

Brahmā made an image of the goddess from mud and made Devī assume Her abode in it on the sixth. Brahmā worshipped Devī who had entered the writing leaf on the seventh. By entering the writing leaf the goddess bringing about the destruction of all entered the bow of Rāma for Rāvaṇa's destruction. On Mahāṣṭamī Brahmā adored Devī by various requisite articles of worship as a result Devī was pleased and entered the arrows of Rāma and cut off Rāvaṇa's heads repeatedly. But fresh heads came out from the body of Rāvaṇa in place of those severed and he did not die. On Mahānavamī Brahmā adored Devī by different sorts of bālīs respectfully. Then Devī who is of the form of Vidyā (lore) Herself approached Rāvaṇa in the form of Avidyā (nescience). So Rāvaṇa deluded by Devī did not remember Her. On Rāma's and Brahmā's prayer in the afternoon, Devī Herself gave a weapon (arrow) to Rāma through Brahmā in order to put an end to Rāvaṇa. That arrow discharged by Rāma pierced the heart of Rāvaṇa and took away his vital airs. At the behest of Rāma Indra showered nectar on account of which the monkeys that had died in the battle were enlivened. Vibhīṣana performed the obsequies of Rāvaṇa. Then Rāma accompanied by Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and the Vāṇaras went to a place where Brahmā had worshipped Devī and prostrated before Her devoutly and eulogized Her. Then Rāma accompanied by Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, Vāṇaras, and Vibhīṣana mounted Puṣpaka and returned to Ayodhyā.

CHAPTER - VIII

Essential Nature, Forms, Incarnations and Exploits of Devī

Nature of the goddess :-

Two aspects of it (1) Incorporeal (Amūrta) or Formless aspect.

(2) Corporeal (Mūrta) or Embodied aspect.

With a desire to know the digitless essence of the goddess sage Veda Vyāsa went to the summit of the Himālayas and practised penance filled with devotion to the goddess (1.19).

Thereafter the goddess Śarvāṇī remaining invisible in the sky advised sage Vyāsa to go to Brahmaloṅka where all the Śrutis were there and added that he would come to know about Her digitless essence (1.20-21) there. She also promised him that She would be visible to him being eulogized by the Śrutis and would accomplish his desired object there (1.22).

On hearing it sage Vyāsa went to Brahmaloṅka there and then and after having bowed down to the Vedas asked them about the immutable Brahman (1.23).

On hearing that statement of the sage, the Vedas replied him one by one (1.24).

R̥g Veda stated that the goddess Herself personally told that it was the highest essence wherein all the creatures resided and wherefrom everything started (1.25).

This statement shows that Brahman is the origin of the universe. This shows the influence of Vedānta philosophy as found in the Prasthāna Trayī viz. the Upaniṣads, the

Brahmesūtras and the Bhagavadgītā on the Mābhg.P. The second sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa's Brahmesūtras called Vedānta Sūtras, Uttara Mimāṃsā sūtras, or Śārīraka sūtras refers to this characteristic feature of Brahman viz. Jñānādya sya yataḥ | i.e. That from which proceed the origination etc. of the universe. This happens to be a Tatastha Lakṣaṇa of Brahman i.e. it is a characteristic feature which is distinct from the nature of Brahman and yet Brahman is known by that characteristic feature,

Yajur Veda stated that She who was thoroughly worshipped even by the Lord by means of all sacrifices and from whence we derived authority that was the goddess Herself (1.26).

Thus Yajur Veda stresses the importance of the goddess as Upāsya (one fit to be worshipped) in ritual. It also stresses the importance of the path of action (Karma Mārga) befittingly.

Sāma Veda stated that by Whom this Universe was supported, Who was contemplated by the yogins, by Whom this universe was shone forth that was goddess Durgā, in the form of the Universe (1.27).

Thus Sāma Veda stresses that the goddess was the supporter of the Universe. It also stresses that the goddess was the object of meditation of the yogins, Another important characteristic noted by Sāma Veda was that by whom this Universe was shone forth. Compare - Tasya bhāsē sarvamidaṁ vibhāti | Kāṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.15^d. Lastly Sāma Veda refers to the Pantheistic form of the goddess. Thus Sāma Veda stresses the importance of the path of knowledge (Jñāna Mārga).

Atharva Veda stated that the goddess of the gods whom the people favoured by devotion saw that goddess Durgā was called Parama (highest) Brahman (1.28).

Thus Atharva Veda stresses the importance of the path of devotion (Bhakti Mārga).

Sage Veda Vyāsa remained unsatisfied even after composing eighteen purāṇas, and went to the Himālayas and practised penance. As instructed by a voice from the air of goddess Śarvāṇī Sage Vyāsa went to Brahmaloka in order to know about the digitless essence of the goddess from the Vedas and learnt from the Śrutis that goddess Durgā is the highest Brahman (1.29).

In order to dispel the doubt of Sage Vyāsa, the goddess that is of the nature of light, even though residing in all creatures assumed an independent figure (1.39). This shows three aspects of the nature of the goddess. The first is that she is of the nature of light. The second is that she resides in all creatures. The third is that though she is incorporeal she assumes at Her will a corporeal form.

After the eulogy of the Śrutis the goddess appeared before them ~~and~~ (Śrutis) as well as Veda Vyāsa, in a form which appeared on the back of a lion. She also appeared with a corpse for Her vehicle (1.41). Thus She showed Her two different forms which are respectively worshipped by the followers of Śākta Sāṃpradāya characterised as Dakṣiṇa mārga, and Vāma mārga.

Just as Lords Brāhmā, Janārdana, and Maheśvara are respectively the creator, the preserver and destroyer of the universe, in the same way goddess Maheśvarī is the dispenser of the creation, preservation, and destruction of Crores of insects residing in the different worlds (3.2-3).

Thus Maheśvarī is the citi Śakti i.e. the power of sentiency pervading all living being.¹

The goddess Maheśvarī is formless and assumes a body on account of Her sport (3.4^{ab}). She creates, preserves and destroys this universe. In this manner the world is deluded by Her (3.4^{cd}-5^{ab}).

Thus citiśakti is immanent in all living beings. Though formless or incorporeal she assumes body through sport. Assuming the body on account of Her sport on the part of the goddess is in keeping with the pratyabhijñā theory of Svātantrya of the supreme being. As stated in Pratyabhijñā, the Cit or Parāśamvit eventhough it is without limits in itself it imposes limitations on itself by its own free will. This is the principle of Svātantrya which is a clear evidence of the influence of the Pratyabhijñā system of philosophy on the Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa.

She Herself complete by Her sport became the daughter of Dakṣa formerly (3.5^{cd}). Similarly She became the daughter of Himālaya (3.6^a). These were Her complete manifestations.

1 Pratyabhijñā system of philosophy of Kāśmir considers this citiśakti as the highest principle.

However Her manifestations as Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, and Sāvitrī are partial manifestations (3.6^{bcd}).

As explained by Mahādeva to Nārada, there was Brahman alone in the beginning and there was absence of the object emitting light (e.g. the Sun, the moon, the stars and the fire etc.). The day and night, the directions, the sense objects (sound, touch etc.) as well as any other kind of life were absent (3.11-12).

This echoes the Upaniṣadic statement expressed in the words : ' Sadeva somye dāmagrā āsīdekame vādvitīyam' (Chāndogya up. 6-2-1). Thus the influence of Upaniṣadic thought on Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa becomes evident.

The idea contained in Mahbg.P. 3.11-12 runs parallel to that found in the Nāsadīya Sūkta, Rg Veda 10.129.1-7.

Nature of Parā Prakṛti :-

The stanzas 13 and 14 of Adhyaya 3 of the Mahbg.P. describe the nature of the primordial nature (Parā Prakṛti) as consisting of existence, intelligence, and bliss, of the nature of pure knowledge, eternal, indescribable and digitless omnipresent, Undisturbed, of eternally blissful nature, subtle and devoid of heavyness. Here the Purāṇakāra describes the Parāprakṛti with the attributes which fittingly described Brahman in the Upaniṣadic passages.

The above description of Parāprakṛti is in sharp contrast with the description of Prakṛti (nature) as found in the Sāṃkhya system and which is adopted at places even in the

Upaniṣads. According to the Sāṃkhya concept of Prakṛti, prakṛti or nature is insentient of the nature of three guṇas. (Triguṇātmikā) etc.

Thus the description of Parā Prakṛti contains the attributes normally describing Brahman in the Upaniṣads. The intention of the purāṇakāra is to convey that Brahman and Parā Prakṛti are essentially the same. The Sāṃkhya analysis mentions two distinct principles, sentient Puruṣa on the one hand and the insentient prakṛti (nature) on the other which concept is the primary concept at the base of further vedāntic development. The Vedānta accepted the prakṛti puruṣa concept of Sāṃkhya but Vedānta philosophy insisted upon the idea of the ultimate reality of Brahman giving a secondary place to the prakṛti. The same ultimate reality is named Brahman in the Vedānta philosophy while it is called Śiva by the Śaivas, Viṣṇu by the Vaiṣṇavas and Śakti by the Śāktas. Thus since this purāṇa is a Śākta Purāṇa, it is in the fitness of the things that Śakti is stated to be the creator of the trinity. Thus the superiority of Śakti is emphatically stated.

Nature of Parā Prakṛti :-

Śiva agreed to the statement of Lords Brahmā and Viṣṇu that Satī was of the form of nature (Prakṛtirūpiṇī), eternal, pure made up of Brahman (Brahmamayī), and the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world (12.6).

The characteristics of Brahman are also found in regard to the goddess Who is of the form of nature.

The highest prakṛti desired to create the world at Her own sweet will. Consequently even though formless She willingly assumed a form immediately (3.15). In this manner the purpose of the formless parā prakṛti in assuming a form is stated to be the desire for creation.

Stanzas 16 and 17 of Adhyaya 3 contain the description of the form of the goddess Kālī. She created out of Her own sweet will a puruṣa devoid of consciousness and then transferred Her desire to create (3.18-19^{ab}). Thereafter that person assumed three forms viz. Brāhmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva in accordance with the three guṇas Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Even then the creation did not come into existence. Hence She bifurcated that puruṣa into Jīva (individual self) and parama (highest self). She also sub-divided Her own self into three parts called Māyā Vidyā, and Paramā. She spreads transmigration by deluding as Māyā (3.22). She in Her form as Paramā is the force of pulpitation (3.23^{ab}). Vidyā which is of the nature of philosophy is the cause of cessation of transmigration (3.23^{cd}). That highest goddess appointed Brāhmā as creator, Viṣṇu as preserver and Śiva as destroyer (3.28-31).

Description of the terrific form of Devī :-

The goddess who was pleased with the penance of Dakṣa appeared before him assuming a terrific form which is generally worshipped by followers of Vāmamārgīya Śakte Sāmpṛadāya.

The complexion of the goddess that appeared before Dakṣa was just like Soft Collyrium and She had four arms. She held a sword in one hand and a lotus in another. Her third hand

was in Varada mudrā, and Her fourth hand was in Abhaya mudrā. Her eyes resembled a blue lotus and Her teeth were beautiful. She had put on a garland of skulls. She had Her hair dishevelled and she was decorated with series of jewells. She was riding a lion and had the directions for Her garment. Her lustre equalled the lustre of a hundred suns at the zenith. (4.10^{cd}-13).

The foretelling of the reappearance of the terrific form of the goddess :-

The goddess warned Dakṣa beforehand that when the merit of his penance would be exhausted he would be deficient in his regard for Her and consequently she would reassume Her terrific form and would go back to Her abode (4.18^{cd}-20^{ab}).

At the time of forsaking the sacrificial ground of Dakṣa by Dadhīci and some other sages, Satī residing on the top of Kailāsa along with Lord Śambhu, noticed a decrease in the reverence of Dakṣa for Her and remembered Her promise to Menā to be born as her daughter and decided to abandon Dakṣa and to go to Her proper place (7.78^{cd}-83).

Nārada on his failure to persuade Lord Śiva to go to Dakṣa's sacrifice turned to goddess Satī. As a psychologist per excellence, Nārada inferred correctly that a brilliant goddess like Satī would not tolerate the insult of Her spouse Lord Śiva and reported to Her that all Her divine sisters had come to the sacrifice and were honoured with the gifts of different sorts of ornaments of gold (7.97). He added that

she alone was excluded on account of pride by Her father. Hence She should try to destroy his pride (7.98).

Nārada continued that Lord Śiva being the highest yogī was equal in the matter of His worship or insult and hence He would neither go to that sacrifice nor would create a hindrance in it (7.99).

Satī conceded that even if Lord Śiva was disinclined to go He must allow Her to participate in Her father's sacrifice, as it was not possible for any daughter to remain in her house even on hearing a festival of a great sacrifice in her father's house (8.24^{cd}-26^{ab}). This shows the accommodating attitude of Satī.

Satī expressed Her firm resolve before Lord Śiva to go to Dakṣa's sacrifice and added that she would send for Śiva in case Dakṣa would be ready to honour Him. Otherwise she would destroy the sacrifice (8.28^{cd}-30,42). This shows Satī's resolute mind.

Satī explained that if Dakṣa accomplished his sacrifice disregarding Lord Śiva then nobody would offer Him oblation in good faith on this earth (8.40-41).

On the one hand, the stand taken by Lord Śiva that an uninvited person should not go was correct so also the stand taken by Satī that Śiva's share must be secured in Dakṣa's sacrifice was also equally correct.

Satī's brilliant nature :-

On hearing the remark of Lord Śiva, that a person possessing bad intellect performs a bad deed and accuses another, Satī became angry and considering it to be Her insult decided to show Him, Her prowess as He was accusing Her Who was obtained by Him on request (8.45-46). With the said intention Satī threw an angry look and laughed loudly on beholding which Śiva was frightened and opening His eyes with difficulty saw Her terrible form (8.47-49^{ab}).

Satī assumed a terrible undressed form with blackish hue, four hands, dishevelled hair and lolling tongue screaming frightfully (8.49^{cd}-52) on seeing which Śiva was terribly frightened and ran away into all the ten quarters (8.53,54,56) in spite of Satī's advising Him not to be frightened (8.55). This form assumed by Satī appears to be that of goddess Kālī.

