strength. O Brahmâ! Verily, I tell you this as certain that this universe becomes motionless, if it be abandoned by Me. If I leave Śankara, he will not be able to kill the Daityas. A very weak man is declared to be as without any strength; he is not said to be without

Rudra, or without Visnu, nobody says like this; everyone says, he is without strength, without Śakti. Those who get fallen, tumbled, afraid, quiet, or under one's enemies are called powerless; no one says that this man is Rudraless and so forth. So the creation that you perform, know Śakti, power to be the cause thereof. When you will be endowed with that Śakti, you will be able to create this whole

Universe. Hari, Rudra, Indra, Agni, Chandra, Srya, Yama, Viśvakarmâ, Varuna Pavana, and other Devas all are able to do their karmas, when they are united respectively with their Śaktis. This Earth, when united with Śakti, remains fixed and becomes capable to hold all the Jîvas and beings. And if this Earth be devoid of force, She cannot hold an atom even.

Thus Ananta, Kurma and all the other elephants of the eight points of the compass, become able to do their respective works, only by My help (when united with Me, the Force). O Lotus born! If I wish I can drink all the fire and waters today and I can hold wind in check. I do whatever I wish. If I say that I am creating this world then the inconsistency arises thus :— “When I am everything, then I am being eternal, all this universe, made up of Prapancha, becomes eternal.” (Whereas this universe is not eternal in the sense that it is changing.) If it were said that this universe is different from Me, then My saying that I am everything becomes inconsistent. Thinking thus, do not plunge yourself in the doubt as to the reality and origin and separateness of the non-eternal universe. For what is unreal, how can that come into existence? The unreal substances can never come into existence; as the child of a barren woman, the flowers in the sky are simply absurd. What is real can only be born. In discussing about origin, birth, etc., the appearance and disappearance of real things is called their birth and dissolution. In the cold of earth there exists the previous existence of the jar and this is the cause of the appearance of the jar; the disappearance of the jar exists in the jar; hence this disappearance is the cause of the destruction of the jar. Thus the appearance and disappearance of the causal eternal things are called the Origin and Pralaya. Similarly in discussing on the causal nature, there does not arise an inconsistency in My being everything.

28-48. So there is nothing to fear. In discussing about the reality of effects, this is to be conceived, that today there does not exist here the earth in the form of jar, if it is destroyed, where it has gone? The conclusion is that the earth in the form of jar exists in atoms. O Brahmâ! All substances eternal, existing for a moment only, the void, and the substances of the nature, real and unreal both, all are due to a cause.

Ahankâra is born first among them. Thus substances are of seven kinds: Mahat, etc. O Unborn One! Mahattattva first arises from Prakriti; from Mahattattva springs Ahamkâra; and from Ahamkâra arises other substances. Thus, in this order, you go on creating this Universe. O Brahmâ! Now you better go to your respective places, and after creating the Universe, remain there and perform your respective functions ordained by Prârabdha. Take this beautiful great Śakti Mahâ Sarasvatî, full of Rajoguna, and of a smiling nature. This Śakti, wearing white clothes, adorned with divine ornaments and sitting on Varâsana, will always

be your playmate. This beautiful woman will always be your boon companion; consider Her as My bibhuti (manifestation of power), and so most worshipful. Never show any sort of disrespect towards Her. Take Her and go immediately to Satyaloka; and from the seed of Mahattattva, create the fourfold beings from these. The subtle bodies (Linga sarîra) and Karmas are remaining mixed up with each other. Separate them, as before, duly, in due time.

Now go on as before and according to Kâla (time), Karma, and Svabhâva (nature), join them with their respective attributes (sounds and other qualities); in other words bestow fruits according to their gunas and Karmas (Prârabdhas), and to the time when these fruits are due.

Visnu is prominent in Sattvaguna and hence superior to You. So You should always respect and worship Him. Whenever any difficulty will come to you, Visnu will come down on earth to fulfil your ends. Janârdan Visnu will sometimes be born in the wombs of birds and animals, be sometimes in the wombs of men and destroy the Dânavas. The highly powerful Mahâ Deva, too, will help you. Now create the Devas and enjoy as you like. The Brâhmanas, Kshattriyas, and Vaisyâs will worship you, with devotion, in various sacrifices, endowed with due sacrificial fees. All the Devas will be always satisfied when my name "Svâhâ" will be uttered in the sacrificial oblations and ceremonies.

Śiva, the incarnate of Tamo guna will be revered and worshipped by all persons in every sacrifice. When the Devas will be frightened by the Daityas, then Vârâhî, Vaisnavî, Gaurî, Nara Simhî, Śachî, Śiva and My other Śaktis will take excellent bodies and destroy your fear. So, O Lotus-born! Be at your ease and do work. You utter and repeat my nine-lettered mantra with Vîja and Dhyân and do your work.

O highly intelligent one! This nine-lettered mantra is the best of all the mantras. You are to keep this mantra, within your heart, for the accomplishment of all your ends.

Thus saying to me, Bhagavatî smiled and began to say to Visnu :— O Visnu! Take this beautiful Mahâ Lakśmî and go. She will always reside within your breast; there is no doubt in this. This all auspicious giving Śakti I give to you for your enjoyment.

You should always shew respect to Her; never show hatred or contempt. For the good of the world, I unite thus Lakśmî and Nârâyan. For your sustenance I create Yajña. You three will act together in harmony unanimously.

You, Brahmâ and Śiva are my three Devas, born of my Gunas. You three will undoubtedly be respected and worshipped by the world.

The stupid man who will find any difference between you three, will go to hell; there is no doubt in this. He who is Hari, is Śiva; He who Śiva is Hari; to make difference between these will lead one to hell. So Brahmâ is one and the same with Śiva and Visnu; there no manner of doubt in this. O Visnu! But there are other differences in their Gunas; I will tell this; listen, as far as meditation of the Supreme Self is concerned you will have Sattva Guna predominant within you; and Rajo Guna and Tamo Guna will be secondary. In various other pursuits and Vikâras (changes) better have Rajo Guna with Lakśmî and always enjoy Her.

49-85. O Lord of Ramâ! I give you Vâkvîja, Kânavîja, and Mâyâvîja that will lead you to the highest end. Take this Mantra and repeat it and enjoy as you like. O Visnu! By this, the danger of death, caused Kâla, will never come to you. When the creation of this Universe will be completely done I will then destroy this whole thing, moving and non-moving. You all will then be dissolved in Me. You should add pranava this mantra with Kânavîja leading to Moksa and repeat it always with auspicious motives. O Purusottama! Build your Vaikunthapurî; live there and think of this My Eternal Form and enjoy as you like.

Brahmâ said :— Saying thus to Vâsudeva, that Higher Prakriti Devî who is all of the three Gunas and yet transcending them, began to address Mahâ Deva, the Deva of the Devas, in sweet words, thus :— O Sankara! Accept this beautiful Mahâ Kâlî Gaurî, build a new Kailâsa city and live there happily. Your primary Gunas will be Tamas; Sattva and Rajas will be your secondary Gunas. Have recourse to Rajo and Tamo Gunas while you slay the Asuras and thus wander.

O sinless Śankara! Have recourse to peaceful Satto Guna, when you reflect on the Supreme Self and practise austerities. You all are for creating, preserving and destroying the Universe and you are all of the three

Gunas. There is no such thing in this world as are devoid of these three Gunas. Everything, that is visible, is endowed with the three Gunas, and whatever will be or was before cannot exist without them. Only the Supreme Self is without these Gunas; but He is not visible. O Sankara! I am the Parâ Prakriti; at times I appear with Gunas; and at others I remain without any Gunas. O Śambhu! I am always of the causal nature; never I am of the nature of effect. When I am causal, I am with Gunas; and when I am before the Highest Purusa, I am, then, without any Gunas on account of my remaining in the state of equilibrium (Sâmyâ vasthâ). Mahattattva, Ahamkâra, and sound, touch, etc., all the Gunas perform the work of Samsâra, day and night, each preceding one being the cause and each subsequent one being the effect; never do they cease in their activities.

From the Reality (Sat vastu) springs Ahamkâra (Avyakta); therefore I am of the nature of causality; again Ahamkâra is embodied with the three Gunas, and so the

Pundits call it as an effect of mine. From Ahamkâra arises Mahattattva; this is denominated as Buddhi. So Mahattattva is the effect and Ahamkâra is its cause. From Mahattattva arises again another Ahamkâra; from this second Ahamkâra arise the five Tanmâtrâs or the subtle elements. From these five Tanmâtrâs, the five gross elements arise after a process called Panchîkarana. From the Sâttvika part of the five Tanmâtrâs, arise the five organs of perception; from their Râjasik part, the five organs of action come; from their Panchîkarana, came the five gross elements; from the Sâttvika portion of all the five elements comes mind. Thus sixteen things come into existence. These organs of perception, etc., and other effects together with the Mahâ bhûtas form one Gana, composed of the sixteen categories. The original Purusa is the Supreme Self; He is neither cause nor is He any effect. O Śambhu! At the beginning of the creation, all the above things are born in the way already indicated. Thus I have described to you, in brief; about the creation. O Devas! Now get up in your aeroplane and go to your respective places and fulfil your respective duties. Whenever you get into any dire distress, then remember Me; I will appear before you. O Devas! You should remember always the Eternal Supreme Self and Me. When you will remember us both, all your actions, will, no doubt, be crowned with success.

Brahmâ said :— Bhagavatî Durgâ gave us Śaktis, full of Divine beauty and lustre; She gave Mahâ Laksmî to Visnu, Mahâ Kâlî to Śiva, and Mahâ Sarasvatî to me and bade good bye to us. Thus given farewell to by the Devî, we three went to another place and were born as males. We thought of the very wonderful nature and influence of the Devî and

we got upon our divine aeroplane. When we ascended, we saw there was no Manidvîpa, there was no Devî, there was no ocean of nectar, nothing whatsoever. Save our aeroplane, we did not see anything. We then got into our wide aeroplane and reached there where Visnu killed the two indomitable Daityas, in the great ocean, where I was born from the lotus.

Thus ends the Sixth Chapter of the Third Skandha on the description of the Devî's Vibhutas (powers) in the Mahâpurânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsî Veda Vyâs.

CHAPTER 7. ON THE CREATION AND THE TATTVAS AND THEIR PRESIDING DEITIES

1. O Brahmâ said :— Nârada! Thus we three I, Visnu, and Mahâdeva saw that highly effulgent Goddess: we also saw separately Her attendant goddesses, one after another, that form, as it were, a veil to her? Who were also preeminently grand.

2-3. Vyâsa said :— O king! Nârada, the foremost of the Munis, hearing thus his father's words, was exceedingly pleased and asked :— O Grandsire of all the Lokas! Now describe in detail that ancient and indestructible undecaying, unchangeable, eternal Purusa, that is Nirguna (free from Prâkritic qualities) that you have seen and realised.

4. Father! You have seen the Śakti (the Prime Energy) personified the Saguna energy, the Supreme Goddess, having hands and feet; but cannot understand of what kind is that Nirguna Śakti which cannot be seen and which is devoid of all Prâkritic qualities.

O Lotus-born! Be good enough to describe to me the real nature of that Prakriti and Purusa and thus satisfy me.

5-6. O Lord of Creation! I practised severe austerities in the Svetadvîpa (white island), so that I might realise and see the Nirguna Highest Self and the Nirguna Śakti, the Supreme Goddess; I saw there many other Mahatmâs (high class spiritual persons) who attained siddhis (supernatural powers) practise Tapasyâ with their passions and anger conquered. But I did not realise nor did I see anything about that Nirguna Highest Self. Father, I was not despaired; again and again I continued with my ascetic practices; but still I failed.

7. Father, you have been so successful as to see that beautiful Śakti with qualities; I have heard about Her from you, but how and of what sort, is that invisible attributeless energy as well as that Nirguna Purusa. Please narrate and explain all these and satisfy my desires that always reign in my breast.

8. Vyâsa said :— O King! Thus asked by Nârada, the Lord of creation, the grandsire of the Lokas, smiled, and began to speak the truth in the following words :—

9. O best of Munis! The form of the Nirguna Purusa (the Supreme Spirit beyond the Prâkritic qualities) cannot exist or be visible; for everything that comes within

the range of sight is transitory. How can, then, that Eternal Spirit have form and how can He become visible!

10. O Nârada! The Nirguna Energy or Nirguna Purusa comes not easily within the range of knowledge; but both of them can be realised by the Munis in their meditation in their consciousness.

11. Prakriti and Purusa have no beginning nor end; they can be realised only through faith; those that have no faith can never realise them.

12. Nârada! The universal consciousness, that is felt in all the beings, know that as the Highest Self; the Energy that is universal and is seen always in all the beings, know that as the Highest Self.

13. O blessed one! That Purusa and Prakriti pervade everywhere and exist in all the things; in this Universe nothing can exist without the presence of both of them.

14. Both of them are the highest intelligent self, nirguna (free from all material qualities), without any tinge of impurity, and undecaying. The one form that is a combination of these two is always to be meditated in the heart.

15. What is Śakti (energy) is the Highest Self; what is the Highest Self is the Highest Śakti. O Nârada! Nobody can ascertain the subtle difference between these two.

16. O Nârada! Merely the study of all the Śâstras and the Vedas with their Amgas without renunciation does not enable one to ascertain the difference between these two.

17. O Child! This whole universe, moving and non-moving, comes out of Ahamkâra (egoism). How can one ascertain the above difference even if he tries for one hundred kalpas, unless one frees oneself from Ahamkâra.

18. The Jîvas are Saguna (with qualities), how can the Sagunas see the Nirguna One with their physical eyes? Therefore O Intelligent one! try to see the Saguna (Brahmâ) only within your heart (until you free yourself from the material qualities and thus be fit to realise the Nirguna Brahmâ).

19-20. O best of Munis! If the tongue (organ of taste) and eyes (organ of sight) be affected with over biliousness, the pungent taste and the yellow colour do not appear what it appeared before; so the hearts of Jîvas, overpowered with material qualities, are quite unfit for realisation of the Nirguna Brahmân. O Nârada! That heart again has come

out of Ahamkâra; how can then that heart be free from Ahamkâra?

21. Until one becomes able to cut asunder all connections with qualities, the

seeing of that Nirguna Brahmâ is impossible. No sooner one is totally free from Ahamkâra, than the Nirguna Brahmâ is at once seen by him within his heart.

22-24. Nârada said :— O best of the Devas! Ahamkâra is three-fold, Sâtvik, Râjasik and Tâmasik; describe in detail the differences between these three subdivisions as well the real nature of the Gunas. Also describe to me about that knowledge, knowing which will lead to my salvation. Also describe, in detail, the characteristics of the several Gunas, in due order.

25-26. Brahmâ said :— O Sinless one! The energy of Ahamkâra is of three kinds :— Jnâna Śakti, Kriyâ Śakti, and Artha or Dravya Śakti. The power by which knowledge is produced or obtained is the Sâttvic Ahamkâra; the power by which action or activity or motion is produced is the Râjasic Ahamkâra; and that by which the material things or objects of have senses are generated is called the Tâmasic Ahamkâra. O Nârada! thus I described to you, in due order, the threefold Ahamkâra.

27-30. Now I describe to you their merits and workings in detail; hear. Out of the Dravya Śakti of the Tâmasic Ahamkâra come sound, touch, form, taste and smell. From these five qualities, the five Tanmâtrâs or the five subtle-elements (primary atoms) are produced.

Sound is the quality of kâ'sa (ether); touch is the quality of Vâyu (Air); the form is the quality of Agni (fire); the taste is the quality of Jala (water); and the smell is the quality of earth.

O Nârada, these ten gross and subtle materials can, when combined, become endowed with power to work out results in the shape of earth, water, fire, etc., and when the Panchîkarana process is combined, the building of the whole cosmos takes place as a natural consequence of the Tâmasa Ahamkâra, endowed with the energy of generating material substances.

31-34. Now hear what are produced by the Râjasic energy. The five organs of hearing, touch, taste, sight, and smell (ears, skin, tongue, eyes and nose) called the five Jñânendriyas (organs of senses); mouth, hands, feet, anus and the organs of generation called the five Karmendriyas (organs of action); and Prâna, Apâna, Vyâna, Samâna, and Udâna, the five Vâyus. The creation out of these fifteen substances is called the Râjasic energy. Nârada! All these organs of senses and actions endowed with the Kriyâ Śakti, called the Karanas and the materials fashioned out of them are called the chidanuvritti or Mâyâ.

35-38. O Nârada! From the Śâttvik Ahamkâra are produced the five presiding rulers of the five internal organs named Dik (quarters), Vâyu, Sun, Varuna, and the twins Asvini Kumâras and the four presiding rulers of the four fold divisions of Antahkarana (Buddhis, manas, Ahamkâra and chitta) named Moon, Brahmâ,

Rudra, and Ksetrajña. Thus the above five organs of senses, the five organs of action, the five Vâyus and mind, these sixteen substances are reckoned as the Sâttvic creation.

39-40. O Child! The Highest Self has two forms; one gross and the other subtle. The formless Self; the Consciousness incarnate, as it were, is the first form. The Seers consider this formless self to be the primary cause (the ultimatum) of all this phenomenal cosmos. (This is only for the best qualified Jñânis, not for others).

The Second Form is the Gross Form for the meditation of the second class qualified persons; thus the sages say. This second form of the Supreme Goddess is conditioned by inherent Mâyâ (time, space and causation); this is also divided into gross and subtle, according as it is the outer or inner body of the second form (and the form suited for the meditation of the third class and the second class devotees).

41. My body is called Strâtmâ; I will now tell you the gross body of Brahmân, the Highest Self.

O Nârada! This my body and soul having the nature of a string or thread is called Hiranyagarbha; this is also the gross body of the Paramâtman; therefore the Paramâtman together with the Strâtmâ, should also be worshipped. O Nârada! I will now describe to you the outer gross body of Brahmân, the Highest Self; hear it attentively; if one hears it with faith and devotion, one is sure to get salvation.

42-43. I have mentioned to you before the five subtle elements, called the five Tanmâtrâs; these, now, when the Panchî Karana process is done, are converted into the five gross elements. Now hear what the Panchî Karana process means :—

44-46. Suppose you are to create the gross element of water. Divide into two equal parts the subtle element of water; divide also the other 4 elements into two equal parts respectively. Now set apart the first half of each of the five elements; divide the second half of each of the elements into four equal parts. Mix the first half of each of the elements with each of the fourth part of the other four elements; and you get one gross element. Similarly you get the other four gross elements. For example :— You want to get the gross element of water :— With the half of the subtle

element ($\frac{1}{2}$) of water mix the fourth part, of the halves of the other elements of ether, fire, air and earth; you get the gross element of water and so on.

The Panchîkarana process is clearly illustrated in the following table.

	Ether	Air	Fire	Water	Earth
Ether	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$
Air	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$
Fire	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$
Water	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{8}$
Earth	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
Gross element	1	1	1	1	1

When the five gross elements are thus produced, consciousness then enters into these elements as their presiding deities; next comes the feeling of egoism (I ness) identifying itself with the body thus created out of the five elements. (I am this body and so forth).

47. This great “I”, the great consciousness, creating and considering the Cosmos as its body is called the Bhagavân, dideva, Nârâyana or Vâisvanara.

48. When, by the Panchîkarana process, the five gross elements, earth, ether, air, etc., are solidified and get their clear definite forms, one, two, three, four, five, qualities are seen to exist in ether, air, fire, water, and earth, respectively.

49-51. Thus ether has one quality only - that is sound: the air has got two qualities - sound and touch; the fire possesses three qualities - sound, touch, and form; the water has got four qualities - sound, touch, form and taste; the earth has got five qualities - sound, touch, form, taste and smell, and by the various combinations of these five gross elements, is produced this grand Cosmos, the great body of Brahmân.

52. Similarly the sum-total of Jîvâs is produced from the several parts of the whole Brahmânda; these Jîvâs are eighty four lakhs; so the sages say.

Thus ends the Seventh Chapter of the Third Skandha of Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam, the Mahâ Purânam, of 18,000 verses, on the creation and the Tattvas and their presiding Deities.

Note :Of these Jîvâs, those who are the best qualified, the Uttamâdhikâris, are known as the Brahmânas, Jânaghana Trîyas, as denoted by Om Hrîm; the middlings have their gross, subtle and causal bodies and are called as Brahmâ Vâisvânara, Stra, Hiranyagarbhas; and the third class is known as Viśva, Taijasa. and Prâjñas and forms the body, as it were, of the Brahmân. There are others also, animals, etc., in the lowest class.

CHAPTER 8. ON THE GUNAS AND THEIR FORMS

1. Brahmâ said :—O Nârada! I have described to you what you asked me just now about the creation of this universe, etc. Now hear with attention the colour of the three qualities, as well their configuration and how they are seen to exist.

2-3. The Sattva Guna is the source of pleasure and happiness; and when happiness comes, everything seems delightening. When integrity, truthfulness, cleanliness, faith, forgiveness, fortitude, mercy, bashfulness, peace and contentment arise in one's heart, know certainly that there has arisen firmly the Sattva Guna in that man.

4. The colour of the Sattva quality is white; it makes one always like religion, and have faith towards good purposes and discard one's tendencies towards bad objects.

5. The Risis, the seers of truth classify Sraddhâ (faith) under the three headings: Sâttvik, Râjasik and Tâmasik.

6. The quality Rajas is of red colour, wonderful and is not pleasant; it is the source of all troubles; there is no doubt in this.

7-8. The intelligent should understand that Rajas has certainly arisen in him, when his mind is filled with hatred, enmity, quarrelsome feeling, pride, stupification, uneasiness, sleeplessness, want of faith, egoism, vanity and arrogance.

9-11. The quality Tamas is of black colour. From Tamas arises laziness, ignorance, sleep, poverty, fear, quarrels, miserliness, insincerity, anger, aberration of intellect, violent atheism, and finding fault with others. The wise should think that Tamas has overpowered him when the above

qualities are found to possess him. When this Tamas quality is attended with the Tâmasî faith, then it becomes the source of pain to others.

12. The well wishers should manifest in themselves the Sattva qualities, control the Râjasik qualities, and destroy the Tâmasic qualities.

13. These three qualities are always found to remain intermingled with another, and each of them has always an inherent tendency to overcome the others; and therefore they are always, as it were, at war with another. They never have a separate existence from one another.

14. Never is found anywhere only one Sattva quality to the exclusion of others, the Rajas and Tamas; similar is the case with the Rajas or Tamas. They remain intermingled and depend on one another.

15. O Nârada! Now hear, in detail, which two qualities remain in twins, knowing which, one is freed from this ocean of the transmigration of existence.

16. I have realised these; therefore you ought not to have any uncertainties on these points. The reality of these is especially felt, when it is really understood and when its effects begin to manifest themselves.

17. O high-minded! No one is able to realise these at once; it requires be heard, and then meditated upon. It also depends on one's natural capability and merits, due to the past actions.

18-21. Suppose one hears of the sacred places of pilgrimages and is filled with the Râjasic devotion. He goes out to those places and sees what he had heard before. There he performs his ablutions, makes offerings and the Râjasic gifts, stays there for some time; but all this he does under the influence of the Râjasic quality. And when he returns home, he finds himself not free from lust, anger, love and hatred; he remains the same that he was before. Therefore, in this case, O Nârada! man hears but he does not realise the purifying effects of those holy places. O best of Munis! And when he does not find any benefit from the holy place of pilgrimage, it is equivalent to his not at all hearing of the place.

22. O best of Munis! The effect of visiting the sacred places of pilgrimages is then said to accrue to any individual, when he becomes freed from his sins, just as the fruit of cultivating fields is then said to occur, when the cultivator gets the ripened harvest out of his labour and enjoys the produce of his fields.

23. O Nârada! Lust, anger, covetousness, delusion, thirst, hatred, love, vanity, malice, jealousy, non-forgiveness, unrest all these indicate that there is sin; and until these are purged out of one's body and mind,

man lives in sin. If the visiting of the sacred places of pilgrimages does not enable one to overcome the above passions, then the labours in going to those places are in vain, i.e., those labours merely are the results just as the toil only undergone by the cultivator is his only result, and is not met with any reward when there is no harvest at all.

24-28. Lo! The cultivator takes hard labour to clear his fields and cultivate the hard soil; he then sows the valuable seeds, because this is considered as doing good. Next, in expectation of the harvest, he undergoes a good deal of pains, day and night, to protect his fields and goes down to sleep, in the cold season, in the forest surrounded by tigers and other dangerous animals; but alas! locusts coming

eat away and destroy all the crops, to the utter disappointment of the cultivator. All his labours are spent in vain. So, O Nârada! The labour taken by one in going to the holy places yields pains, and pains only, instead of success and happiness.

29-32. When the Sattva quality grows in abundance, as a consequence of reading the Vedânta and the other Śâstras, dispassion comes towards the Râjasic and the Tâmasic qualities and things, and the Sattva quality overpowers the Rajas and Tamas. Similarly when the Râjasic quality grows in abundance, as a natural consequence of greed and avarice, then it overpowers Sattva and Tamas; so, by delusion, when the Tâmasic quality grows in abundance, it overpowers the Sattva and the Râjasic qualities. O Nârada! I will now speak to you, in detail, about the overpowering of these qualities by one another.

33-35. When the Sattva quality grows in preponderance, the mind rests in religious ideas and things; it no more thinks of those external things, the products of the Rajas and Tamas qualities. Rather it wants to enjoy the Sâttvic things; wealth, religious affairs, sacrifices that can be acquired or performed without any trouble. Then that individual yearns after salvation and renounces his pursuits after the Râjasic and Tâmasic objects.

36. Thus, O Nârada! first try to conquer the Rajas and then the Tamas; then the Sattva becomes pure.

37. When the Râjasic quality grows in preponderance, the individual imbibes the Râjasic faith, abandons his own Sanâtan Dharma (settled eternal religion) and practises against his religious instructions.

38. Under the Râjasic propensities, one is eager to amass wealth and enjoy the Râjasic things. The Rajas drives away the Sattva and curbs the Tamas.

39-41. Nârada! So when the Tâmasic quality grows in preponderance, the faith in the Vedas and in the religious Śâstras entirely disappears. Imbibing the Tâmasic faith, the individual squanders away his wealth and is always engaged in quarrels, and party feelings, envy, violence and never enjoys peace. The individual with the Tâmasic quality in excess overpowers the Râjasic and Sâttvic qualities and becomes angry, wicked, and a great cheat and does everything as he likes, without any regard to his superiors.

42. Nârada! Thus you see that, of these three qualities, no one can remain entirely alone, free from the other qualities. These remain always in twos or threes.

43-44. The Sattva can never exist without the Rajas; the Rajas can never exist without the Tamas; and these two qualities can never exist without Tamas. Again Tamas cannot exist without Rajas and Sattva. These qualities act and react always in twos or threes.

45-47. They never exist separately; they live in pairs or threes and are the originators of each other; these qualities are of the nature of procreating things; in other words, Sattva originates the Rajas or Tamas; again the Rajas originates sometimes Sattva and Tamas. Again the Tamas sometimes originates Sattva and Rajas. Thus they generate each other as the earthen pots and earth are their mutual causes.

48-49. Deva Datta, Visnu Mitra, and Yajña Datta these three united perform any action, so these three qualities united reside in the buddhi (intellect) of the Jîvas and generate their sense perceptions.

Just as the husband and wife get into a couple, the qualities get into couples.

50. The Sattva with Rajas forms the couple Rajas Sattva; so Sattva Rajas forms another couple, where the Sattva predominates. So Sattva and Rajas forms each with Tamas the other couples.

51. Nârada said! O Dvaipâyana! Hearing thus about these three qualities from my father, I asked him again these questions.

Thus ends the eighth chapter of the Mahâ Purânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam containing the description of the Gunas, of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 9. ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GUNAS

1-2. Nârada said :— Father! You have described to me the characteristic of the three qualities; though I have drunk the sweet juice from your lotus like mouth, still I am not quite satisfied. Kindly describe to me, in detail, in due order, how I can recognise clearly the three qualities so that I can get the highest peace of mind.

3. Vyâsa said :— O King! The Creator of the world, Brahmâ, originated from the Rajo Guna, asked by his high minded son Nârada, began to speak in the following terms.

4. O Nârada! I myself do not possess fully the complete knowledge of the three qualities; but, as far as I know, I am telling that to you.

5. The pure Sattva quality is not found alone to exist anywhere; it manifests itself

always, in mixed condition, in combination with the other qualities.

6-9. As a beautiful woman, well decorated with ornaments and endowed with amorous gestures, gives delight, on the one hand, to her husband, father, mother and friends; and, on the other hand, becomes a source of pain and delusion to her rival wives, so the Sattva quality, personified as a beautiful woman, engenders the Sâttvic happiness of the mind to some individual, at one time, and at another time becomes a source of pain to the same individual (or at one and the same time becomes a source of happiness to one and a source of pain to another.) Thus the Rajas or the Tamas quality, personified respectively as a beautiful woman becomes a source of pain or delusion to an individual at one time, and at another time, a source of happiness to the same man. So it is easily seen that one quality cannot remain single; it remains in union with the other qualities.

Note :— It is very possible that a man, possessing the Sâttvic quality at any time, can be said not to possess only the Sâttvic quality but also the Rajas and the Tamas to a certain degree. At any subsequent time the Rajas might get preponderance, and that man may be in circumstances requiring money or so forth; but, due to his Sattva quality before hand he did not collect money and therefore he feels pain afterwards. So with the Rajas. Or it may be thus :— Suppose an earning member is Sâttvic. He earns just sufficient to meet his wants. But his family members require more money, for they are Râjasic. Therefore the earning member is happy for his Sâttvic quality; but the other members are unhappy for his Sâttvic quality. A man is, as it were, wedded to the three wives, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas.

10. O Nârada! When the three qualities remain each in their own real natures, then the effects produced by them also remain always the same; no changes are perceived owing to the difference of time or person. But when they get combined, then each of them produces effects sometimes counter to their natures.

11-13. A young beautiful woman, shy, modest and of sweet qualities, well versed in her religious learning, and full of good behaviour, skilled in love practices and full of sweet sentiments becomes a source of loving delight

to her beloved and also a source of pain to her rival wives so each of the three qualities assume no doubt, different aspects according to differences in time and in the nature of the person.

O Nârada! As one woman gives pain and delusion to her rival wives and gives pleasure to her husband and friends, so the Sattva quality, when perverted, gives pain and delusion to the persons.

14-19. As the police sepoy and constables are, on the one hand, delight to the saints, troubled by thieves, and, on the other hand, sources of pain and confusion to the thieves and robbers; again as the heavy shower of rain in a pitch dark night,

in the rainy season, when the sky over clouded, and when there are flashes of lightning and thunder, is on the one hand, a source of highest delight to a farmer, who has all seeds and necessary things and implements, and, on the other hand is a source of pain to the unfortunate householder, whose house is not yet completely thatched with grass or who has not been able to collect his beams and grass for necessary roofing, and a source of utter bewildering confusion to the young woman, whose husband is abroad expected back at that time, so the three Gunas produce contrary results when perverted by contact with the remaining Gunas, instead what they would have produced, had they not been perverted so.

20-25. O Child! Again I speak to you of the characteristics of the the Gunas. The Sattva guna is pure, clear, illumining, light (not heavy) white. When the senses, eyes, etc., and the limbs are felt very light (without any heaviness) and the heart and brain clear, when there is dispassion towards the Râjasic and the Tâmasic enjoyments, know then that the Sattva quality has grown in preponderance in a body. When there is a tendency to yawn, when there is rigidity and suppression of the functions of faculties and when one feels drowsiness, consider that the Râjasic quality has gone to excess. Again, when one seeks after quarrels and goes to another village, one is always restless and ready to fight, when one feels heaviness in body, as if wrapped by a very heavy darkness, when one's limbs and senses are heavy and obscure, when one's mind is vacant, and when one does not like to go to sleep, know that the Tamas has increased too much, Nârada!

26. Nârada said :— O Father! You have described the different characteristics of the three Gunas; but I cannot understand how they act all in conjunction?

27. As those who are enemies to one another do not work united, so these Gunas, of opposite characteristics, are enemies, as it were, to one another; how can, then, they act in unison? Kindly explain this to me.

28-30. Brahmâ said :— O Nârada! The three Gunas may be likened to a lamp. As a lamp manifests a certain object, so these three qualities united do manifest or reveal a certain thing. See the wick, oil, and flame are all of different characteristics; though the oil goes against fire, still it unites with the fire. The oil, wick and fire though running against each other, all these united, serve the one common purpose of illumining, revealing a certain object.

31. So, O Nârada! All the three qualities, though of contrary natures, go to prove the same thing.

Nârada said :— O Son of Satyavatî! The lotus born Brahmâ thus described the three qualities, as born of Prakriti; and they are the causes of this Universe. What I heard of you about the nature of Prakriti, I have now described before you.

32. Vyâsa said :— O King! What you asked me, I asked before the same to Nârada

and he described thus (as I told you above) to me about the characteristics and the effects of the three Gunas in regular order and in detail.

33. O King! Wherever in the Śâstras whatever is said, the essence of all that is this – that the Highest Energy, the Supreme Force, the Great Goddess who is pervading the Universe, is always with qualities and without qualities, according to the differences in the manifestation. This Supreme Force is to be worshipped with the highest devotion.

34. The Brahmân, the Purusa (the Supporter, the Ultimate Substratum) the Highest Energy considered as the Male Principle though It is Undecaying, Supreme and Full, is still without any desires or emotions. It is not able to accomplish any action (without the help of its inherent force); this Mahâmâyâ, the Supreme Force is doing all the functions, real and unreal, of the universe.

35-37. Brahmâ, Visnu, Rudra, the Sun, Moon, Indra, the twin Asvins, the Vasus, Visvakarmâ, Kuvera, Varuna, Fire, Air, Psâ, the Sadânan, and Ganesa all are united with Śakti and can do their respective functions; else they are unable to move themselves. Therefore O king! Know that Supreme Goddess Mahâmâyâ as the cause of this Universe.

38. O Lord of men! You worship this Goddess, perform sacrifices in honour of Her and worship Her with the highest devotion.

39. O king! That Mahâmâyâ is Mahâ Laksmî, She is Mahâ Kâlî, She is Mahâ Sarasvatî; She is the Goddess of all the bhctas and She is the Cause of all causes.

40. That all peaceful, easily worshipped and the ocean of mercy, when worshipped, fulfills all the desires of Her devotees; what to say, the mere utterance of Her name is sufficient for the granting of the desires.

41. In days of yore Brahmâ, Visnu, Maheśvara and all the Devas and many other self controlled ascetics worshipped Her to attain liberation.

42. O king! What shall I speak now about Her more than this :– If one takes Her name even with indistinctness, She grants the desired purposes, even if they are quite unattainable.

43. In the midst of forest, on the sight of tigers and other ferocious animals, if one becoming afraid, cries aloud Her seed mantra (twice) “Ai, Ai” without the Vindu (incorrectly) instead of “Aim, Aim” She grants immediately his desires.

44-45. O best of kings! There is an example of Satyavrata on this point. That the mere utterance of the name of Bhagavatî gives unforeseen results, has been witnessed by us and other high minded Munis. Also in the assembly of the Brâmanas I have heard fully many sages quoting in detail many instances on the above point.

46-47. O king! There was a Brahmân, named Satyavrata, quite illiterate, a thorough block-head. Once he heard the letter “Ai, Ai” being uttered by a pig; and in course of a talk he himself uttered incidentally that letter and thereby became the one of the best Pundits.

N. B. “Aim” is the seed mantra of Sarasvatî, the Goddess of learning.

48. The Goddess Devî, the Ocean of mercy, hearing the letter “Ai” being pronounced by that Brahmin, became very glad and made him the best of the poets.

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the 3rd Skandha on the characteristics of the Gunas in Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam, the Mahâ Purânam 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 10. ON THE STORY OF SATYAVRATA

1. Janamejaya said :— O Maharsi! Who was Satyavrata, the Brâhmin whose name you have just taken? In what country was he born? Of what nature was he? Please describe all these to me and satisfy my curiosity?

2. How did he hear that sound “Ai”; how did he repeat that word? How came out the success to him, that illiterate Brâhman, at that very instant?

3. And how is it that that Great Goddess, who is omniscient and omnipresent, was pleased with him, kindly describe this interesting incident in detail.

4. Sta said :— Vyâsa, the son of Satyavatî, thus asked by the king, addressed in the following pure, sweet, and highly liberal words.

5. Vyâsa said :— Hear, O king! You are the best and foremost in the Kuru clan; what I before heard in the assembly of the Munis, I am now relating that ancient story, highly beneficial to you.

6. O best of the Kurus! Once in my peregrinations in the holy places of pilgrimages, I came to the Naimisâranya forest, that highly sacred place frequented by the Munis.

7-8. That time there were staying Sanaka, Sanâtana and the other sons of Brâhma who were liberated while living. I went there and bowed down to the Munis and

took my seat. Then the religious conversations ensued there in the assembly, when the great sage Maharsi Jamadagni began to question the Munis in the following terms :—

9. O high-minded excellent ascetics and Munis! There has arisen a great doubt in my mind; I am desirous to have that doubt solved in this assembly of the Maharsis.

10-12. O all-knowing Maharsis that have fulfilled your vows! O Givers of one's honour! Now my question is this :— Of the following Devas Brâhma, Visnu, Rudra, Indra, Varuna, Fire, Kuvera, Wind, Visvakarmâ, Kârtikeya, Ganesa, the Sun, the two Aśvins, Bhaga, Psâ, Moon, and the other planets, who is the first and best to be worshipped, that can easily be served; who is very quickly satisfied and grants the desired boons; kindly tell me this as early as possible.

13. Thus questioned by the Muni Jamadagni, Maharsi Lomaśa, one in the assembly, spoke :— O Jamadagni! Hear in reply to your question.

14-15. The Goddess of Energy is the best of the Devas, most excellent and highest to be worshipped. Those who want welfare, they ought to worship this Supreme Force. She is the Parâ Prakriti, the Highest Nature, the Brâhma, conditioned by Mâyâ (Time, space, and causation). She grants all the desires, does good to all, pervades everywhere, and is the Mother of Brâhma and the other high souled Devas. She is the First Prakriti, and is the Root of this gigantic Tree of Universe.

16. If any one calls the Devî in remembrance or distinctly utters Her Name, She fulfills all the desires of the human beings. If anybody worships Her, She is at once filled with mercy and becomes ready to grant boons.

17. O Munis! How, once on a time, at Brâhmin, uttering one letter of Her mystical mantra, obtained Her Grace, I am now describing that most auspicious history before you. Be pleased to hear.

18. Once on a time, there lived in the country of Kosala,* a famous Brâhmin, named Deva Datta. He had no issues and therefore started duly according to the prescribed rules a sacrifice called Puttresti for the sake of obtaining children.

*Kosala is a country situated, according to Râmâyana, along the banks of the Saray (or Gogrâ). It was divided into Uttara-Kosala and Dakshina Kosala. The former is also called Ganda and it must have therefore signified the country, north of Ayodhyâ comprising Gonda and Bahraich. Aja and Dasaratha, etc., are said to have ruled over the province. At the time of Râma's death, his two sons Kusa and Lava reigned respectively at Kusâvati in Southern Kosala in the defiles of the Vindhyas and at Srâvasti in northern Kosala.

19-20. On the banks of the Tamasâ river, the Brâhmin erected a temporary building (or an open shade) for performing the ceremony, and there built an altar and

invited the Brâhmins, versed in the Vedas, and clever in performing sacrificial rites. There he placed the fire and began to perform according to the strict rules, the Puttresti sacrifice.

21-22. In that sacrifice, Suhotra, the best of the Munis acted the part of Brâhma (1); Yâjñavalkya acted the part of Adhvaryu (2); Brihaspati, that of Hotâ (3); Paila, that of Prastotâ (4); Govila, that of Udgâtâ (6); and the other Munis acted as assistants. These all were duly paid their remunerations.

(1) One of the four priests employed at a Soma sacrifice as a superintendent.

(2) Any officiating priest technically distinguished from Hotri, Udgâtri and Brâhman. His duty was to measure the ground, build the altar, prepare sacrificial vessels, to fetch wood and water, light the fire, bring the animal and immolate it and while doing this to repeat the Yajurveda.

(3) A sacrificing priest who offers the oblations. Or one who recites the prayers of the Rigveda at a sacrifice.

(5) One of the four principal priests at a sacrifice, one who chants the hymns of the Sâmaveda.

23-24. The Hotâ Govila, the excellent reciter of the Sâma hymns, began to sing in accented tones called svarita (the accents are three Udâtta, Anudâtta and Svarita) and the Rathantara Sâma in 7 tunes.

Then he began to draw breath frequently; and consequently there was a break in time in the accent of Govila. Seeing this, Deva Datta was angry and immediately said to Govila.

25. Well, Govila, you are the foremost of the Munis and still you are doing your work like a quite illiterate man. I fear obstacles may arise in the getting of my son in this my sacrifice of Puttresti.

26. Govila then became much enraged and told Deva Datta “your son will be illiterate, hypocrite, and dumb.”

27. Behold! Every being is subject to breathing and respiring; it is very hard to control them; there is no fault of mine in the accents of my songs being thus broken; it is strange that you, being intelligent, cannot understand this.

28. Being afraid to hear the curse from Govila, Deva Datta became very sorry and said “O Muni! I have done no serious offence; why are you so offended without any cause. See! The Munis are void of anger and they always give delight to others.”

29-30. O best of Brâhmans! My offence is very trifling; why have you inflicted on me so severe a curse? I was already under the mental agony, since I had no issues; and now you have made me suffer more pain.

31. For the Vedic Pundits declare that it is better not to have any son than to have an illiterate stupid son; the more so, when a Brâhmin's son is illiterate, he is blamed by one and all.
32. An illiterate son is like a Śdra or a beast; he is unfit for any action. O Brâhmin! What shall I do with an illiterate son?
33. An illiterate Brâhmin is like a Śdra; consequently not an object to be engaged in any act of worship or of gifts, he is not deserving to do any action.
34. A Brâhman, bereft of the knowledge of the Vedas, living in a country is treated as a Śdra by the king of the place and is liable to pay taxes.
35. Whoever wants to have any fruit in any action will never invite an illiterate Brâhmin to take his seat in the ceremony relating to the Pitris or the Devas.
36. The king will consider an illiterate Brâhmin as if a Śdra and will never engage him in any religious ceremony but will order him to do the work of a farmer in cultivating fields.
37. Rather to perform the funeral ceremonies by erecting a Kuśabata than to engage an illiterate Brâhmin for the purpose.
38. One should give food to an illiterate Brâhmin just sufficient to fill his belly and no more. If he does not do that, the giver and especially the receiver are subject to go down to hell.
39. Fie to a kingdom where honour is shown to the illiterate stupid Brâhmanas.
40. Where no difference is observed when seats, worship and gift are given to various persons, sages should draw their inference how the literate and illiterate persons are treated there.
41. When the illiterate fools become haughty, when they are paid honours and gifts, the literary persons should never dwell there.
42. The wealth of the wicked goes to the enjoyments of the bad persons; for the Nim trees, though abounding richly in fruits, are enjoyed only by crows.
43. Again, on the other hand, if the Brâhmins, versed in the Vedas, study the Vedas even after they have taken their food, still his father and forefathers are happy and play cheerfully in their heavens.
44. Therefore O Govîla! You being the foremost of the Brâhmin who are versed in the Vedas, what have you said just now? See in this world, death is rather to be preferred than to have an illiterate son. How is it, then, that you have cursed me that I would get an illiterate son, when you are the best one, highly qualified with knowledge.

45. O high minded one! You are capable to relieve the distressed; I am bowing down to your feet; shew your mercy and re-consider your curse.

46. Lomaśa said :— O Munis! Devadatta, saying these words, fell prostrate at his feet and began to eulogise him in very pitiful words, being very much grieved and with tears in his eyes.

47. Seeing him thus distressed, Govila was moved with pity. The persons that are noble have their anger satiated after a short while; the anger of the ignoble lasts for a long time.

48. The water is naturally cool; but it gets hot in contact with fire heat; and no sooner the heat is drawn away, water gets again cooled quickly.

49. The merciful Govila then addressed the distressed Devadatta “your son though at first illiterate, will afterwards be very learned.”

50. The Brâhmin Devadatta was very glad on getting this boon; then completing the sacrifice, rewarded the Brâhmins with their due dakshinâs and dismissed them.

51. In due course of time, his fair chaste wife Rohinî, like the asterism Rohinî became pregnant.

52. Devadatta performed the Garbhâdhân (1) and Pumsavan (2) ceremonies and other purificatory rites duly.

53. He performed the Sîmantonnayana ceremony according to rules and considered his Puttrvesti sacrifice successful and made various offerings to the Brâhmins.

N. B. – (1) One of the Samskâras, purificatory ceremonies, performed after menstruation to ensure or facilitate conception (this ceremony legalises in a religious sense the consummation of marriage).

(2) It is a ceremony performed on a woman’s perceiving the first signs of a living conception, with a view to the birth of a son.

(3) “Parting of the hair” one of the twelve Samskâras or purificatory rites observed by women in the fourth, sixth, or eighth month of their pregnancy.

54-55. In the auspicious lagna when Rohinî asterism was present and in the auspicious day, his wife Rohinî gave birth to a male child. Devadatta performed the nativities of the new born child and saw its face. Next that knower of the Purânas, Devadatta kept the name of the child as Utathya.

56. When the son was eight years old, Devadatta performed the Upanayana (thread) ceremony duly.

57-58. Next the child was made to accept the vow of Brâhmachâri; and Devadatta made him study the Vedas; but the child could not pronounce a single word and

used to sit simply like a stupid boy. Though tried in various ways to read and write, that wicked boy never paid the slightest attention, simply sat idly. Seeing this, his father was very sorry and much grieved.

59. Thus twelve years passed. Yet the boy could not learn how to perform his Sandhyâ Bandanâ duly.

60. The rumour went abroad that Utathya, the son of Devadatta turned out very illiterate. All the Brâhmanas, ascetics, and other persons came to learn this fact.

61. Wherever Utathya used to go in any forest on hermitage, the people used to laugh at him, ridiculed his father and mother and began to chide that illiterate son.

62. Thus blamed by father, mother and all other persons, dispassion occupied the heart of Utathya.

63. Once when rebuked by his father and mother that it was better to have a blind and lame son instead of an illiterate brute, Utathya took recourse to renunciation and went to a dense forest.

64-65. On the banks of the Ganges in a beautiful spot free from obstacles, he built a beautiful hut and began to subsist on the roots and

fruits of the forest and with collected mind. Having made the excellent vow "I will never speak untruth" and holding the vow of celibacy, he lived in that beautiful hermitage.

Thus ends the 10th chapter in the 3rd Skandha of Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa relating to the story of Satyavrata.

CHAPTER 11. ON THE MERITS OF THE DEVÎ IN THE STORY OF SATYAVRATA

1-5. Lomaśa said :— O Munis! Utatthya, the son of Devadatta, was quite ignorant of anything of the Vedas, Japam (muttering of mantra), meditation of the deity, worship of the Devas, sana (Posture), Prânâyâma (withholding the breath by way of religious austerity), Pratyâhâra (restraint of mind), Bhṭasuddhi (purification

of the elements of the body by respiratory attraction and replacement), mantra (a mystical formula regarding some deity), Kîlaka (chanting of a mantra to serve as a pin of protection), Gâyattrî (the famous mantra of the Brâhmins), Saucha (cleanliness, external and internal), rules how to bathe, chamana (sipping of water and reciting mantrams before worship), Prânâgnihotra (offering of oblations to the fire of Prâna or to the fire of life), the offering of a sacrifice, hospitality, Sandhyâ (the morning, mid-day or evening prayer), collecting fuels for oblations, and offering of oblations. Daily he rose in the morning and somehow rinsed his mouth and washed his teeth and bathed in the Ganges river without any mantrams (like a Sdra).

6. That stupid fellow ate indiscriminately, did not know what to eat and what not to eat. During the mid-day he collected the fruits from the forest and used to eat them.

7. But he always spoke truth while he stayed there; never did he say any untruth. The people of that place, seeing this, named him Satyatapâ.

8-9. That Utatthya did no good or bad to anybody; he slept peacefully and blissfully; but he used to think when he would die; thus his troubles would be ended; he felt that the life of an illiterate Brâhman is a curse; his death would be a better alternative.

10. He used to think thus :— Fate has made me a fool; I do not find any other cause for it. Oh! I got the exceedingly good birth amongst men; but all this has been rendered in vain by Fate.

11. Oh! As a fair woman, if barren, a cow if giving no milk, and a tree without any fruits are all useless, so Fate has rendered my life, too, quite useless.

12. Why am I cursing Fate? This is all the fruits of my past Karma. In my previous life I never wrote a book and presented to a good Brâhmin; hence I am illiterate in this birth.

13. In my former birth I did not impart any knowledge to my favourite pupils; hence I am wicked and a cursed Brâhmin in this birth.

14. I never performed any religious asceticism in any holy place, I did not serve the saints, I never worshipped the Brâhmins with any offerings. For all these reasons I am now born of perverted intellect in the present birth.

15. Many a son of the Munis have learnt the meanings of the Vedas and the Śâstras; and I am whiling away my time thus in a quite illiterate condition by some wretched combinations of incidents.

16. I do not know how to perform Tapasyâ; what is the use, then, of my attempting

to do so? I am of very bad luck, and thus my good resolve will not be crowned with success.

17. I consider Fate to be the strongest of all; Fie on one's own prowess! For actions done with effort and hard labour are frustrated entirely by Fate.

18. Time can never be overstepped; See! Brahmâ, Visnu, Rudra, Indra, and others are all under the influence of the Great Time.

19. O Risis! Thus arguing in his mind, that Brâhmin son Utatthya stayed there in that hermitage on the bank of the holy Ganges.

20. And gradually he became thoroughly unattached to all the things and, being peaceful, passed away his time in that forest without any habitations and men, with great difficulty.

21. Thus passed away fourteen years in that forest where the Ganges was flowing. Still he did not learn how to worship the Supreme Deity, how to make Japam, nor did he learn any mantrams. Simply he lived there and whiled away his time.

22. People surrounding that place knew this much only of him that this Muni spoke truth only and hence his name was Satyavrata. This one name made him celebrated that he is Satyavrata; never did he say any untruth.

23. Once on a time, a hunter named Nisâda, exceedingly clever in hunting, came accidentally with bows and arms in his hands, while hunting a deer in that wide forest. He looked like a second God of Death (Yama) and seemed to be very cruel.

24. That savage mountaineer, drawing his bow so as to touch the ear, pierced a boar with his sharp arrows. The boar, being very much terrified, fled with enormous rapidity to the Muni Satyavrata.

25. On seeing the distressed condition of the boar trembling with fear and his body besmeared with blood, the Muni was moved with mercy.

26. While the boar, pierced with arrows and besmeared with blood, was running away in front of him, mercy took possession of the Muni, therefore the Muni began to tremble and agreeably to the human nature exclaimed "Ai" "Ai" (go to that direction), the seed mantram of the Goddess of learning with "m" left out (Aim, Aim).

27. That illiterate Brâhmin son never heard before that "Ai" was the seed mantram of the Sarasvatî Devî; nor did he come to know of it by any other means. Accidentally it came out of his mouth, and he uttered. And afterwards that Mahâtma seeing the boar's distressed condition was merged in deep sorrow.

28. The boar entered trembling into the Muni's hermitage very much distracted and being very much pained with arrows. Being unable to find any other way the

boar hid himself in the dense bushes.

29. Instantly there appeared then, before the Muni, the terrible savage hunter, like a second God of Death, with string stretched to his ear, in pursuit of that boar.

30-33. On seeing the Muni Satyavrata sitting there alone and silent on the Kuśa grass seat, the hunter bowed down to him and asked “O Brâhmin! Whither has that boar gone. I know very well everything about you that you never speak untruth; therefore I am enquiring about the boar pierced by my arrows. My family members are all very hungry; and to feed them, I am come out in this hunting. This is the living, ordained by the Fate; I have got no other means of maintaining the livelihood of my family. This I speak truly to you; whether it is bad or good, I will have to maintain my family with it. O Brâhman! You are famous as Satyavrata; my family members are starving; kindly reply quickly where that boar has gone?”

34. Thus asked by the hunter, the Mahâtmâ Satyavrata was merged in an ocean of doubt; he began to argue “If I say I have not seen the boar then my vow to speak the truth will certainly be broken.

35. The boar struck with arrows has gone this way, it is true. How can I tell a lie? Again this man is hungry and is therefore asking, he will instantly kill the boar no sooner he finds him. How then can I speak truth?

36. Where speaking out the truth causes injury and the loss of lives, that truth is no truth at all; moreover, even untruth, when tempered with mercy for the welfare of others, is recognised as truth. Really speaking, whatever

leads to the welfare of all the beings in this world, that is truth; and every thing else is not truth.

37. O Jamadagni! Thus placed between the horns of a religious dilemma what shall I do now so as to meet both the ends – to save the life of the boar, to do the welfare, as well as not to speak untruth.”

38. When Satyavrata saw the boar wounded by the arrow of the hunter, he, moved with pity, uttered the seed mantra of the Goddess of Learning; and now that most auspicious Goddess, on account of his uttering Her seed mantram, was very pleased and gave him the knowledge, difficult to be attained otherwise.

39. The door of all his knowledge opened out at once, and he became at once instantly the seer, the poet like the ancient Muni Vâlmikî.

40. Then that religiously disposed, merciful Brâhman, aiming at Truth, addressed that hunter before him with bows in his arms, thus :—

41. That force which sees (as witness) never speaks; and that force which speaks,

never sees. O hunter! Why are you asking me repeatedly, impelled by your own selfish desire?

42. The hunter, the killer of the animals, on hearing this was disappointed in the matter of finding out the boar and went back to his home.

43. That Brâhmin turned out a poet like Varuna and he became celebrated as Satyavrata, the speaker of truth, in all the worlds.

44. He began to recite the Satyavrata mantram duly, and, by its influence, became a Pundit, rivalled by none in this world.

45. During every festival the Brâhmans chanted his praise and the Munis used to narrate his story in detail.

46. On hearing his fame spreading all around, his father Devadatta who forsook him before, recalled him to his hermitage and took him again in his family with great honour and affection.

47. Therefore O King! You should always worship and serve that Great Goddess, the Prime Energy, the Cause of all this Universe.

48. O King! With due Vedic rites you perform that sacrifice to that Goddess which will surely yield results at all times and all desires. I already spoke to you about this.

49. That Great Goddess is known as Kâmadâ (the giver of all desires); for She grants all desires when men with devotion remember Her, worship Her, take Her name, meditate Her and eulogise Her.

50-56. O King! The wise sages ought to see the persons diseased, distressed, hungry, those without any wealth, the hypocrite, the cheat, the afflicted,

the sensual, the covetous, the incapable, always suffering from mental troubles; again those who are wealthy with their children and grand-children, prosperous, healthy, with enjoyments, versed in the Vedas, literary, kings, heroes, those who command over many, those attended with relations and kinsmen and endowed with all good qualities; and then judge for themselves that those people did not worship the Goddess and therefore they were sufferers and these people worshipped the Goddess and hence they were happy in this world.

57. Vyâsa said :- Thus I heard from the mouth of Lomaśa Muni, in assembly of the sages, the good merits of the Great Goddess.

58. O King! Consider all these and you will find that the Highest Goddess, the Bhâgavatî is to be worshipped always with devotion and unselfish love.

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter on the merits of the Devî in the story of Satyavrata

in the Third Skandha of the Mahâ Purânam Śrî mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 12. ON THE AMBÂ YAJÑA RULES

1. The king spoke :— O Lord! Kindly describe the rules and regulations as to how the Devî Yajña (sacrifice) is performed with its duly prescribed rites and ceremonies. Hearing it I will unwearied perform it, as far as it lies in my power, with as little delay as possible.

2. How the worship is done, what are the mantras, what are the articles required for oblations, how many Brâhmins are required and what Daksinâs are to be paid to them, describe in detail all these.

3-5. Vyâsa said :— O king! I am telling you duly how the Yajña is performed, hear. The actions are always threefold according as the preparations are made and according as they are practised with regard to the observed rules. The threefold divisions are Sâttvik, Râjasik and Tâmasic. The Munis do the Sâttvik Pjâ, the kings celebrate Râjasik and the Rakshasas do the Tâmasik Pjâs. There is another Pjâ which is devoid of qualities and which is performed by the liberated ones. I will describe to you all these in detail.

6-7. O king! The Yajña is then called Sâttvik, when it is performed in a Sâttvik country, like Benares, etc., in Sâttvik time, e.g., in Uttarâyana, when the materials collected are earned rightly, when the mantras are those of the Vedas, when the Brâhmin is Srotriya, where there is Sâttvik faith, void of any attachment towards the sensual objects, when all these happen to coincide. O king! When all the above takes place and there is purification of materials, actions, and mantras, i.e., when the

materials are all right, when the actions are done as they ought to be, and where there is no error or omission, etc., in the mantras, etc., then and then only the Yajña becomes perfect and no doubt yield full results; there would be nothing contrary to this.

8-9. If the Yajña is performed with articles not rightly earned, then there is no

fame either in this world nor there is any reward in the next world. Therefore it is necessary that the Yajña should be performed with rightly earned materials; then there is fame in this world and better state in the next world; and happiness is also acquired; there is no doubt in this.

10. O king! It is before your eyes, as it were, that the Pândavas performed the Râjasya Yajña, the king of sacrifices, and, on the completion whereof, the excellent Dakṣiṇâs were paid to the Brâhmins and others.

11. In that Yajña the highly intelligent Śrî Krisna Himself, the Lord of the Yâdavas was present, as well as many other Brâhmanas, like Bhâradvâja and other fully enlightened souls.

12. But within three months after completing the sacrifice, the Pândavas suffered extreme hardships and had to live, with extreme difficulty, as exiles in the forest.