The Appearance of Deśa Mahāvidyās before Lord Śiva :-

On Śiva's finding Her in all the directions in Her terrible form He inquired of Her as to Who was She with blackish hue and where His beloved Satī had gone (8.58-61). Whereupon Satī retorted to Śiva whether He was able to see Her standing in front (8.62^{ab}) and added that the names of the goddesses present there were Kālī, Tārā, Kamalā, Bhuvanēśvarī, chinnaṁastā, Sodāśī Sunderī, Bagalāmukhī, Dhūmāvātī and Nētaṅgī respectively (8.62^{cd}-63).

In this manner on account of the will of goddess Satī the Daśa Mahāvidyās² appeared before Lord Śiva.

However in 8.95 it is mentioned that the form of Kālī mentioned above in 8.49^{cd}-52 mingled with the Tārā form of the goddess at the time of Satī's departure for Dakṣa's sacrifice. At that time the other eight forms of the goddess disappeared all of a sudden (8.96^{ab}).

Satī while introducing to Lord Śiva the ten forms of the goddesses viz. Daśa Mahāvidyās informed Him that the one with black hue and dreadful eyes that was in front of Him was Kali (8.65^{ab}). Thus two main features of goddess Kālī are mentioned here viz. black colour and dreadful eyes.

According to the goddess the one standing over Śiva's head was Tārā of the nature of Mahākālā (8.65^{cd}-66^{ab}). Thus being of the nature of Mahākālā on the part of goddess Tārā is mentioned here.

The terrible chinnamastā was introduced to Śiva as one without a head that was situated on His right hand side (8.66^{cd}-67^{ab}). Being without a head was the main feature of this goddess as mentioned above.

2 For more details about the nature and traits of Daśa Mahāvidyās see "Kalyāṇa Saktiāṅka", Gitā Press, Gorakhpur, 1934, PP.102-112. Also see "Devī-Kośa", Vol.I by P.K. Prabhudesai, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeetha, Pune-2, 1967, PP.405-427 as well as Introduction to Kāmākhya-Tantra by Dr.Biswanarayan Shastri, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Bungalow Road, Jawaharnagar, Delhi-7, 1990, PP.11-15. The Mahbhg. has given the iconography of Daśa Mahāvidyās as stated in the introduction to the Mahbhg. by Dr.Pushpendrekumar P.36.

On Śiva's left there was Bhuvaneśvarī (8.67^{cd}).

In Śiva's rear there was Bagalā, the killer of the enemies (8.68^{ab}). The characteristic feature of goddess Bagalā was Her being a killer of enemies as stated here.

In the South-easter corner of Lord Śiva, the goddess bearing the form of a widow was Dhūmāvatī (8.68^{cd}-69^{ab}). Widowhood was the characteristic feature of goddess Dhūmāvatī as stated here.

In the South-west of Śiva there was Tripuresundarī (8.69^{cd}).

In the North-west of Śiva there was the daughter of Mātanga (8.70^{ab}).

In the North-east of Śiva there was Śoḍaśī (8.70^{cd}).

Then at last the goddess introduced Herself to Lord Śiva as Bhairavī and advised Him not to be afraid (8.71^{ab}).

Instead of the name Kamaḷā mentioned in 8.62^{cd}, the name Bhairavī is mentioned here in 8.71^{ab}.

The goddess assumed a terrific form of Kālī terrifying the whole world as it were at the end of an aeon and rode the chariot (8.101-102^{ab}) drawn by ten thousand lions and brought by the commander of the Pramethas at the behest of Lord Śiva (8.98). That chariot reached the house of Dakṣa in half a moment. On seeing goddess Satī, those remaining in the house of Dakṣa were terrified (8.106).

The citizens of Dakṣa exchanged their opinions expressing their wonder regarding the change of colour of Satī who was formerly having the hue of gold and a pleasing form which was then changed to black colour and a terrific form with fierce eyes putting on the hide of a leopard and possessing four hands (9.31^{cd}-34^{ab}). They suspected the fate of Dakṣa (9.34^{cd}-35^{ab}), thinking that Satī was determined to give Dakṣa, the fruit of Her disregard (9.36). According to them Lord Viṣṇu was helpless in case if that goddess who used to destroy Brahmā and Viṣṇu at the time of dissolution, undertook to destroy the sacrifice (9.37).

Having seen goddess Satī the gods enjoying oblations and the sages, Brhaspati, all trembled and saw Her without winking and gave up their respective functions, just like painted in a picture on cloth (9.39-40).

Having heard the slander of Lord Śiva spread by Dakṣa, Satī became red with anger and thought that even though She was able to reduce to ashes her father along with the gods within a moment She would not do that on account of the fear of patricide but she would delude him along with gods (9.52^{cd}-54).

Creation of Chāyēsati by Satī :-

After having thought like that Satī created a Chāyēsati³ resembling Her form in a moment (9.55) and ordered her to destroy the sacrifice (9.56) by entering into the sacrificial fire, on hearing Śiva's censure from Dakṣa (9.57^{cd}-58^{ab}).

Thus Satī avoided the unrighteous act of committing patricide.

After having said so Satī became invisible and went to the sky (9.61^{cd}).

Lord Brāhmā disclosed to Mahādeva Satī's real nature as Brāhmā, the supporter of the world and pointed out that to think that Satī assumed a body was a delusion and hence Mahādeva should not have done like that (10.70-71^{ab}). Lord Brāhmā further explained to Lord Śiva that that Mahāmāyā immanent in the world established Chāyēsati near the altar of the sacrifice⁴ for the sake of deluding Dakṣa (10.71^{cd}-72^{ab}). According to Him that Chāyēsati entered the fire of sacrifice for the sake of deluding Prajāpati Dakṣa and the original Devī Herself went to the sky (10.72^{cd}-73^{ab}), (11.15^{cd}-16^{ab}).

3 In Śrīmad Bhāgavata IV 4.24-28, Sati Herself burns Her body to ashes by the fire created by intense concentration. Thus there is no reference to the creation of Chāyēsati in Śrīmad Bhāgavata. Perhaps the creation of Chāyēsati is under the influence of the creation of Chāyēsātā in the Kūrmapurāṇa, Uttaravibhāga, Adhyaya 34 and Brāhmaveivarta Purāṇa, Prakṛtikhaṇḍa, Adhyaya 24, and Devī Bhāgavata Skandha 9, Adhyaya 16. See the article "Chāyēsati Ane Chāyēsātā" by the present writer which appeared in "Svādhyāya" Vol.26 No.3-4 Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1989, PP.295-300.

4 Cf. Sā tu Dakṣavimohāya mahāmāyā Jaganmayī // 10.71^{cd}
Chāyēsati yejñakundāsannidhau sthāpitā teyā / 10.72^{ab}

Lords Brahmā and Viṣṇu tried to console Lord Śiva who was afflicted by separation from Satī stating that the goddess was of the nature of Pūrṇa Brahma, was the eternal mother of the world, the great lore, the creator of the universe and of the nature of universal consciousness (11.3). Thus light is thrown on the real nature of the goddess. According to Lords Brahmā and Viṣṇu all including themselves were deluded by Her Supernatural power (Māyā) and that abandonment of the body by Her was the effect of illusion (11.4). Thus the deluding capacity of the supernatural power of the goddess is mentioned.

Lord Mahēśvara became Mr̥tyuñjaya (conqueror of death) on account of the good grace of the goddess. Hence the abandonment of Her body was merely a delusion and not a reality (11.5).

The benignant form of the goddess as Satī :-

The highest goddess was born a daughter to Prasūti the wife of Dakṣa on an auspicious day (4.23). That Pūrṇā Prakṛti was white complexioned and Her eyes were long resembling a full blown blue lotus. Her lustre equalled the lustre of a crore Suns. That auspicious faced one was shining with eight arms (4.24-25^{ab}). This is the benignant form of the goddess which is generally worshipped by the followers of Dakṣiṇamūrgīya Śākta Sāṃpradāya.

Gaṅgāprēdurbhāve :-

Menā gave birth to a daughter with all Her limbs beautiful and with charming face on the third day of the bright half of Vaiśākha at mid-day (13.6^{cd}-7^{ab}). Gaṅgā was white complexioned with charming lotus like face, three eyes and four hands (13.7^{cd}-8^{ab}).

Pārvatījanma :-

Menākā, the wife of the king of mountains gave birth to a daughter on an auspicious day Who was having a face as beautiful as a lotus and was resplendent (15.6^{cd}-7^{ab}). She was possessing a divine form with three eyes, eight hands and large eyes and with a crescent as Her crown and shining like a crore of rising Suns (15.9).

Pārvatī's Appearance before the Trinity :-

The goddess on seeing the three great gods prostrating appeared before Them in a moment by Her grace, seated on a throne studded with jewels (36.44) and assuming eighteen (18) hands with a crescent on Her head and with a blooming face and smiling with beautiful teeth with three eyes and having a flower garland adorning Her breast (36.45-46^{ab}).

Incarnation of goddess Lakṣmī (as Sītā) :-

The goddess Lakṣmī also incarnated as the most beautiful daughter of king Janaka on the earth (37.20^{cd}-21^{ab}).

Ayonijā Sītā :-

Out of the four daughters Sītā was obtained by Janaka while ploughing the field for preparing the ground for the sacrifice. While Ūrmilā was Janaka's legitimate daughter. Whereas the other two were the daughters of his brother (38.12^{cd}-13). Thus Sītā was not born from the womb of a mother. Sītā's birth was quite extra-ordinary as stated in Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa Gita Press ed., Bālākāṇḍa 66.13^{cd}-14.

Vide :- Athame kṛṣataḥ kṣetreṇ lāṅgalādutthitā tataḥ || I.66.13^{cd}
 Kṣetram śodhayatē labdhā nāmnā sīteti viśrutā |
 Bhūtalādutthitā sā tu vyaverdhata mamātmajā || I.66.14.

Sītā Born from the womb of Mandodarī :-

Sītā, the paragon of beauty was born from the womb of Mandodarī and was a daughter of Rāvaṇa, as She was an offspring of his wife (42.64).

Contrast the above statement with the statement Ayonijā Sītā (Bhūtalādutthitā) as made in Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa I.66.13^{cd}-14 as well as in the Mabhg. P.38.12^{cd} since it is stated here in 42.64 that Sītā was born from the womb of Mandodarī.

Sītā's being born as the daughter of Mandodarī in the absence of Rāvaṇa is mentioned in Keshmīri Rāmāyaṇa composed by Divākara Prakāśa Bhatt at the end of the 18th Century A.D.

In Tibbatī and Khotānī Rāmāyaṇas (800-900 A.D.) also the abandoning of the daughter of Rāvaṇa on account of inauspicious horoscope is mentioned. It is quite possible that

Sītā's being the daughter of Mandodarī as mentioned in the Mēbhg.P.42.64 might be under the influence of Tibbatī Rāmāyaṇa as Kāmarupa (Assam) and Tibet are geographically in proximity. In many other works where there are references to the above incident it can be inferred that they must have taken it either from Tibbatī, Khotānī Rāmāyaṇas or from the Mēbhg.P. which is next to them in point of time (1000 to 1100 A.D.).

Sītā-a chaste, Devoted, Loyal and Virtuous Wife :-

Sītā's accompanying Rāma in exile (38.19) reveals her nature as a dutiful wife who voluntarily accompanies her husband simply to participate in his miseries.

Sītā-a Paragon of Beauty in the Three Worlds :-

Śūrpanakhā informed Khara that Rāma's wife also had come there along with Him whose beauty is such that nobody must have ever seen or heard in the heaven, on the earth, and in the nether region (38.39-40^{ab}).

Rāvana tied by the fetters of Kāla (destiny) on hearing Śūrpanakhā's words about the exquisite beauty of Sītā thought of abducting Her (38.45).

Hanumān introduced Himself to the goddess as a servant of Rāma Who had come to Lankā to search out Jānakī Who was Lakṣmī incarnate (39.22).

The Words supposedly uttered by Rāma made Sītā anxious Who sent Lakṣmaṇa to His help :-

Thinking it to be the word uttered by Rāmācandra the daughter of Janaka immediately sent Lakṣmaṇa towards Rāma (38.49).

The Abduction of Sītā :-

In the meanwhile Daśānana came and abducted Jānaki forcibly Who was another form of the goddess Lakṣmi (38.50). Despite Sītā's Ability to Burn Rāvaṇa to Ashes She Refrained from so doing as he always prayed to the goddess :-

The goddess of the gods even though She was able to reduce Rāvaṇa to ashes at that moment, She did not do that as She was always prayed to in Her form of the goddess (38.51). Sītā Brilliant like the Burning Fire made it impossible for Rāvaṇa to Rape Her :-

Rāvaṇa placed that chaste woman in the beautiful forest Aśoka, but could not violate or rape Her Who was brilliant like blazing fire (38.54).

Devī maintains relationship with the followers of righteousness:-

That goddess never forsakes a person following the path of duty and in the matter of abandoning a sinner she does not consider near relations e.g. father etc. (11.8) i.e. Her relation is solely dependent on duty and that it is not a wordly relation (11.9^{ab}; 44.15^{ab}).

The goddess is gracious towards those who follow the path of righteousness and punishes those who follow unrighteousness. She maintains relations with persons commensurate with their performance of righteousness. So she abandoned Dakṣa, Her father (11.10) who used to censure Lord Śiva. In order to honour the worldly relationship the goddess did not think it fit to chastise Dakṣa whose daughter She was and hence She, the giver of the fruits of righteousness and action abandoned that sinner and went to Her own abode (11.11-13^{ab}).

That Bhavānī Bhuvaneśvarī Who is one without a second, and Who is the best of all is the bestower of victory to the followers of the path of righteousness and is the destroyer of the sinners (42.66).

Lokasaṃgraha practised by Devī :-

The goddess Satī, a teacher of righteousness wanted to set an example of tolerance towards one's father. Thus instead of punishing Dakṣa, She abandoned Her body for the sake of maintenance of the world order (11.14-15^{ab}).