13. Consider the insult shown towards Draupadî, the Pândava's defeat in the play of gambling, their going away to dwell in the forest; these hardships were borne by the Pândavas. What rewards did then the Pândavas derive from the Râjasya Yajña?

14-15. All the high-souled Pândavas had to work as slaves of Virâta; and Draupadî, the best of women, was very much troubled and insulted by Kichaka. When all these occurred, any one can easily ask where were the ashirvâdas of the pure souled Brâhmanas? Also what result did they derive from their unflinching devotion towards Śrî Krisna when they were involved in the above critical state?

16. No one protected Draupadî, the chaste and the best, the daughter of Drupada, when she was drawn by her hair on her head into the hall of assembly where gambling was being played?

17. O king! How could all these happen in a place where Śrî Bhagavân Kesava Himself and the high souled Yudhisthîra were present? If one argues, one would conclude "there must have been something wrong in that Yajña."

18. If you say that nothing wrong happened in the Yajña, all these were caused by Fate; then it comes to this :— that the Vedic mantras, gamas and the other Vedic rites are all fruitless.

19. If it be argued that though the Vedic mantras are powerful enough to bear fruits, yet whatever is predestined to come to pass, will surely pass, then the proposition resolves into this :— that all the means, expedients, and appliances lead to meaningless conclusions.

20. Then the gamas, the Vedas merely recommend a vidhi or precept by stating the good arising from its proper observance and the evils arising from its omission

and also by adducing historical instances as its support; in other words, they are powerless as far as bearing fruits is concerned; all the acts are meaningless, asceticism to attain Heaven comes as useless and the peculiar duties of caste are fruitless. O king! This view is exceedingly culpable; it is never fit for acceptance by the highsouled persons.

21. O King! If what is laid by God in the womb of futurity (a state of things preordained by God in which it is sure to take place in the fullness of time), be taken as the first-hand proof, then all the other proofs are rendered null and void. Therefore Fate and human exertion both are to be undoubtedly taken into account to ensure success.

22. Human exertions being applied, if the results come otherwise, the wise Pundits would infer that some defects, omissions or imperfections crept into the work.

23. All the Pundits, very learned and institutors of sacrifices have classed Karmas under different headings according as the agents, mantras, and articles employed in the worship vary.

24. Once on an occasion Viśvarpa, ordained as a Guru by Indra (in a Yajña) (intentionally) did things contrary so as to benefit the Daityas, who belonged to his mother's side.

25. Viśvarpa uttered repeatedly the mantrams beneficial to the gods, while they were present; and, during their absence, prayed heartily for the welfare of the Daityas; and, in the long run, protected the Daityas.

26. On seeing the Asuras gaining strength, Indra, the Lord of the Devas, became very much enraged and instantly cut off Viśvarpa's head by his thunderbolt.

27. O King! This is then the instance where the contrary fruits were borne out by the agent employed in performing the Yajña; there is no doubt in this. This is not possible in the other cases.

28. See, again, the king of Pâñchâla performed his sacrifice to get a son to kill Drona, the son of Bhâradvâja; and though he did this out of angry motives, still Dhristadyumna was born out of fire; and Draupadî sprang out of the altar.

29. Again, in days of yore, Daśaratha, the king of Kosala, was sonless; and he instituted a sacrifice to get one son; and lo! he got four sons.

30. Therefore O King! If the Yajña be performed according to proper rules and regulations, it yields fruits in all respects; again if it be done unrighteously, without any regard for the rules, etc., it yields results just the contrary; there is no doubt in this.

31-32. Therefore, there must have been some defects in the Yajña of the Pândavas;

hence contrary effects ensued, and therefore the truthful king Yudhisthîra and his powerful brothers and the chaste Draupadî were all defeated in the play at dice.

33. It might be that the materials were not of a good stamp; they were all earned by killing the kings, good many in number, and earned thus unrighteously; or it might happen that the Pândavas did their Yajña with too much egoism. However, this is certain that there had crept in some defects in their actions.

34. O King! The Sâttvik Yajña is rare; it can be done only by the Sâttvik Munis who live in the 3rd order of the household life or who live as hermits.

35-36. The ascetics that eat daily the Sâttvik food, the roots and fruits, collected from forests and obtained rightly, that is good to the Munis and that is well cleaned and purified, are the only ones that can perform with full devotions the Sâttvik Yajñas, where no animals are sacrificed (where there are no sacrificial posts to which the victim is fastened at the time of immolation) and where offerings of cakes of ground rice in vessels are given. These are the best of all the Sâttvik Yajñas.

37. The Ksattriyas and the Vaisyas perform the Yajñas with Abhimân (self-conceit and egoism) where many presents are given, animals are sacrificed, and all things are well cleansed, purified and elaborately decorated. This Yajña is called Râjasik.

38. That Yajña is according to the sages, Tâmasik, where the Dânavas, puffed up with arrogance, infatuated with anger, jealousy and wickedness perform their acts with the sole object of killing their enemies.

39. That Yajña is called Mânas Yâg or mânasic (mental) where the high-souled Munis, void of worldly desires, collect mentally all the necessary articles and perform the Yajña with the sole object of liberation from the bondages of the world.

40. In all the other Yajñas (than the Mânas Yâg) some imperfections or other naturally arise, due to some defects in the materials, or want of faith, or in the performance or in the Brâhmins.

41. No other Yajñas can be so complete as the Mânasa Yajña; the reason being that in the other Yajñas some, imperfections come out due to time, place, and separate ingredients to be collected.

42-43. Now hear who are the persons fit to undertake this mental Yajña in honour of the Great Goddess. First this mind is to be purified, by making it void of the Gunas; the mind being pure, the body becomes also pure, there is no doubt. When the mind becomes completely pure, after it has abandoned all sensual objects, fit for enjoyment, then that man is entitled to perform the Mother's Yajña.

44-45. There he should build mentally the big hall for sacrifice, many Yojanas wide,

decorated with high polished pillars out of the materials brought for the purpose (e. g., fortitude, etc.). Within the hall he will imagine a wide and spacious altar and place the Holy Fire on it mentally according to due rules and regulations.

46-47. He is to select mentally the Brâhmin priests and consecrate them as Brahmâ, Adharyu, Hotâ, Prastotâ, Udgâtâ, Pratihatâ and other assistants. He is to worship mentally all these priests.

48. Then he will have to imagine the five Vâyus, Prâna, Apâna, Vyâna, Samâna, and Udâna, as the five fires and locate them duly on the altar.

49-50. Prâna Vâyus stands for Gârhapatya; Apâna, for havanîya; Vyâna for Daksinâ; Samâna for Avasathya; and Udâna for Sabhya Agni. These fires are all very terrible; then one should place these carefully on the altar with great concentration of mind. He is to collect then all the other necessary materials and think that all are very pure and free from any defects.

51-57. In the Mânasic Yajña, mind is the offerer of oblations and mind the Yajamâna, the performer of the Sacrifice; and the Presiding Deity of the Sacrifice is the Nirguna Brahmâ. The Great Goddess, the Nirguna Energy, who is always auspicious and gives the feeling of dispassion and indifference to worldly objects is the awarder of fruits in this Yajña. She is the Brahmâ Vidyâ, She is the substratum of all and She is all pervading. The Brâhmin is to take the Devî's name and offer oblations in the fire of Prâna, the necessary articles for the Devî's satisfaction. Then he is to make his Chitta and Prâna void of any worldly thought, or any worldly support and to offer oblations to the Eternal Brahmâ through the mouth of Kundalinî (the Serpent Fire.) Next, within his Nirvikalpa mind, by means of Samâdhi, he should meditate on his own Self, the Maheśvarî Herself by his consciousness. Thus, when he will see his own self in all the beings and all the beings in his own self, then

the Jîva will get the vision of the Goddess Mahâvidyâ, giving auspicious liberation (Moksa). O King! After the high souled Munis have seen the Goddess, of everlasting intelligence and bliss, then he becomes the knower of Brâhman. All the Mâyâ, the cause of this Universe becomes burnt up; only, as long as the body remains, the Prârabdha Karma remains.

58. Then the Jîvas become liberated, while living; and when the body dissolves, he attains to final liberation. Therefore, O Child! Whoever worships the Mother becomes crowned with success; there is no doubt in this.

59. Therefore follow the advice of the Guru, the Spiritual Teacher; and with all attention, hear, think and meditate on the Great Goddess of the World.

60. O King! Liberation is sure to ensue of this Mânasa Yajña. All the other Yajñas

are Sakâma (with some object in view) and therefore their effects are temporary.

61-62. He who wants enjoyments in Heaven, should perform the Agnistoma Yajña, with due rites and ceremonies; such is the Vedic injunction. But when the acquired merit expires, the sacrificer will have to come again into this world of mortals. Therefore the Mânasa Yajña is eternal and best.

63-65. This Mânasa Yajña is not fit to be performed by kings intent on getting victory. The Yajña that you performed, the serpent Yajña, is Tâmasic, for you wanted to take vengeance on your enemy, the serpent Taksaka; and millions of serpents were made to be burnt in that sacrifice.

O King! Hear now about the Devî Yajña, that was performed by Visnu in the beginning of the creation. You better now do that Devî Yajña with due rules.

66-67. I will tell you all about the rules; there are Brâhmins that know the rules and know best also the Vedas; they know also the seed mantrams of the Devî, as well as the rules of their application; they are clever in all the mantrams. These will be your priests and you yourself will be the sacrificer.

68. O King! Do this sacrifice duly and deliver your father from hell by the merits that you will acquire thereby.

69. O Sinless One! The sin incurred on account of insulting a Brâhmin is serious and leads the sinner to hell. Your father committed that sin and incurred the curse from a Brâhmin. Therefore he has gone to the hell.

70. Your father died also out of a snake bite which is not a meritorious one. The death occurred also in a palace built high up in the air (on a pillar), instead of taking place on the ground on a bed of Kuśa grass.

71. O best of the Kurus! The death did not occur in any battle nor on the banks of the Ganges. Void of proper bathing and charities, etc., he died in a palace.

72. O best of Kings! All the ugly causes, leading to hell, were present in the case of your father. See, again, there is also one thing which done will lead to one's liberation; but that was absent too with your father.

73-76. That is this :— Let a man remain, wherever he may, whenever he comes to learn that his end is approaching, even if he had not practised before any good practices or meritorious deeds, and even if he becomes senseless in the trial time of death, when dispassion comes to an individual whose mind gets, for the time being, clear and free from any worldly thoughts, then he should think thus :— “This my body, composed of five elements, will soon be destroyed; there is no cause whatsoever in having any remorse for it; let whatever come, that it may; I am free, void of qualities; and I am the Eternal Purusa; death is not capable to

do any harm to me. All the elements are liable to decay and destruction; what remorse can overtake me? I am not a man of the world, I am always free, Eternal Brahmâ; I have got no connection with this body that is merely the outcome of actions.

77. Before I did meritorious or unmeritorious acts, leading to happiness and pain; therefore I have got this mortal coil and am enjoying the fruits of my past auspicious or inauspicious Karma.”

78. Whoever thinks thus and dies, even if he does not take proper purificatory bath or make any charity, he gets himself freed from the awful Samsâra and never comes to see himself again born in this world.

79. O King! This method of parting from one’s body is rarely attained even by the Yogins; this is the acme, the highest height of all the human efforts towards liberation.

80. But your father, hearing even the curse from a Brâhmin, retained his attachment towards his body; therefore he did not attain dispassion.

81. He thought thus :— “My body is now free from any disease; my kingdom is free from enemies or any other source of danger; how can I now get myself saved from this untimely death.” Thinking thus, he ordered to call the Brâhmins, who know the mantrams.

82. Then that king ascended to the palace, with medicines, many mantras and many other instruments.

83-84. He considered his fate to be the strongest and therefore did not take his bath in any holy place; he did not perform any charities, did not sleep on the ground or remember any mantram of the Devî. Due to Kali entering into his body, he committed the sin of insulting an ascetic and plunged himself in the ocean of delusion and died bitten by the Taksaka snake on the top of a palace.

85. The King has now fallen undoubtedly to the hell, on account of those vicious deeds. Therefore, O King! dost Thou deliver your father from the sin.

86. Sta said, O Risis! Hearing these words from the fiery Vyâsa, the king Janamejaya became very sad and tears came from his eyes and flowed down his cheeks and throat.

He then exclaimed in a suffocating voice “Fie on me! my father is still in the hell. I will now do at once whatever leads my father to heaven.”

Thus ends the twelfth chapter on the Ambâ Yajña rules in the 3rd Adhyâya of Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam, the Mahâ Purânam of 18,000 verses composed by Mahârsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 13. ON THE DEVÎ YAJÑA BY ŚRÎ VISNU

1-3. The King spoke :— O Grandfather! How did Visnu, the Powerful, the Cause of the world, perform the Devî Yajña? Whose help did he receive and what priests with their knowledge of the Vedas did he engage, kindly tell all these to me in special details. I will very attentively hear first this Devî Yajña, performed by Visnu; and then I will make arrangements to do that myself accordingly.

4. Vyâsa said :— O noble one! Hear in detail that very wonderful thing, how Visnu celebrated the Devî Yajña conformably to the rules laid down in the Śâstras.

5. When Brahmâ, Visnu, and Maheśa were each given powers by the Devî, the Goddess of the Universe, and when they parted, these three Devas became free from their womanhood, while they were coming back in their aerial cars and turned out men, as they were before.

6. These three Devas, found the great ocean before them. They brought out world from it; and built, in that world, dwelling abodes; and they themselves began to live in some of them.

7. That world became fixed, steady and the supporter of all beings when the Goddess imparted the power of fixture, steadiness, and the power of supporting to the world. The earth, filled with marrow, then, became fixed and the great supporter by Her power.

8-10. O King! The name of this earth is Medinî, since it was made out of the marrow of the two Asuras Madhu and Kaitabha. This earth is termed Dharâ because it supports all; is termed Prithvî because it is very capacious; and it is called Mahî because it is great, since it supports so many beings. O King! the Ananta serpent is holding it on her thousand-hoods. To make the earth remain solid and compact, Brahmâ built at places mountains. As iron nails in a log of wood, so these hills and mountains within this earth made it fixed. Therefore the Pundits call these mountains “Mahîdhara,” holder of the earth.

11. O King! Thus the golden Meru, the great mountain, many Yojanas wide, adorned with many golden mountain peaks was created.

12. Next Marîchi, Nârada, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Daksa, and Vaśistha were created by Brahmâ; these are the Brahmâ’s mental sons (sons created by the sheer power of mind).

13. The son Kaśyapa was born to Marîchi and thirteen daughters were born of Daksa. From these daughters and out of the seed of Kaśyapa, various Devas and Daityas were born.
14. Then human beings, animals, serpents and many other classes were created. This is called the Kâsyapî Śrîsti or the Kaśyapa's creation.
15. Next Svâyambhava Manu sprang from the lower half of Brahmâ; and the daughter named Śatarpâ came out of the left hand side of the Brahmâ's body.
16. The two sons Priyavrata and Uttânapâda were born of Manu in the womb of Śatarpâ and the three daughters, very beautiful and fair complexioned, were also born of him.
17. Creating then, the Bhagavân, the lotus born Brahmâ built the beautiful Brahma-loka, on the top of the Meru mountain.
18. Then the Bhagavân Visnu built the Vaikuntha city on the top of all the lokas or worlds to dwell with his consort Laksmî.
19. Mahâdeva, too, built the exceedingly beautiful Kailâśa and stayed there with his Bhtas and played with them at his will.
20. The third Loka termed Heaven was built on the top of Meru, decorated with various precious gems and jewels and stones. It was fixed as the abode of Indra.
- 21-22. When the great ocean was churned, Pârijâta, the best of all the trees, the elephant Airāvata with four tusks, the Heavenly cow yielding the milk of all desires, the Uchchaiśravâ horse and Apsarâs, Rambhâ and others, arose and were taken by Indra. These became the ornaments of Heaven.
23. The Moon and Dhanvantarî, the great physician also came out of the churning of the ocean. These surrounded with many other members began to shine, being situated above the Heavens.
24. O King! Thus the three varieties, human beings, Devas, and Tiryakas (birds, etc.) and their great subvarieties sprang up.
25. The four classes of Jîvas, Andaja (born from the eggs), Svedaja (born out of sweats), Udbhija (plants, etc.) and Jarâyujâ (men, etc.) were created, being endowed with the fruits of their past auspicious or inauspicious Karmas, as the case may be.
26. Brahmâ, Visnu, and Maheśa began to play and walk about at their leisure in their respective spheres, after they finished all their creations.
27. Thus the wheel of creation being started, the Great God Bhagavân Visnu Achyuta remained in sport with Mahâ Laksmî in His own sphere Vaikuntha.

28. Then Bhagavân Visnu, while sitting one day in Vaikuntha, got in his mind the memory of that beautiful island, called Mani Dvîpa, adorned with precious stones, gems and jewels.

29-33. O King! In this Mani Dvîpa, the Bhagavân Visnu got the vision of the Mahâ Mâyâ and the auspicious mantra. He now thought to celebrate a Yajña in honour of the Devî, when he recollected the highest Energy, the Great Goddess. He then went out of his abode and invited Brahmâ, Maheśvara, Kuvera, Indra, Varuna, Fire, Yama, Vaśistha, Kaśyapa, Daksa, Vâmadeva, Brihaspati and others and began to collect lots of materials necessary for the Devî sacrifice. Selecting a site Sâttvik, beautiful, and possessing great spiritual powers, Visnu erected, with the help of the great artists and engineers, a wide capacious sacrificial hall, and for the due celebration and fulfilment of it, appointed twenty seven priests; who pledged a solemn vow to complete it duly.

34. When the big altar and chiti (pile of wood for burning, stack of sacrificial bricks) were finished, the Brâhmanas began to recite slowly the Devî mantrams with their root mantrams.

Note :- Chiti, lit pile of wood for burning, is perhaps the Mlâdhâra, the sacral plexus, where the fire called Kundalinî is first kindled by processes of Yoga.

35-37. Then the profuse quantities of ghee were offered as oblations to to the Sacred Fire. Thus when the Homa, (offering oblations of ghee to the fire) ceremony was finished elaborately and conforming to the rules of the Śâstras, the sweet and melodious Heavenly voice was heard in the air, addressing Visnu Bhagavân, thus :- O Visnu! Let You be the supreme amongst the gods; honour and worship shall be Thine first; and you would be the most powerful of the Devas. Indra together with Brahmâ, and the other Devas, all will worship You.

38-39. O Achyuta! (O Infallible One!) Those men on the earth that will be devoted to you, will certainly be endowed with power and you shall be the bestower of boons and all their desires. O Visnu! you will be the Supreme of the Devas and you will be the God of the gods; you will be the first and foremost in all the sacrifices and you will be worshipped by the sacrificers.

40-41. People will worship you; and you will favour them with the boons. O best of the Purusas! When the Devas will be troubled by the Asuras, they will come and take refuge in Thee. You will be the Protector of all, there is no doubt in this. In all the Purânas and all this vast Vedas, You will be first worshipped.

42. O Keśava! Wherever there will be decay and decline in religion, You will incarnate in your parts and preserve the religion.

43-44. O Mâdhava! Avatâras, renowned in all the worlds, will come down on earth

as Your part incarnations in all sorts of wombs, in due order, and will be respected by all the high souled personages. O Madhusdana! Those Avatâras will be the best of all the Avatâras and will be famous all the Lokas, the worlds.

45. In all your Avatâras, you will get your attendants, the Śaktis (females) drawing their energies from My parts; and they will serve your purposes.

46-47. Vârâhî, Nârasimhî, etc., and various other Śaktis of auspicious appearances, endowed with various weapons and decked with all the ornaments will serve as your attendants; no doubt in this. O Visnu! Always with their help and under the influence of My favour, you will no doubt be quite competent to serve the purposes of the Devas.

48. You should respect and worship all those powers by all means and with very great attention; never shew the slightest trace of pride to them; never do you thus insult them.

49. These Śaktis, capable of bestowing all the desires, will be worshipped in Pratimâs (images of clay, etc.) in the whole of India.

50. O Deva of the Devas! The fame of all these Śaktis, as well as of You will be spread in the seven worlds and in the whole Universe.

51. O Hari! The human beings on this earth will constantly worship with selfish ends these powers and you, for the fructification of their desires.

52. Having various desires, men will, in your worship, present various offerings, recite the Veda mantrams, and repeat the names of you and the powers.

53. O Visnu! You will be the God of the Immortals and your glory will be enhanced by the worship offered by the human beings in the world as well as in the heavens.

54. Vyâsa said :— O king! The heavenly voice, thus, bestowing boons on Visnu, ceased. Visnu Bhagavân became very glad to hear this.

55-58. Then Hari, the God of Gods, completed duly the sacrifice and dismissed the Devas and the Munis, the sons of Brahmâ. Then ascending on Garuda, (His Vâhana), He went up to Vaikuntha with his followers. The Devas also went to their own respective places. The Munis also retired gladly to their own hermitages, all thunderstruck to see these things, conversing with each other about this sacrifice.

59. O king! All were filled with best devotion towards the Supreme Force, on hearing this clear beautiful, sonorous heavenly voice; then the Dvîjas, the Munis, and Munîndras began to worship with devotion, according to the Vedas, that Highest Force, the Supreme Goddess, giving all desired objects profusely in all the details.

Here ends the thirteenth chapter on the Devî Yajña by Śrî Visnu in the third Ad-

hyaya in Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam; the Mahâ Purânam by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 14. ON THE NARRATION OF THE GLORIES OF THE DEVÎ

1-2. Janamejaya spoke :- O Dvîja! I have heard in detail the Devî Yajña, performed by Śrî Visnu. Now describe Her Glory and glorious deeds. After hearing these, the Devî's glorious deeds, I will also perform that, the best of all sacrifices. Thereby I will no doubt be pure through your favour.

3. Vyâsa said :- O king! Hear, I am describing to you the history of the most auspicious mighty deeds of the Devî, according to the Purânas.

4-5. In days of yore, there reigned in the country of Kosala, the king Dhruvasandhi of the Solar Dynasty. He was the son of Puspa and cele-

brated on account of his great prowess. He was truthful, religious, engaged in doing good to his subjects, obeying the laws of the four castes and śramas. He being pure, performed his regal duties in the flourishing city of Ayodhyâ.

6. The Brâhmanas, Ksatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śdras and other good persons all lived religiously under his rule, each abiding by his own profession.

7. No thieves, cheats, cunning persons, vain and arrogant persons, treacherous and illiterate men were allowed to remain in his kingdom.

8. O host of Kurus! Thus ruling virtuously, the king had two wives, both of them young, fair and beautiful and well able to give delights and enjoyments to the king.

9. The first and lovely wife was Manoramâ, and the second was Lîlâvatî. Both of them were exceedingly handsome, intelligent and qualified.

10. The king enjoyed much with them in palaces, gardens, romantic hills, lakes, and various beautiful mansions.

11. In the auspicious moment, Manoramâ gave birth to a beautiful child, endowed with all royal qualifications. The child was named, in due course, Sudarśana.

12. Next within one month, his second wife the fair Lîlâvatî in the auspicious

fortnight and in the auspicious day, gave birth to an excellent child.

13. The King then performed the Jâta-Karma (ceremonies on the birth of a child) and being very glad, made lots of presents, wealth, etc., to the Brâhmanas.

14. The King shewed affection equally to the two children; never he made any distinction between them.

15. The king, the tormenter of the foes, was very glad and performed duly the chudâ karana ceremony according to his position and wealth.

16. The sight of these two sons delighted very much the people. Now seeing these Kritachdas, and playing, the king was merged in the ocean of pleasure.

17-18. Sudarâsana was the eldest; but Satrujit, the second beautiful son by Lîlâvatî was of sweet and persuasive speech. His beautiful figure and sweet words gave very much delight to the king, and for these qualities, the child Satrujit turned out also a favourite of the people and ministers.

19. The king could not show so much affection to the unfortunate Sudarâsana as he showed to Satrujit.

20-21. Thus some days having passed, one day the king Dhruvasandhi went out on an hunting expedition to the forest. He killed in the forest many deer, Ruru (a kind of deer), elephants, boar, hare, buffaloes, rhinoceros, camels and amused himself very much with this hunting affair.

22-23. While he was hunting thus, a lion got very much enraged, and, from a bush, suddenly jumped and came upon the king. That king of the beasts was already struck with arrows; now seeing the king in front, he loudly roared.

24-25. He angrily lifted his long tail high up in the air and, puffing up his manes, jumped up high in the air to attack and to take the life of the king. Seeing this, instantly the king took sword in his right hand and shield in his left and stationed himself like another lion before him.

26. The king's followers, one and all, angrily shot arrows on the lion.

27. Then a loud uproar ensued; and all began to hurl arrows as best as they could. But, after all, that dangerous lion fell upon the king.

28-29. Seeing thus, the king struck him with his sword, but the lion also tore asunder the king, with his sharp nails. The king thus struck by the lion, fell on the spot and died. The soldiers cried aloud and killed the lion with arrows.

30. Thus both the king and lion lay dead on the spot; and the soldiers turned back to the palace and gave all the informations to the royal ministers.

31. When the munis heard the demise of the king, they went to the forest, per-

formed the burning of the dead body of the king.

32. The Maharsi Vaśistha performed duly on the same spot, all the funeral ceremonies, thus ensuring the king the safe journey to the next world.

33. All the subjects and the citizens and the Muni Vaśistha counselled each other to install Sudarśana on the throne as the king.

34-35. The minister-in-chief as well as the other members proposed that as Sudarśana is the son of the legal wife, calm and quiet, beautiful and endowed with all the royal qualifications, he is fit for the throne. Maharsi Vaśistha said, the royal son, though not attained to proper age is still religious; therefore he is really fit be installed as king on the royal throne.

36. When the wise aged ministers thus decided, Yudhâjit, the king of Ujjain, on hearing the decision hastened to the spot.

37. He was the father of Lîlâvatî; on hearing the demise of his son-in-law he came there, so that his daughter's son might get the kingdom.

38. Next, Vîrasena, the king of the country of Kalinga and the father of Manoramâ, came there also with the object that his daughter's son Sudarśana be the Emperor.

39. The two kings, accompanied respectively by their own army and soldiers, began to counsel with the aged ministers, each trying so that his daughter's son may get the throne.

40. Yudhâjit made the question :— “Who is the eldest of the two sons? Is it always the case that the eldest will inherit the kingdom? Will not the youngest ever be able to acquire it?”

41. Vîrasena said :— O king! He who is the son of the legal wife inherits the kingdom; this I have heard from the learned who are proficient in the knowledge of the Śâstras.

42. Hearing Vîrasena, Yudhâjit repeated “Sudarśana is not so qualified with royal qualifications and other matters as this son of the late king, Satrujit. How can then Sudarśana inherit the throne?”

43. O King! Then quarrels ensued amongst the two kings. Now, at this critical juncture, who is able to solve their doubts?

44. Yudhâjit then addressed the ministers :— “You all are prompted by selfish ends; you want to acquire a good deal of money by making Sudarśana the king.

45-46. I have come to know by your gestures and postures that your decision is to the above affect. After all, as Satrujit possesses many more qualifications than Sudarśana, he has more claims to the throne; and therefore he is fit to occupy the

throne and no other. Moreover, let me see as long as I live who can set aside the claims of a qualified prince, in possession of an army, and put forward the claims of a prince who has no qualifications it all.

47. I am ready to fight and I will tear the earth into two pieces by my sword. What more have you to say on this?"

48. Hearing this, Vîrasena addressed Yudhâjit "I see the two boy's intelligence the same. You are intelligent; kindly mention where is the difference?"

49. O king! The two kings quarrelling with each other, remained there; the subjects and the Risis, seeing this, were very anxious.

50. Hundreds of tributary princes wanting that the two kings might be involved into quarrels with each other, came to the spot, with their soldiers, though they had to undergo great hardships in doing so.

51. Many aborigines, from the inhabitants of Sringaverpur, hearing the demise of the late king, also appeared on the scene with the sole object to plunder.

52. The two princes are minors; and hearing their parties at war with each other, many robbers from various adjoining countries came also there.

53. Thus when the war broke out between the two kings, the great confusion and tumult across within the kingdoms; on the other hand, Yudhâjit and Vîrasena both became ready to fight.

Thus ends the Fourteenth Chapter on the narration of the glories of the Devî and the death of the Kosala king Dhruva Sandhi in the 3rd Adhayâya of Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam.

CHAPTER 15. ON THE BATTLE BETWEEN YUDHÂJIT AND VÎRASENA

1. Vyâsa said :- O king! When the war was declared, the two kings, excited by greed and anger, took up arms; and a dreadful encounter ensued.
2. On one side the king Yudhâjit of long arms, surrounded by his own army, with

bows and arrows came ready to fight.

3. On the other hand, the fiery Vîrasena, the second God of the Devas appeared in the battle, following a true Ksattriya custom, on behalf his daughter's son.

4. Then that truthful king Vîrasena, seeing Yudhâjit in battle, became very angry and hurled arrows on him, as a cloud rains on the mountain tops.