In this manner according to the conception of the performance of actions in order to teach people the path of righteousness, to maintain the world order, the highest goddess also performs certain actions in keeping with the conception of Lokasaṃgraha explained in detail in Bhagavadgītā III.20-26.

The two great gods Brahmā and Viṣṇu in their attempt to console Lord Mahādeva advised Him to abandon grief as it was Chāyāsati that had entered fire and not the real one Who had disappeared through supernatural power and had gone to the sky (11.16).

In this manner the eternal existence of the goddess is set forth. The characteristics existence, intelligence and bliss are as much exclusive to the highest goddess as they are to Brahman. Even though the three great gods come next in rank to Her yet Lord Śiva is nearest and dearest to Her.

Advaita - the real nature of the goddess :-

Advaita (non-duality) is the highest nature of the goddess as definitely decided by the Vedas and the Āgamas and that is known by the knowledge of Brahme (i.e.Veda) and is extremely hidden (11.22).

Advaita - the real nature of the goddess - transformed to Dvaita :-

The goddess assumed a body for the sake of the creation of the world and thus changed Her non-dual nature into a dual one. The Śrutis imagined two elements Pradhāna (Prakṛti) and Puruṣa (Ātmā). The Puruṣa is incomplete without Her (Prakṛti), just like a dead body. Consequently the goddess is considered to be the highest of all gods (11.24).

The forms and deeds of the goddess - unthinkable :-

As the intellect of the three gods was imperfect they were unable to eulogize the auspicious goddess whose deeds and forms were unthinkable (11.25). Rāma in His eulogy of Devī expressed similar ideas (44.7). The three great gods conceded that they were created and destroyed on account of Her will and hence no one in the three worlds was capable to praise Devī (11.26).

The deluding Supernatural Power of Devī :-

All knowers were deluded by the Supernatural power of the goddess just like human beings and hence even the three great gods were unable to praise Her (11.27; 42-56^{ab}). The goddess was the consciousness, the intelligence and the power of the triad (Trimūrti) and without Her all of them were like dead bodies. Hence Her praise was not possible for them (11.28). Devī was unknowable even by the three great gods who were bound by three guṇas and were deluded by Her superhuman power just like the ignorant people (11.29; 42.56^{cd}).

Merciful nature of Devī :-

On hearing ~~th~~her eulogy by the trinity and on observing the despair of the gods and the uneasiness of Lord Śiva the goddess appeared in the sky resembling the form of Kālī that had come to the sacrifice of Dakṣa and its shadow that had entered fire (11.32-33). This shows the merciful nature of the goddess.

The goddess advised Lord Śiva to take to courage and promised Him that She would obtain Him again as the daughter of the Himālayas born from the womb of Menā (11.34-35). Thus Devi tried to console Lord Śiva. She further continued that Lord Maheśvara was never abandoned by Her and that the region of the heart of Lord Śiva was the highest resort of goddess Mahākālī (11.36). Consequently Lord Śiva was Mahākāla bringing about the destruction of the world. She conveyed to Him that He had told Her something out of pride of superiority due to which offence She would not remain in the form of His wife for sometime (11.37^{cd}-38).

In order that Lord Śiva may obtain Her again in a form more beautiful than the previous one, Devī advised Śiva to keep the body of the shadow of the Devī that had entered the sacrificial fire on His head and to pray to the goddess and to move over the earth (11.40). She continued that that body will fall on the ground in pieces and wherever those pieces will fall, there will come into existence a Mahāpīṭha destroying sins (11.41). Lord Viṣṇu undertook to cut the limbs of Chāyāsati by means of His discus Sudarśana (11.71^{cd} - 74^{ab}) who was supported by the goddess for the sake of protection of the world (11.74^{cd}-75).

The Origin and greatness of the Mahāpīṭhas :-

The cutting of the limbs of Chāyāsati by means of the discus Sudarśana by Lord Viṣṇu and their falling on the surface of the earth, and turning into Mahātīrthas, Muktikṣetras and

Siddhipīṭhas are described in 11.76-81^{ab}. The sacrifices and worship etc. pertaining to the goddess which are performed in the Śaktipīṭhas yield a fruit a crore times more than ordinary worship and sacrifice (11.81^{cd}-82^{ab}).

After having repeatedly uttered the name of the goddess in Kāmākhyā pīṭha, a person attains a direct vision of the goddess and a sinner becomes free from the sin of committing a Brahmicide (11.82^{cd}-83^{ab}).

The limbs of the Chāyāsati which fell on the ground turned immediately into stones for the sake of the good of the people (11.83^{cd}-84^{ab}). In this manner assuming the form of stones of the limbs of the goddess facilitated the need to worship Her on the part of the people.

Nārada sent by Lord Viṣṇu informed Lord Śiva that Viṣṇu, the protector of the three worlds on realizing a great calamity wielded the discus and threw it and cut to pieces the body of Chāyāsati gradually in order to pacify Him (11.101^{cd}-102). Wherever the pieces of that body fell on the ground there Mahāpīṭhas like Kāmarūpe etc. came into existence (11.103). For details about Mahā(Śakti) pīṭhas see Appendix 1.

Nārada continued that formerly that goddess, the sustainer of the world, who was worshipped by Śiva had told that Her body would fall on the ground (in pieces) for the sake of the glory as Mahāpīṭhas and hence Viṣṇu did accordingly (11.104-105).

Thereafter on seeing the organ of generation of the goddess fallen in Kāmarūpa, Lord Girīśa (Śiva) became anxious on account of lust and had horripilation on His body (11.113) and that organ of generation of the Devī seen by Śambhu with lustful eye began to enter the nether world breaking the earth as it were (11.114). Lord Śaṅkara on seeing that assumed the form of a mountain Himself by a part of Satī and supported the organ of generation of Devī joyfully (11.115). In all those pīṭhas like Kāmarūpa etc. Śiva Himself presided over in the form of Pāśāṇa Liṅga and enjoyed (11.116).

Śiva remembered the incident in which Devī had informed Him that after having practised penance in the Yonipīṭha, He would obtain Maheśvarī again (11.117). Thereafter Śiva became calm and thoughtful regarding Yoga (11.118^{ab}).

Lord Mahādeva narrates to Nārada how Satī became bifurcated and became the daughter of Himavat from the womb of Menakā as Gaṅgā by one part assuming liquid form in order to remain on His (Śambhu's) head (13.1-2). Afterwards Satī became Gaurī a complete wife of Śiva who became half of the body of Maheś on account of Her affection (13.3). On hearing about the birth of Gaṅgā, even a sinner who has committed Brahmicide is liberated in a moment (13.4).

Gaṅgāpradurbhāva :-

Menā gave birth to a daughter with all Her limbs beautiful and with charming face on the third day of the bright half of Vaiśākha at mid-day (13.6-7^{ab}).

Gaṅgā was white complexioned with charming face, three eyes and four hands (13.7^{cd}-8^{ab}).

When Nārada visited the house of Himavat, he inquired of him whether he knew his daughter in reality whereupon Himavat replied that he understood Her to be his daughter endowed with auspicious marks and possessing beautiful limbs and added that nothing special was noticed by him (13.20^{cd}-21^{ab}). Thereupon the sage Nārada disclosed to Himavat the real identity of the goddess Who was subtle *mūla prakṛti* Who had become Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa formerly had been born by Her part as his daughter with a view to obtain Lord Hara as Her husband (13.21^{cd}-22). Nārada advised Himavat to fix his daughter's name as Gaṅgā, as she was a protector of the worlds and the destroyer of great sins (13.23). The sage also advised him to hand Her over to Lord Brahmā on His request and added that Brahmā would take Her to Svargapura and would respectfully hand over Her to Lord Śiva (13.25-27^{ab}).

On Nārada's informing Brahmā about the goddess's becoming Gaṅgā by Her part Lord Brahmā predicted that She would marry Mahēśa as She was His former wife (13.31 and 33). Brahmā was already perplexed as regards the means to pacify Lord Śaṅkara as He was angry with the other two great gods because Lord Hari had cut off the body of Ohāyāsati held on His head by Śiva formerly (13.35^{cd} and 36^{cd}-37^{ab}). Sage Nārada advised Brahmā to take Gaṅgā to Svargapurī and after having called Lord Śambhu He should arrange for their marriage ceremoniously (13.40). Nārada stated further that Gaṅgā would assume liquid

form and would remain on the head of Lord Hera as Chāyāsati was. Whereupon Maheshvara would be pleased (13.41^{cd}-42^{ab}). In this manner Nārada points out a means of winning the favour of Lord Hera.

Lord Brahmā disclosed to Himālaya that Lord Śambhu had become an offender as He considered His Lordship over Satī to be absolute, as a result Satī got angry with Him and abandoning Him, went to the place of Dakṣa (13.78).

This is one of the reasons why Satī left Śiva and went to Her father Dakṣa's sacrifice inspite of being prohibited by Śiva. Śiva's notion of absolute overlordship over Satī was His offence against Her.

She abandoned Dakṣa also who was always censuring Lord Śiva. Thus She abandoned both of them assuming the form of Chāyā (Shadow) which was the dead form of the goddess that was eternal, complete and constituted of Brahman (13.79-80).

Lord Brahmā narrated to Himālaya in brief the incidents which were connected with the cutting of the limbs of Chāyāsati with the discus by Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva's getting angry with Lord Viṣṇu and the gods. He also disclosed to Himālaya that Gaṅgā was the former wife of Lord Śiva and foretold that she would again obtain Lord Śiva as Her husband (13.81-86^{ab}).

Lord Brahmā explained to Himevat his plan to take Gaṅgā to Svargapura and to hand over Her to Lord Śiva in

marriage (13.87-88^{ab}) in order that Lord Śiva might be pleased with the gods. Compare Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa (Gitā Press Edition), I. 35.17-19. Brahmā persuasively informed Himālaya that the goddess Who is going to be born in toto as his daughter would be respectfully handed over to Lord Śiva by Himavān in marriage (13.88^{cd}-89^{ab}).

Himālaya gave expression to his feeling of unbearable grief on account of the separation from Gaṅgā (13.91). Thereupon Gaṅgā consoled him and requested him to hand Her over to Brahmā and assured him that neither she was away from him nor he was away from Her (13.93-94^{ab}). Thereafter Gaṅgā went near Brahmā in order to obtain Lord Śiva as Her husband (13.95).

Pārvatījanma :-

In compliance with the earnest request of Lord Śiva to the goddess to take another birth to end His separation from Her, the goddess that was of the nature of Pūrṇa Brahma Herself entered the womb of Menakā and was born on an auspicious day (15.5^{cd}-6^{ab}).

The goddess was possessing a divine form with three eyes, eight hands and with a crescent as Her crown with large eyes and shining like a crore of rising suns (15.9.40).

The Himavān considered Her to be the eternal, subtle, prakṛti (nature) that had been born on account of Her sport (15.10^{ab}).

While Himavān requested the goddess in the form of his daughter to reveal Her real identity to him (15.15), the goddess replied him that she was the highest power (Śakti) who resorted to Lord Maheśvara and was of the form of eternal Sovereignty and knowledge directing everything (15.16).

She was the giver of release to all, the fore-ordainer of creation, maintenance, and destruction of the worlds the mother of the world, and the mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa (15.17).

She was residing in the internal organ of all creatures was eternal, of the form of eternal bliss, of the form of Brahman, the ruler and the saviour (deliverer, the redeemer), from the ocean of transmigratory existence (15.18). Thus slokas 15-18 reveal Vedantic concept of the goddess. In this manner the real nature of the goddess is fully described.

While Himālaya requested the goddess to show him Her real form (15.20). The goddess replied him that he should know Her to be constituted of all gods and added that she bestowed a divine eye on him and advised him to see Her sovereign form and to cut the doubt of his heart (15.21). This episode appears to be a reflection of a similar one in the Bhagavadgītā XI. 8 in which Kṛṣṇa bestows a divine eye on Arjuna. After imparting the highest knowledge to the best of mountains the goddess showed him Her divine Māheśvarī form (15.22). Compare with Viśvarupadarśana of Bhagavadgītā XI.9-49.

Her form was shining like a crore of moons with a crescent as Her crown and with matted hair on Her head and holding a trident in one of Her hands and Her another hand was in Varada mudrā (15.23).

Her form was terrific, awe-inspiring and lustrous like the thousands of universal fires with five faces, three eyes and with a Cobra for Her sacred thread putting on the hide of a leopard and adorned with the king cobra (15.24-25^{ab}). This is the highest form of the goddess which is similar to the form of Lord Maheśvara with Whom she is inseparable.

That eternal goddess Who was of the form of universe assumed another form which was like the autumnal moon with Her head adorned with a beautiful crown and holding a conch, a discus, a mace and a lotus in four hands putting on a divine garland and garments and anointed with divine unguents with three eyes saluted by a throng of the best of yogis and with delicate lotus like feet having hands and feet and eyes and heads and faces everywhere (15.27-29). This is Devī's special form as Sarasvatī (Brahmānī).

The paraphernalia held in the four hands by Brahmānī are wrongly stated to be the same as those held by Vaiṣṇavī in Her four hands.

The goddess withdrew that form on Himavān's request to show him another form and assumed another divine form which was bluish like the petal of a blue lotus and decorated by a Vanamālā and holding a conch, a discus, a mace, and a lotus in

Her four hands (15.33-34). This is Devī's special form as Lakṣmī (Vaiṣṇavī).

Eulogizing the Vaiṣṇavī form of the goddess Himālaya requested Her to be pleased with him (15.35-36) Who was the resort of the universe, the ruler of the universe, and without whom there is nothing in this world and Who is Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Girīśa, and Lord Dhātā and also the highest power. He adduced that Her deeds were unthinkable and unknown even to Lord Brahmā etc. (15.37).

The Various Forms of the Goddess Experienced in life :-

The goddess is Svāhā causing satisfaction on the part of gods as well as Svadhā causing satisfaction on the part of manes. She is Havya, Kavya, Niyama (Regular practice), sacrifice, penance, sacrificial fees, the fruit in the form of heaven etc. and the giver of all sorts of fruits and of the nature of the highest god (15.38).