5. On being covered, as it were, by the sharp and swift arrows, sharpened on a stone slab hurled at him by Vîrasena, Yudhâjit, too, quickly, shot arrows at Vîrasena and cut off all his arrows.

6. O King! A dreadful fight then ensued between the cavalries, the warriors on the elephants; and the Devas, men, and Munis began to witness this terrible battle with wonder and astonishment. Birds, vultures and crows, desirous to eat the flesh of the dead soldiers, flew in the air.

7. Blood of elephants, horses and warriors, the bodies that lay dead, flowed in torrents awfully like rivers in that deadly battle ground. The torrent of blood excited fear amongst those who came to see it, as the river Vaitarani on the way to hell (the Lord of Death) is very fearful to the sinners.

8. The human skulls were driven ashore by the current and they look like so many hollow shells of gourds scattered there for the play of the boys on the banks of the Jumnâ.

9. When any warrior lay dead on the field, the vultures began to fly about in the air for devouring his flesh. It seemed then that the soul of the warrior beholding his beautiful body tried to reenter into his body, though he thought that it had become very inaccessible to him.

10. Some warriors on being slain in the battle instantly arose in a celestial car to the heavens and was seen addressing the celestial nymph, who came already within his embrace, thus "O one of beautiful thighs. Behold! how my beautiful body is lying on the earth below!"

11. Another warrior thus slain got up in the heavens on a celestial car, came in possession of a celestial nymph and when he was sitting with her in the car, his former wife in the earth made herself a sati and burnt herself up in the funeral pyre, thus got a celestial body, came up to the heavens; and that chaste virtuous woman drew away perforce her own husband away from that celestial nymph.

12. Two warriors, went up, slew each other and lay down dead at the same time. They went up in the heavens at the same time and there began quarrel with each other and fight with their weapons for one and the same celestial nymph.

13. Some hero got in the heavens a nymph more lovely and beautiful than himself

and he thus became very much attached and devoted her. He began to describe his own heroic qualities and also to copy dotedly the qualities of his lover so that she might remain faithfully attached to him.

14. The dust, arising from the dreadful encounter of the soldiers in battle field, rose up in the air and covered the sun. It appeared night. After a while that dust became absorbed in the blood below, and the sun appeared very red, reflected with the colour of the blood.

15. Some Brahmachârî fought in the battle and was slain. He went up to the heavens; instantly a lovely eyed Devakanyâ, a celestial nymph desired to select him as bridegroom with great devotion. But that clever man did not accept the offer, thinking that his vow of Brahmacharya would be thus broken.

16-17. O King! Thus when the battle was deadly, the king Yudhâjit shot a sharp, dreadful arrow at Vîrasena and severed his head from body. Vîrasena lay dead on the battle field and his army was routed. The soldiers fled away from the battle.

18-19. Hearing that her father was slain in the battle, Manoramâ became very terrified and anxious. She then began to think that the vicious wicked king Yudhâjit will surely slay her son, for kingdom's sake and to satisfy his enmity with her father.

20. What shall I do now? My father is slain in the battle. My husband is no more. My child is a minor to-day. Where shall I go?

21. Greed is very sinful; who is there that cannot be bought over by love of gold? and what vicious act can there be, that cannot be done when actuated by covetousness?

22. A greedy man does not hesitate to kill his father, mother, spiritual guide, friends and others. There is no doubt in this.

23. It is the inordinate love of worldly things that makes a man eat what is held unclean in society, that makes a man approach a woman who is unapproachable, and it is greed that makes a man discard his own religion and become an apostate.

24. In this city I find none so powerful as I can remain there under his shelter and be able to rear up my child.

25. What can I do if the king Yudhâjit slay my son? There is none in this world who can save me, and, counting on whose shelter, I can stay here without any anxiety.

26. And this my co-rival wife Lîlâvatî will always practise enmity with me. She will never shew mercy on my son.

27. When Yudhâjit will arrive in this city, I will never be able to go out of it and

he will to-day put my son in the prison on the pretext that he is a minor.

28-29. I heard that, in days of yore, Indra entered into the womb of his pregnant step mother with a small thunderbolt in his hand and divided the foetus into seven parts with that weapon, again each of these seven into seven parts again, thus the forty nine Maruts were born in the Heavens.

30-31. I heard also that in ancient times one queen gave poison to destroy the foetus in the womb of her rival wife. When the child came out of the womb, he was celebrated by the name of Sagara (with poison) in this earth.

32. The husband was alive, and still his queen Kaikeyi banished the eldest son of his king, Śrî Râmachandra to the forest; and the king Daśaratha sacrificed his life for that very reason.

33. The ministers no doubt wanted before to install my son as the king; but now they are not independent; they have now yielded themselves to the king Yudhâjit.

34. There is no brother of mine powerful enough to release me from my bondage; I see I have fallen into a great difficulty by the combination of unforeseen circumstances.

35. Though the success depends on Fate, still one should make an earnest effort. If one does not make any effort, fate also remains asleep. I will therefore soon make out a plan to save my son.

36-38. O King! Thinking thus, that woman Manoramâ called in private the best and very respectable minister Vidalla, who was intelligent and expert in everything, and holding the hands of her son and weeping, said humbly in a depressed spirit "O Minister! My father is slain in the battle field, this my son is a minor, and Yudhâjit is a powerful king; consider all these and tell me what I should do now?"

39-40. The venerable minister Vidalla then said to the queen Manoramâ "It is never advisable for us to stay here. Soon we will go into the forests of Benares. There I have got my powerful uncle Subâhu. He is prosperous and has got a strong army. He will protect us."

41. "I will make the pretext that I am become very anxious for the king and therefore I am going out to see the king Yudhâjit and will go out of the city in my chariot. There is no doubt in this."

42-43. Hearing, thus, the Vidalla's words, the queen Manoramâ went to Lîlâvatî and said "O faireyed! To-day I am going to see the father Yudhâjit." Thus saying, she went out of the city in a chariot, accompanied by her son, attendants and Vidalla.

44-45. Grieved at the loss of her father, fearful, distressed, and fatigued, Manoramâ

saw Yudhâjit and performed the cremation of her father Vîrasena; and, trembling with fear, got to the banks of the Ganges after two days' swift journey.

46-48. There the robbers, the Nisâdas plundered all their riches and took the chariot and went away. Manoramâ had only her clothings, that she wore, left to her. She began to weep, and, holding the hands of her attendant, went to the Ganges shore, and being afraid crossed the river on a raft and went to the Chitrakta mountain.

49. That terrified Devî went to the hermitage of Bhâradvâja as early as possible. There she saw the ascetics and was relieved of her fear.

50. Bhâradvâja asked, "O lotus eyed! Who are you and whose wife are you? Why have you taken so much trouble to come here? Answer all these truly."

51. "O beautiful one! are you a Devî or a human being? your son is a very minor. Why have you come in this dense forest? It seems, as if you are deprived of your kingdom."

52. Thus asked by the best of the Munis, the beautiful Manoramâ became very much afflicted with grief and began to weep; she could not speak anything herself and ordered Vidalla to inform the Muni all what had happened.

53-54. Vidalla then said :— There was a king of Kosala, named Dhruvasandhi. She is the legal wife of that king. Her name is Manoramâ. That powerful king of the Solar Dynasty was killed by a lion in a forest. This boy Sudarśana is his son.

55. The father of this Manoramâ was very religious. He died fighting for the cause of his daughter's son. Now the present queen has become much afraid and has therefore come to this wild forest.

56. The son of this woman is now a minor; he is now taking your refuge. O best of the Munis! Protect them.

57. To give protection to any distressed person is to acquire merits higher than performing a sacrifice. Therefore to protect one who is very much afflicted with fear and who is helpless will have still higher merits.

58. Bhâradvâja said :— "O beautiful one! Remain in this hermitage without any fear; rear up your son here. O auspicious one! There is no cause of fear here from your enemies.

59. Better nourish and support your child. Your son will surely be a king and if you remain in this hermitage, no sorrow or grief will overtake you."

60. Vyâsa said :— When the great Muni Bhâradvâja said thus, the queen Manoramâ became peaceful. The Muni gave them a cottage to live in and there they dwelt without any sorrow.

61. Thus Manoramâ dwelt obediently with her maid servant, liked by all. Vidalla also remained there and Manoramâ began to nourish her child.

Here ends the Fifteenth chapter on the Devî Mâhâtmya and the battle between Yudhâjit and Virasena and the going away of Manoramâ to the forest in the 3rd Adhyâya of Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 16. ON THE GLORY OF THE DEVÎ

1. Vyâsa said :– After gaining the victory in the battle, the king Yudhâjit returned to the city of Ayodhyâ with his huge army and asked where are Sudarśana and Manoramâ? He wanted to kill Sudarśana.

2. He repeatedly exclaimed “Where are they gone?” and sent his servants on their search. Then, on an auspicious day, he installed his daughter’s son on the throne.

3. Maharsi Vāsistha was engaged as the priest; he and the other ministers began to chant the auspicious hymns of the Atharvaveda and with the jars, filled with water, and consecrated by these hymns, installed Śatrjit on the throne.

4. O best of the Kurus! Conch shells resounded; drums, bherîs and triyas, resounded; and great festivals and rejoicings took place in the city.

5. The reciting of the Vedic mantrams by the Brâhmans, the chanting of hymns by the bards and the auspicious acclamation of Victory to the new king resounded the whole city of Ayodhyâ with joy.

6. When the new king Śatrjit ascended on the throne, the subjects were filled with joy; everywhere hymns were sung; drums were resound. At this Ayodhyâ looked as fresh as ever.

7-8. O King! Though there were thus great rejoicings and festivals, yet some good persons were found that remembered Sudarśana and gave vent to this feeling of sorrow, thus :– “Alas! Where has that prince gone? Where has that chaste queen Manoramâ gone with her son? Oh! The enemies have killed his father for greed of kingdom.”

9. The saints with their views impartial, thus rendered uneasy, sorry, began to pass away their time there subject to Śatritj.

10. After installing duly his daughter's son on the throne and after having made over the charge of the kingdom to the wise councillors, Yudhâjit turned towards his own city.

11-12. Afterwards Yudhâjit heard that Sudarśana was staying in the hermitage with the Munis. He started at once for Chitrakṭa and went quickly to Durdarśa, the chief of the city of Sringavera, being accompanied by Bala, the chief of the Nisâdas.

13-15. Hearing that Yudhâjit was coming there with his army, Manoramâ began to think that his son was a minor and became very sorrowful, distressed and terrified. Then she with tears in her eyes addressed the Muni thus :— “Yudhâjit is coming here; what shall I do and whither shall I go? He has slain my father, and has installed his daughter's son on the throne. Still he is not satisfied and he is now coming with his army here to kill my minor child.”

16-21. O Lord! In days of yore, I heard that the Pândavas, when they went to the forest, lived in the holy hermitage of the Munis with Draupadî. One day the five brethren went a hunting, and the beautiful Draupadî stayed without any fear with other maid servants in the

hermitage where there was the chanting of the Vedas by Dhaumya, Attri, Gâlava, Paila, Jâvâli, Gautama, Bhṛigu, Chyavana, Kanva of the Atrigotra, Jatu, Kratu, Vîtihoṭra, Sumantu, Yajñadatt, Vatsala, Râśâsana, Kahoda, Yavakrî, Yajñakrit, Kratu and other holy high souled Risis like Bhâradvâja and others.

22-23. While the five great heroes Arjuna and others, the destroyers of their enemies, were roaming in the forests, Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu came with his army to the hermitage, hearing the reciting of the Vedic hymns.

24. Hearing thus, that king quickly descended from the chariot so that he might have a sight of these holy maharsis.

25-27. Accompanied by two attendants only, he approached to the Munis and, finding them engaged in the study of the Vedas, waited there with folded hands for an opportunity. O Lord! When the king Jayadratha on entering the hermitage took his seat, the wives of the Munis came there to see the king and began to enquire “Who is this person?”

28. With the wives of the Munis came there also the beautiful Draupadî. Jayadratha looked upon Draupadî as if she were the second goddess Laksmî.

29-30. Looking at that lovely royal daughter who looked like the Deva girls

Jayadratha asked the Maharsi Dhaumya, “Who is this beautiful lotus eyed lady? Whose wife is she and who is her father? What is her name? Oh! From her beautiful appearance it seems that the goddess Śachî has come down on earth.”

31. This fair woman is shining like the celestial nymph Rambhâ surrounded by the Raksasis or like the beautiful creeper Lavangalatika encircled by thorny trees.

32. O good ones! Tell truly whose beloved is she? O Brâhmins! It seems that she is the wife of some king, not the wife of a Muni.

33. Dhaumya said :– “O king of Sindhu! She is the daughter of Pâñchâla; her name is Draupadî; she is the wife of the Pândavas; they are residing in this forest, having got rid of their fears.”

34. Jayadratha said “Where have those powerful Pândavas of great prowess gone now? Are they dwelling in this forest, free from fears?”

35. Dhaumya said :– “The five Pândavas have gone out on hunting, ascended on a chariot. They will return at noon with their game.”

36-37. Hearing the Muni’s words Jayadratha got up, and going near to Draupadî, bowed down to her and said :– “O Fair One! Is there every-

thing well with you? Where have your husbands gone? To-day it is eleven years that you are residing in the forest.”

38. Draupadî then said :– “O prince! Let all be well with you, wait here for a short while; the Pândavas are coming quickly.”

39. While Draupadî thus spoke, that powerful king, being overpowered with greed and avarice, stole her away, disregarding all the Munis present there.

40-42. O Lord! The wise should never trust any body; if on any body he places his trust, he will surely come to grief. For example, see the case of the king Bali. Bali, the son of Virochana, and the grandson of Prahâlâda, was prosperous, devoted to his religion, true to his promise, performer of sacrifices, generous, always giving protection to and liked by the saints and a great warrior. His mind never turned to any irreligious subject and he performed ninety nine Yajñas with full Daksinâs (remunerations).

43-44. But the Bhagavân Visnu, who is all full of Sâttvic purity and who is never affected with passions and changeless, who is always worshipped by the Yogis, He, in the form of a dwarf in his Vâmana incarnation as the son of Kaśyapa Risi, to serve the Devas, stole away his whole seagirt earth and kingdom deceitfully on hypocritical pretext.

45. O Lord! I heard that the son of Virochana was a generous large hearted king. He truly resolved to give what was wanted; but Visnu behaved with him deceitfully

to serve the cause of Indra.

46. When the pure, Sâttvik Visnu could assume this dwarf incarnation to bring about the hindrance to Bali's Yajña, what wonder is that other ordinary mortals would practise things like that?

47. Therefore never trust on any body in any way. Lord! Where there are greed and avarice, reigning in one's heart, what fear can he have to perpetrate any evil deed?

48-49. O Muni! It is through avarice that men commit sinful deeds; they do not care what good or bad will happen to them in the next world. Thoroughly overpowered by greed, they take away in mind, word and deed other's things; and thus they become fallen.

50-51. Lo! Human beings always worship the Gods for wealth; but the Devas do not give them wealth instantly; they give them these things through others by making them carry on trade, make gifts, or shew their strength or by making them steal.

52. The Vaiśyas worship the Gods simply because they think they will be highly prosperous and therefore they sell many things as grains, cloth and the like.

53. O Controlled one! Is there not the desire to take away the other's property in this act of merchandise? Certainly there is. Besides the merchants, when they find that when people are in urgent need of buying articles from them, expect that the price of those articles might run higher.

54. O Muni! Thus every one is anxious to take away other's properties. How, then, can we trust them?

55. Those who are clouded by greed and delusion, their going to places of pilgrimages, their making charities, their reciting the Vedas, all are rendered useless. Though they go to the holy places, etc., still these things bear no fruits to them, as if they have not done these things at all.

56. Therefore O Enlightened one! You make Yudhâjit go back to his own place. Then I will be able to remain here, like Sîtâ, with my son.

57-58. On Manoramâ's thus speaking to the Muni, the fiery Maharsi went to Yudhâjit and said :— "O King! You better go back to your own place or anywhere else you like. The son of Manoramâ is a minor; that queen is very much grieved; she cannot come to you now."

59. Yudhâjit said "O peaceful ones! Kindly cease showing this impudence and give me Manoramâ. I will never go away leaving her. If you do not give her easily, I will take her away by force."

60. The Risis said “O King! If there be any strength in you, you can take away Manoramâ by force; but the result will be similar to that when the King Visvâmitra wanted to take away the heavenly cow by force from the hermitage of Vaśistha.”

Thus ends the Sixteenth Chapter on the glory of the Devî and the going of the King Yudhâjit to the hermitage of Bhâradvâja, to kill Sudarśana, in the the 3rd Adhyâya of Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 17. ON THE STORY OF VIŚVÂMITRA

1-3. Vyâsa said :— O King! Hearing thus the words of the Maharsi Bhâradvâja and seeing that he made a firm resolve, the King Yudhâjit called his prime minister quickly and asked, “O intelligent one! What am I to do now? I want to carry away by force this boy with his mother sweet Manoramâ; no one desirous of one’s welfare won’t trifle away his enemy, be he even a very weak one; if he does so, that enemy

will get stronger day by day, as the disease consumption becomes stronger; and will ultimately become the cause of death.

4. There is no warrior, nor any soldiers here of the other party; no one will be able to resist me; I can take away, as I like, the enemy of my daughter’s son and can kill him.

5. I will try to-day to carry him away by force, and Sudarśana being killed, my daughter’s son will reign fearlessly without an enemy; there is no doubt in this.”

6. The prime minister said :— No such hazardous courage need be shewn now; you have heard the Maharshi’s words; he quoted you the example of Viśvâmitra.

7. O King! In days of yore, Viśvâmitra, the son of the King Gâdhi, was a celebrated monarch; one day while roaming, he accidentally reached the hermitage of Vaśistha.

8. The powerful king Viśvâmitra bowed down before the Muni, and the Muni gave him a seat. The king took his seat there.

9. Then the high souled Vaśistha invited the king to a dinner. Viśvâmitra, the king, went there with his whole army.

10-12. There was a cow, named Nandinî, of Vaśistha. The Muni prepared all sorts of eatables from her milk and entertained them all. The king with his whole army was very much pleased; and, coming to know of the divine power of the cow, asked Vaśistha to give his cow Nandinî over to him and said “The udder of your cow Nandinî is like a big jar. I will give you thousand cows like that; I pray you to let me have your cow Nandinî.”

13. Vaśistha said “O King! This is my sacrificial cow; I cannot give you this cow in any way, let your thousand cows be yours.”

14. Viśvâmitra said :— “O Saint! I will give you cows lakhs or tens and hundreds of lakhs or any number you like. Please give me your cow; in case you be unwilling, I will carry her away perforce.”

15. Vaśistha said :— “O King! As you like, better take it perforce; I will never be able to give you my cow Nandinî from my house.”

16. O King! Hearing thus the Vaśistha’s words, Viśvâmitra, the King, ordered at once his powerful followers to carry the cow Nandinî away by fastening a cord round her neck per sheer force.

17-19. The followers, obeying the order at once bound the cow with ropes and began to carry her away by force. At this Nandinî, trembling and with tears in her eyes, began to say to the Muni “O One! whose wealth consists only in asceticism! Are you going to leave me? Otherwise

why these fellows are binding me with a cord and dragging me away?” At this the Muni replied “O Nandinî! I have never parted with you; I perform all my sacrifices through your milk. O auspicious one! I honoured this king, my guests, with eatables prepared from your food and for that reason he is carrying you away from me by sheer force. What can I do? O Nandinî! I have not the least desire to part with you.”

20. Hearing these words from the Muni, the cow became very angry and bellowed loudly and terribly.

21. At once came out from her body, on that very spot, the terrible demons wearing coats of armour, and holding various weapons; and they uttered aloud, “Wait; you will soon meet with vengeance.”

22. They then destroyed all the forces of the king. And the king alone was left and he went away alone, much dejected and sorrowful.

23. Oh! That wicked king then cursed with great humility the Ksattriya Śakti;

and thinking the Brâhmanic power would be attained with great exertion, began to practise asceticism and penance.

24. Performing penance and tapasyâ, very hard indeed, in the great forest, Viśvâmitra, the son of Gâdhi, succeeded at last in becoming a Risi and then he renounced his Ksattriya Dharma.

25. Therefore, O King! Dost Thou never quarrel with these ascetics and be involved in wars resulting in great enmity and causing the extinction of the race.

26. Better dost thou appease the Muni and now go back to your own kingdom. Let Sudarśana remain here at his pleasure.

27. O King! This minor boy has no wealth; what harm can he do to you? It is useless to show your enmity towards an orphan, a weak minor boy.

28. This world is under the control of Destiny; therefore one should shew mercy to all. O king! What use is there to shew one's jealousy? What is inevitable will surely come to pass.

29. O king! The thunderbolt comes sometimes like a blade of grass; a blade of grass acts sometimes like a thunderbolt.

30. O king! You are very intelligent; consider that by combinations of circumstances, a hair can kill a powerful tiger and a gnat can kill an elephant. Therefore dost thou forsake this rashness and hear my beneficent advice.

31. Vyâsa said :— O king! The best of kings, Yudhâjit hearing the prime minister's advice bowed down humbly at the feet of the Muni and returned to his own city.

32. Manoramâ, too, became free from anxiety, and, remaining peaceful in the hermitage, began to nourish and support her child, engaged in vows.

33. The lovely son of the king began to grow daily like the phases of the waxing moon and sport fearlessly with the boys of the Munis, altogether, wherever they liked, a sight very auspicious.

34. One day the minister Vidalla came there and the sons of the Munis seeing him began, in the presence of Sudarśana, to address him "Klib," "Klib."

35. Sudarśana, too, hearing them pronounce "Klib," "Klib" took up the one letter, "Kli" and uttered this only repeatedly, which is, in fact the prince of the root mantras of Kâma, with anusvâra omitted.

36. Then the son of the king took that mantram and silently repeated this in his mind.

37. O King! Thus that boy Sudarśana was initiated in this root mantra of Kâma (desire) spontaneously, out of his original Samskâra (innate tendency) owing to

the unavoidable destiny of Fate.

38-39. The son of the king, when he was five years old, got this most excellent mantra, though without its Risi (seer), meditation, without its chhanda (metre) and without Nyâsa (assignment of the various parts of the body to different deities, accompanied with prayers and corresponding gesticulations), and considered this as the quintessence of all, therefore meditated this always in his mind spontaneously and never forgot it.

40-41. When the king's son grew eleven years old, the Muni performed his Upanayana (sacred thread) ceremony and made him begin the study of the Vedas. The son, with that mantra power, soon mastered all the studies about archery, all the moral and political sciences in conformity with proper rules, within a very short time.

42-43. One day Sudarśana got a vision of the form of the Supreme Goddess, of a red colour, wearing red apparel and decorated with red ornaments, mounting on Garuda and with Her wonderful Vaisnavî powers and Her face, fully opened like the budding of a lotus flower.

44. Thus, expert in many branches of learning, Sudarśana served his Mother in that forest and began to wander on the banks of the Ganges.

45. One day the Mother of the Universe gave the bows, sharpened arrows, quiver and a mail coat of armour to that boy in that forest.

46-47. O King! At this time the extraordinary beautiful and lovely princess Śaśikalâ, endowed with all auspicious qualities, the daughter of the king of Kâshi, came to hear that a beautiful prince named Sudarśana, a second Kandarpa, full of heroism and endowed with all auspicious qualities is dwelling in a forest.

48. The princess, hearing this from a soothsayer, mentally loved and desired him and wanted finally to accept him as her legal husband.

49-50. Thus, on one occasion, at the end of a night (night-fall), the Goddess appeared in her dreams before her and consoled her and said "O fair one! ask a boon from me; Sudarśana is my devotee; he will fulfill, at my word, all your desires."

51. Thus seeing the beautiful figure of the Goddess in her dreams and hearing Her sweet words, the honoured Śaśikalâ was drowned in the ocean of bliss.

52. When the princess awoke, her face beaming with gladness, her mother perceived her joy and inferred that her daughter must have been internally very glad, and asked her repeatedly, but Śaśikalâ was too much abashed and did not give vent to the cause of her satisfaction.

53. The princess, remembering her dreams, began to laugh repeatedly on account of her excessive joy. At last she spoke out in detail all about her dreams to one of her lady friends, or companions.

54. On one occasion, that large eyed Śaśikalâ went out for enjoyment to a nice garden beautified with champaka flowers, attended by her companion.

55. While the King's daughter seated under a champaka tree, was collecting flowers, she saw a Brâhmin, coming towards her in great haste.

56. After bowing down before him, that beautiful princess, endowed with all auspicious qualifications, addressed him in sweet words "O blessed one! whence are you coming?"

57. The Brâhmana said :- "O girl! I am coming on an errand from the hermitage of Bhâradvâja Muni. Please mention what you are going to ask me?"

58. Śaśikalâ replied "O Noble one! What beautiful thing is therein that hermitage that is extraordinary and worth describing."

59. The Brâhmana said "O fair one! There is staying the most lovely Sudarśana, the son of the King Dhruvasandhi. He is the loveliest of all men.

60. O fair one! He who has not seen him, I think, has his eyes given to him in vain.

61. O auspicious one! It appears as if the Creator, with a view to see how it looks, has invested him with all the qualities.

62. O beautiful one! what shall I say more to you, suffice to say that, that prince is fit to become your husband. I think that the Creator has, no doubt, settled already the union between you two, as a happy union of two congenial things (gold in union with Jewel)."

Thus ends the seventeenth chapter on the story of Viśvâmitra and on the getting of the root mantra of Kâma by the son of the King in Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam, of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 18. THE SVAYAMBARA OF ŚĀŚIKALÂ

1. Vyâsa said :— The King's lovely daughter was very glad on hearing the words of the Brâhmana, and drowned herself in ecstasy of love. The Brâhmin also departed, thinking of the whole affair.
2. The daughter was already attached to the prince, and now she became the more merged in love for him and became very anxious. Now, on the departure of the Brâhmin, she felt herself struck by the arrows of love.
- 3-4. Then Śāśikalâ, oppressed by love, addressed her dear companion, who followed her inclinations thus :— “O my companion! I have not as yet had any knowledge of the king's son; still the signs of love have sprung up in my body and mind, from the moment that I heard about him from the Brâhmin. The love is giving me much trouble; tell, my companion what am I to do now? and whither shall I go?
5. O dear companion! I saw him like a second God of Love in my dreams; and, since then, my innocent mind is being troubled with his being away from me.
6. O fair one! The sandal paste on my body appears to me like a poison, this garland is like a serpent and the moon's rays seem like a fire.
7. O companion! My mind gets not rest anywhere, in palaces, gardens, in lakes, in hills, at any time, during the day or night; all the enjoyable things have assumed now contrary aspects and are paining me.
8. The bedding, betel leaves, music, singing, and dancing, all now fail to give me satisfaction and peace.
9. O companion! I would have gone to-day where is residing that deceiver; but I fear for my father as well for the honour of my family.
10. My father is not yet declaring the svayamvara for my marriage. What shall I do? Had he given me in marriage to that Sudarśan, I would have allowed him embrace me and satisfy his passions to-day!
11. O friend! look at the strange ideas of the Creator! There are hundreds of kings today who are influential and I do not consider them beautiful; and that King's son is exiled from his kingdom and yet he has stolen away my heart.”
12. Vyâsa said :— Thus that King's son, Sudarśana, though helpless, and living in a forest on roots and fruits, deprived of wealth, power, and army, began to reign

in the heart of that princess.

13-14. Śaśikalâ, too, began to recite slowly the root mantra of Sarasvatî and therefore her love towards this prince held out signs of success.

Once engaged in meditation on that excellent root mantra on Kâma, and, while repeatedly reciting it mentally, he got in a dream the vision of that Ever Full, the World Mother Ambikâ, that cannot be expressed in words, the Vaisnavî Śakti and capable to bestow all wealth and property.

15-16. At this time the King of Nisâdas, the lord of Śringaverpur came to the hermitage and presented an excellent chariot together with all other necessary things. This chariot was drawn by four horses, decorated with nice flags and was endowed with the prospect of getting victory everywhere; thinking it thus a befitting present to be given to the King, he gave it to Sudarśana.

17. Sudarśana, too, accepted the offer of a friend and worshipped him well in return, with roots and fruits of the forest.

18-19. The lord of the Nisâdas, thus worshipped as a guest, went away. The Munis and ascetics then began to address Sudarśana, with fondness “O son of the king! Don’t be anxious and restless; within a very short time, you will get your kingdom, no doubt, by your own good luck and prowess.

20. O one attached to one’s vows! The Goddess that enchants the whole universe, the Giver of boons, Śrî Ambikâ, has been pleased with you; assistance is also rendered well to you; therefore do not trouble yourself with contrary thoughts any more.”

21. The Munis, who have taken vows, addressed Manoramâ also “Your son will soon become the lord of the world; you need not care any more.”

22. Then the lean and thin Manoramâ, hearing the Muni’s words said “O Brâhmanas! Let your âsiss (words of benedictions) be justified with success. What wonder that a kingdom be obtained by the good will of the Sâdhus!

23. There is no force, no minister, no help, no property; how, under what combinations, can then my son get kingship?

24. You are the best of the knowers of mantrams; due to the influence of your good will, my son will surely be a king; there is no doubt in this.”

25. Vyâsa said :— Wherever that intelligent Sudarśana used to go on his chariot, there he seemed by his own prowess, as if he were surrounded by a whole army consisting of 109, 350 foot, 65,610 horse, 21,870 chariots and 21,870 elephants.

26. This is the influence of the seed mantra; it is not an ordinary acquisition. It is because Sudarśana, with gladness and one-pointedness of his mind, meditated on

his seed mantra, that he acquired the above powers; there is no doubt in this.

27. Becoming pure and peaceful, whoever gets this wonderul seed mantra from a true spiritual guide and meditates on it incessantly, is destined certainly to attain all desires.

28. O best of kings! There is no such thing either in the heavens above or in the worlds below, that a man won't get, when the Supreme Goddess becomes pleased.

29. Those are certainly very unfortunate and of dull intellect, who cannot place their faith on the worship of this Goddess and consequently suffer incessantly all sorts of troubles.

30. O best of the Kurus! At the beginning of the creation, this Ambâ Devî was the Mother of all the Gods, and is therefore known as the First Mother.

31. She is practically seen in this world in the shape of Buddhi (intelligence), Kîrti (fame), Dhṛiti (fortitude), Laksmî (Goddess of wealth), Śakti (the Force), Śraddhâ (Faith), Mati (Intellect), Smṛiti (memory), etc.

32. It is only the deluded souls that do not realise the nature of the Devî; it is only those, whose hearts are destroyed by the glare of false argument, that do not worship this All-auspicious Goddess of the Universe.

33-34. O king! Brahmâ, Visnu, Śambhu, Indra, Varuna, Yama, Vây, Agni, Kuvera, Viśvakarmâ, Psâ, Bhaga, the two Asvins, dityas, Vasus, Rudras, Viśvedevas, Maruts, all worship the Supreme Deity of Creation, Preservation and Dissolution.

35. Who is there amongst the wise that does not serve this Highest Energy? The real nature of that Auspicious Goddess, the Bestower of all desires, Sudarśana came to know very well.

36. She is the Real Essence, Brahmâ, very rarely realised; She is the Higher Vidyâ and the Lower Vidyâ (Avidyâ) and She is the vital energy, the Mukhya Prâna, of the best of the Yogis, who are desirous of liberation.

37. O king! What individual is there that is able to realise the nature of Pramâtmâ (the Highest Universal Self) without having recourse to Her, Who is manifesting this universal consciousness, by bringing into existence these Sâtvik, Râjasik, and Tâmasik creations.

38. Sudarśana, though he dwelt in the forest, realised a greater happiness than that in obtaining the sovereignty of a kingdom, by constantly meditating on that Goddess.

39. Śaśikalâ, too, being too much oppressed with the arrows of love, any how remained with her soul in her body, having had to be always cared for her health in various ways by her attendants.

40. Then the king Subâhu, on coming to know that her daughter is desirous of getting her husband, made arrangements for her Svayambara (a marriage in which the girl chooses her husband from among a number of suitors assembled together) without any delay.

41-44. The Svayambara of the royal family, the Pundits say, is of three kinds :— 1st Ichchhâ Svayambara (optional); 2nd Panya Svayamvara by fulfilling a promise, e.g. Râmachandra broke in two the bow of Śiva and married Sîtâ; 3rd the Svayambara, preferring one who will prove the strongest hero by one's own prowess. Of these three kinds of Svayambaras, the king Subâhu preferred Ichchâ Svayamvara (according to the bride's free choice).

Accordingly the king employed many artisans, had platforms covered with beautiful carpets and big halls decorated beautifully in various ways.

45-47. Thus the assembly hall for Svayambara built and decorated and all the necessary articles and equipments brought thither, the fair eyed Śaśikalâ, told her companions with sorrow "Better go to my mother and say her privately that I have already selected mentally my husband the beautiful Sudarśana, the son of the king Dhruvasandhi in my mind; I won't marry any other prince than him; the Goddess Bhagavatî has settled him for my husband."

48-50. Vyâsa said, the companion of Śaśikalâ hearing thus, went quickly to her mother Vaidarbhî and addressed her sweetly in private "O chaste one! Your daughter, with a sorrowful heart, has sent me to you to say the following; Please hear and do at your earliest convenience, what is good and beneficial." She said "There is staying in the hermitage of Bhâradvâja, the son of the king Dhruvasandhi; I have mentally selected him as my husband; I won't select any other prince."

51. Vyâsa said :— The queen, hearing her words, told to her husband, when he returned to the palace, all her daughter's words as she had heard them.

52-53. Hearing this, the king Subâhu was astonished and then laughed frequently and then began to say to his wife, the daughter of the king of Vidarbha the following true words :— "O fair one! That king's son Sudarśana is a minor, he has been exiled to the forest; now he is helpless and is residing with his mother in a dense forest.

54. For his sake, the king Vîrasena was slain in battle by the king Yudhâjit. O fair eyed! how can that helpless exiled poor boy become her husband.

55. Do say therefore to Śaśikalâ that, in the assembly hall for her Svayamvara, many kings commanding honour and respect would be present. She would then choose whomever she likes. She need not repeat such words any more."

Thus ends the Eighteenth Chapter of the 3rd Skandha about the Svayambara of

Śaśikalâ, the daughter of the king Kâsirâja in the Mahâ Purânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 19. ON THE GOING TO THE SVAYAMVARA ASSEMBLY OF SUDARŚANA

1-2. Vyâsa said :— After the king Subâhu had spoken thus, the Queen made her daughter Śaśikalâ, who had always sweet smiles on her lips sit on her lap and after consoling her with sweet words, began to say “O fair eyed! You always practise vows and other religious performances; why are you, then, speaking these unpleasant words? The King has heard all what you wanted to say and has been very sorry.

3-5. That Sudarśana is very unfortunate, deprived of his kingdom, helpless, void of wealth and army, abandoned by his friends, exiled with his mother in the forest, subsisting on roots and fruits, lean and thin. Thus he is not worthy of becoming the husband of yours. There are many learned, beautiful, approved of all, qualified with all royal marks, princes fit to become your husband. They all will come in this Svayamvara.

6. There is one brother of this Sudarśana, who is endowed with all kingly qualifications, beautiful, and qualified in various other ways. He is the king of the Kosala country.

7. There is another point worth consideration; please hear it. The King Yudhâjit is trying his best to kill Sudarśana on a befitting opportunity.

8. He already counselled with his ministers and killed in a desperate fight the king Vîrasena and installed his daughter’s son on the throne.

9. Even he came up so far as the hermitage of Bhâradvâja to kill Sudarśana; afterwards he was prevented by the Munis from doing so then he returned home.”

10-11. Śaśikalâ replied :— “Mother! That prince, though staying in the forest, is approved of by me; under the advice Śaryâti, the chaste Sukanyâ married Chyavana Muni and served her husband all along; so I will marry this king’s son and will always be engaged in serving him. The women are able to attain heaven and

emancipation, if they serve their husbands; therefore if we be sincere in serving our husbands, we will no doubt be happy.

12. I have seen in my dream that the Goddess Bhagavatî has ordained him to be my husband; how can I now accept any other body as my husband than him?

13. The Devî Bhuvaneśvarî has pictured his frame firmly in my heart; I will never be able to leave my dearest beautiful husband and to contract marriage with any other person.”

14. Vyâsa said :– Thus the mother, the daughter of the King of Videha, found many signs and at last desisted. She then reported to the King all the words of Śaśikalâ.

15-16. When Śaśikalâ, on the day before the marriage day, became very anxious and, sent in a great hurry, one trustworthy Brâhmin, versed in the Vedas to the hermitage of Bhâradvâja with this message “O Brâhman, go in such a way to Sudarśana, as my father be not able to know about it and tell Sudarśana all my words.

17-18. My father has called in for my marriage a Svayambara ceremony; many powerful kings will attend with their armies; O Deva! The Goddess Bhagavatî has ordered me in dream and accordingly I, with full gladness of my heart, have become yours already in my heart.

19. Rather I will take poison or I will jump in a blazing fire, than I can obey my father’s and mother’s words and marry another.

20. By my mind, word, and deed, I have selected you my husband; and pleasure and happiness is sure to attend on us by the blessings of the Bhagavatî.

21. Please depend unto Her, at Whose command this whole universe, moving and unmoving is resting, unto that Great Destiny and come to this place without fail.

22. What the Goddess, whose commands Śankara all the other Devas obey, has ordered, can never turn out false.

23. O Brâhmin! You the foremost amongst the virtuous; do therefore call on that King’s son in privacy and speak out all there to him. What shall I say more to you. Do all that my object may be fulfilled.”

24. Thus saying, she gave the Brâhmin his Dakṣinâ and sent him to Sudarśana. He went there and reported all the matter duly to him and quickly returned back.

25. On coming to know all this, Sudarśana determined to start; and the Mahârṣi Bhâradvâja, with gladness, sent him.

26. Vyâsa said :– Seeing her son ready to start, the mother Manoramâ became

very sorry and, trembling and shedding tears, thus spoke to her son.

27-28. “Sudarśana! Where are you going now? How do you dare to go there in the Svayamvara alone, where are present kings and all your terrible enemies. O Son! You are as yet a boy. The King Yudhâjit will certainly go there with the object of killing you; there will then be no other body to help you. So you should never go to that place.

29. You are my only son; I am very poor and helpless; I have no other to lean upon than you; therefore you ought not to throw me in despair at this moment.

30. See Sudarśana! The King Yudhâjit who had slain my father, that uncontrollable king will come there; if you go there alone, he will certainly kill you.”

31. Sudarśana replied “Mother! What is inevitable will certainly come to pass; there is no need to discuss further on the subject. I will go at the command of the World Mother to that assembly hall

Svayamvara.

32. O Auspicious one! Do not give vent to sorrow; I do fear none by the grace of the Bhagavatî.”

33. Vyâsa said :— Thus saying, Sudarśana mounted on his chariot and was ready to start. Seeing this Manoramâ began to bless him and so cheer him.

34-37. O Son! Let Ambikâ Devî protect your front; Padmalochanâ protect your back; Pârvatî, your two sides; Śivâ Devî, all around you; Vârâhî, in dreadful paths; Durgâ, in royal forts, Kâlikâ, in terrible fights; Parameśvarî, in the platform hall; Mâtamgî, in the Svayamvara hall; Bhavanî, the Avertress of world, amidst the kings; Girijâ, in mountain passes; Chamundâ, in the sacrificial ground, and let the eternal Kâmagâ, protect you in the forests.

38. O Descendant of Raghu family! Let the Vaisnavî force protect you in quarrels; let Bhairavî protect you in battles and amongst your enemies.

39. O Son! Let the Mahâ Mâyâ Jagaddhâtrî Bhuvaneśvarî protect you everywhere and at all times.

40. Vyâsa said :— Then Manoramâ, speaking thus to him, trembled with fear and again said :— “O Sudarśana, I will also accompany you; there will not be otherwise.

41. I will never be able to remain anywhere without you and even for the twinkling of an eye. O Son, carry me thither where you are desiring to go.”

42. Thus saying, his mother with her attendants was ready to start. The Brâhmanas pronounced their blessings. All then went out.

43. Sudarśan, the descendant of the Raghu family, mounted then alone on his

chariot and reached Benares. There the King Subâhu, hearing that he had come, welcomed him and worshipped him with various presents.

44. He gave him, the house for his residence, and made arrangements for his food and drink and other necessary requirements and gave order to his servants to wait on the prince.

45. Then, from various quarters, the kings assembled together; and Yudhâjit, too, came there accompanied by his daughter's son, Śatrujit.

46-48. The King of Karsa, the King of Madra, the King of Sindhu, the King of Mâhismatî, the valiant warriors, the King of Pâncchâla, the kings of the mountainous tract, the King of Karnat, the powerful King of Kâmarpa, the King of Chola, and the very powerful King of Vidarbhas with 180 Aksauhini soldiers all arrived and assembled there. Benares was then crowded all over with soldiers and soldiers.

49. Many other kings came there on their beautiful elephants to witness the Svayamvara ceremony.

50. Then the princes began to talk amongst them "The King's son Sudarśana, too, had come there and is staying unconfused and calm.

51. Is it that the high minded Sudarśana, born of the Kâkutstha family, had come there on a chariot, helpless, to marry?

52. Can it be that the princess will overlook these Kings with soldiers and weapons, and select the long armed Sudarśana?"

53. Then the King Yudhâjit addressed all the other kings "I will slay Sudarśana for the sake of the daughter; there is no doubt in this."

54-55. Hearing Yudhâjit's words, the king of Keral, the foremost of those who know morals, began to say :- "O king! In this Ichchhâ svayamvara, it is not proper to fight. Here there will be no marriage for the prowess; there is no arrangement fixed to steal away the bride elect by force; here the bride will select of her own free choice; what cause can then there crop up here for quarrels?

56. Before, you had driven him out of his kingdom; and though you are the superior king, you have taken his kingdom by force and installed your daughter's son on the throne.

57. O King! This Sudarśan is born of the Kâkutstha family and the son of the King of Kosala. Why would you kill this innocent boy?

58. O Long lived! Better be sure that there is some God of this Universe; He is governing all; and if you commit anything wrongful know that you will get the fruit of that due to you; there is no doubt it

this.

59. O King! There is victory everywhere of the Truth and Dharma, always you find Adharma and Falsehood defeated. Therefore dost thou forsake your evil and mean intentions and pacify your vile mind.

60. Your daughter's son is also present here; he is beautiful and prosperous and is reigning a kingdom. Why will not that bride elect him as bridegroom?

61-62. Consider again that there are many other powerful princes and kings in this Svayamvara; the princess may select them also. Therefore let all the kings assembled here say that if the selection of the bridegroom be performed in that way, what cause of a quarrel can there crop up? Knowing all these, you ought not to quarrel here."

Thus ends the Nineteenth Chapter on the going to the Svayamvara assembly of Sudarśana and the other kings in the Mahâ Purânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses, by Mahârsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 20. ON THE SVAYAMVARA HALL AND THE KING'S CONVERSATION THERE

1. Vyâsa said :— O Noble minded one! The king Yudhâjit replied to the address of the king of Keral, thus :—

2-3. O King! You are truthful and have restrained your passions. What you have told just now in this assembly of kings is all correct and approved by morality. O best of the kings! You are born of a high family; you better say how can this take place that when so many fit persons are present here to become the bridegroom, can an unworthy person take away the offer?

4. As a jackal never becomes fit to enjoy what are the dues of a lion, so this Sudarśana is also unfit to acquire this bride elect.

5. The Brâhmanas have the Vedas as their strength; the Ksattriya kings take bows and arrows to be their source of strength; this is ordained everywhere. Therefore O King! What wrong have I done in my statement. Kindly explain.

6-7. The power of the kings is the befitting money given to the parents of a bride; according to this, the strongest man is to acquire the bride, a jewel. The Ksatriyas that are weak can never acquire that. Make this the rule in this marriage. This earth is fit to be enjoyed by the heroes only and not by the cowards and intriguing persons. Otherwise quarrels are sure to ensue amongst the kings.

8. The dispute thus arose in that Svayamvara hall; and the king Subâhu was called in.

9. The kings that could see the reality of things then addressed the king Subâhu. "O king! You are requested to establish a golden rule in this marriage ceremony.

10. What is your object in calling this Svayamvara. Better give it out after a mature consideration. Please be explicit whom have you intended to give over your daughter in this marriage?"

11-12. Subâhu said :- "My daughter has mentally selected Sudarśana; I prevented her repeatedly from doing this; but she did not accept my word. What shall I do now? The mind of my daughter now is not at her will. Sudarśana, too, though uninvited, has come here singly and is residing calmly, without any signs of disturbance in his mind."

13-14. Vyâsa said :- Then the chief kings all invited Sudarśana there; Sudarśana, too, came there quietly, and the princes, seeing his quiet nature, asked him, "O one, engaged in practising vows! Who has invited you here? Why have you come here singly, in this assembly of kings?"

15. You have no force, no ministers, no help, no wealth, and no army. O intelligent! Then explain why have you come here alone?

16. In this assembly of kings you see that the powerful monarchs are ready to fight with each other for the sake of this princess. What do you intend to do under those circumstances?

17. Your brother, too, is come here to have the princess; he has got his army and is also marked with his strength and valor. The powerful Yudhâjit has come here also to help him.

18. O observer of good vows! Seeing you without any army, we have narrated to you all the facts. Now think and do accordingly. If you please, remain here or go anywhere else."

19-20. Sudarśana replied :- "True, I have no army, no help, no wealth, no forts, no friends or no kings to protect me. Hearing that Svayamvara will be held here, I have come here to witness it. But there is one particularity here; it is this :- The Devî Bhagavatî has ordered me in my dream to come here. Under Her command

I have come here; there is no doubt in this.

21. I have got no other object in view; I have obeyed what the Bhagavatî Bhuvaneśvarî has ordered me to do. Today will happen, no doubt, what She has ordained.

22-23. O kings! I am seeing everywhere the Supreme Goddess Bhagavatî Bhavânî. Therefore there is no enemy of mine in this world; but he who will turn out an enemy of mine, will be duly punished by the Mahâ Vidyâ Mahâ Mâyâ. I do not know what is enmity?

24. O kings! What is inevitable will surely come to pass. There will be nothing otherwise. I am always depending on Fate, Destiny. What is the use, then, in thinking what will be the result?

25. Everywhere in the Devas, in the spirits, in men, in all the beings, the Devî's power is existent; it cannot be otherwise.

26. O kings! Whenever She wishes, She makes kings, masters of wealth or devoid of wealth. What is, then, the use of bothering my head in this?

27. When even the Gods Brahmâ, Visnu, and Maheśa without Her presence, become powerless enough to move their hands or feet, then why shall I be anxious for the result?

28. O kings! Whether I am unable or able or an ordinary person, you have nothing to consider; I have come here in this assembly hall under the command of the Supreme Bhagavatî.

29-30. What She has willed, She will do that. I am not to care for that. O high minded ones! You need not be afraid at all in this. I have told you all truth. Victory or defeat, I feel no shame in either of them. For I am always under the control of Bhagavatî; therefore if there be any shame here, it is all Hers."

31-33. Vyâsa said :— Hearing thus his words, and seeing that his mind is firmly devoted to Bhagavatî, the kings saw each other and said thus :— "O Sudarśana! What you have said is quite true; it is never otherwise; still Yudhâjit, the king of Ujjain is intent on killing you. O intelligent! O sinless! we have all come to know that there is no trace of evil in you. We were all overcome with pity for you; hence we have informed you; now think and do the needful?"

34. Sudarśana said, "You are all kind and large hearted; what you all have said is quite true. What shall I tell you, being a minor as yet!

35. O kings! No one can cause the death of another. All this world, moving and unmoving, is under the control of Fate.

36-38. No soul is independent; every one is under the effects of one's own Karma.

The Pundits that have realised the Truth, say that Karma is of three kinds, Accumulated, Present, and Prârabdha? This whole world is due to Kâla (Time), Karma (action) and Svabhâva (Nature); unless the proper time comes, even the Devas cannot kill men. The men are killed on account of some cause, immediate; but the Great Time is the real Destroyer.

39. My father, though a destroyer of many others, was himself killed by a lion and my mother's father was slain by Yudhâjit in the battle.

40. The Jîvas, though caring hard to preserve their lives, are killed by Fate in spite of all their cares; and they live thousand years though there is none to protect them.

41. O religious kings! I do not fear a bit from Yudhâjit. I consider Fate as the Supreme and I therefore remain always undisturbed, calm and quiet.

42. Daily and constantly I remember Bhagavatî, Who is the Mother of all this Universe. She will look after my welfare.

43. Behold! One will have certainly to bear the burden of one's past Karma, whether it be good or it be bad; one's own actions must bear their fruits. Then why shall he be sorry, who has come to know this?

44. The less intelligent deluded persons, on getting pain from their own actions, turn out enemies on very trifling matters.

45. I do not grieve nor do I fear on account of such enemies. I am staying here in this assembly of kings, cool-minded.

46. Under the order of Chandikâ, I have come here to see this Svayamvara; whatever is inevitable will surely come to pass.

47. The words of the Bhagavatî are the best proof; I do not know any other. My mind is entirely given up to Her. There will be nothing otherwise than what She has ordained; whether it is good or whether it is bad.

48. O kings! Let Yudhâjit remain in peace. I have no enmity with him. He, who will deal inimically with me, will certainly reap his reward. There is not the least doubt in this."

49. Vyâsa said :— O king! When Sudarśana addressed them thus, all the kings became very glad and they all remained there for the Svayamvara. Sudarśana, too, went to his camp and remained also calm and quiet.

50. Next day the king Subâhu invited all the kings present in his city to their respective seats in the Svayamvara hall.

51. The princes and kings, decorated with best ornaments, came and took their seats on their respective platforms, covered with valuable carpets of best work-

manship.

52. The kings then looked like the celestial Devas, wearing divine ornaments and apparels, blazing with the lustrous light of gems, and remained to see the Svayamvara affair.

53. Every one there had this foremost thought in his mind when will the princess, the bride elect, would come there; and who will be the man so fortunate as to be blessed with garlands offered by her (as a token of selection of the bridegroom)!

54. If, accidentally, she offers the garland to Sudarśana in this Svayamvara assembly, then will ensue, no doubt, desperate struggles amongst the kings.

55. While they were thus meditating, sounds of drums were loudly sounded.

56-58. Then Subâhu, the king of Benares, went to her daughter and found that Śaśikalâ had just taken her bath and put on her silken clothes, and adorned herself with various ornaments and sweet garlands. Thus, dressed in complete marriage dress, she began to shine like another Goddess Laksmî, the Goddess of wealth. The king, on seeing his daughter dressed in silken cloth, afflicted with anxious thoughts, just smiled and said, “Child! Rise and take the beautiful garlands by your hands and go to the the Svayamvara hall and just look at the assembly of kings.

59. O lean bodied one! Whoever, well-qualified, beautiful, and of noble birth, amongst the kings is reigning in your mind, better select him.

60. O graceful! The kings from various quarters are adorning their respective seats; better go and see and select whomever you like.”

61. Vyâsa said :— When Subâhu had spoken thus, Śaśikalâ, who generally talked little, replied with sweet sonorous words, impregnated with religious truth.

62. “Father! I won’t go before the kings who are inspired by lust; women like me never go there; it is those that are dissolute that attend those places.

63. Father! I have heard from the religious texts that women should cast their glances on their husbands only and not on any other.

64. The woman that goes to many persons is mentally claimed by all; each of them contemplates strongly “Let this woman be mine.” Thus her chastity is destroyed.

65-66. Desirous of selecting her husband, when the woman holding in her hands, the garland for her would-be-husband, goes to the Svayamvara hall, then she turns out like an ordinary unchaste woman. As a prostitute going to a public shop looks on many persons and judges of their merits and demerits according to her own power of judgment, the maid that goes in the Svayamvara hall does exactly the same.

67. How can I behave myself in the hall of the assembly of kings like a prostitute, who does not attach her feelings firmly on a single individual but glances constantly at many lustful persons.

68. Though this system of Svayamvara is approved by the elderly persons, I am not going to follow that now. I will take the vow of a chaste woman and act up to that doctrine as perfectly.

69. I will never be able to act like an ordinary woman going in the Svayamvara hall, mentally determining many and finally selecting one.

70. Father! From the very beginning I have given myself up to Sudarśana in mind, word and deed. I have not the least inclination to leave him and select another in his stead.

71. O King! If you want to have my welfare, then give your daughter on an auspicious day and in an auspicious lagna to Sudarśana, according to the prescribed rites.”

Thus ends the 20th Chapter on the Svayamvara hall and the king's conversation there in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of 18,000 verses by Mahārṣi Veda Vyāsa.

CHAPTER 21. ON THE KING OF BENARES FULFILLING THE ADVICE OF HIS DAUGHTER

1. Vyāsa said :— On hearing the sound words of his daughter Śaśīkalā, pregnant with reason, Subāhu the king of Benares, became very anxious and began to think what he would now, so short a space of time in this momentous occasion, thus :—

2-3. “The powerful kings, all, have come here on intention that they would fight and therefore they are all attended with their armies and followers respectively; and they are now sitting on their respective daises in the Svayamvara hall. If I go now and tell them that my daughter

Śaśīkalā is not willing to come of her own accord in the hall, the evil minded kings will certainly kill me out of their wrath.

4. I have not so much strength, whether in my army or in forts, as to be able to

decline these kings and drive them away from my kingdom.

5. Sudarśana, too is, alone, helpless, wealthless, and a mere boy. What shall I do now? Alas! I am now plunged in deep sorrow.”

6. Thinking thus, with head bowed down by humility, the king went to the kings, and said thus :—

7. “O Kings! The girl, though requested repeatedly by me and her mother, is not willing to come to this hall. What can I do now?

8-9. I am your servant and, bowing my head at the feet of you all, pray to you, to accept my worship and return to your own cities respectively. I am ready to give a sufficient quantity of gems and jewels, clothes, elephants, chariots. Kindly accept these and go back to your own homes.

10. My daughter is as yet a girl; if I chastise her, she may commit suicide; and I will be exceedingly sorry; therefore I am very much distressed with this thought.

11. You all are fortunate, energetic, and of a merciful disposition; what will it serve you to accept the daughter of mine, who is disobedient and unfortunate?

12. I am your obedient servant; shew your mercy on me and it is your duty to consider my daughter as your own daughter.”

13. Vyâsa said :— Hearing Subâhu’s words, the kings did not utter a single word; but Yudhâjit, with his eyes reddened out of wrath, began to address the king of Benares in an angry tone :—

14. “O King! You are a veteran fool; what do you say now after committing a most blameable act? Had you any doubt as to your proceedings, why have you, out of sheer delusion, called this meeting hall of Svayamvara, without thinking the matter before-hand.

15. You have invited the kings and princes in this marriage ceremony Svayamvara; and they all have assembled here; how can they now go back to their homes?

16. Are you going now to insult these? and will you give your daughter in marriage to Sudarśana? Nothing can be more ignoble than this?

17. The welfare-seeking person ought to judge before-hand and then to act. But you have started your work without any previous judgment and decision. You will have to reap its fruit; there is no doubt this.

18. Why are you now thinking of giving your daughter to this helpless, wealthless Sudarśana in the presence of kings that are powerful and that command a great militia.

19. O thou most sinful! Today I will certainly kill you; next I will kill Sudarśana

and then give your daughter to my daughter's son; know that this is my firm resolve.

20. Who is there, when I am standing, in this assembly that can aspire to carry away the bridegroom elect by force or theft? Nothing to speak of Sudarśana who is powerless, wealthless and a mere boy!

21. I spared his life before in the hermitage of Bhâradvâja at the Muni's request; but today I will not spare the boy under any circumstances whatsoever.

22. Therefore, please go and consult with your wife and daughter and give your dear beautiful daughter to my daughter's son.

23. Be engaged in a marriage tie with me by giving your exquisitely beautiful daughter to my daughter's son. You can very well judge that it is always proper and advisable that a great man shall come under the protection of another great man.

24. What happiness can you expect from this Sudarśana, who is helpless and banished from his kingdom, that you are going to give him your dear and auspicious daughter!

25. Family, wealth, army, appearance, kingdoms, forts and true friends and other helping persons; these a man should consider when he is going to give away his daughter in marriage to anybody; else there is no surety of happiness. Think over the royal custom and the never failing Dharma and do what is proper. Never it is advisable to do any act, abandoning the path of Dharma and morals.

26. You are my intimate friend; therefore I am telling you these good words. O king! Better bring your daughter, surrounded by her attendant maids, in this hall of Svayamvara.

27. Let this daughter select any man other than Sudarśana; I have got no cause of quarrel; and the marriage will then be celebrated according to your will.

28-29. O best of kings! The other kings are all of high descent; and they have armies and are all in positions befitting your connection! If the daughter chooses any one amongst them, then no quarrels would arise. But if the daughter chooses Sudarśana, then certainly I will carry her by force. Therefore, O king! act in such a way that no quarrels occur in future."

30-31. Vyâsa said :- Thus addressed by Yudhâjit, the king of Benares was very sorrowful, and, after a heavy sigh, went to his palace and told with a grieved heart to his wife, thus :- "O fair eyed one! Now I am completely under your control; you better explain to Śaśikalâ that a dreadful quarrel is now to occur; what am I to do now?"

32-33. Vyâsa said :— Hearing her husband's words, the queen went to her daughter and spoke thus :— “O child! Quarrels have now ensued amongst the kings for your sake; your father has become very sorrowful; therefore, O fair one! Choose any other man your husband than Sudarśana.

34-35. O Child! If you do not judge and rashly choose Sudarśana, then the powerful king Yudhâjit, possessing a large army, will no doubt kill you, me and Sudarśana. It might be, if quarrels ensue, you might be married to another husband; therefore better think now and act.

36. O dear eyed! It is now your incumbent duty to choose another king for your husband, if you want your and my welfare and happiness. Leave Sudarśana.”

37. The mother thus advised her daughter; the king, too, afterwards explained and tried to convince her. The girl spoke fearlessly.