Mahāmāyā in the Form of Manes in Pitrpakṣa :-

Rāma thought that the very same goddess Mahāmāyā was of the form of manes in that fortnight (in Pitrpakṣa) (40.15^{cd}).

Vedantic concept of the nature of the Goddess :-

The form of the goddess that is most subtle, higher than the high, and is spoken of as of the nature of pure Brahman by the yogins, indescribable by speech, unthinkable and undaunted and is a seed of the three worlds, to that form Himālaya bowed down for protection (15.39).

Menakā also was astonished to know Her to be of the nature of Brahman. She added that this world was created by Her and that She was the giver of that fruit and that she was of the form of resort of everything and that She pervaded everything (15.49,51). Thus the omnipresence of the goddess is stated.

According to the instructions of the goddess to Himālaya, She alone has assumed all forms Herself. She Herself is of the figure of existence, intelligence, and bliss. She adds that the bodies of the denizens of heaven are covered by Her part (15.65).

The essential characteristics of the goddess are the same as those of Brahman. The embodied forms of the denizens of heaven are the splendour (Vibhūtis) of the goddess.

The Attributeless form of the goddess-worthy of meditation by those desiring release :-

On Himālaya's inquiring from goddess Pārvatī about the sort of Her form that should be meditated upon by those desiring release (18.2^{ab}), the goddess replied that Her form is digitless (Niṣkāla), subtle, beyond speech and extremely pure, attributeless, the highest light, all pervading and the cause of everything (18.4). Her form is absolute, supportless and of the form of existence, intelligence and bliss which should be meditated upon by aspirants desiring release for the sake of freedom from the bondage of the body (18.5). Compare the attributes describing Brahman in similar words in Muṇḍakopaniṣad I.1. 6 and Śvetāśvatara^o VI.19.

Vibhūties of the goddess :-

From 18.6 onwards the goddess Pārvatī describes to Himālaya Her Vibhūties in the manner of the description of Vibhūti yoga found in BG. X. 19-42.

The goddess is good intellect in those endowed with intellect and good smell in the earth, juice in waters and light in the moon (18.6). The goddess is austerity in those who practice austerity and She is the light of the fire. Moreover She is the strength which is without passion and attachment etc. in the persons endowed with strength (18.7). Compare BG.VII.9^a, 8^a, 8^b, 9^d, 9^b, 11^{ab}.

Among all the actions the goddess is meritorious deed and She is Gāyatrī among the metres and Praṇava in the midst of Bījākṣara mantras (18.8).

The goddess is lust that is not antagonistic to one's own duty (18.9^{ab}). Compare BG.VII.11^{cd}. Thus those other conditions of goodness, passion and darkness which have come into existence from the goddess are under the control of the goddess and are in the goddess (18.9^{cd}-10^{ab}). Compare BG.VII.12.

Thus those who are deluded by Māyā, they do not know the all pervading, non-dual, immutable (Avyaya) and highest form of the goddess (18.11). Those who devoutly worship the goddess, they overcome this Māyā (18.12^{ab}). Even the Śrutis viz. Rg etc. do not know the highest splendour of the goddess (18.12^{cd}).

For the sake of creation the goddess has bifurcated Her form by Her own will in the form of a woman and a man (18.13). This will of the goddess is Her Svātantrya.

The non-duality of Śiva and Śakti :-

Śiva is the Pradhāna Puruṣa and Śakti is the highest Śivā. The Yogins knowing the essence say that Brahman is of the nature of Śiva and Śakti (18.14) which is the highest essence (18.15^{ab}).

The goddess creates this world moveable as well as immoveable by assuming the form of Brahmā (18.15^{cd}). At the end, the goddess destroys the world by Her sweet will by assuming the form of Mahārudra (18.16^{ab}). For the sake of bringing the wicked under control, the goddess assumes the form of Viṣṇu, the highest Puruṣa and protects the whole world after being incarnated again and again on the earth in the form of Rāma etc. (18.16^{cd}-17).

By the main form of the nature of Śakti, the goddess kills the demons again and again and protects the world (18.18). Without that form the Puruṣa is unable to do anything on His own (18.19^{ab}). All these forms and those others assumed for the time being are to be understood as gross forms. While the subtle form is already mentioned formerly (18.19^{cd}-20^{ab}).

Himālaya desired to know from the goddess that gross form of Her out of many by resorting to which one becomes the recipient of release (18.23).

Pantheism :-

The goddess replied to Himālaya that this whole universe is pervaded by Her g̃ross form (18.25^{ab}). Therein the form of the goddess bestows release immediately and hence that is to be worshipped most (18.25^{cd}).

The Ten Mahāvidyās The Bestowers of Release :-

Out of the different forms of the goddess, the Mahāvidyās are the givers of release. Goddess Pārvatī enumerates their names before Himālaya (18.26) as follows. Mahākālī, Tārā, Śoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Bagalā, Chinnā, Mahātripurasunderī, Dhūmāvatī, Mātāṅgī are the bestowers of salvation to the human beings (18.27-28^{ab}). He who worships these forms with highest devotion doubtlessly attains release (18.28^{cd}). Devī's Śaktyātmaka form is the giver of salvation without effort (18.34).

The goddess is omnipresent and hence is the giver of the fruit of all sorts of sacrifices (18.36^{ab}).

Nārada requested Maheśvara to describe in details how the goddess could take away half the body of the enemy of cupid (20.3).

For 20.3^{ab} compare Premā Śarīrādheharām Karasya || Kumārasambhava. I.50^d

Lord Mahādeva replied to Nārada that nobody is capable to know the Māyā of that goddess by Whose highest Māyā the whole universe is deluded (20.4).

Once upon a time Nārada visited Himālaya with a view to see the goddess Maheśvarī and foretold him that his daughter would become a beloved wife of Lord Śambhu snatching away half of His body on account of love (20.19). Nārada added that Lord Hera would become Ardhanārīśvara by Her alone (20.20). Nārada advised Himālaya to give away his daughter to Lord Maheśa as She had been the daughter of Dakṣa and a former wife of Lord Śiva (20.21).

Unique conjugal love of Śiva and Śivā :-

The conjugal love between these two (Śiva and Śivā) would be such as cannot be found between any husband and wife in the past, present or future (20.22). Accompanied by Her, Lord Śiva would perform many tasks of the gods and She would give birth to a son endowed with great strength and valour (20.23), a warrior equalling whom in strength was not born in the past, nor would be born in future (20.24^{ab}). In reality, this daughter alone would delude Lord Hera since this Mahāmāyā which deludes the whole world has been born (20.34). Lakṣmī deludes Viṣṇu and Śivā deludes Śiva (20.35^{ab}). And that Mahākālā who is a great Yogī in His mystic trance observes forever the goddess Mahākālī residing in His own self (20.35^{cd}-36^{ab}).

Goddess Pārvatī declared Her decision before Himālaya to approach Lord Chandraśekhara and to delude Him in order that He might give up yoga and might accept Her as His wife (21.49).

While consoling Menā, Her mother, Pārvatī besought Menā not to worry about Her on Her going to a forest and added that She was the primordial nature and was Herself made up of eternal bliss, and thus was not fit to be grieved (21.55). The goddess Pārvatī told Menā that She was Mahākālī residing in a crematory and having a dead body for Her beat and hence She had no misery either in a forest or in a house (21.56). She had no fear in an isolated place and so Menā should take to courage. She assured her that She would definitely come back again after deluding Lord Mahādeva (21.57). Pārvatī further told Menā that She would approach in the proximity of Lord Śiva after having obtained Him as Her husband (21.58^{ab}).

The Reason of Pārvatī's getting the name Umā :-

On hearing the above statement of Pārvatī giving rise to fear, Menā said "Umā", hence She was named Umā (21.58^{cd}-59^{ab}).

On observing cupid turn away from deluding Lord Śiva goddess Maheśvarī (Pārvatī) smiled and got up to delude Maheśa (22.91). At that time the three eyed god gave up meditation and observed Pārvatī without winking (22.93-94^{cd}).

Pārvatī's Teasing Lord Śiva :-

The goddess Pārvatī smiled and put a question to Lord Mahādeva in the wilderness (23.5). She asked Lord Śiva that He was practising penance for long in order to obtain the primordial nature in the form of Herself, as His wife. Hence the assassination of cupid was purposeless (23.6). On the

destruction of Cupid what purpose would remain with wife on Śiva's part ? The destruction of Cupid is the characteristic feature of the yogins (23.7).

Pārvatī's Showing Her Kālī form to Lord Śiva to evince Her Being Satī :-

Lord Śiva requested Pārvatī to show Him Her Kālī form which She had assumed at the time of the destruction of Dakṣa yajña, in case She were Satī dearest to Him as His vital airs (23.15-16).

On the request of Lord Śiva, the goddess Pārvatī assumed the terrible form of Kālī black like a heap of soft collyrium, which She had formerly assumed at the time of the sacrifice of Dakṣa (23.17). The goddess Kālī was without garments, oozing blood, with terrific long eyes and with Her chest decorated with a pair of plump high breasts (23.18). She was dreadful on account of Her hair kept untied and reaching the feet, with Her tongue lolling and decorated with shining teeth and nails (23.19). She looked beautiful by long garland of skulls extending up to the knees (23.20^{cd}-21^{ab}).

After being eulogized by the 'Lalitāsahasranāmastotra' by Lord Śiva, goddess Pārvatī also continued to practise penance there (24.2^{cd}) meditating upon Lord Śiva till three thousand years passed (24.3^{b-d}).

Soon after the completion of the nuptial rites, Lords Brāhmā and Viṣṇu approached Lord Mahēśvara and Pārvatī and reminded Him that His wife Pārvatī was goddess Satī who was ancient and eternal goddess (28.19-21^{ab}).

Shyness - a characteristic feature of goddess Pārvatī :-

Lord Brahmā and other gods praised the goddess Pārvatī that She was the mother of the three worlds including the gods and Lord Hara was their father and requested Her to protect the earth and be pleased with them as She Herself was of the nature of shyness (30.2).

The Attributeless and Immanent Aspects of the goddess :-

As stated by the gods Goddess Pārvatī was the self, the Brahman devoid of three guṇas and She Herself was sporting thus in the world after transforming Her own self as the women and men on the earth in keeping with their respective qualities whom the peoples call the wife of the destroyer of cupid (30.3).

Prowess of the goddess - Her Omnipotence :-

Lord Viṣṇu asked Brahmā to do the needful to obtain the favour of the goddess in order to conquer the enemy (36.29). He (Viṣṇu) further added that He was unable to do anything as long as Kātyāyanī was in Rāvaṇa's favour (36.30^{cd} and 31^{cd}; 42.7). This shows the omnipotence of the goddess. Even Lord Viṣṇu accepts His helplessness in the matter of vanquishing Rāvaṇa as long as the goddess Kātyāyanī remained in Lankā.

According to Lord Brahmā all the three great gods were only instrumental in the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world as the goddess was the real cause of the three states (36. 36,35).

When that sinner Rāvaṇa forcibly abducted chaste Sītā, Lakṣmī incarnate, Who was another form of the goddess for the

sake of enjoyment at that time itself She entered the city of that wicked one in the form of calamity for his destruction (42.30-31).

The goddess emphatically told Brahmā that She was the controller of the opponent of righteousness as well as unrighteousness definitely in the three worlds (42.53). According to Her fire was ordained as the fifth face of Brahmā and when oblations are offered in it all the gods get eternal satisfaction (42.54).

The goddess's Providing Guidelines for the course of Action to End Rāvāṇa :-

The goddess gave Her consent to bring about the destruction of Rāvāṇa provided She got a cause (36.60). However She Herself was reluctant to kill Rāvāṇa as She wanted that Brahmā's boon should prove true (36.61^{abc}). The goddess promised Viṣṇu about Her support when He would be born as a human being and would try to kill Rāvāṇa (36.61^d-62^{ab}). She foretold that Kamalā (Lakṣmī) Who was born from a part of Pārvatī would be born as a woman immediately after Viṣṇu's taking birth as a human being (36.62^{cd}-63^{ab}).

The lascivious Rāvāṇa would abduct Her Who was another form of goddess Pārvatī desiring sexual intercourse (36.63^d-64^{ab}). On Her entering Leṅkā, the goddess would quit it with the approval of Lord Śiva for Rāvāṇa's destruction (36.64^{cd}-65). Rāvāṇa would meet his destruction as a result of disregarding Lakṣmī Who was another form of goddess Pārvatī (36.66).

The goddess predicted that Vasistha would teach Viṣṇu's incarnation in human form a sacred formula (Devī Mantra) (38.1-2^{ab}) which He should repeat in the battle for the sake of His own protection and for the destruction of Rāvaṇa (36.68^{cd}-69) when He would be born as a human being in the solar race (36.68^{ab}).

The goddess further advised Viṣṇu to remember Her at the time of discharging arrows towards Rāvaṇa and assured Him about His victory (36.71; 42.9). She further informed Viṣṇu that He would be able to cross the ocean along with the monkeys and would approach Laṅkā due to Her good grace (36.72). The goddess revealed to Viṣṇu the process of worshipping Her earthen image on the sea coast in autumn in keeping with the laid down ceremony as taught by Brahmā which would enable Viṣṇu to kill Rāvaṇa (36.73-74).

Viṣṇu raised a doubt as to why the goddess should abandon Laṅkā in spite of Rāvaṇa's steady devotion for and remembering Her (36.77). Viṣṇu was also perplexed as to how He would be able to slay Rāvaṇa who was a devotee of the goddess remembering Her in the battle as generally such persons are protected by Lords Śaṁbhu, Viṣṇu and Śaṁena (36.80,79).

Pārvatī removed Viṣṇu's doubt by saying that he who remembers Her with devotion in calamity, even though troubling the world, in his case the fruit which accrues pertains to the other world and not to this world (36.83). On the other hand, one who remembers the goddess devoutly without envying the

whole world is protected by Her in both the worlds (36.84). Thus according to the goddess Rāvaṇa's remembering Her would be futile from the temporal point of view (36.85^{cd}-86^a). She added that after enjoying his desired objects of enjoyment for long, Rāvaṇa would obtain salvation which is the highest fruit in the case of an embodied self (36.86^{cd}-87). In this way the goddess removed the doubts of Viṣṇu by stating that She would not protect Rāvaṇa and ordered Him to be born as a human being (36.89).