38. “O king! What you have said is all true; but you know my firm resolve already. I won't ever select any other king than Sudarśana.

39-40. O king! If you are afraid and be in agony, then do this thing: better give me in marriage to Sudarśana and then drive us away from your city. He will put me in his chariot and go away out of your city. After that what is inevitable will surely come to pass. There cannot be anything otherwise.

41. O king! You need not fear anything about what is kept in the womb of future by Destiny. What is inevitable will happen; there is no doubt in this.”

42. The king said :— “O child! The intelligent persons never show too much rashness and insolence. The learned people, versed in the Vedas, say it is never advisable to quarrel with many persons.

43. How can I give my daughter in marriage to one and then banish them both? The kings have turned out enemies. There is no heinous crime, that they cannot commit now.

44. O child! If it be your opinion, I can pledge something as a pawn for your marriage, as the king Janaka pledged in days of yore for her daughter Sitâ.

45-47. I will also put forward a pawn very difficult to be carried out, as Janaka originally made an offer of the hands of Sitâ to whomsoever, who would break the Śiva's strong bow. Thus the quarrels amongst the kings might

be diminished; for he who will be able to fulfill the promise, will be able to accept you. Then, be he Sudarśana or any other king, whoever will be strong to fulfill the promise will take you as his wife.

48. Thus the quarrels will cease and I will also be able to perform your marriage ceremony in peace and happiness.”

49. The daughter said :– “Father! On hearing from you, I am merged in an ocean of doubt, for it seems to me what you are saying is the act of a fool; already, I have chosen in my mind Sudarśana for my husband; now it cannot be otherwise.

50. O king! The mind is the source of virtue and vice. When I have mentally selected, how can I now forego him and choose another?

51-52. O king! If you keep any pledge, then I will be subject to any and everybody; if one, two, or more fulfill the same pledge, I will be then subject to any or all of them. Father! in that case quarrels may arise. What shall I do then? I cannot give my vote on this doubtful point.

53. O king! You need not fear anything. Better give me in marriage to Sudarśana according to the prescribed rules; then, in that case, the Goddess Chandikâ will certainly protect us.

54. O king! Taking Whose Name destroys a whole host of sins, take Her Name and think the Almighty and perform carefully our marriage ceremony.

55. Better go to the king’s assembly today, and, with folded hands, tell them come tomorrow to the hall of Svayamvara.

56-57. Thus bidding goodbye to the kings, perform in the right spirit, according to the prescribed rites, our marriage ceremony. Next, after giving fit dowries and other articles after the marriage, better tell the prince Sudarśana to depart. The son of Dhruvasandhi will take me away with him.

58. If, at this, the kings get angry and be ready to quarrel with you, then in that case, the Goddess Bhagavatî will no doubt help us.

59. Sudarśana then will fight against those kings; and if he loses his life perchance in the battle, then I will also follow him and die.

60. O king! Let all good come unto you! Better give me in marriage to Sudarśana and remain here with your army. I will go alone with him, the object of my love.”

61. Vyâsa said :– Hearing these words from her daughter, the king Subâhu trusted her, and firmly resolved to act according to that, and to celebrate the marriage of Śaśikalâ.

Thus ends the 21st chapter on the king of Benares fulfilling the advice of his daughter in Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 22. ON SUDARŚANA'S MARRIAGE

1. Vyâsa said :— O King! Then, on hearing his daughter's words, that high souled king of Benares, Subâhu, came to the spot where the kings were staying and said :— "O kings! Now you can go to your own camps; tomorrow I will perform my daughter's marriage ceremony.
2. Let you all be pleased with me and graciously accept the food and drink, given by me. Tomorrow let you all come here and perform my daughter's marriage ceremony.
3. O Kings! My daughter is not coming today to this hall of Svayamvara; what can I do now; I will console her and bring her here tomorrow. Therefore do you all go now to your own camps respectively.
4. Intelligent persons should not quarrel with the members of their own family. But they should always shew kindness towards their own sons and daughters who are under their protection. However, I will make my daughter understand and bring her tomorrow morning. You may all go now to your places as you desire.
5. Tomorrow morning we will settle about the pledge, whether by choice or by fulfilling a promise, that requires strength, and have the marriage celebrated; or better you all together would decide what mode of Svayamvara is to be adopted."
6. The kings heard Subâhu and trusted him. Then seeing that the city is well guarded on all sides, they went to their own camps and performed their mid-day duties.
- 7-8. The king Subâhu on this side began to perform all the duties regarding the marriage of his daughter, after duly consulting with all the chief members of the family. At the appointed time of marriage he brought his daughter in a well concealed and guarded chamber, had the bathing ceremony of the bridegroom elect performed by the priests, versed in the Vedas, and had him well dressed and did other requisite things. Then he brought the bridegroom in the house, made him seat on a Vedî (platform) and duly worshipped him.
9. Then the large-hearted king gave to the bridegroom seat, chamanîya (water for rinsing the mouth and such articles of food as require rinsing one's mouth after eating them), Arghya (articles for worshipping deservedly, pâdyam, e.g., water for washing the feet with an offer of green grass, rice, etc., made in worshipping a God or a Brâhman), the two silken cloths and sheet, cows, and two ear-rings and then

wanted to give Sudarśana his daughter.

10. The high minded Sudarśana accepted all the offerings given by the king. Seeing this, Manoramâ was relieved of her anxiety. Manoramâ began to think that beautiful and well adorned daughter as if the daughter of Kuvera (the God of wealth); and thanked herself and thought as if all her duties were over.

11. Then the royal ministers carried gladly and fearlessly the beautiful Sudarśana, worshipped with ornaments and clothings, in a good nice carriage to the centre of the amusement court.

12. On the other hand, the elderly female members, who knew all about the prescribed rules, performed the dressing of the princess in a befitting manner and placing her in a beautiful conveyance took her before the bridegroom elect, in the marriage hall, where there was the platform regularly built.

13-14. The Sacred Fire was then lit, the royal priest began to perform the Homa ceremony duly; when the amusement ceremony of the bridegroom and bride united in love was duly performed, the priest called them there. After this the bridegroom and bride performed duly the Lâjâ Homa ceremony and circumambulated the Sacred Fire. Thus all the ceremonies, befitting the gotra and family, were all fully performed according to the prescribed rules.

15-17. Then the king Subâhu, excited by feelings of love, in the marriage time, gave to the prince Sudarśana the following presents: well adorned two hundred chariots, with horses and the arrow cases filled with arrows, one hundred and twenty five elephants, dressed with golden ornaments, looking like so many mountains, one hundred beautiful female elephants and one hundred maid servants, all dressed in golden ornaments.

18-20. The king gave the bridegroom also one thousand servants well adorned, bearing the complete set of all sorts of weapons, many gems and jewels, clothings, nice variegated woolen clothes, beautiful capacious rooms to live in, and two thousand excellent horses born in the Sindhu country, three hundred good camels able to carry sufficient loads, and two hundred carriages, filled with grains, etc.

21. Then the king bowed to the king's daughter Manoramâ and with clasped hands, said :- "O royal daughter! I am now become your servant; now kindly say what is your desire?"

22. Hearing these beautiful words of the king, Manoramâ said :- "O king! all good to you and let your family increase in sons and grandsons. You have increased my honour by giving in marriage your daughter (jewel) to my son. I have no other desire than to see your welfare constant and the increase in your family, posterity and prosperity.

23. O king! You are the chief amongst the kings. You have made my son great and strong like the Sumeru mountain by giving him your daughter in marriage. You are high and my related. I am not the daughter of a panegyrist or a bard; how can I then praise you for this noble act of yours.

24-25. O king! Your character is wonderful and pure. What more shall I say to you than this that you all, in the face of many other kings, have given your daughter to my son in marriage, who is banished from his kingdom, is deprived of his father and is living in the forest, penniless, armyless, subsisting himself on roots and fruits only.

26. In these cases the kings as a rule make relations with those only, who are their equals in rank and position, of noble families of equal grade, having forces and wealth equal to each other. No other king would have offered his beautiful well-qualified daughter in marriage to my prince who is without any wealth.

27. O king! On your this act, all the other kings, holding great influence and possessing armies, have turned out your enemies. I, being a woman am unable to describe the amount of patience in you.”

28. The king Subâhu of Benares, hearing the sweet words of Manoramâ was highly pleased and, with folded hands, began to say, “O Devî, you better take my this celebrated kingdom; I will become the commander of your forces and will try my best to guard this city.

29. Or you can take half of my kingdom and remain here with your son. It is not my desire that you leave this Benares and go and live in the forest.

30-31. The kings have become very offended; I will first try to appease them; if they be not satisfied, I will adopt the means of “gift” or sowing dissensions amongst them; and even, if, in that, I fail, I will ultimately take to war. O Devî! Victory or defeat is under the hands of the Destiny; still victory comes to those who are in the right path and defeat to those who are in the wrong path. How then can the victor arise to those sinful kings?”

32. Hearing the king’s words, pregnant with meaning, Manoramâ felt herself highly respected; and, with a cheerful heart, said the following good words.

33. “O king! let all good come on you! you better discard all fear and reign with your sons here; my son Sudarśana, too, will become the king of Ayodhya by the Grace of Śrî Bhagavatî Bhuvaneśvarî, the Supreme Cause of the innumerable worlds, and will roam in this world; there is no doubt in this.

34. May Bhagavatî Bhavanî bring all good unto you; now kindly permit us to depart to our homes, O king! I always contemplate the Highest Goddess Ambikâ; and I have no time to indulge in other thoughts.”

35. Thus, on various subjects, Manoramâ and the king Subâhu began to talk with each other, causing satisfaction to both like nectar, when the morning broke out.

36. The kings, knowing early in the morning, that the princess had been given away in marriage, became very much enraged and went out of the city and began to discuss with one another.

“We will kill today the king Subâhu, the disgrace amongst the kings as well that boy Sudarśana, totally unfit to marry the princess, and take away the kingdom and the princess Śaśikalâ. How can we return to our homes, with this severe disgrace, stamped on our heads.

37. Hear, O kings! the sound of the drums, mridangas, other instruments; the sounds of the conchshells have even been overpowered. Hark! The various musical sounds and the chanting of the Vedas. It is then certain that the King Subâhu has finished the marriage ceremony of his daughter Śaśikalâ with Sudarśana.

38. Oh! This king has deceived us with his words and performed the marriage ceremony, according to ordinary religious rules.

39. Now O kings! decide unanimously what to do and come to a definite conclusion.”

When the kings were thus discussing, the king of Benares, of indomitable prowess, the king Subâhu, after finishing his daughter's marriage, came there with his famous friends to invite them.

40. Seeing the King of Benares present, all the other kings did not utter a single word, but they remained silent, beaming with anger.

41. Subâhu then approached to the kings, bowed down, and, with folded hands, said :— “Be kind enough to come to my house for dinner.

42. O kings! My daughter Śaśikalâ after all has selected Sudarśana; I could not help in this. You are all kind and noble; therefore you all be peaceful and let the matter drop.”

43. The kings hearing him were filled with rage and said, “We have all taken food; our desires have been fulfilled; you better now go back to your own home.

44-45. Your behaviour with us is all right and proper; now do your other duties and let the kings go back to their homes.” Hearing these words of the kings, the king of Benares was very much terrified and returned home, thinking that the kings were all filled with rage and might do serious harm to him. Thus he began to pass away his time in dire anxiety.

46. Then the king Subâhu disappeared; the kings united made this resolve that they would block the passage of Sudarśana, kill him, and take the girl away.

47. Some of these kings rather said :— “What is the use in killing the king’s son. We will all go willingly to see the fun.”

48. Thus the kings went and remained blocking the path of Sudarśana; and the king Subâhu, on returning home, began to make arrangements for the departure of the bridegroom and the bride.

Thus ends the 22nd Chapter on Sudarśana’s marriage in Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 23. ON THE KILLING OF THE ENEMY OF SUDARŚANA IN THE GREAT WAR

1. Vyâsa said :— After paying due respects to his new son-in-law, the king Subâhu cheerfully entertained him for six days with variety of good dishes.
2. Thus finishing off the marriage ceremony, the king after consulting with his ministers, presented the bridegroom and the bride various jewels and ornaments and other things given naturally on marriage occasions.
3. Then the king of Benares, of brilliant splendour, heard from his messengers that the kings had obstructed the way back of Sudarśana and became very absent minded.
4. Then Sudarśana, of firm resolve, told his father-in-law “O king! better now give us order that we may depart. We will go without any fear.
5. O king! First we will halt at the holy hermitage of Bhâradvâja Muni; and next we will, after due considerations, settle where we would go.
6. O pure one! You need not fear a bit from these kings; the Mother of the Universe, the Bhagavatî Bhavânî will surely protect us.”
7. Vyâsa said :— O king Janamejaya! Hearing thus his son-in-law’s orders, the king Subâhu gave him a vast amount of wealth and bade good-bye to him. Sudarśana, too, quickly departed.
8. The king Subâhu followed him with a long train of soldiers. Thus Sudarśana went on, in his journey, fearless.

9. The great hero Sudarśana, the descendant of Raghu, with his new consort in the chariot and followed by many other chariots, saw the soldiers of the several kings.

10. The king Subâhu, seeing them, became anxious. But Sudarśana, gladly took refuge, with his whole heart, of the all-auspicious Goddess Śankarî.

11. Sudarśana began to recite silently the excellent one word seed mantra of the King of Desires (Kâmarâja) and, out of its power, he and his wife remained in the chariot without any fear and sorrow.

12. Then all the kings came there with their soldiers to fight with Sudarśana and to carry away by force the bride. Thus a loud uproar arose.

13. The king of Benares seeing them wanted to kill them. But Sudarśana, the descent of Raghu, desirous of victory, repeatedly asked him not do so.

14. Loud arose, then, the uproar, caused by the sounds of conchshells, bherri, and war drums of the kings on one side and Subâhu on the other, each of the two parties determining to extirpate the other.

15. Śatrujit prepared himself for the war to destroy his enemy. Yudhâjit came there for his help, well equipped with army, etc.

16-17. Some warrior kings remained there as witnesses with their soldiers. Then Yudhâjit went in front of Sudarśana. His younger brother Śatrujit, too, attended Yudhâjit to kill his brother in the battle field. Then the warriors, overpowered with anger, shot each other with arrows.

18. A great encounter then ensued in the battle field with sharp arrows. The king of Benares hurriedly advanced there, with a great body of army, to relieve his son-in-law.

19. Thus when the dreadful war began to grow more and more horrible, the Goddess Bhagavatî suddenly appeared there, mounted on Her lion.

20-21. The beauty of Her body was exceedingly lovely; She was adorned with various excellent ornaments and She held various weapons. She wore divine clothings and the beautiful Mandâra garland suspended from Her neck up to Her knees. The kings were greatly astonished to see Her. They began to argue "Who in this Lady, mounted on a lion? Whence has She so suddenly come?"

22-23. Beholding Her, Sudarśana told the king of Benares "O king! Behold! The Divine Mahâ Devî has come here to favour us. She is very merciful. Now I am completely fearless."

24. Sudarśana and Subâhu were highly delighted to see the Beautiful Goddess and bowed down to Her feet with great devotion.

25. Then the lion, the vehicle of the Goddess, roared, making tremendous noise. Hearing the roaring of the lion, all the elephants trembled. At that time, the winds began to blow violently and the four quarters assumed an awful appearance.

26-27. Then Sudarśana told his general to carry soon his forces where the kings were staying, blocking his way. “What could the vicious kings do now, though they had become very angry? The Goddess Bhagavatî had come there to save us.

28. Now you all go safely and calmly through the midst of the kings. See! At my remembering Her, She has come here mercifully to save us.”

29-30. The general, on hearing these words, became ready to march by that route. Then Yudhâjit, very much infuriated with anger, said to all the kings :— “Why are you all so much fear stricken? Kill this Sudarśana, stealing away this girl.

31. This lad, weak and without any support, will carry away by force and fearlessly the girl, spiting all the kings; and won’t you be able to do anything? This is very strange!

32. Are you afraid to see this one lady on a lion? O high minded kings! Never trifle away this boy; kill him with all attention.

33. Killing him, we will then take away this girl. The jackal can never snatch away the lady under the grasp of a lion.”

34. Thus saying, the king Yudhâjit, filled with anger, came to the battle field with Śatrujit and all his forces.

35-36. That wicked king, drew his bow string well nigh to his ear and shot arrows after arrows, sharpened under stone and by blacksmith at Sudarśana, with the object of killing him. Sudarśana cut off all those arrows quickly with his own quick going arrows.

37. Thus when the fight grew intense, the Goddess Chandikâ became very much enraged and shot arrows at Yudhâjit.

38. Assuming diverse forms, the Goddess Durgâ, holding various weapons the auspicious Mother of the Universe, began to fight terribly in the battle field.

39. Śatrujit and the king Yudhâjit were killed in that terrible battle. Both of them fell dead from their chariots; and a shout of victory arose from the side of Sudarśan.

40. The uncle and cousin of the king Subâhu were on the side of Yudhâjit and were killed. The kings were very much astonished to see them thus lying dead.

41. The king Subâhu, seeing them dead in the battlefield became very glad and

began to praise and sing hymns in honour of Durgâ Devî the Destroyer of all difficulties.

42-43. I bow to the auspicious Goddess Jagaddhâtî, again and again; I bow to the Bhagavatî Durgâ the bestower of all desires; I always bow down to Her Who is auspicious, peace giving, and the Higher Vidyâ. O Mother! O Giver of salvation! O Auspicious One! You are pervading the whole Universe, O World Mother! and Upholder of the Universe! I bow down to Thee.

44. O World-mother! O Devî! you are devoid of Prâkritic qualities; you are full of qualities; beyond mind and speech; one cannot think out your prowess, etc., by one's mind. Mother! you are the Highest Force; ever willing to destroy the miseries of your devoted persons. Your influence is manifest everywhere; what eulogy can I sing of Thee.

45. O Devî! You are the Goddess of Vâk (speech) of all beings; you are the all pervading intelligence, mind, effort, and movements; you are the controller of the minds of all; therefore how can I praise You? O Goddess; You are the Self of all; how can I sing eulogies to You, who are beyond speech and mind, and to the Universal Self.

46. Brahmâ, Hari and Hara and other higher Devas have not been able to find the limits of your qualities, though they are incessantly chanting your praises; O Goddess! I am the small of the smallest, I am without qualification, and bound by Prâkritic qualities; I am ignorant as regards Jîva and Brahmâ. O Mother! I will never be able to describe Your characteristics that are unfathomable.

47. O Mother! why not good companionships effect the fulfilment of one's desires. The purification of my heart has been effected incidentally. O Mother! my son-in-law is wholly devoted to you; accidentally there has arisen the connection between him and me and it is on account of his connection that I have been able to see You.

48. O Mother! Today I have got without any restraint and control of passions, and samâdhi, the rare vision of You, who is wanted to be seen even by Brahmâ, Hari and Hara, Indra and the other Devas and by the Munis, who have attained their realisation. Therefore who is there in this Trilokî, that is so fortunate as I am.

49. O Bhavânî! Where am I, void of intelligence and where is the rare vision of You, Who is the only medicine of this disease of the ocean of world? Still, O Mother! Who is worshipped by the Devas, I have got Your vision. Now I have come to know that You always show mercy to Your Bhaktas, who are in their Bhavas (mental images of your Self).

50. O Goddess! You have saved Sudarśan in this great war crisis and You have slain these two powerful enemies. How can I describe your

prowess in this matter? This I have understood that Your Holy Character ever shows mercy on Your devotees.

51. O Goddess! Again this is not a matter to be wondered at, if one considers; for You are protecting this whole universe, moving and unmoving; and accordingly You have now protected, out of Your mercy, your Bhakta Sudarśana, the son of Dhruvasandhi, by killing his enemy.

52. O Bhavânî! It is not merely for the protection of your Bhaktas, engaged in Your service, that You shew this favour but also to extol the meritorious deeds of your Bhaktas that You do such things; otherwise how is it that this Bhakta saintlike Sudarśana, by marrying my daughter, has got victory in this battle field?

53. O Mother! You are fully capable to destroy the fear of birth and death. What wonder is there that you fulfill the desires of your Bhaktas? The Bhaktas extol You by characterising You as Saguna (full of qualities), Nirguna (devoid of any quality) and Apârâ, beyond all merits and demerits.

54. O Goddess! O Bhuvaneśvarî! I am fortunate that I have been able to see You, and thus all my duties have become crowned with success. O Mother! I have no practices in the shape of Your meditation, etc. nor do I know any seed mantras of Yours; today I have fully seen Your glory manifested.

55. Vyâsa said :— Thus extolled by the king Subâhu, the Goddess Bhagavatî, the Bestower of the Absolute Freedom, was pleased and said “O thou, practiser of good vows! Ask boon from Me.”

Thus ends the twenty third chapter on the killing of the enemy of Sudarśana in the great war, in Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 24. ON THE INSTALLATION OF DURGÂ DEVÎ IN THE CITY OF BENARES

1. Vyâsa said :— Hearing the Devî's words, the king Subâhu began to say with great devotion thus :—

2-3. O Devî! If there be made a comparison between the kingdom of the Devas and the world on the one hand and the vision of Thine on the other hand, then it must be acknowledged that the kingdom of the Devas and the earth cannot stand in comparison before Thee. O Devî! There cannot be anything, in this Trilokî, that is more exalted than Thy vision; therefore, O Mother! What other boon may I ask from Thee. I am very thankful and blessed; all my desires are fulfilled, when I have seen Thee.

4-5. O Auspicious Mother! I ask from You this boon, my desire that my devotion may remain constant, fixed, and unflinching towards You. O Mother! You would remain always in this city of mine being celebrated under the name of Śrî Durgâ Devî, Your Śakti. This is my desire.

6-9. O Devî! As you have cleared off all the obstacles of Sudarśana and saved him from this danger, so remain here in this city of Benares and protect it, so long as this city stands on the face of the earth and make it firm and well established and renowned. O Durgâ, I pray that you may grant me these boons. O Devî! Grant me also various other desires of mine and destroy my enemies and extirpate all the irreligious and wicked people in this city. O Goddess of mercy! What more can I ask from you?

10-11. Vyâsa said :— Thus praising and praying, the king Subâhu stood, with folded hands, before the Devî Durgâ, the remover of all calamities, when She addressed thus :— O king! I will remain no doubt, in this city of Benares, the place of salvation, as long as it stands on the face of the earth and protect all the people here.

12. Then came there Sudarśana, heartily gladdened; and he bowed to Her and began to praise Her with intense joy and devotion.

13. O Mother of this Universe! Everyone in this world shows mercy to those that are devoted to him; but, O Mother! I see, in Your case, You take it as if Your bounden duty, to save those, that are void of any devotion towards You; for You have saved my life, though I am devoid of any devotion towards you. Therefore

how can I describe the boundless ocean of mercy that reigns in You!

14. O Goddess! I have heard that You have created all this Universe, with its elements, and You are preserving this Your own creations and again You will destroy it in due time. Therefore O Mother! What wonder is there that you have saved me!

15. O Goddess! Now order me early what work of Yours shall I do now? Where shall I go? O Mother! Now I am unable to make out my duty; therefore kindly order me whether I will remain here or go anywhere else or remain anywhere, I like, at my leisure?

16. Vyâsa said :— On Sudarśana thus petitioning before the Devî, She said with much kindness :— “O good soul! Go to Ayodhyâ and govern the country befitting your family.

17. O king! Constantly remember Me and worship Me with great care. I will always look after the welfare of your kingdom.

18. Especially in the eighth, fourteenth, and in the ninth day of the lunar half month, worship Me according to the prescribed rites and rules and offer me victims (sacrifices).

19. O sinless one! Establish my image in this city and worship it three times, morning, mid-day and evening carefully and with devotion.

20. It is noteworthy that My Great Puja in autumn for the nine nights (Navarâtra) ought to be done with the greatest devotion.

21-22. O king! In the month of Chaitra, Mâgh, śvîn, and sâdha, My grand festival should be done on the four Navarâtris respectively; and especially on the fourteenth and on the eighth day of the black half, all persons ought to worship Me with their minds full of devotion towards Me.”

23. Vyâsa said :— After the Devî, the Goddess Durgâ, the Destroyer of all dangers, had finished Her sayings, Sudarśana bowed down to Her and praised Her much. The Devî, giving him the above mentioned advices, disappeared.

24. Seeing Her disappear, all the kings went to Sudarśana and bowed to him, as the Devas go to their lord, the Indra.

25. The king of Benares, Subâhu, too, gladly bowed down and stood before him. Then all the kings began to address Sudarśan, the king of Ayodhyâ.

26. “O king! You are our lord and governor; we are always your servants; protect us as the king of Ayodhyâ.

27. O king! It is through your grace only that we have seen the Supreme Force,

the Goddess of this Universe, the most Auspicious, the Eternal Bhavânî, the Giver of the fourfold desires.

28. O king! It is for your sake that the Eternal, Highest Prakriti Devî appeared; therefore you are very fortunate, auspicious, and most blessed in this world. Your have finished, as it were, all that you had to do.

29. O king! We all are deluded by the Mâyâ of that Mahâmâyâ Chandikâ Devî; therefore none of us is able to know Her prowess.

30. We are always engaged in thinking of wealth, sons and wives; there we are merged in this awful ocean of delusion, infested with crocodiles, etc., in the shape of lust, anger, greed, etc.

31. O Blessed one! You are highly enlightened and you know everything; hence we ask you What is this Force; whence has She sprung? How is Her prowess? Kindly describe all these to us.

32. O Descendant of Kakud! The saints are always merciful; kindly therefore relate to us the glory of the Excellent Goddess, that serves the purpose of a boat in crossing this ocean of world (transmigration).

33. O king! I am intensely desirous to hear the prowess and nature of the Devî."

Note :- Kakud is an epithet of Puranjaya, son of Śasâda, a king of the solar dynasty, and a descendant of Ikshvâku. The Mythology relates that when in their war with the demons, the gods were often worsted; they, headed by Indra went to the powerful king Puranjaya and requested him to be their friend in battle. The latter consented to do so, provided Indra carried him on his shoulders. Indra accordingly assumed the form of a bull and Puranjaya seated on its hump, completely vanquished the demons. Puranjaya is therefore Kakutstha standing on a hump.'

34. Vyâsa said :- When the kings had thus asked, the son of Dhruvasandhi, the king Sudaraśana became very glad and, meditating on the Goddess, began to say thus :-

35. "O kings! Indra and the other Devas, even Brahmâ, Visnu, and Maheśa are unable to fathom the most exalted deeds of that Goddess; how, then, can I describe to you the great glory of the Mahâmâyâ.

36-38. O kings! The Bhagavatî Bhavânî is present, as it were, being divided into four parts. She who is the first and foremost, the excellent Sâttvic Energy, worshipped by all, is always engaged in the preservation of this world. That part which is engaged in creating this world, is called the Râjasik Energy; and that part which is engaged in destroying the world is called the Tâmasik Energy, and

that part which is the cause of all, Brahmâ, etc., that Highest Śakti, the Bestower of all desires, is called the fourth Śakti, the Nirgunâ Śakti.

39. O kings! Those who are not Yogis, will never be able to grasp the Nirgunâ Śakti. The Sagunâ Force can be easily served. All those middle Adhikâris (fit persons) and learned men always meditate and worship the Sagunâ Aspect of Her.”

40-41. The kings said :— “O king! You got afraid and went in your very early age to the forest; how is it, then, that you have been able to know the excellent Goddess Mahâmâyâ. How did you worship and pray to Her? That She, becoming so glad, has favoured you and so helped you?”

42-43. Sudarśana said :— “O kings! Early in my childhood, I got the excellent root-mantra of desires, Kânavîja; daily I meditated and silently uttered that mantram. After that I came to realise through the Risis That Eternal Auspicious Mother; and since that time, day and night, I always used to remember that Highest Deity; with the greatest devotion.”

44. Vyâsa said :— Hearing the words of Sudarśana, the kings came to know that the Goddess which they saw was the Highest Force and filled with the greatest devotion towards Her, returned to their own homes.

45. The king of Benares, Subâhu, returned to his own city after bidding good-bye to Sudarśana. The virtuous Sudarśana, too, went towards his Kosala kingdom.

46. The ministers were very glad to hear the death of Śatrujit and to see the victory of Sudarśana.

47-48. The inhabitants and armies of Sâkata (Ayodhyâ) hearing that Sudarśana is coming and knowing him to be the son of the king Dhruvasandhi, became highly delighted and approached to him with various offerings.

49-50. Sudarśana, with his new consort, arrived at Ayodhyâ with his heart highly gladdened, and shewed his due regard and respect towards all his subjects. Then the ministers came and sainted him; the women threw at him offerings of Lâja (fried rice) and flowers; the bards began to praise loudly. Thus, honoured by various auspicious ceremonies, the king entered into his palace.