Hanumān's encounter with Lankinī as described in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Sundarakāṇḍa 3.20-51 is dropped in the Mahāg.P. Adhyaya 39 and instead another incident in which Hanumān sees the temple of the goddess (39.17) and approaches Her and requests Her to abandon Lankā, reminding Her about this arrangement formerly decided by Herself is added (39.18-28). This innovation is more in keeping with the spreading of the Devī cult.

Devī's Quitting Lankā :-

The goddess replied Hanumān that she was very much angry by the insult of Sītā and had already decided to leave Lankā (39.27). She further added that She was in expectancy of His words in keeping with which She would immediately leave Lankā (39.28). After having said so the great goddess left Lankā and became invisible all of a sudden (39.29).

Actions Indicate Auspicious as Well as Inauspicious Enjoyment :-

On Brahmā's inquiry about His offence on account of which Lord Śiva had cut off His fifth head, the goddess informed Him that the actions should be understood as indicating auspicious as well as inauspicious enjoyment (42.41-45).

The Goddess - The Dispenser of Fruits of Actions and Independent without a Second :-

The goddess further told Brahmā that She was the bestower of the fruits of meritorious or otherwise actions and that She was quite independent and without a second (42.46). In this manner the highest power and spiritual supremacy of the goddess are mentioned.

The Impartiality of the Goddess :-

The goddess further told Lord Brahmā that there did not exist one who was loved or disliked by Her (42.48^{ab}). For the same idea expressed formerly refer to 18.39^{cd}.

Immeasurable Glory of the Particles of Dust of the Feet of Devī:-

Śiva eulogized the particles of dust attached to the feet of the goddess considering them as the givers of the world of the goddess and desired to bear them on His head with devotion (42.57^{ab}).

Due to the Good Grace of Devī, Śiva became Mṛtyuñjaya :-

Lord Śiva gave the credit of His bearing the deadly poison in His throat, to His conquering death as a result of the goddess's placing Her foot on His chest (42.58^{abc}).

In order to satisfy the curiosity of Rāma as regards the form of Maheśvarī Jayadurgā and Her abode at that time (43.3), Lord Brahmā informed Rāma that the goddess is omnipresent, residing in all the seats of deities and remaining in the centre of Brahmāṇḍa and also remaining outside of it (43.5).

Two Forms of the Goddess - Paurāṇikī Mūrti and Tāntrikī Mūrti :-

The form of the goddess which is in the heaven, on the earth, on the Himālayas and on Kailāse in the proximity of Lord Śiva that is the Paurāṇikī Mūrti (43.6).

The other form of the goddess which is outside the Brahmāṇḍa is the form of Mahādurgā which is the Tāntrikī Mūrti eternally blissful and fit to be guarded (43.7).

Brahmanhood, Eternity Self-sufficiency and Inner Controllership of Devī :-

That which is decided to be self satisfied one in the Vedas, the Āgamas and in the Smṛties and which is decided to be Brahman in different philosophies like Vedānta etc. by manifold means of proof is that great goddess Herself Who is eternal (43.27). In this stanza the Brahmanhood, the eternity and self-sufficiency of the goddess as described in the Vedas, Āgamas and Smṛties and in different philosophical sects etc. are referred to. She is eternal, possessing all the bodies, devoid of excessive happiness eternally, the resort of everyone and the highest (43.28^{ab}).

Just as the Ganges merged into the ocean does not get separated from the sea, similarly those created from a part of Brahman do not get segregated from it (43.31). The goddess Herself is born as the universe, She Herself sustains it and she Herself destroys at the end. There is no other reason (43.32). Thus the activities of creation, sustenance and destruction are really the activities of the goddess as mentioned in 43.32.

Power of Māyā Makes Consider the Trinity as the cause of Creation etc. :-

Just as setting aside the potter who is the real cause of a pitcher, a person with deluded intellect imagines in the pitcher etc. the causality because of prominence on account of imperfection (43.35^{cd}-36^{ab}), in the same way there is the imagining of the causality of creation etc. elsewhere because of Māyā in the case of the deluded persons on account of prominence (43.36^{cd}-37^{ab}).

Rāma Awakened Devī at an Improper Time i.e. in Dakṣiṇāyaṇa Kṛṣṇapakṣa :-

Then Lord Rāma desirous to wage a war thought of worshipping the great goddess for the sake of attaining victory over Lankā (40.12^{cd}-13^{ab}). Rāma thought that it was Dakṣiṇāyaṇa at that time, so the goddess of the three worlds must be asleep and hence He was ready to worship Her at an improper time (40.13^{cd}-14^{ab}). So thinking Lord Rāma, the immutable Nārāyaṇa determined to offer Her oblations Who was of the form of the manes (40.14^{cd}-15^{ab}).

Mahāmāyā in the Form of Manes in Pitrpekṣa :-

Rāma thought that the very same goddess Mahāmāyā was of the form of manes in that fortnight (40.15^{cd}). He determined further that He would worship the great goddess Who was of the form of Manes and the giver of victory in keeping with the ceremony called Pārvaṇa and then would fight with enemies for their death (40.16^{cd}-17). Then at the proper time, Rāma of true prowess performed the Pārvaṇa Śrāddha,⁶ remembering the goddess (40.21).

- 6 While explaining the classification of Śrāddhas MM. Dr. P.V. Kane has noted as follows. "Śrāddhas have been variously classified. One classification viz. into nitya, neimittika and Kāmya has already been described above (P.369). Another classification is that into Ekoddiṣṭa and Pārvaṇa.⁸⁵⁵ The first is offered to one deceased person alone, while the latter is performed on the amāvāsyā of a month or in the dark half, Bhādrepadā or on saṅkrānti and in it the three paternal ancestors are principally invoked." History of Dharmasāstra, Vol.IV, P.380.

In the footnote No.855 op.cit., it is stated as follows.

Vide History of Dharmasāstra, Vol.III, P.737 footnote 1425 for explanation of these two. As stated in Parāśaramādha-
vīya I.2 P.199, "Puruṣatrayamuddiśya yatkriyate tat
pārvaṇam| ekapuruṣoddeśena yatkriyate tadekoddiṣṭam|| "

Pārvaṇa means performed on a Parvan day. According to the VP. III.11.118 the Parvan days are Amāvāsyā, Purnimā, Caturdaśī, Aṣṭamī and Ravisamkrānti. Bhaviṣyapurāṇa 9 in Śrāddhatatva P. 192 defines the Pārvaṇaśrāddha as
Amāvāsyām yat kriyate tat pārvaṇamudāhṛtam| kriyate vā
Parvaṇi yat tat pārvaṇamiti smṛtiḥ|| HDS Vol.III, P.736
foot note 1425.

For more details on Pārvaṇaśrāddha see History of
Dharmasāstra, Vol.IV, PP.431-451.

Devīpujā by the Lord, the Immutable Puruṣa Shows Her Limitless Glory :-

In this manner the Lord, the immutable Puruṣa Himself worshipped the goddess in keeping with the rites in the autumn (48.11).

Devī - Most Fit To Be Worshipped :-

There is no one most fit to be worshipped as the goddess in the world. He who does not worship Her due to infatuation he is a sinner without doubt (48.13). There is no place for him anywhere. He who discontinues Her worship is a sinner (48.14). Thus the greatness of the worship of the goddess is stressed.

The Greatness of the Goddess :-

That Who is of the nature of support of the world, the Protector of all, the highest, and the giver of salvation, She Herself is the promulgator of infatuation and bondage (43.37^{cd}-38^{ab}).

The goddess is of the form of consciousness and the whole world devoid of Her appears like a corpse and accompanied by Her the world gains consciousness just as one's own machine gets operated by its owner (43.39^{cd}-40). The goddess Herself on account of Her sweet will, sports sportingly in Herself forever in the form of Paramāśiva Who happens to be another form of Her own (43.41). That same goddess Who is the highest lore of the people is spoken of by the upholders of Vedas as a

saviour⁸ from misfortunes (43.44). Brahmā described Her as the giver of the four human goals and the destroyer of all antagonists and asked Rāma to carefully listen to the condition of the place of Her residence as described by Him (43.45).

Significance of the Name Durgā :-

That Devī rescues the doomed persons who are surrounded by misfortunes and hence She is spoken of in the world as Durgā, the destroyer of misfortunes (43.42). In this stanza the significance of the name Durgā is nicely explained.

Tāntrikī Mūrti of Devī :-

In order to satisfy the curiosity of Rāma as regards the form of Maheśvarī Jayadurgā, Lord Brahmā informs Him that in Menidvīpe in a pavilion made up of various jewels supported by pillars of shining jewels and with portals decorated with pearls, the directions in which appeared gay by rows of lamps of jewels in a pleasant inner apartment on a beautiful throne of jewels Mahādurgā, the mother of the three worlds Whose face is auspicious stays (43.64^{cd}-67).

The goddess is decorated with thousands of shining Syamantaka jewels to which shining gold was attached and also decorated with many Kaustubhas and with a crown on Her head (43.68).

The Beautiful Appearance of the Goddess :-

Devī's chest is decorated by the lustre of a series of necklaces made of precious rubbies. Her face looks beautiful

on account of Her smile revealing beautiful teeth and also on account of dark coloured eyes (43.69). She looks beautiful on account of Her ear ornaments and the ornaments for the nose and Her face looks all the more beautiful on account of the crescent moon on Her head (43.70). She is decorated with ornaments made up of pure jewels. She has four arms and She is riding a great lion (43.71). Devī has put on a red garment and Her waist looks beautiful on account of the jingling of a girdle and Her lotus like feet possess auspicious marks connected with Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu (43.72).

The Splendour of the Goddess :-

The great gods Brahmā, Mahēśvara and Mahāviṣṇu eulogize Her with folded hands by eulogies in front of Her (43.73).

On both the sides of Devī Jayā and Vijayā are fanning with the white chowries (43.74). Lakṣmī stands by Her right hand side with a variegated fan in Her hand spreading the fragrance of saffron and sandal paste (43.75). The goddess of speech Herself is situated on Her left hand side and sings the virtues of the goddess in accordance with the Vedas and Āgamas in accompaniment of the lute (43.76). In a vessel made up of pure jewels the goddess of speech etc. pour nectar and give it to the goddess to please Her (43.77).

The sages like Nārada etc. sing songs in a flattering tone devoutly in Her front (43.78). The Yoginīs etc. bring a box of rubbies containing betel leaves and give it to the

goddess (43.79). The gods amongst whom Bhairavas are the foremost stand as door-keepers with sticks of jewels and swords in their hands in crores (43.80).

Limitless Sovereignty of Devī :-

Thus Brāhmā describes the limitless sovereignty of the goddess to Rāma and adds that it cannot be completely described by His four mouths (43.81). Brāhmā emphatically states that Lord Tryambaka is perhaps able to describe the virtues of the goddess or the Śrutis may describe within thousands of crores of years (43.82).

The goddesses Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī have been born directly from Her part (43.83^{ab}).

The vision of the goddess obstructed by one another is the giver of merit. There is no consideration of superiority nor the discrimination of castes (43.85).

In this manner Lord Brāhmā says that He has described Devī's Tāntrikī Mūrti to Rāma (43.86^{cd}) and also the beautiful city as asked by Him (43.87^{ab}).

The Efficacy of Adoring a Paurāṇikī Mūrti of Devī :-

Brāhmā assured Rāma that He would adore a mūrti of the goddess made up of clay riding a lion with ten arms as described in Purāṇas for the sake of His victory in the battle (43.87^{cd}-88).

Brahmā Undertook to Awaken Mahādevī on Navamī :-

Lord Brahmā undertook to awaken the Mahādevī, the remover of great danger on the coming Navamī after adoring Her under Bilva Vṛkṣa (43.89).

Devī's Special Characteristics in Accordance with Vāmamārgīya Upāsana :-

Rāma addressed Devī as the lover of battle, as blood thirsty, as devourer of flesh, as remover of calamity of the seeker of protection in the battle and prayed to Her to give Him victory (44.4). The adjectives "raktabhākṣe" and "māṃsabhakṣaṇakārini" indicate the traits of Vāmamārgīya Upāsana of the goddess.

Rāma addressed Devī as the wielder of Khaṭvāṅga and a sword, as one whose figure was shining with a garland of skulls and requested Her to be the remover of miseries of those who remember Her in calamity (44.5). Here the epithet "Muṇḍamālādyotitavigrahe" signifies the trait of Vāmamārgīya Upāsana of the goddess.

Rāma praised Devī as the lover of the blood of Mahiṣa in the battle, as the killer of Mahiṣāsura, as the daughter of the mountain and as the giver of protection (44.9). Here a clear trait of Vāmamārgīya Upāsana of Devī is indicated by the epithet "Mahiṣāsrukpriye".

Rāma addressed Devī as one possessing red eyes and red teeth and as one whose limbs are smeared with blood, as the killer of Raktabīja and prayed Her to give Him victory (44.11). Here a clear trait of Vāmamārgīya Upāsana of Devī is indicated by the epithet "Raktacarcitagātrake".

On Being Awakened by Brahmā, Devī Foretold the Fall of the Demons :-

After Devī was awakened and eulogized by Lord Brahmā, She foretold the gods that Kumbhakarna with great prowess would fall in the battle along with his dreadful soldiers (45.18). She further informed them that from that Navamī of the dark fortnight till the navamī of the bright fortnight daily the demons would fall in the battle (45.19-20^{ab}). She also foretold that on the night without moon when Meghanāda would be killed Rāvana with his afflicted heart would approach Rāma (45.20^{cd}).

Devī Ordained Annual Śāradīya-pūjā :-

Devī ordained that the great festival of the goddess should be celebrated in the manner shown by Her by the residents of the three worlds for the sake of gratification of the goddess every year on the advent of this inopportune time (46.1; 27^{cd}-28^{ab}). On the ninth of Bhādrapada connected with the constellation Ārdrā the goddess should be adored in a bilva tree and should be addressed with devotion till the ninth of the bright fortnight (of Āśvin) (46.2).

Thus the practice of annual Śāradīyapūjā came into vogue in accordance with the ordaining of Devī. Actually the Śāradīya-pūjā thus introduced, originally lasted for fifteen days from Navamī of Bhādrapada dark fortnight to Navamī of Āśvin bright fortnight. At present however this Śāradīyapūjā of Devī lasts for nine days from first to ninth of Āśvin

²Suklapakṣa called Navarātrī or Navarātra in India especially in Gujarat. This Śārādīyapūjāvidhāna was first told by Devī to Lord Brāhmā and other gods.

Hearing of the Fruit of Daily Śārādīya-pūjā of Devī :-

Those who daily worship the goddess during the fifteen days as mentioned above would get Devī's favour always and would obtain their desired objects (46.3). As a result of the favour of Devī one's enemy would not be able and one would not be separated from one's relatives and would be without misery and poverty (46.4). Moreover one obtains one's desired prosperity in both the worlds (46.5). Daily increase in temporal wealth e.g. longevity, riches, corn, sons etc. is assured to those who devoutly sacrifice to the goddess. Moreover their wealth would be steady (46.6). They would be free from disease and oppression caused by planets and from miserable death (46.7). They would be free from the fear arising from the rulers, the decoits, and from the wild creatures like lion, tiger etc. (46.8). One's enemies would come under one's control and one would be victorious in the battle doubtlessly (46.9). Their sins would not last and no calamity would overpower them at any time (46.10).

A man who is the worshipper of Devī attains happiness and at the end attains Her world without doubt (46.11).

The fruit of the worship of Devī during autumn equals the performance of crores of sacrifices like Aśvamedha etc. (46.12).

Non-adoration of Devī during Śāradīya-pūjā Leads One to Become Yoginīpaśu :-

Non-adoration of Devī during this Śāradīya-pūjā festival on account of infatuation or jealousy would lead to the condition of becoming a beast of Yoginī (46.13).

Dakṣiṇamārgīya (Sātvika) Devī Upāsana Prohibits Offering A Victim :-

Those persons who adore the goddess resorting to the virtuous path, they should not offer a victim to Devī nor should offer food with meat (46.15^{cd}-16^{ab}).

The followers of the path of virtue who desire to attain the favour of the goddess should perform Her Mahā-pūjā by offering eatables without meat and by eulogies originated from the Vedāṅgas and by carrying on extensive Japa yajñas and by feeding the brahmins keeping their minds under control and devoid of violence etc. (46.16^{cd}-18^{ab}).

Rājasa Devī Upāsana Allows Offering Victims And Meat :-

The followers of the path of passion should perform the Mahā-pūjā of Devī by offering of various victims as food i.e. a goat, a ram, etc. and by a he-buffalo and by food with meat (46.19) and by eulogies meant for Japa-yajña and by feeding brahmins (46.20^{ab}).

The Temporal Reward of This Mahāpūjā :-

The temporal reward of this Mahāpūjā is the destruction of the visible enemy the increase of riches and corn, victory in the battle and having sons and wife etc. (46.20^{cd}-21^{ab}).

The Other-worldly Reward of This Mahāpūjā :-

The other worldly reward of this Mahāpūjā is the attainment of the highest happiness on the attainment of the highest place (46.21^{cd}).

Tāmasa-pūjā-Prohibited for Those Possessing Knowledge :-

The possessors of knowledge should not perform the worship of the goddess following the path of darkness as it cannot equal the worship of the other two types (46.22). Thus Tāmasī-pūjā is clearly prohibited.

Devī Advised Gods to Sacrifice With a He buffalo, a Goat or a Ram etc :-

The goddess asked the gods desiring Rāvana's death to sacrifice with a he buffalo, a goat, a ram etc. and to adore Her daily till the ninth of the bright half for the sake of Rāma's victory (46.23-24^{ab}) and (46.28^{cd}) especially to worship Her with the bali of a goat etc. on Mahānavamī (46.24-25). A bali should be given even by disabled persons on the ninth always (46.29^{ab}). Devī assured the gods that She thus satisfied would definitely bring about the fall of Rāvana (46.25^{cd}-26^{ab}).

According to Devī a bali offered to Her on the eighth is the giver of the fruit of a great sacrifice (46.29^{cd}).

A Fast on Mahāṣṭamī To Be Observed By Those Desiring a Son :-

By those desiring to have a son in the three worlds, a fast should be observed on Mahāṣṭamī for the sake of the

pleasure of the goddess (46.30). In the case of those who observe a fast on Mahāṣṭamī a son with all good qualities would definitely be born (46.31^{ab}). But persons having a son are forbidden to observe a fast on Mahāṣṭamī (46.31^{cd}).

The fruit that accrues by observing a fast on the eighth and by offering a victim to the goddess on the ninth is even greater than that which accrues by the performance of sacrifice like Aśvamedha etc. (46.32).

Devī Herself of the Form of Vidyā Bestowing Release, Assumed the Form of Avidyā (Nescience) and Approached Rāvaṇa :-

Devī Who Herself is the lore bestowing release, She Herself approached Rāvaṇa in the form of nescience. Consequently he did not remember Devī nor entertained devotion for Her as he was deluded by Her Māyā (47.59^{cd}-61^{ab}).

Devī Gave An Infallible Weapon (Arrow) to Brahmā for Rāvaṇa's Destruction :-

As a result of the meditation prayer and prostration of Rāma as well as of Brahmā on Mahānavamī in the afternoon, the goddess Herself gave an infallible weapon (arrow) shining brightly like the fire at the time of universal destruction to Brahmā for the destruction of the king of demons (47.64^{cd}-67^{ab}). Lord Brahmā with delightful mind immediately passed it on to Rāma (47.67^{cd}-68^{ab}).

After Rāvaṇa's Fall Rāma along with His Followers Saw Brahmā at His Place of Devīpūjā :-

After the fall of Rāvaṇa, Rāma accompanied by Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and Vānaras went to the place where the grand sire

Brahmā had worshipped the goddess of the world (47.77^{cd}-78). Rāma permeated by the highest devotion of Devī prostrated before Her on the ground and eulogized Her with joyous mind (48.1). The other best of gods came over there and eulogized the great goddess, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world (48.2).

The great goddess adored with devotion and eulogized by them became pleased by extensive balis (48.3).

In the festival of the goddess the residents of the three worlds were overjoyed in heaven, on the earth and in Rasātala (48.4). Thus the ninth day passed in celebrating the great festival on the part of Rāma and other gods also (48.6). Devī Pārvatī Agreed With The Desire of Lord Śiva to Incarnate as A Man (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) :-

In compliance with the request of Lord Śiva Who considered a woman's birth as very fine on observing Pārvatī's beauty while sporting with Her Devī Pārvatī agreed to incarnate on the earth in the form of a man in the house of Vasudeva as Kṛṣṇa and asked Lord Trilocana to become a woman for Her pleasure (49.18^{cd}-19). Thereupon Lord Śiva agreed to incarnate as a daughter of Vṛṣabhānu assuming the form of Rādhā (49.20^{cd}). Lord Śiva also foretold that His eight forms would incarnate as women with beautiful eyes viz. the queens Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā etc. (49.21^{cd}-22^{ab}). Devī assured Lord Śiva that She would sport with His eight forms befittingly (49.22^{cd}).

Devī's Two Friends Jayā and Vijayā To Be Born As Two Men :-

It was also decided that the two beloved friends of Devī Pārvatī viz. Vijayā and Jayā would be born as two men viz. Srīdāmā and Vasudāmā (49.24^{cd}-25^{ab}).

Lord Viṣṇu Formerly Agreed with Devī To Be Born as The Elder Brother :-

In keeping with the former agreement between Devī and Lord Viṣṇu, it was decided that Viṣṇu would be the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa called Rāma, the wielder of a plough (49.25^{cd}-26). Thus as a result of loving promise of Devī to Lord Śambhu, She became Kṛṣṇa, black like the lustre of fresh clouds (49.28).

Devī Refused To Fight With Wicked Kings As They Were Devoted to Her Female Form :-

On Brahmā's requesting Devī to kill the wicked kings who were those Daityas, Dānavas and Rākṣasas that were formerly killed by Her as well as by Viṣṇu and were reborn as kings then (49.38-40) She refused to fight with them in Her Woman form as they were devoted to Her female form (49.41). Devī ordained that Her Bhadrakālī form would be born as a man in the house of Vasudeva from Devakī (49.42). According to the goddess His appearance would be handsome with two arms, Himself adorned by Vanamālā, bearing the mark of Śrīvatsa with a beautiful lotus like face (49.43).

Devī Incarnated As Lord Kṛṣṇa Possessed the Characteristic Marks of Viṣṇu :-

As stated in the Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa, Kṛṣṇa would be characterized by the marks characteristic of Viṣṇu in order to conceal Himself. He would be dark coloured with handsome limbs, looking beautiful on account of a conch and a discus and would be possessing a supernatural powers and would be the killer of wicked Kṣatriyas like Kāṁsa etc. (49.44-45).

Kṛṣṇa's possessing the characteristic marks of Viṣṇu is reminiscent of His being an incarnation of Viṣṇu as interpreted by Vaiṣṇava Purāṇes like Śrīmad-bhāgavata etc. Thus this point is debatable.

Devī Ordained the Birth of Pāṇḍavas From Various Gods :-

As stated in the Mahābhāgavata P., Devī ordained that Viṣṇu also by His part would become a Pāṇḍava called Arjuna with terrible prowess (49.46) whose elder brother would be Dhārma Himself called Yudhiṣṭhira (49.47^{ab}) and whose another elder brother would be Bhīmasena born from a part of the wind god (49.47^{cd}-48^{ab}). Devī further ordained that the Aśvins would incarnate as the two sons of Mādrī possessing great strength and unassailable (49.48^{cd}-49^{ab}).

Devī Foretold Duryodhana's Disrespecting Kṛṣṇā Born From Her Part :-

As foretold by Devī, the cruel one with bad intellect called Duryodhana would disrespect Kṛṣṇā born from a part of Devī Herself (49.50).

Devī Also Foretold the Destruction of All Best Kings
Except Pāṇḍavas :-

On the breaking out of terrible war in the Kurukṣetra the whole earth would be devoid of best kings in which only children and old people would be left (49.57^{cd}-58^{ab}). The five fortunate, meritorious Pāṇḍava brothers practising righteousness and solely devoted to the goddess would remain alive (49.58^{cd}-59^{ab}).

Devī Promised Brāhmā To Bring About An End of Prominent Kṣatriyas :-

Devī promised Brāhmā that She would bring about an end of other prominent Kṣatriyas in the battle by trickery (49.60^{cd}-61^{ab}). Devī summed up the deeds to be performed by Her in Her incarnation as Kṛṣṇa amongst which the main mission was to remove the burden of the earth (49.61^{cd}-62).

Devī Sent Word Through Brāhmā to Viṣṇu To Incarnate as a Man in Kuntī :-

At the behest of Devī, Lord Brāhmā saw Viṣṇu in Vaikunṭha and informed Him that He should incarnate as a man on the earth in the wife of Pāṇḍu (49.65-67).

Devī's Strategem :-

As per the instructions of Devī a strategem was adopted in keeping with which Lord Brāhmā would approach Lord Viṣṇu and would remind Him to be born on the earth in keeping with the agreement made formerly (50.43; 45). As desired long

before Lord Viṣṇu would be born by part from Vasudeva through Devakī and Devī Herself would bifurcate Herself and would enter the wombs of Rohinī as well as Yaśodā by Her parts (50.46-47^{ab}). In the fifth month after conception, Devī and Viṣṇu would exchange their positions from the womb of Rohinī to that of Devakī and vice versa (50.47^{cd}-48) which would make possible the birth of Devī as the eighth child of Devakī about which the wicked Kāṁsa would remain ignorant (50.49-50).

This shows that some technique must be prevalent which would make the exchange of the embryo between two pregnant woman possible. We do not have any clear idea about this wonder either of the science of medicine or of that of yogic powers. Probably it must be the latter. It cannot be gainsaid that it was a great accomplishment.

Devī further informed Brahmā that She would be born at the same time in Devakī in the form of a man and in Yaśodā in the form of a woman by Her own sport (50.53), Whom Vasudeva should exchange placing Devakī's child by the side of Yaśodā in Gokula, and by bringing Yaśodā's girl back with him (50.54-55) and should inform the wicked Kāṁsa that a girl is born to him (50.56^{ab}).

Devī Also Bifurcated Herself And Went To The Wombs of Rohinī and Yaśodā :-

As decided by Devī Herself at the meeting with Brahmā She also bifurcated Herself and went to the wombs of Rohinī

and Yaśodā for the sake of the removal of the burden of the earth (50.61).

In the fifth month after conception, Devī and Visnu exchanged their positions from the womb of Rohiṇī to that of Devakī and vice versa (50.62) as decided earlier.

Devī - Born From Devakī As The Highest Man :-

Devī was born from Devakī as the highest man on the eighth of the dark half of Śrāvaṇa in the mid-night when the moon was in the constellation Rohiṇī and when the sign Taurus of the Zodiac was in the ascendant (50.65), when the host of clouds were roaring and when darkness pervaded everything and when all including the guards were fast asleep (50.66). The child boy that was born from Devakī was as dark as fresh clouds, decorated with a vanamālā, bearing the mark of Śrīvatsa with a pair of eyes and arms and with divine limbs shining by His own lustre. On seeing Him Devakī wept much and expressed her fear that her wicked brother Kāṁsa would kill him as he had killed her other sons (50.67-69^{ab}, 70-71).

Śrīkṛṣṇa's Advice To Vasudeva To Exchange Yaśodā's Girl With Him :-

On Vasudeva's seeking the advice of Śrīkṛṣṇa, He advised Vasudeva to put Him near Yaśodā in Gokula and to bring the girl quickly and to declare that a girl was born to his wife (50.100) and foretold the events stating that the girl would escape from the hands of Kāṁsa, would declare that Kāṁsa's

killer is already born and would go to heaven (50.101-102). He further added that He would stay for sometime in Gokula and then would return to kill the wicked uncle (50.103).