Here ends the 24th chapter on the installation of Durgâ Devî in the city of Benares and the return to Ayodhyâ of Sudarśana in the Mahâ Purânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 25. ON THE INSTALLATION OF THE DEVÎ IN AYODHYÂ AND BENARES

1-4. Vyâsa said :— The king Sudarśana, surrounded by his friends, on coming to the palace at Ayodhyâ, bowed down to Lîlâvatî, the mother of Śatrujit, and said :— “O mother! I swear by touching your feet, that I have not killed in battle your son Śatrujit nor your father Yudhâjit; it is the Devî Durgâ that has killed them; I am not to be blamed a bit in this. O mother! You need not be sensitive in this; there is no remedy for what will inevitably come to pass; therefore you do not be sorry for the death of your son; you must know that the Jîvas enjoy pleasure and pain as the results of their own Karmas.

5. O mother! I am your servant; you are entitled to the same respect and worship as Manoramâ, my own mother; there is no difference whatsoever between her and you.

6. O mother! One must bear the effects of one’s Karma, good or bad; therefore when pleasure or pain arises, you should not be glad or otherwise.

7. When pain arises, more pain is said to be conceived and when pleasure arises, more pleasure is seen. But the learned say that man ought not to subject himself to excessive pleasure or pain.

8. O mother! This whole world is under Fate, Destiny; nothing of it is yours. Therefore the intelligent persons ought not to grieve their hearts at any time with sorrow.

9. As the wooden dolls dance in a stage as danced by the actor, so the individual souls here work as the results of their past Karmas; there is no doubt in this.

10. O mother! I know that the effect of one’s own Karma, must have to be borne; it is, on that account, that I never felt sorrow in my exile in the forest.

11. You are quite aware that my mother’s father was killed here, and my mother, becoming very much afraid and sorrowful, took me and escaped to the forest.

12-13. The robbers robbed us of everything save our clothes on our bodies; I was then very young; my mother was without any shelter; she carried me with this minister Vidalla and my helpless nurse to the hermitage of Bhâradvâja.

14. There the kind hermit and his wife and the other wives of the hermits protected our lives in that forest, with the roots and fruits, that can be obtained there in

that forest. Thus our time passed.

15. Mother! I had felt no pain then; nor do I feel any pleasure at present, when wealth is flowing unto me. What more to say, I have no feeling of jealousy or envy whatsoever in my mind.

16. O mother! Rather it is better, in my eyes, to subsist on roots and fruits than to enjoy kingdoms; for the kings go to hell; but the ascetics living on roots and fruits never meet with that result.

17. The wise should undoubtedly practice Dharma and control their passions and thus save themselves from being led into hells.

18-19. O mother! The human birth in this auspicious Bhâratvarsa is seldom obtained. The enjoyments in eating and drinking are possible in every womb, but it is highly incumbent on us when we have got the privilege of this human birth, to earn Dharma, leading to the Heavens and salvation which can be very rarely attained in being born in other wombs.”

20-21. Vyâsa said :— When Sudarśana had told thus, Lîlâvatî became very abashed; she cast aside the sorrow for the death of her son, told him with tears in her eyes :— “O my son Sudarśana! I am very much guilty on account of my father Yudhâjit killing your mother’s father and taking hold of the sovereignty of this kingdom.

22. I could not then hinder my father and son; whatever unlawful evil and cruel deeds were then committed, all were done by my father Yudhâjit. Therefore, my child, I am not to be made guilty in any way in these doings.

23. Both my father and son were killed out of the wickedness of their own actions; how can you account for those wicked things? Child! I am not expressing sorrow at the death of my son; I have been pained by his doings.

24-25. O noble souled one; You are my son; Manoramâ is my sister; Child! I am not at all offended with you nor am I the least sorry for your obtaining the kingdom; Child! you are very fortunate; therefore you have obtained, by the grace of Bhagavatî, this kingdom without any enemies; now rule your subjects according to the prescribed rules of Dharma.”

26-28. Vyâsa said :— O king! The king Sudarśana heard Lîlâvatî and bowed down at her feet. Then he went to the beautiful palace where Manoramâ had previously gone and began to live there. Inviting the ministers and the astrologers, he asked them what was the auspicious day and the auspicious moment, that he can establish Durgâ Devî on a beautiful golden throne and he would worship Her.

29. “O ministers! First I will install on the throne the Devî, the Awarder of the four main objects of human pursuits (viz. virtue, wealth, enjoyment and final

beatitude) and then I will govern my kingdom like the kings Śrî Râma Chandra and others.

30. All the people of this city of Ayodhyâ ought also to worship this Auspicious Śakti, the Highest Energy, the Giver of all desires and Siddhis, and that is respected and adored by all."

31. The ministers, on hearing his words, had a beautiful palace built by the engineers, artists and workmen and proclaimed in the city the king's proclamation.

32. Then the king Sudarśana had an image of the Devî nicely built and got that installed with the help of the Pundits, versed in the Vedas, on an auspicious day and at an auspicious moment.

33. The intelligent king performed the worship and Homa ceremony, according to the prescribed rules, and thus finally settled the ceremony of invocation of the Deity into the new image and established it as an idol in the temple.

34. O Janamejaya! There the soundings of the various drums and other musical instruments, the chanting of the Veda mantrams by the Brâhmanas, and sweet music were heard; and various sorts of festivities and rejoicings were celebrated.

35. Vyâsa said :— Thus completing the installation ceremony of the Durgâ Devî by the Brâhmanas, versed in the Vedas, the king Sudarśana duly worshipped the image in various ways, etc.

36. Thus gaining his father's kingdom and worshipping the Devî, he and the Devî became celebrated throughout the kingdom.

37. The religious largehearted Sudarśana, on gaining his kingdom, brought all the other feudatory princes under his control by the sheer force of his religious character.

38. The subjects became happy and got honor in the reign of Sudarśana, as they got before in the reigns of Dilîp, Raghu and Râmachandra.

39. The virtue of all the citizens under Varnâśrama shone complete with all its four pâdas; and there remained none in the world irreligious.

40. In villages after villages, the chief townsmen began to build temples, worship the Goddess there with all their jolliness. Thus everywhere in the Kosala kingdom spread the Devî worship.

41. On the other hand, the king Subâhu established the Idol in Benares, had temples built and worshipped there the Devî.

42. The inhabitants of Kâśî became then filled with devotion and intense love towards the Devî and duly worshipped Her, as they used to do to Śiva in the

temple of Viśvanâtha.

43. Thus the Durgâ Devî became very widely celebrated in this world. O king! Thus in different countries, the devotion began to increase towards the Goddess.

44. The Devî Bhagavatî Bhavânî became in every way an object to be worshipped and adored by all people and everywhere in Bhâratavarsa.

45. The people began to recite slowly, meditate, and chant hymns as advocated by the gamas constantly and became deeply attached to the Śakti worship and began to be looked upon with the highest honour by others.

46. O king! From that time all the people used to worship, perform Homa ceremony and sacrifice duly in honour of the Devî in every Navarâtri (for the first nine days of the bright half in the months of śvin and Chaitra).

Here ends the 25th Chapter on the installation of the Devî in Ayodhyâ and Benares in the Mahâ Purânam Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 26. ON THE NARRATION OF WHAT ARE TO BE DONE IN THE NAVARÂTRI

1. Janamejaya said :— “O Best of the Brâhmins! What are men to do in the time of Navarâtra? Especially in the Navarâtra ceremony during the autumnal season how is the ceremony to be performed? Kindly relate all this with the prescribed rules and regulations.

2. O intelligent one! What are the fruits therein of the Navarâtra ceremony? and what are the rules to be observed? Kindly describe all these to me.”

3-5. Vyâsa said :— O king! Hear about the vow of auspicious Navarâtra. This has to be performed with loving devotion in the vernal season; but its special season is autumn. The two seasons, autumn and spring, are famous as the teeth of Yama, the God of Death; and these are the two seasons, very hard for the persons to cross over. Therefore every goodfaring man should everywhere perform this vow very carefully.

6-8. O king! The people are very much afflicted with various terrible diseases in these two seasons autumn and spring and many lose their lives during these portions of the year. Therefore the wise should unquestionably worship with great devotion the Chandikâ Devî in these auspicious months of Chaitra and śvin.

9-11. On the day previous to the commencement of the vow, when the Amâvasyâ tithi commences, one should collect the materials that will be required in the worship and should eat only once in that tithi what is called Habisyâna (sacred food, boiled rice with ghee) and should on that day prepare an open shade in a temporary building, twenty four (24) feet in dimensions, on a level piece of ground, that is considered holy; it is to be equipped with a post and a flag. Next, this is to be heaped over with yellow earth and cow dung. Then a raised platform called the Vedî, six feet wide and one and a half foot high, level and hard, is to be erected, and provided with an excellent space thereon for the seat of the Devî. Provisions are to be made also for ornamented gate ways and an awning over the top.

12-17. One should invite then, those Brâhmins, that observe fully the customs and usages, who are self restrained and versed in the Vedas and Vedângas, especially those who are skilled in the ceremony of worshipping the Devî.

Next, in the Pratipad tithi (the first day of the bright half), one should take one's morning ablutions in a river, or in a lake, tank or a well or in one's own residence, according to rules, and one should perform one's every day practices of Sandhyâ Bandanam. Afterwards he should appoint the Brâhmins and give them water for washing their feet and Arghya (offerings of grass, rice, etc.) and Madhuparka (an oblation of honey and milk, etc.) and give then, as his means permit, clothings and ornaments to them. If he happens to be rich, he should never show his miserliness here in making these gifts; for if the Brâhmins be satisfied, they will try their best to make the ceremony a complete success. O king! The Chandî paths (the reading of the book called Chandî) and Bhâgavata paths (the reading of some portions of the book named Bhâgavat) are done on this occasion, for the satisfaction of the Goddess; and either nine Brâhmins or five or three or at least one Brâhmin should be appointed for the purpose. Moreover one other Brâhmin, of a restrained and calm nature, is to be appointed, who would observe the fasting on the day previous (pârâyana). All these being done, the able man is to perform the ceremony preparatory to the solemn Devî worship, (in which the priest utters the Vedic mantra Svasti-vâchana, Svasti na Indro vridhâśravâh, etc.). Om Hrîm Śrîm Dm Drgâyai namah is the nine lettered Drgâ mantra.

18-20. O king! When the ceremony has been thus commenced, one should place on the Vedî (a raised platform; an altar), the throne fitted with double silken clothes; and, on that throne, he should place the image of the Devî. The Devî, the Eternal World-Mother, is to be four-armed or eighteen armed, (4 or 18) fully provided

with all the weapons, ornamented with garlands of pearls and jewels, decorated with various ornaments of gems and precious stones, wearing excellent heavenly clothings, all the parts of the image being artistically finished and endowed with all the auspicious signs, mounted on a lion, and holding conch shell, wheel, club, and lotus in Her hands.

Note :— The Devî, here, is represented with four (4) or eighteen (18) hands.

21-22. In the absence of the image, one should place an earthen water-pot, on that throne, thoroughly purified by the Vedîc Mantras, filled with gold and jewels, and filled fully with the water, brought from a sacred river or a sacred place of pilgrimage and with five young shoots of plants, the extremities of branches bearing new leaves immersed in water. Beside the water-pot on the throne, there should be a symbol (Diagram or Yantra) with the nine lettered Mantram (Om Hrîm Śrîm Chandikâyai namah) in it for the purpose of worship.

23. One should place on one's side all the materials of worship in their due places, and then have the music and other sounding drums played, for the good fortune and prosperity of the family.

Note :— Look for the mantras in the book Mantramaho Dadhi.

24. O king! If the first day be the Nandâ tithi (i.e., the first day of the bright half with the asterism Hastâ in the ascendant), then that is the best time for worshipping duly the Holy Goddess. There is no doubt that special fortunate results would arise on this.

25. On the previous night, one should observe fasting, or on the previous day one should take only one meal of Habisyânnâ (boiled rice and ghee) and on the next day one should make a Sankalpa (an avowal of the purpose to perform a rite) and then begin worship.

26. One should pray before the Goddess thus, “O Mother, Mother of the World! I will perform this excellent Navarâtra vow; be pleased to help me in every respect.”

27. One is to observe, as far as possible, all the rules enjoined in this vow and then utter the mantras and do the worship according to the prescribe rules.

28-31. First of all, one should worship duly the Goddess Jagaddhâtri, presenting Her Chandan (sandal paste), Aguru (a fragrant wood, the aloe wood), Camphor, the flowers Mandâra (one of the five trees of the celestial regions), Karaja a kind of fragrant flower)! Aśoka, Champaka, Karavir, Mâlatî, and Brâhmî and various lovely sweet scented flowers and good Bel leaves, Dhpa (incense, a fragrant gum burnt before idols) and lamps. Next one should present the fruits cocoanut, Mâtulinga, the pomegranate, bananas, oranges, the jack fruits, Bel and various other delicious fruit and then, offering Her arghya, present boiled rice and other

food with a heart, full of devotion.

32. Those who eat meat, they can sacrifice animals in this worship of the Devî; and, for this purpose, goat and wild boars are the best.

33-34. O sinless one! The goats, etc., offered as a sacrifice before the Devî attain to unending heavens. Therefore persons offering the sacrifices of goats do not incur any sin. O king! The goats, etc., and other beast offered as a sacrifice before the Devas undoubtedly go to the heavenly regions; therefore, in all the Śâstras, it has been decided that this killing of animals in a sacrifice is considered as non-killing.

35. Now, for doing the Homa ceremony one should prepare, according to one's requirements, a triangular pit from one to ten hands in dimension and a triangular level piece of ground covered with sand.

36. Daily, thrice, one should worship the Devî with various lovely articles and finally make a great festivity with dancing, singing and music.

37. Everyday he should sleep on the ground and worship the virgins (young girl from the age of two to the age of ten) with nectar like sweetmeats and beautiful clothings and ornaments.

38. Everyday one virgin or increased by one, two, or three every day or nine virgins in all the days respectively are to be worshipped.

39. O king! One should perform worshipping this Kumârî (virgin) Pujâ for the satisfaction of the Devî, as his means allow; never one is to shew miserliness in this.

40. O king! Hear the rules of the virgin worship that I am going to tell you. The virgin, aged one year, is not to be worshipped; for they are quite ignorant as to smell and tasting various delicious things.

41-43. The virgin aged two years is named the Kumârî; aged three years is named the Trimurtî four years, is called the Kalyânî; five years, Rohinî; six years, Kâlikâ; seventh year, Chandikâ; eighth year, Śâmbhavî; ninth year, Drgâ; and a virgin, aged ten years, is called Subhadrâ. Virgins aged more than ten years are not allowed in all ceremonies.

44. One should worship these virgins, taking their names and observing all the rules. I am now mentioning the different results that arise from the worship of these nine classes of virgins.

45. The worship of Kumârî leads to the extinction of miseries and poverty, to the extirpation of one's enemies and the increment of riches, longevity and power.

46. The Trimurtî Pujâ yields longevity, and the acquisition of the three things,

Dharma, wealth, and desires, the coming in of riches, sons and grandsons.

47. Those who want learning, victory, kingdom and happiness, they should worship the Kalyânî, the fructifier of all desires.

48-49. Men should worship Rohinî duly for the cure of diseases. For the destruction of enemies, the worship of the Kâlikâ with devotion is the best. For prosperity and riches, Chandikâ is to be worshipped with devotion. O king! For the enchanting and overpowering of one's enemies, for the removal of miseries and poverty, and for victory in battles, Śâmbhavî worship is the best.

50-51. For the destruction of awfully terrible enemies and for happiness in the next world, the worship of Drgâ is the safest and best. People worship Subhadrâ when they want their desires to be fulfilled.

52. People should, with great devotion, worship the Kumârîs (virgins) with the mantrams "Śrîrastu" or other mantrams, beginning with "Śrî" or with the seed mantrams.

53. The Goddess who can create without any difficulty all the sacred tattvas of the Kumâr Kârtikeya and who effects, as if in sport, the creation of all the Devas Brahmâ and others; I am worshipping the same Kumârî Devî.

54. She who is appearing under the three forms as differentiated by the three gunas Sâttva, Râjas, and Tâmas, and who is appearing in multiple forms, owing to the differentiations of the three gunas again into various minor differences, I am worshipping Her the Trimurtî Devî.

55. She who being worshipped always fares us with auspicious things, I am worshipping Her, with devotion, the Kumârî Kalyânî, the awarder of all desires.

56. I am worshipping the Rohinî Devî with a heart, full of devotion who is germinating all the karmas in seed forms, that have accumulated owing to past deeds.

57. She who, at the end of a Kalpa gathers unto Her in the form of Kâlî all this Universe, moving and unmoving, I worship that Kâlikâ Devî with devotion.

58. She, who is furious and wrathful and hence is called Chandikâ and who killed the two Demons Chanda and Munda I bow down to Her humbly with devotion, to that Chandikâ Devî, who destroys the terrible sins.

59. I worship that Śâmbhavî Devî, the giver of all pleasures and happiness, whose form is the Veda Brahmâ, and whose origin is without any cause, and who is so recited in the Vedas.

60. She who saves from danger her devotees and who always delivers from various difficulties and troubles, whom all the Devas are incapable to know, I worship with devotion that Drgâ Devî the destroyer of all calamities.

61. I, with my mind devoted, offer my salutations to that Subhadrâ Devî, Who procures all auspiciousness to Her devotees and removes all inauspicious incidents.

62. Thus, in the mantrams, above described, people should always worship the virgin girls, giving them clothings, ornaments, garlands, scents, and various other articles.

Here ends the 26th Chapter on the narration of what are to be done in the Navarâtri in the Mahâ Purânam in Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18000 verses, by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 27. ON THE VIRGINS FIT TO BE WORSHIPPED AND THE GLORY OF THE DEVÎ

1. Vyâsa said :- O king! Those Kumârîs, who are defective in limbs, who are lepers, who are filled with sores and ulcers over their bodies, whose bodies emit offensive smell or whose bodies are polluted, or those who are

of a bad family are never to be accepted for worship in the Navarâtra ceremony festival.

2-3. Those who are born blind, who are squint-eyed, who are blind of one eye, of disgraceful appearance, whose bodies are overgrown with hairs, or who are diseased or who are in their menstruation or in any other signs, indicating thus their passionate youthful tendencies, or those who are very lean and thin, or born of widows, or of women unmarried are always to be avoided in this Pjâ.

4. O king! It is only the healthy, graceful, beautiful, without any ulcers, and who are not bastards, those virgins are to be selected for the Kumârî Pjâ.

5. In all the cases, the Kumârîs, born of the Brâhmin families, can be taken; when victory is desired, the Kumârîs of the Kshattriya families are preferred; when profit is wanted, the Vaiśya Kumârîs and, when general welfare is wanted, the Śdra Kumârîs are to be taken.

6-7. O king! In the Navarâtri Pjâ, the Brâhmins should select for worship the Brâhmin Kumârîs; Kshattriyas, Brâhmin or Kshattriya; the Vaiśya worshippers

can select for worship Brâhmin, Kshattriya, or Vaiśya Kumârîs. And the Śdra worshippers can select, for worship, any of the four classes. But artists and artisans should select for worship the Kumârîs from their own families and tribes respectively.

8. If persons become unable to worship on all the days, then it is advised that they should perform the special worship on the eighth day (Astamî tithi).

9-10. In ancient times, on the eighth day, Bhadra Kâli Goddess, the destroyer of the sacrifice, started by Daksa, appeared on that day in hideous forms, surrounded by hundreds and lakhs of Yoginîs (one of a class of sixty goddesses or female attendants on Kâli). Therefore one should worship in particular on the eighth day with scents, garlands, and pastes and various offerings.

11. On this day, Pâyasa (a food prepared of rice, milk and sugar), and fresh fish are to be specially offered to the Deity. The Homa ceremonies, feasting of the Brâhmanas, and the worship of the Mother Goddess are done with various offerings, the fruits and flowers, and in good quantities.

12. O king! Those who are unable to observe the fasting in this Navarâtra Pjâ, will reap the same fruits, if they observe fasting for the three days only the Saptamî, the Astamî, and the Navamî tithis.

13. On the seventh, eighth, and ninth days, in these three tithis (lunar days) if one worships with devotion, one will acquire all the merits.

14. When the Devî's worship, Homa, Kumârî worship and the feasting of the Brâhmanas, all these are done, know that the Navarâtri Pjâ is completed.

15. O Janamejaya! No worship or vow or charitable gifts extant in this world, can be compared, as regards their meritorious effects, with this Navarâtra Pjâ.

16. On observing this Navarâtram Vrata, one gets riches, crops, sons and grandsons, prosperity and happiness, longevity, health and heaven and even the final beatitude.

17. Those who are desirous of learning, riches, or sons will get them all if they perform this most auspicious Navarâtra ceremony, able to confer fortunes on the devotees.

18. On the performance of this sacrifice, those who want learning get all the learning; and he, who is deprived of his kingdom will get back all his kingdoms.

19. Those who did not, in their previous births, perform this meritorious vow, they become diseased, poor and devoid of sons in their present births.

20. Those women that are barren, or widows or devoid of sons, infer that they never, in their previous births, performed this sacrifice.

21. Those who have not performed the Navarâtra ceremony, how can they acquire riches in this world and acquire happiness and peace in the next?

22. He who has worshipped the Goddess Bhagavatî Bhavânî Devî with young leaves of the Bel tree, besmeared with red sandal paste, it is he that will undoubtedly become the king in this world.

23. That man who has failed to worship the Goddess of the whole universe, Who fructifies all the pursuits of human life, Who destroys all the troubles, pains and miseries, Who is all suspicious Bhagavatî Bhavânî, that fellow is sure to pass his days in this world, wretched, impoverished, and surrounded by his enemies on all sides.

24. When Hari, Hara, Brahmâ, Indra, Fire, Varuna, Kuvera, and the Sun when all these possessing all the wealth and powers and filled with the highest felicities, when they meditate constantly the Goddess of the universe, Who is All Existence Intelligence, and Bliss, then what to speak of the human beings! How is it that persons do not worship that Chandikâ Devî, the One that leads all human pursuits to success!

25-26. Why should not the people worship the Goddess Bhavânî, the bestower of all happiness, whose other names are Svahâ and Svadhâ, the mantrams under whose intrinsic energies the Devas and the Pitris always get satisfied, and which are recited by all the Munis when they chant in every sacrifice the Vedic mantrams? Under Whose Will power Brahmâ the Creator, creates all this Universe? Under Whose energy, the

Visnu Janâradan, the Deva of the Devas, incarnates in this earth in various forms and preserves this world, and under Whose power, Śankara destroys this whole Universe?

27. No body, in this whole universe, can have his existence without having recourse to that Prakriti Devî, the Śakti incarnate; be he a Devî, a human being or a bird, or a serpent, Gandharva, Râkhsasa, Piśâcha, a mountain or a tree, he cannot move even of his own accord, without the help of this Force.

28. Therefore, why should not anybody worship that Chandikâ Devî, the Awarder of all desires and wealth? And how is it, that a man desiring one of the 4 objects of human pursuits, Dharma, wealth, desires, and the final beatitude, observes not the vow regarding that Deity.

29. So much so, that even a man who has committed a heinous offence, five such are enumerated, viz. (1) killing a Brâhman, (2) drinking liquor, (3) stealing gold, (4) adultery with the wife of a spiritual guide (5) associating with any such person, if he performs the Navarâtra vow, he will be absolved entirely from all such sins;

there is no doubt in this.

30. O king! Once on a time there lived in the country of Kosala, a trader, poor and miserable, having under him many relations and dependants in his family, whose provisions he had to provide.

31. He had many sons and daughters; when they were very hungry and distressed, then they used to get a little food and that in the evening, only once in twenty-four hours.

32. That trader, too, worked under another, the whole day; and when it was evening, he used also to take his meals. Thus, being very much anxious and distressed, he maintained somehow or other his family members (that are to be maintained).

33-34. This trader was of a quiet temper, of a good conduct, truthful, always ready to act religiously, devoid of anger, steady and contented, void of vanity and jealousy; daily he used to worship the Devas, Pitris, and the guests and used to take his meals after all his family members had taken their meals.

35-36. Thus many days passed away when that good trader, named Suśîla, being very much perplexed with poverty and hunger, asked a quiet tempered Brâhmin “O Bhdeva! (deva incarnate on the earth) kindly tell me positively how this state of poverty can be got rid off!

37. O holy minded! Kindly advise me such as preserves my honour; I do not want wealth, nor do I like to be a rich man; O Brâhmin! I want just enough to meet with the expenses, incurred in maintaining my family; please advise so that I may be able to earn this much only.

38. I have many sons; I have not got any food, sufficient enough to give them even a handful of rice.

39. Alas! My youngest son was crying today for food; I have driven him out of the house by chastising him. O Brâhmin! What am I do? I have got no wealth; my heart is burning with grief and sorrow; my baby has gone out of the house, weeping and hungry.

40. My daughter has come to a marriageable age; I have no money. Her age has exceeded ten years; the marriageable age limit has been exceeded. Alas! What am I to do?

41-42. O Brâhmin! I am expressing my sorrow for all that. You are merciful, and all-knowing; tell me any means, be it asceticism, gifts, vow, or the reciting of any mantrams by which I can maintain my family; I want wealth just sufficient for that purpose and nothing more.

43. O high minded one! Kindly devise and tell me some means by which my family members become happy in this world.”

44-46. Vyâsa said :— The Brâhmin that used to practice vows when thus asked by the trader told him gladly “O trader! Do now the Navarâtri vow, the most auspicious, and worship the Bhagavatî, perform Homa, and feast the Brâhmins. Have the Vedas and Purânas recited and recite then slowly the Śakti mantram and try, as much as you can, to do other concomitant ceremonies; and your desires will thus be undoubtedly fulfilled.

47. There is no other vow superior to this in this world; this vow is very holy and will bring unto you happiness.

48. This vow leads to wisdom and liberation; destroys enemies and increases posterity and prosperity.

49. In former days, Śrî Râma Chandra suffered very much owing to his being deprived of his kingdom; and, then on account of his wife being stolen away. Subsequently he performed this Navarâtra vow in Kiskindhyâ, his heart being heavily laden with grief.

50. Though troubled very much, on account of the bereavement of Sîtâ, still Râma Chandra observed the Vow of Navarâtra and worshipped the Goddess according to the prescribed rules and rites.

51-52. As a fruit of this worship he was able to bridge the great ocean and kill the giant Kumbha Karna, Meghanâda, the Râvana’s son, and Râvana, the king of Lanka; and subsequently he was able to recover his Sîtâ. He installed Vibhîsana on the throne of Lanka (Ceylon) and at last returned to Ayodhyâ and reigned there without any enemies.

53. O best of the Vaiśyas! Râma Chandra, of incomparable prowess, was able to obtain happiness in this world on account of the influence of this Navarâtra ceremony.

54-55. Vyâsa said :— O king! That Vaiśya, hearing thus the Brâhmin’s words, made him his Guru, was initiated by him in the seed mantra of Mâyâ and ceaselessly, without any laziness, recited slowly the mantram for nine nights and worshipped the Devî, with great caution and with various offerings. Thus for nine consecutive years he devoted himself to the Japam (reciting slowly) of the seed mantra of Mâyâ till, at last, when the ninth year was completed, the Great Goddess appeared distinctly before his eyes on the night of the great Astamî tithi (the eighth day of the bright half) and gave him various boons and delivered the Vaiśya from poverty and bestowed on him wealth and his other desired things.

Here ends the 27th Chapter on the virgins fit to be worshipped and the Glory of

the Devî in the Mahâ Purânam Śrîmad Devî Bhâgavatam by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa in the Third Adhyâya.

CHAPTER 28. ON THE INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH NAVARÂTRI

1. Janamejaya said :— O Muni! How did Râmchandra celebrate the Devî's Pjâ, that leads to happiness? Who was He! And how was stolen away His Sîtâ? How was He deprived of His kingdom? Please satisfy me by narrating all these incidents to me.

2. Vyâsa said :— O king! There lived, in days of yore, in the city of Ayodhyâ, a prosperous king of the solar dynasty named Daśaratha. He always worshipped the Devas and Brâhmanas.

3-5. He had four celebrated sons Râma, Laksmâna, Bharata and Satrugna. These four sons were equally learned and beautiful and they always did actions agreeable to the king. Of these, Râmachandra was the son of the Queen Kauśalya, Bharata was the son of Kaikeyî, and the good looking Laksmâna and Satrugna were the twin sons of Sumitrâ. While young, they learned the art of archery and began to play with bows and arrows in their hands.

6-7. Thus educated and purified, the four sons began to give delight more and more to the king; one day the Maharsi Viśvâmitra came to Ayodhyâ and asked from the king Daśaratha the help of his son Râmachandra for the protection of his sacrificial ceremonies. The king could not cancel the Viśvâmitra's request and sent with him Râma, accompanied by Laksmâna.

8-11. The lovely Râma and Laksmâna accompanied the Muni on his way back. There lived a terrible looking Râkhasî, named Tâdakâ, in a forest on their way, who used to give great troubles to the ascetics; and Râma killed her with only one arrow. Next he killed Subâhu and shot arrows at another night-wanderer Mârîcha and made him senseless, almost dead and threw him at a great distance and thus saved Viśvâmitra from all the obstacles troubling him in his sacrificial ceremonies. Thus fulfilling the great work, protecting the sacrificial ceremonies, Râma, Laksmâna and the Muni Cowsick, the three, started for the kingdom of Mithilâ. On his way, Râma Chandra rescued Ahalyâ from the curse that she was

suffering from.

12-13. At last the two brothers, accompanied by the Muni, reached the city Videhanagar. Just at this time the king Janaka of Ayodhyâ made a vow to give in marriage Sîtâ to anybody who will be able to break the bow of Śiva; Râma broke that bow into two and married Sîtâ, born of Laksmî's parts. The king Janaka gave in, marriage, to Laksmâna his own-daughter Urmilâ.

14. The good and auspicious Bharata and Satrugna married respectively Mândavi and Śrutakîrti, the two daughters of Kuśadhvaaja.

15. O king! Thus, in the great city of Mithilâ, the four brothers performed their marriage ceremonies, according to the prescribed rules and rites.

16. The king Daśaratha, then seeing Râma well qualified to take charge of the kingdom, proposed to install him on the throne of Ayodhyâ.

17. The queen Kaikeyî, seeing that various articles were being collected for the installation of Râma, asked for the two boons, promised before, from her husband Daśaratha, who was completely under her control.

18. The first request was her own son, Bharata's becoming the king of Ayodhyâ; and the second request was the banishing of Râma to the forest for fourteen years.

19. Thus Râmachandra went accompanied by Sîtâ and Laksmâna to the Dandakâ forest, frequented by the Râksasas.

20. The high souled king Daśaratha felt very much due to bereavement of his son, remembered the curse given to him by Andhaka Muni and left his mortal coil.

21. Bharata, seeing that his father died solely on, account of his mother, refrained from becoming the king of Ayodhyâ, the prosperous city and wanted the welfare of his brother Râma.

22. Râmachandra went to the forest Pañchavatî. One day the youngest sister of Râvana, named Srpanakhâ became very passionate and came to Râma; whereon Râmachandra disfigured her by cutting off her nose and ears.

23. Seeing her nose thus cut away, the Râksasas Khara, Dsana, and others fought very hard against the powerful Râmachandra.

24. The truly powerful Râma killed Khara, Dsana and all other powerful Râksasas, for the welfare of the Munis.

25. Then Srpanakhâ went to Lankâ and informed Râvana of her nose having been cut and of the death of Khara, Dsana and others.

26. The wicked and malignant Râvana, hearing of their death, became filled with anger and, mounting on a chariot, quickly went to the forest of Mârîcha.

27. Râvana expressed his desire to take away Sîtâ; so ordered that magician Mârîcha to assume the form of a golden deer and go to Râma and entice him away.

28. The magician Mârîcha assumed the form of a golden deer and reached the sight of Jânakî. Then that variously spotted deer began to move about near the Sîtâ Devî.

29. Looking at the beautiful golden splendour of the body of that golden deer, Sîtâ Devî, prompted as it were by the great Fate, spoke to Râmachandra like other independent women “O Lord! Bring me the skin of the deer.”

30. Râma too, not judging at all, as if it was the work of Destiny, asked Laksamana to remain there and protect Sîtâ, took hold of his bows and arrows and went after the deer.

31. Infinitely skilled in magic, the deer seeing Hari in the shape of Râma sometimes came and sometimes came not within his sight and travelled from one forest to another.

32. When Râma saw that He had come very far away from His place, He became angry and drew his bow and shot sharp arrows at that deer, the transformed Mârîcha.

33. The deceitful conjuror Râksasa, being thus shot very violently and pained intensely, cried out “O brother Laksmana! I am killed” and breathed his last.

34-35. This loud awful cry reached Jânakî’s ears. She took that voice for Râma’s voice and told to Laksmana in a grieved tone “Laksmana, go quickly. I fear Râma is killed; hear the voice O Laksmana! come quickly and deliver me’ is calling you to go there.”

36. Laksmana then replied “Mother! You are alone in this forest; therefore I cannot leave you thus even if Râmchandra be killed.

37. O daughter of Janaka! Râma has ordered me to remain here. Now if I leave you and go elsewhere, then I will be charged with having disobeyed his order. Fearing that, I am unable to leave this place.

38. It seems to me, moreover, that some magician has carried Râma away from here; I am therefore unable to move a step from here and leave you alone.

39. Hold patience; let me consider; I find no such man as can kill Râma; I am unable to leave you by any means alone here and to go away, disobeying Râma’s orders.”

40. Vyâsa said :— O king! Then the young wife of Râma, having handsome teeth, began to cry aloud, fearfully, as if made to do so by Destiny, and uttered the cruel

words to the pure Laksmāna.

41. “O son of Sumitrâ! I know why you are so much attached towards me? I know very well that you have been sent here by Bharata to accompany us simply to obtain me.

42. O vile Ksatttriya, skilled in magic! I am not that sort of woman acting to my wanton will; never I will accept you of my will as my husband in case Śrî Râmchandra be dead.

43. In case Śrî Râma does not return, I will certainly commit suicide; without him I would be very much grieved and afflicted with sorrows; and I would not be able to hold on my life.

44. O Saumitrî! Whether you remain here or do not remain, I won't request anything more to you; for I am quite unaware of your mind; but this much I like to say to you, where has your intimacy towards your religious elder brother now gone?”

45-46. Hearing thus the Sîtâ Devî's words, Laksmāna became exceedingly sorry; and, being suffocated with heaving sighs on account of the internal pain told Sîtâ “O! One born from without any womb! Why are you uttering so cruel and malignant words; I clearly see when you are speaking such unworthy words, that some great evil is sure to befall on you very soon.”

47. O king! Thus saying, the spirited Laksmāna left Sîtâ and went out weeping very much, and, being very much afflicted with grief, traced the footsteps of his elder and went on in search of him.

48. When Laksmāna thus departed, Râvana entered into the hermitage in the guise of a deceitful beggar (Bhikṣu wearing a red garb).

49. Jânakî took that villain Râvana to be a Yogi and respectfully gave him offerings of worship and forest fruits.

50-52. That villain asked Sîtâ humbly, in a gentle tone, “O beautiful! Your eyes are beautiful like Palâsa lotus leaves; therefore it seems that you are not an ordinary woman; how is it that you are here thus alone in a wild forest? O fair one! Who is your father? who is your brother and who is your husband? Being such a beautiful one, how is it that you are in this forest here like an ordinary woman, dumbfounded? O good looking one! You are worthy to live in a palace filled with nectar; why are you living, in this hovel, in this wild forest like an ordinary Muni's wife, when your beauty is shining in lustrous beams like a Deva girl?”

53-55. Vyâsa said :— The daughter of Jânakî, hearing the words of Râvana, the husband of Mandodarî, unfortunately took him to be a good Yogi and replied in

the following way :— “Perhaps you have heard that a prosperous king Daśaratha is reigning in the Ayodhyâ city. He has four sons; the eldest of these, Śrî Râm Chandra, is my husband. The king offered two boons to Kaikeyî; due to which Râm Chandra has been exiled in this forest and is with his brother Laksmâna.

56. I am the daughter of the King Janaka; my name is Sîtâ; Râm Chandra has broken the bow of Śiva and has married me.

57. Resting under his prowess of arms, I am resting here fearlessly in this wild forest; seeing a golden deer, he has gone out to kill that for me.

58. Laksmâna, too, hearing his voice has gone just now. O Yogi! I am living here depending on the strength of these two brothers.

59. Thus I have told you all about our living in this forest; shortly they will come and worship you duly.

60-61. The man who has controlled his passions and has become a Yati is like Visnu incarnate; therefore I have worshipped you. O Yogi! Our śram is in the midst of this terrible forest, surrounded by Râkhsasas. Therefore I am asking you how is it that you have been able to come here in this dress of Tridandi (a Sannyasi Yogi); please speak in the name of Truth before me.”

62. Râvana said :— “O askance looking one! I am the king of Lankâ, the husband of Mandodarî. O beautiful one! it is for you that I have put on this dress of Yati.

63. O beautiful! My two brothers Khara and Dšana have been killed in this forest; and being urged by my sister I have come here.

64-65. Now leave your this man-husband, residing in the forest as a pauper, devoid of fortune and wealth; and worship me as a husband. O fair one! I am Râvana, the king of kings; you now become my lord.

66. O daughter of Janaka! I am the lord of the Regents of the quarters; and yet I bow my head down to your lotus feet; better accept me and fulfil my desires today.

67-68. Formerly I asked of you from your father, the king Janaka; but he then said, that he had laid a pledge, ‘Whoever will break the Śiva’s bow will marry my daughter.’ The Bhagvân Rudra is my Guru; hence I feared to break his bow, and therefore I was not present in your Svayamvara. But from that time my mind is always thinking of you and is in a state of bereavement for you.

69. O beautiful one! Hearing now that you are residing in this forest, I, impelled by my previous fascination for you, have now come hither; and you better now crown my labour with success.”

Thus ends the 28th Chapter on the incidents connected with the Navarâtri and the description of Râmayanam in Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18000 verses, by

Maharsi Veda Vyâsa in the 3rd Adhyâya.

Note: The story about the origin of Sîtâ Devî runs thus :— Râvana, the king of Ceylon (Lankâ) practised very severe austerities and got extraordinary powers. He brought the three worlds under his subjection, levied taxes from all. The Devas and all the other inhabitants of the several worlds paid their taxes, as imposed by Râvana. Râvana sent messengers to the Risis and the Munis, the ascetics, dwelling in forests and asked them to pay their taxes. The Risis replied that they had no property. But Râvana insisted. The Risis gave, then, blood, cutting their thighs, in a jar that was carried to Lankâ. Râvana kept that jar under the custody of his queen Mandodarî, and instructed her that the jar contained poison and that she should not eat that. Mandodarî, however, ate a portion of that, out of curiosity, and became pregnant and gave birth to a daughter. Fearing Râvana, she floated the jar with the daughter, in the ocean, which, floating through oceans and rivers, came and touched the lands of the King Janaka. The peasants while tilling, found that and took the girl to the king, who reared her as his daughter. Thus Sîtâ, born out of the blood of the Brâhmanas, took away subsequently the kingdom, life, and all of Râvana.

Another version is this :— As before, the messengers advised the Munis to give something; otherwise Râvana would insist and put them to various troubles. So the Munis cut their thighs and gave blood as their tax, saying that that blood in the jar would cause ruin and desolation to the country where it will be kept. Râvana, hearing this, ordered the jar to be carried to the kingdom of the king Janaka, thus causing ruin to him. The jar was brought and placed in the fields of Janaka.

Now it happened that there was a very severe drought; rains were absolutely wanting; and a dire famine was imminent. The Brâhmin Pundits informed the king that if the king and his wife ploughed themselves the fields, rains would fall. So the king with his wife did that, the king holding the plough and the queen holding the hand of the king. The fore end of the plough accidentally hit upon that jar, out of which came out Sîtâ Devî with two women Riddhi and Siddhi, waving chowries on her two sides. The two ladies disappeared and Sîtâ Devî looked like a girl. The king Janaka reared her, as if his daughter. Sîtâ Devî used to lift daily with her left hand the bow of Śiva, kept in the king's house, and daily worshipped that, and thus cleansed the place. Seeing this, the king Janaka pledged the vow that, whoever would break the Śiva's bow, would marry Sîtâ.

CHAPTER 29. ON THE STEALING OF SÎTÂ AND THE SORROWS OF RÂMA

1-2. Vyâsa said :— Hearing these vicious words, Jânakî became very much confounded with fear and began to tremble; somehow collecting herself she began to say :— “O descendant of the family of Pulastya! Why are you, prompted by lust, uttering these sinful words? I am born of the family of Janaka; therefore I cannot act wantonly according to my own inclination.

3. O ten faced one! Better you go to Lankâ quickly; else Râmchandra will take away your life; you will no doubt incur death for my sake.”

4-5. Thus saying, Sîtâ Devî went towards the Sacred fire called Gârhapatya, placed in the house, with words “go away” “go away” in her mouth. He, whose wickedness has caused all the Lokas cry out “save” “save”, the same Râvana, of perverted intellect, then assumed his real form, went towards the hut and caught hold of Sîtâ Devî who was crying, bewildered with fear.

6. Sîtâ cried “Râma” “Râma” “Laksmana”, and the sinful Râvana caught hold of her and quickly mounting her on the chariot, fast got away.

7-9. On the way Jatâyû, the son of Aruna, met Râvana; and a terrible fight then ensued between the two, when the evil minded Râvana, the king of the Demons, killed Jatâyû. Râvana carried Sîtâ to Lankâ. Then Sîtâ cried like a forlorn deer and Râvana kept her in the Aśoka forest (Jaffna),

surrounded and guarded by the Râksasis. The king of Lankâ tempted Sîtâ with comforting words, and the kingdoms, etc., but she never swerved from her own pure and stainless chastity.

10-12. On the other side, Râmachandra after killing the deer and taking it was coming back calmly, when he saw Laksmana going to him and said “O Laksmana! What a great blunder you have committed! Hearing the voice of that villain conjurer, how is it that you have left my dear Sîtâ alone and come here!” Laksmana said :— “O Lord! Being pierced sharply by Sîtâ Devî’s words (coming like sharpened arrows) and being driven away by her, under the guidance of the Inevitable Destiny as it were, I have come here; there is no doubt in this.”

13. They, then, both hurriedly went to their hut, made of leaves; and there not finding Sîtâ, they were very much afflicted with sorrows and went in quest of

Jânakî.

14. Râma and Laksmâna in their search for Sîtâ, came at last to the spot where Jatâyû, the king of birds, was lying on the surface of the earth, with his life ultimately on the point of parting away from his body.

15-16. Jatâyû said :— Râvana, the king of Lankâ, carried away today stealthily Sîtâ Devî; I resisted that villain who then fought with me on that account and threw me down on this spot by weapons. Thus saying, the king of birds died; whereupon Râmchandra performed the burning of his dead body as well his funeral ceremonies. Then both of them went out of that place.

17. Then the Lord Râmachandra killed Kabandha and freed him from his curse; and, through his advice, he made friendship with Sugrîva, the king of the monkeys, and was thus bound under a tie.

18. Next Râma killed the hero Balî as a duty and gave the excellent kingdom of Kiskindhyâ to his new friend Sugrîva according to his promise.

19. Then, he began to ceaselessly think of the stealing away of Sîtâ by Râvana and passed away the four months of the rainy season there with his brother Laksmâna.

20. Râma, being very much shaken on account of the bereavement of Sîtâ, began to address Laksmâna thus :— “O Saumitre! The desires of the daughter of the king of Kekaya are now fulfilled.

21. Jânakî will no more be obtained; without Jânakî I will not go back to Ayodhyâ; without Jânakî I won't be able to live any longer.

22. Kingdom lost, dwelling in forests happened, father left his body, at last the dear wife is lost; the cruel hands of Destiny are tormenting me now thus; what more it will inflict, how can I say now?

23. O Brother Laksmâna! What is to happen is very hard to be known beforehand by men; I cannot say, what is written on my fate after this, painful or otherwise.

24. See! Both of us, the descendants of Manu, though born in a royal family, are exiled in forests due to our past deeds.

25. O Laksmâna! It is by Fate, too, that you, abandoning the pleasures of the royal surroundings, have come out with me; and you, too, are now suffering heaps of dire troubles with me.

26. No one in our family suffered so much as we are suffering; why we talk of our family! No human being was ever born or will ever take his birth that suffered or will suffer like me so many troubles, will be like me incapacitated and a penniless pauper.

27. O Saumitre! I am drowned in the ocean of pains and troubles; What am I to do now? I have no means to cross this ocean; I am quite helpless, no doubt.

28. No money, nor armies, O hero! you are my one and only one companion; O brother! On whom shall I be angry when I am suffering on account of my own deeds?

29. Alas! The kingdom that could have been compared in prosperity to the Indra Sabha, was almost obtained by me when, in an instant, I lost it and am now in exile in forest. Laksman! Who can ascertain what is in the womb of Destiny?

30. Oh! That soft bodied Sîtâ, with her child like nature came out with us in this forest; but the inexorable Fate has now drowned her, that perfectly beautiful woman, into an ocean of sorrows, difficult to be crossed?

31. That fair daughter of Janaka is extremely devoted to me; she is pure and holy. How will she be able to suffer troubles in the house of the king of Lankâ!

32. O Laksmâna! Sîtâ Devî will never come under the control of Râvana; how can that excellent chaste woman act like an ordinary public woman?

33. O Laksmâna! Rest assured that in case Râvana exercises, out of his lordly position, any violence on Sîtâ, she will rather put an end to her life than come under his control.

34. O Laksmâna! And when Jânakî sacrifices her life, I will assuredly do the same; for, of what use, then is this body to me when that fair Sîtâ has gone away with her life?"

35. While the lotus eyed Râmchandra was thus weeping and expressing his regrets and sorrows, the religious Laksmâna consoled him with the following sweet, truthful, words :—

36. "O Hero of the heroes! Kindly cast aside this weakness and have patience; I will soon kill that villain demon Râvana and get you back your Sîtâ Devî.

37. The wise steady persons remain on account of their fortitude, unshaken in their hearts whether in joy or in sorrow; whereas men, of little intellect, indulge in sorrows when they are happy.

38. Coming in union and going out in disunion, both are under the hands of Destiny; What, then, there is the need for expressing sorrows for this body, which is not soul.

39. As we have been banished from our kingdom into this forest, as there has happened this bereavement of Sîtâ, so, in proper time, we will again get back Sîtâ Devî.

40. O Darling of Jânakî! There must come a time when sorrows will be converted into happiness and vice versa; there will be nothing otherwise. So avoid this sorrow now and have firmness.

41. There are multitudes of monkeys, who are our helping hands; they will go to all the four quarters and bring back to us the news of the daughter of Janaka; there is no doubt in this.

42. O Lord! Knowing the way to Lankâ, we will go there and kill by our prowess the villainous Râvana and bring back Sîtâ Devî.

43. Or we will call Bharata with Satrugghna and with all the armies we all united will kill our enemy; why, then, are you thus expressing sorrows in vain.

44. O Lord! our ancestor Raghu, the hero of heroes, the monarch; won his victories over the ten quarters; and you belong to that family and are now plunged in grief!

45. Alone, I can defeat all the Devas and the Demons; and if I get help, is there any doubt, then, in my killing, that Râvana, the disgrace of the family of Râksasas.

46. O Powerful One! We may call to, our aid the king of Janaka and root out that wicked source of enemy to the Devas.

47-48. O Descendant of Raghu! Like the rim of a wheel, happiness and pain come alternately; it is not that happiness, or pain comes and remains for ever. He whose mind is very much overwhelmed. with pain or happiness, is the man who is always plunged in an ocean of misery; and he can never expect to become happy.

49. See! In days of yore, Indra once got addicted into vicious habits. The Devas united put in place of Indra, the king Nahusa.

50. Then Indra, terrified, relinquished his post and passed very many years into an unknown and unnoticed state within the lotus.

51. Again, when time changed, he got his own post back; and the king Nahusa fell down on this earth and became transformed into a boa constrictor (a big serpent), through the curse of a Risi.

52. The king Nahusa wanted the wife of Indra and insulted a Brâhmin; therefore, he was, under the curse of Maharsi Agasti, transformed into a snake on the earth.

53. Therefore, O Râghava! One ought not to plunge in grief, when a danger comes; rather one should be quite energetic in times of danger and remain firm; thus, the sages do.

54. O Lord of the world! You are high minded, omniscient and omnipotent; why are you now overwhelmed with grief, like an ordinary mortal."

55. Vyâsa said :- Oh king! Thus consoled by Lakshmana, Râma discarded all his

heavy sorrows and began to remain with his heart firm and at rest.

Thus ends the 29th chapter on the stealing of Sîtâ and the sorrows of Râma in the 3rd Skandha of Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

CHAPTER 30. ON THE NARRATION OF THE NAVARÂTRA CEREMONY BY NÂRADA AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THAT BY RÂMA CHANDRA

1-2. Vyâsa said :— O king! Râma and Laksmana, discussing thus, remained silent; when the Risi Nârada appeared there from the sky above, singing the Rathântara Sâma Veda hymns in tune and musical gamut with his renowned lute.

3-4. Râmachandra, of indomitable prowess, on beholding him rose up from his seat and gave him quickly an excellent seat and offerings of water for washing his feet. Then he worshipped the Muni and stood with folded hands. When the Muni ordered him, he took his seat close by Nârada.

5-8. On Râmachandra taking his seat there with Laksmana with a grievous heart, Nârada asked him in a sweet tone “O Descendant of Raghu! Why are you being afflicted with sorrows like an ordinary mortal? I know that the evil minded Râvana has stolen Sîtâ Devî. I heard while in the heavens that Râvana, the descendant of Pulastya, stole away Jânakî, out of fascination, could not know that would be the cause of his death. O Descendant in the family of Kâkutstha! It is for the killing of Râvana that your birth has taken place; and for that purpose Jânakî has been stolen now.

Note :— The real Jânakî was not stolen; Her shadow form was stolen.

9-12. O Râghava! The Devî Jânakî, in her previous birth, was the daughter of a Muni and practised asceticism. While engaged in her austerities, in her holy hermitage, Râvana came and looking at her, prayed that beautiful woman to become his wife. Hearing this, she gave a good reproach to Râvana, when he perforce caught hold of her hairs. That ascetic woman got very angry, and, considering her body polluted by the devil’s contact, resolved to put an end to

her life and cursed Râvana, thus :— “O Villain! I will be born on the surface of the earth, not from any womb but simply for your destruction and ruin.” Thus saying, she parted with her life.

13. O Tormentor of the foes! Râvana, the king of the Râksasas, mistook a garland for the extremely poisonous serpent and has stolen away Sîtâ Devî, the part incarnation of Laksmî, in order to root out his race.

14. O Kâkutstha! When the Devas prayed for the destruction of that wicked insolent Râvana, difficult to be subdued, you are born on this earth, in the family of Aja, as a part incarnate of Hari, beyond birth, old age and death.

15. O mighty-armed! Have patience; Sîtâ Devî is meditating you, day and night.

16-17. Indra himself, the king of the Devas, sends the nectar and the Heavenly Cow’s Milk in a pot to Her daily; and She subsists on that, alone.

O Lord! On drinking the Heavenly Cow’s Milk, the lotus eyed Sîtâ Devî is living without any hunger or thirst! I use to see Her daily.

18. O Descendant of Raghu! I am now telling how that Râvana can be killed. Perform, in this very month of śvin, the vow with devotion.

19. Fasting for nine nights, the worship of the Bhagavatî, and repeating the Mantram silently and performing the Homa ceremony, observing all the rules, will certainly fulfill one’s all the desires.

20. O the best in the race of Raghu! You should offer the sacrifice before the Goddess of a sacred and unblameable animal, perform Japam and Homa ceremony equivalent to one-tenth of Japam. If you do all this, you will certainly be able to release Sîtâ.

21. In days of yore, Visnu, Śiva and Brahmâ and the Devas in the Heavens all performed this worship of the Goddess.

22. Therefore, O Râghava! Every person desiring happiness, specially those that have fallen under great difficulties, ought to do this auspicious ceremony, without the least hesitation.

23-24. O Kâkutstha! Viśvamitra, Bhrigu, Vāsistha and Kaśyapa all of them did this worship before. When some stole away the wife of Brihaspatî, the Guru of the Devas, he, too, by the force of this worship, got his wife back. Therefore O king! dost thou also celebrate the Pjâ for the destruction of Râvana.

25-26. O high minded one! This vow was practised before by Indra for the destruction of Vritra, by Śiva for killing the demon Tripurâ, by Nârâyana for the killing of the demons Madhu and Kaitava; so you should also firmly resolve to perform duly this vow with your whole heart.”

27. Râma replied :— “O Ocean of Knowledge! Who is that Devî? What is Her influence; whence has She sprung? What is Her Name? And how is that vow to be duly observed? Kindly describe all these to me in detail.”

28. Nârada answered :— “Listen, O Râghava! That Goddess is Eternal and Ever Constant Primordial Force. If you worship Her, all your difficulties will be removed and all your desires will be fulfilled.

29. She is the source of Brahmâ, Visnu and others and of all these living beings. Without Her force, no body would be able even to move their limbs.

30. That Supreme Auspicious Goddess is the preserving energy of Visnu, is the creative power of Brahmâ, and is the destroying force of Śiva.

31. Whatever there exists in this infinite Universe, whether Temporal or Eternal, She is the Underlying Force of all; how, then, can She have an origin!

32-33. Her origin is not Brahmâ, Visnu, Maheśa, Sun, Indra, or the other Devas, not this Earth nor this Upholder of the Earth; She is devoid of any qualities, the Giver of Salvation of all, the Full Prakriti. In the time of the final dissolution of this Universe, She lives with the Supreme Purusa.

34. She is also Saguna, full of qualities, and is the Creatrix of Brahmâ, Visnu and Maheśa, and has empowered them, in every way, to create the three Lokas.

35. She is the Supreme Knowledge, existing before the Vedas, and the Originator of the Vedas. The individual souls, knowing Her Nature, become able to free themselves from the bondages of the world.

36. She is known by endless names. The Brahmâ, and the other Devas might choose to call Her according to their actions and qualities. I am unable to describe those names.

37. O descendant in the race of Raghu! Her endless names are formed by the various combinations of the various vowels and consonants from the letter A’ to the letter Ksa.”’

38. Râma said :— “O best of the Munis! Describe briefly all the rules and regulations as to how that vow and worship are to be performed. With my heart, full of devotion and faith, I will worship the Goddess today.”

39. Nârada said :— “O Râghava! On a level plot of ground, prepare an altar. Place the Goddess there and fast for nine days.

40. O king! I will be your priest and I will, with great energy, carry out this yajña to fulfil the work of the Gods.”

41-42. Vyâsa said :— Then the powerful Bhagavân Hari, hearing all from the Muni,

believed them to be true; and, on the approach of the month of śvin, prepared the altar on the top of a hill and placed the Auspicious Goddess, the World Mother and, observing all the rules, performed the vow and worshipped the Goddess.

43. Fasting for nine days, Râma celebrated the vow and duly offered sacrifices, performed the worship and Homa ceremonies.

44-46. When, on the grand night of the Eighth lunar day, the two brothers completed the vow as told by Nârada, the Supreme Bhagavatî was pleased with the worship and appeared before them, mounted on a lion, and remaining there on the mountain top, addressed Râma and Lakshmana, in a sweet grave tone, like the rumbling of a rain cloud, thus :– “Râma, I am satisfied with your worship; ask from me what you desire.

47. Râma! You are sent by the gods for the destruction of Râvana and are born as a part incarnate of Nârâyana, in the pure and stainless family of Manu.

48. It is You that, in ancient times, incarnated as a fish for serving the purpose of the Devas and preserved the Vedas by killing the terrible Râksasas for the welfare of the Universe.

49. It is You that incarnated as a tortoise and held aloft the Mandara mountain, churned the ocean and nourished the Devas.

50-51. O Râma! It is You that incarnated, in days of yore, as a boar and held aloft on your teeth this earth. It is You that assumed the form of a Man-Lion and preserved Prahlâda, by tearing asunder the body of Hiranya Kaśipu, by Your sharp nails.

52. O Descent of Raghu! It is You that assumed, in ancient times, the form of a dwarf and served the purpose of the Devas, by deceitfully cheating Balî, the younger of Indra.

53. O son of Kauśalya! You incarnated as the son of Jamadagni in the Brâhmin family, extirpated the line of Ksattriya kings and gave over this whole earth to Bhagavân Kaśyapa Risi.

54. So You are now born as the son of Daśaratha, in the stainless race of Kâkutstha, at the request of the Devas, harassed by Râvana.

55-56. These powerful monkeys, born as Deva incarnates, all endowed with great power by Me, will help you. Your younger Lakshmana is the incarnate of Śesa serpent; this indomitable man will kill undoubtedly Indragit, the son of Râvana.

57. You will kill Râvana; then you would worship Me, with great devotion, in the vernal season and then enjoy your kingdom according to your liking.

58. O best of the Raghus! For full eleven thousand years you will reign on this

earth; and after that reenter your heavenly abode.”

59. Vyâsa said :— O king! Thus saying, the Devî disappeared. Râma Chandra became very glad and, completing that most auspicious ceremony, performed the Bejoyâ Pjâ on the tenth day and gave lots of presents to Nârada and made him go towards the ocean.

60-61. O king! Thus stimulated by the Supreme Energy, the Highest Goddess brought front to front, Râmachandra, the husband of Kamalâ, went to the shores of the ocean, accompanied by Lakshmana and the monkeys. Then he erected the bridge across the ocean and killed Râvana, the enemy of the gods. His unparalleled fame spread everywhere throughout the three Lokas.

62. He who hears with devotion this excellent account of the Devî, will get the greatest happiness in this world, and, in the end, will get the final beatitude. There is no doubt in this.

63. O king! There are extant many other Purânas, but none is equal to this Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam. Know, this is my firm belief.

Here ends the thirtieth chapter on the narration of the Navarâtra ceremony by Nârada and the performance of that by Râma Chandra in the 3rd Adhyâya in Śrî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa. Here ends the Third Book.

The Third Skandha completed.