Devī Thrown Up By Kāṁsa Went To The Sky, Appeared In Her Real Form And Foretold About Kāṁsa's Killer :-

When Kāṁsa threw up the girl in order to strike Her against a stone slab (50.120^{ab}), the goddess shining brightly in the sky and riding a lion told Kāṁsa that She had been born by Her supernatural power in the form of a man in Devakī from Vasudeva for the sake of his destruction and was staying in the house of Mandagopa in Gokula (50.121^{cd}-122).

In Śrīmadbhāgavata, the girl is not taken by the guards to Kāṁsa but Kāṁsa himself comes to the prison and forcibly snatches away the girl from Devakī disregarding her supplications and strikes Her against the stone slab in order to kill Her when She freed from his hands escapes to the sky and assumes a divine form and tells Kāṁsa that his killer is already born in Gokula and then disappears X. 4.7-12.

Lord Kṛṣṇa - His Exploits, Sports Etc.:-

Pūtanēvadha :-

Kṛṣṇa after having known Pūtanā as a demoness assuming forms at will after closing His eyes and remaining in the cot saw her (51.7). When Pūtanā suckled Kṛṣṇa her breast smeared with poison, Kṛṣṇa who knew her to be a cruel demoness sucked her vital airs along with milk (51.13).

Kṛṣṇa all of a sudden transformed Himself into another Kālīkā possessing dreadful mouth and wearing a garland of skulls on Her chest (51.16).

Trṇāvertavādha :-

When Trṇāvarta took away Kṛṣṇa, He smiled and transformed Himself into Kālī putting on a tiger's hide and roared like the thunder of dense clouds (51.25). The demon infatuated by Her great roar fell down on the ground shaking the earth with forests and mountains (51.26). Then the goddess Kālī severed his head with a sword and again became a small boy on his chest (51.27). This transforming of Kālī into Kṛṣṇa is peculiar to the Mābhg.P.

Lord Kṛṣṇa :-

Kṛṣṇa was pleased by the affection of Rāma, Śrīdāmā and Vasudāmā and hence stayed in Gokulā desirous to sport with Rādhā (51.40).

Kṛṣṇa in His childhood killed the demons Dhenuka etc. and subdued the serpent 'Kālīya' and thus showing His prowess sported along with Rādhā and also with the throngs of cowherdesses born from the part of Bhairavas (53.4^{cd}-6).

Amorous Sport of Rādhā And Kṛṣṇa :-

After reaching the auspicious Vṛndāvana by day Kṛṣṇa used to bring all the cowherdesses by the attraction of the sound of the flute and after having made Rādhā His principal queen consort used to sport with them as He pleased (53.7-8).

At times the Gopīs strung the garlands of flowers of wild plants and offered them to Kṛṣṇa with pleasure (53.9). Kṛṣṇa also occasionally offered them garlands and stared at their cheerful lotus like faces (53.10). Sometimes Śyāma seated on a divine throne placed beautiful Rādhā on His left side and kissed Her face out of love with His mind ~~afflicted~~^{sp} by lust (53.11-12). Yādunandana sported along with the throng of Gopīs sometimes on the bank of Yamunā and sometimes in the middle of the current (53.13). Kṛṣṇa attracted the minds of the Gopīs by the sound of His flute in the night and after having brought them in the forest sported with them there to His heart's content (53.14).

At Times Rādhikā And Kṛṣṇa Transformed Themselves As Śambhu And Gaurī :-

At times Rādhikā transformed Herself and assumed the form of Śambhu possessing five beautiful lotus like faces along with Kṛṣṇa transforming Himself as Gaurī and both took a walk (53.15).

Rāsakrīdā :-

Under the intoxicating influence of the autumnal night with full moon Lord Kṛṣṇa overjoyed by blooming flowers like Mallikā, Kunda, Jātī, Campeka etc. and gentle winds spreading the fragrance of flowers as well as by buzzing of the bees, cooing of the cuckoos etc. came to Vṛndāvana with the intention of roaming for pleasure (53.17-21). On seeing the beauty of His favourite forest and the rise of the blemishless moon Kṛṣṇa overjoyed in His own self played upon the flute

(53.22). On hearing the sound of the flute all the best cowherdesses gave up their household works and gathered together under the leadership of Rādhā with beautiful limbs attracted towards Kṛṣṇa (53.23-24). On observing that all of them have come Kṛṣṇa endeavoured to roam for pleasure (53.25). Then smiling Kṛṣṇa, afflicted by lust subdivided Himself into eight forms (53.27), after having seen that Rādhā also assumed eight forms in a moment all of a sudden blooming like the light of the moon and also afflicted by lust (53.28). Thus assuming eight forms by Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā indirectly suggests their original nature of Gaurī and Hara. It is well known that Lord Śiva is called Aṣṭamūrti.

Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā disappeared in a moment for the sake of roaming for pleasure with the eight forms assumed by both of them (53.29). Leaving all other Gopīs to suffer acute pain of separation He went to the atmospheric region and began a sportive circular dance (Rāsakrīḍā) (53.30). While sporting with Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa dragged Her arms with those of His own and rubbed His face with Her face and kneaded Her breast by His hands (53.31). At times Kṛṣṇa entertaining desire laughingly removed the garment of Rādhā and sported for long in keeping with His sport (53.32). There a great shower of flow^ers rained forth accompanied by the sounds of a kettle drum (Bherī), Mrdaṅga, Tūrya etc. (53.33).

Other Gopīs unable to see Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa roaming for pleasure in the atmospheric region cried ¶loudly in the beautiful forest (53.34). This shows their deep rooted

affection for both of them. After having heard their lamentations Kṛṣṇa along with Rādhā again appeared before them in the forest (53.35). This shows reciprocal affection and love of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā for the Gopīs. This also shows that Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā took pity on the Gopīs after ascertaining that they loved them intensely. In order to fulfill the desire of all the Gopīs, Kṛṣṇa assumed many forms in keeping with His prowess and sported with them in the forest (53.36). The gods and the Gandharvas after having seen Kṛṣṇakṛīḍā showered showers of flowers (53.37).

Thus Kṛṣṇa along with Gopīs performed Rāsakṛīḍā for many a night in the forest beginning with the full moon day of Kārttika (53.38). This reference to the full moon day of Kārttika should be understood as a reference to the full moon day of Āśvina according to the calculations prevailing in Gujarat.

Vastrāheranālīlā :-

The great goddess also performed other great exploits like snatching away of the garments etc. along with Lord Śambhu in the form of a woman (53.39).

Vṛṣabavedha :-

Once upon a time a strong demon called Vṛṣabha impelled by Kāṁsa went to Gokula in order to kill Rāma and Kṛṣṇa (53.42). Kṛṣṇa on seeing the residents of Gokula running away from the demon, came forward and approached him (53.45). On seeing Kṛṣṇa before him that Vṛṣabha roared shaking the earth by his hoofs (53.46). Then Kṛṣṇa dragged

him holding him by his horns and threw him up and made him fall on the ground lifeless (53.47). Then the cowherds who were very much astonished and pleased in their minds eulogized Kṛṣṇa by many eulogies (53.48).

Kuvalāyavedha :-

On hearing that Rāma and Aṅṣa had come Kāṁsa with stupified intellect placed the wicked Kuvalāya elephant at the city gate for slaying them (54.30^{cd}-31). Kṛṣṇa caught him by the trunk and made him fall on the ground by striking with His hand sportingly, He subdivided his head into two parts (54.32). In Śrīmadbhāgavata X 43. 13-15^{ab}, it is stated that Lord Kṛṣṇa caught the elephant Kuvalāyapīḍa by the trunk and forcibly made him fall down on the earth. Then He put His foot on the fallen elephant and snatched away his tusk and killed with it the elephant and his protectors. Thus there is a little difference between the two accounts as regards the way in which the elephant was killed by Kṛṣṇa.

Cānūravēdha :-

Kṛṣṇa also killed cānūra, after having thrown him up in the sky and after making him fall down again (54.38).

Kāṁsavadha :-

Kṛṣṇa after having seen Kāṁsa speak thus assumed His own form causing agitation in the universe in half a moment. Then that goddess Kālī caught hold of him by his hair by Her left hand and after having dragged him segregated his head with a sword (54.43-44). As stated before in Mbhg.P.(51.16;25) Kṛṣṇa here also changes His form and assumes His original form of Kālī.

Freeing Vasudeva And Devakī From Fetters :-

That Kṛṣṇa after having approached Devakī and Vasudeva tied with fetters prostrated before them and freed them from the fetters (54.48).

Crowning Ugrasena As The King :-

Kṛṣṇa consoled the lamenting queens of the departed king and thereafter crowned Ugrasena as the king in that kingdom (54.50-51).

Kṛṣṇa's Sending Uddhava To Console Gopīs :-

In order to remove the grief of the Gopīs caused by their separation from Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa sent Uddhava, the solely devoted devotee to Gokula (54.62^{cd}-63^{ab}).

Investiture Of The Sacred Thread Ceremony Of Rāma And Kṛṣṇa :-

Then Vasudeva invited the great sage Gargācārya and got performed the investiture of the sacred thread ceremony of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa according to the laid down rites (54.64^{cd}-65^{ab}). Gargācārya taught them all the scriptures and the science of archery (54.65^{cd}).

Kṛṣṇa's Remaining in Mādhupura For Sometime :-

Thus the venerable Devī assuming the form of Śyāmasundara removed the wicked ones by trickery and awaiting the reason of slaying other wicked ones stayed along with Rāma in beautiful Mādhupura (55.1-2). On hearing about the partiality of Dhṛterāṣṭra for his sons from Akrūra who had visited Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Kṛṣṇa thought that as a result of this jealousy kings would die in Kurukṣetra along with wicked Duryodhana, Śakuni, Saubala (55.18-19).

Then Kṛṣṇa entered the divine city Dvārakā, designed by Brahmā for the sake of residence along with Yadus (55.20).

This shows that up to this moment i.e. up to the return of Akrūra from Hastināpure Śrīkṛṣṇa stayed in Mathurā.

Kṛṣṇa's Abducting Rukminī :-

When Kṛṣṇa came to know from Nārada about the auspicious occasion of the marriage of Rukminī in the capital city of the king of Vidarbha, He mounted a chariot and started for it (55.25^{cd}, 27^{ab}). On reaching there Kṛṣṇa abducted Rukminī who was expecting an arrival of Vāsudeva and who was being led by other women to the temple of goddess Durgā for Her worship (55.29^{ab}, 30). Rukminī's going to the temple of Durgā for worship is also found in Śrīmadbhāgavata X. 53.39-50.

Kṛṣṇa Inflicted A Heavy Defeat On The Kings Attacking Him :-

The enraged kings displeased on account of the hindrance attacked Kṛṣṇa (55.31). But Kṛṣṇa cut off all their best bows and vehicles and after inflicting on them including Śisupāla a heavy defeat, went to His own abode equalling heaven (55.32).

Kṛṣṇa Showed His Prowess And Married Seven Brides :-

Similarly Kṛṣṇa, showing His prowess married the seven brides viz. Jambavati etc. who were born from the part of Śambhu (55.33).

Kṛṣṇa after having fought many battles and after having conquered the heroes married many other brides and after

having brought them to Dvārakā, enjoyed with them as desired (55.34-35) and procreated sons from them in thousands (55.37).

Similarly after having slain the unassailable great king Bhauma (Narakāśura) Kṛṣṇa brought thousands of beautiful ladies (55.38).

Pāṇḍava's Conquest of the Directions And Performance of Rājasūya :-

Kṛṣṇa promulgated the sacrifice, Himself presiding over it and sent forth Bhīma etc. along with soldiers to the four directions (55.42) in order to subdue the kings and to bring them there (55.43^{ab}).

Śiśupālavadha :-

On seeing that Kṛṣṇa was adored first Śiśupāla burning with anger censured Yudhiṣṭhira, Kṛṣṇa and the sacrifice (55.49). Then in that assembly of kings Kṛṣṇa cut off the head of that burden of the earth and killed him (55.50).

Kṛṣṇa Considered Draupadī's Insult A Great Cause For The Removal Of The Burden Of The Earth :-

Kṛṣṇa after having decided that Draupadī's insult was a great cause for the removal of the burden of the earth went to Dvārevatī (55.62^{cd}-63).

Kṛṣṇa Put His Nārāyaṇīsenā Under The Command Of Kauravas :-

Devī in the form of Kṛṣṇa placed His army under the control of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra (57.1).

Kṛṣṇa Remained On The Side Of Pāṇḍavas Along With Sātyaki :-

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself joined the side of Pāṇḍavas along with Sātyaki (57.2^{ab}).

Lord Brahmā Approached Kṛṣṇa To Remind Him To Return To His Own Place :-

While Kṛṣṇa was thinking over returning to His own place after having removed the burden of the earth, Lord Brahmā approached Him and reminded Him about His real nature as Mahādevī who had assumed the form of Māyāpuruṣa and had accomplished the work of the removal of the burden of the earth and had fulfilled whatever was desired by Sambhu (58.1-5^{ab}) and requested Him to return back to His own place after assuming His own natural form (58.5^{cd}-6^{ab}).

Srīkṛṣṇa readily accepted the suggestion of Brahmā and assured Him about His intention to return to His original place before long and dismissed Him (58.6^{cd}-7^{ab}).

Messengers - Sent To Hastināpura To Inform Pāṇḍavas About Kṛṣṇa's Ascending Heaven :-

At the behest of Kṛṣṇa, the counsellors sent forth the messengers to Hastināpura to inform Pāṇḍavas about Kṛṣṇa's decision to quit the earth for heaven (58.11-13).

Kṛṣṇa Distributed Riches To Twice Born Ones And Went Out Of The City :-

Then the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa clad in Silken garments after distributing riches to the twice born ones immediately

went out of His city (58.32). This echoes Kāma's sending messengers to Śatrughna to inform his will to go to heaven and then His going out of His city Vide Vālmīki Rāmāyana VII. 109.2-22. But this imitation is improper. As found in the Śrīmadbhāgavata XI. 30.46-50 and the Mahābhārata Mausālaparva 4.2-3 the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī were not present at the time of Kṛṣṇa's ascending to heaven in the holy place of pilgrimage called Prabhāsa Pātana.

Kṛṣṇa's Ascending To Heaven :-

Thus when a great festival was being celebrated by gods Kṛṣṇa transformed Himself into Kālī all of a sudden and ascending the chariot dragged by lions, went to Kailāsa immediately eulogized by the best of gods and sages when even Brahmā was the spectator (58.39-40).

Viṣṇu Would Become Śrīkṛṣṇa In Another Kalpa :-

In another Kalpa at the end of Dvāpara, Viṣṇu would be born wholly in the form of Śrīkṛṣṇa on the earth on account of the boon of Lord Śambhu and would again remove the burden of the earth thus by His sport (58.51^{cd}-52).

In order not to raise jealousy in the minds of the followers of Vaiṣṇava sect, the promulgator of the Mahābh. P. appears to have made the above statement. The implication is this that Mahādevī incarnated as Śyāmasundarā and removed the burden of the earth as desired by Her husband Lord Śambhu in the present Kalpa. Thus the authenticity of this Sākāta Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa as well as that of Śrīmadbhāgavata and other Vaiṣṇavite Purāṇas and Mahābhārata, Harivaṃśa etc. is maintained.

Kālī's Appearance :-

The trinity saw Kālī seated on a throne of jewels (68.28) and possessing the lustre of a crore of Suns with three dreadful eyes, four arms, dishevelled hair and a fearful look (63.29). She had put on shining earrings studded by many costly jewels and Her person was adorned by many precious jewels. Her hue resembled that of a cloud (63.30). Devī had directions for Her garment, and possessed fearful teeth (63.31).

Her lustre equalled that of the Kālānala (the fire at the time of universal destruction) and hence it was very difficult to gaze at Her. Mahākāla Sadāsiva was on Her right hand side (63.33).

The description of Devī Mahākālī found in stanzas 28 to 33^{ab} of Adhyaya 63 is in consonance with the description found in Tāntric works belonging to the Vāmamārgīya sect of Devī worship.

Antaryāmitva And Vibhūtimatva - The Real Nature of Devī :-

Devī Kālī used to reside in everyone i.e. this is Her Antaryāmitva as stated in the Śrutis. She also used to reside in the best of its kind. This is Her Vibhūtirupa. She had put on a garland of skulls (63.32^{ab}) which shows that She is ever free from infatuation (Nirmohī).

Mahākālī And Mahākāla Both Disappeared Simultaneously :-

While Lords Brahmā and Viṣṇu were thinking as to where Lord Maheśvara must have gone, the goddess Mahākālī along

with Mahākāla disappeared in a moment (63.41). Actually Devī Kālī and the Lord Mahākāla were in front of them as before, but as they were deluded by Her Māyā (supernatural power) They could not see Them (63.42).

On hearing the eulogy of Lords Brāhmā and Viṣṇu, Kālī became pleased and again became visible to Them along with Mahākāla (63.52).

Devī Kālī - Kāmākhyā - The Presiding Deity Of Kāmarūpa :-

By way of a reply to Nārada's inquiry as regards the presiding deity (Adhiṣṭhātrī devatā) of the great place of pilgrimage Kāmarūpa Śiva told him that the ten lores residing in the place of pilgrimage of Kāmākhyā for the benefit of the aspirants were the givers of fruit of repetition of mantras and worship (77.1-2).

Kāmākhyā is the foremost eternal goddess Kālī Herself. The other nine Vidyās remain near Her (77.3). Since Kālī Who is of the nature of all Vidyās is of the form of Kāmākhyā, therefore after having adored Her there and after adoring the deity agreeable to oneself, if one repeats the sacred formula of one's desired deity with devotion one becomes a Siddhamantra (77.4).

The Description Of Devī Kāmākhyā Her Appearance :-

One should meditate upon the highest goddess Kāmākhyā, Who is Kālikā clad in red garment and having three terribly shining eyes (77.5). She has four arms and terrible teeth and Her hue resembles that of the clouds at the end of the age.

She graces the throne of jewels supported by a lion, a corpse and a lotus (i.e. by Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahṁā respectively) (77.6). Hari i.e. Lord Viṣṇu is the lion, Śava i.e. corpse is Sambhu and lotus is Brahṁā (77.7^{ab}).

Her tongue is lolling and hence She looks dreadful. She looks brilliant on account of the golden crown (77.7^{cd}). That supporter of the world is decorated by the ornaments made up of precious jewels and rubbies (77.8).

The above mentioned description is in keeping with the Tāntric Concept of Devī.⁷

Nine Other Lozes Accompanying Kāmākhyā :-

To the left hand side of Devī Kāmākhyā is Tārā and to Her right hand side is Bhuvaneśvarī. Śoḍaśī is in Her South-east. Bhairavī (Tripurabhairavī) is in Her South-west. In the North-west of Her There is Chinnaṁastā and in Her rear there is Bagalāmukhī. To the North-eastern corner to Her there is Sunderī (i.e. Kamalā) and over Her head there is Anāṅganāyikā (i.e. Mātāṅgī). Dhūmāvatī lore is in the southern direction of the Mahāpīṭha⁸ (77.9-11^{ab}). Below Kāmākhyā, there is Lord Śūlī i.e. Lord Śiva Himself and Lords Brahṁā and Viṣṇu

7 Cf. Kālikāpurāṇa V.52 and VIII 9-10. Also compare Śāktapremodā-Kālītānta.

8 Vide- Vāme Tārā Bhagavatī Dakṣiṇe Bhuvaneśvarī |
 Agnau tu Śoḍaśī vidyā neirṛtyāṁ Bhairavī svayam || 9
 Vāyavyāṁ Chinnaṁastā ca pṛṣṭhato Bagalāmukhī |
 Aiśānyāṁ Sunderī Vidyā cordhvamāṅganāyikā || 10
 Yāmyāṁ Dhūmāvatī vidyā Mahāpīṭhasya Nārada | 11^{ab}
 Mahbg.P. 77.9-11^{ab}

along with other gods accompanied by Their powers are always in proximity of that Pīṭha (77.11^{cd}-12).

There one should adore Devī accompanied by Her family, by different requisite articles of worship in keeping with one's riches, desiring the highest grace of Devī by true devotion in which case there is no doubt of rebirth (77.13-14).

Offering Bilvapatra To Devī Kāmākhyā And Its Fruit :-

He who offers a bilvapatra to Devī with devotion should be considered as Lord Śaṅkara Himself Who is the Lord of the lord of all the worlds (77.15).

The bilvapatra with three leaves is of the nature of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva of whose nature is this whole world, moveable as well as immoveable (77.16). Hence he who offers a bilvapatra to the accomplished goddess attains the fruit of giving the whole world by way of alms (77.17). He has all his desires fulfilled. He attains the fulfilment of his birth and is not reborn again (77.18). He who smeared with ashes worships Lord Śiva with bilva leaves, with devotion, he attains release after enjoying desired enjoyments (77.19).

Gaṅgādevī :-

As stated in Mabhg. 13.1-2 Sātī bifurcating Herself became the daughter of Himavat as Gaṅgā by one part assuming liquid form and became Gaurī by another. Gaṅgā desiring to come in contact with the liquid form of Hari by Her own liquid form entered the water pot of Brahmā (64.22). Thus Gaṅgās assuming liquid form was in keeping with Her free will to come in contact with that of Lord Viṣṇu.

Lord Brahmā collected the watery form of Gaṅgā in His water pot (64.23^{ab}). Thus Gaṅgādevī, the sanctifier of the three worlds transformed Herself into liquid form and remained into the water pot of Brahmā (64.25).

Brahmā's Pouring Water From His Kamaṇḍalu On Viṣṇu's Toe-Gaṅgā's Origin :-

The creator (Lord Brahmā) in order to worship Viṣṇu's foot poured the water from His water-pot on the toe of Viṣṇu and thus Gaṅgā, the destroyer of all sins in the form of water remained thereon (65.38). This is the way in which the watery form of Gaṅgā came in contact with the toe of Viṣṇu and remained in it.

Gaṅgā's Coming In Contact With Viṣṇu's Toe And Remaining Therein :-

Lord Viṣṇu, the Lord of Vaikunṭha went to His abode and Gaṅgā, the sanctifier of the world remained in His foot (65.43).

Thus the way in which Gaṅgā came in contact and remained in the toe of Viṣṇu is explained.

In Vaikunṭha Brahmā prayed to Gaṅgā for long Who was in the body of Viṣṇu, to Whom (i.e. Brahmā) She appeared (66.6^{cd}-7), and assured Him that She would remain for sometime in the body of Hari and thereafter, after assuming liquid form She would come out from the lotus like foot of Viṣṇu by eulogizing of king Bhagīratha and would sanctify the three worlds (66.8-9^{ab}).

Gaṅgā's remaining in the body of Viṣṇu for sometime is a special innovation of the Mahāg.P. The other details are commonly found in other purāṇas.

Gaṅgā foretold Brahmā about Her reaching the earth as Bhāgīrathī and releasing all the ancestors of king Bhagīratha and then Her entering the nether regions (66.9^{cd}-10).

Gaṅgā's Boon To Bhagīratha :-

Gaṅgā, the power of Śiva became pleased with Bhagīratha after a lapse of many thousands of years while practising penance (66.37). When Bhagīratha requested Gaṅgā to come down on the earth to sanctify it and thereafter to enter the hole to release his ancestors (66.40), Gaṅgā agreed to grant Bhagīratha's request (66.42).

Gaṅgā directed Bhagīratha to propitiate Lord Śiva, Her husband to obtain His consent to come down to the earth to release his ancestors as She was unable to go without His command (66.44^{cd}-45). Gaṅgā further added that after his propitiating Lord Śaṅkara when he would blow a conch after ascending the peak of mountain Meru, Gaṅgā would come out from the lotus like foot of Viṣṇu and piercing the Brahmāṇḍa would come to the ground in watery form following him (66.46-47). She further assured him that she would release his ancestors and thereafter would enter the hole to go to the nether regions (66.48).

Gaṅgāprādurbhāva On Jyēṣṭha Sukla Daśamī :-

The description of Gaṅgā's coming down to the earth from heaven is a very fine description in minute details as found in Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa Adhyaya 69.

Gaṅgā came out for the protection of even great sinners on the tenth day of the bright half of the month of Jyēṣṭha (69.1).

On Tuesday When The Moon Is In Hasta Constellation Gaṅgā ~~is~~ Destroys Tenfold Sin :-

Since Bhāgīrathī Herself destroys the ten-fold sin of the people accumulated within ten births by bathing or plunging into its waters when the moon happens to be in the Hasta constellation on Tuesday, therefore all embodied ones who are desirous of getting rid of all great sins should bathe in its water dēligently (69.4-5).

Gaṅgā after coming out from heeven, and following the path of the chariot of that king went to the south (69.6) . On the way Gaṅgā was worshipped by the Devarṣis, Gandharvas, and human beings with great devotion by the offering of various kinds of flowers, bilvāpetras, and rice grains and by beautiful Durvā grass (69.7-8^{ab}).

Gaṅgā equalling pure crystal was decorated by those flowers, and appearing beautiful on account of foam after having crossed the impassable mountain Hemakūṭa came near the Himālayas (69.8^{cd}-10).

On Jyestha-Pūrṇimā Gaṅgā Approached Śiva's Head :-

Gaṅgā approached the head of Lord Śambhu at mid-day on the fifteenth of the month of Jyestha (69.13). Gaṅgā was filled with highest joy on reaching Śiva's head and looking beautiful by the flowers in the form of foam moved to and fro on His head (69.16).

Gaṅgā Remained For One Year In The Matted Hair Of Śiva :-

Gaṅgā after hearing the sound of the conch blown by king Bhagīratha, moved here and there trying to find out an outlet (69.19). But unable to find it out from the matted hair of Śambhu She passed one year therein (69.20).

On hearing the sound of Bhagīratha's conch Gaṅgā moved to and fro in the matted hair of Lord Śambhu and sought His refuge as She could not find out a way to come out to follow the path of Bhagīratha (69.30-32). She expressed Her anxiousness to release all creatures on the earth as She was dragged by that sound (69.33).

Śambhu Untied His Matted Hair And Allowed Gaṅgā To Proceed :-

When Śambhu untied His matted hair and allowed Gaṅgā to proceed, She proceeded towards the chariot of the king in the southern direction (69.35).

Out of their parental love and affection for Gaṅgā, Menā and Himālaya approached Her as described in 69.37^{cd}-38. They received Gaṅgā well and Gaṅgā also honoured them by prostrating before them as was expected from persons of noble birth (69.39).

After having reached the surface of the earth Bhāgīrathī Gaṅgā shone brightly like heated gold (69.41). That speedy Gaṅgā, rushed speedily following Bhāgīratha and flooded the forests and the gardens, the cities, the villages and houses etc. (69.43-45).

Gaṅgā's Reaching Different Holy Places And Increasing Their Greatness :-

Gaṅgādevī after having traversed many Yojanas came to Haridvāra along with that great souled king (70.1). There the seven sages after having seen Gaṅgā and after having worshipped Her blew conches in the seven directions (70.2-3^{ab}). On hearing that sound Bhāgīrathī Gaṅgā subdivided Herself into seven streams and went towards the south-eastern direction and joined with other rivers (70.3^{cd}-5^{ab}). Compare Vālmīki Rāmāyana (Gītā Press ed.) I.43.11-14).

After having come to the region of Prayāga Gaṅgā joined with Yamunā and Sarasvatī (70.5^{cd}-6^{ab}).

On Gaṅgā's approaching Kāśī Kālabhairava inquired of Her about Her whereabouts. To that inquiry Gaṅgā replied that She was Gaṅgā, the wife of Śaṅkara in watery form, Who wanted to see Kāśīśivanātha and promised Bhairava that She would not overflow Kāśī (70.16^{cd}-18). Kālabhairava told thus bowed down to the mistress of Śaṅkara (70.19).

Desiring to see Kāmākhyā Gaṅgā turned towards the east from Kāśī (70.20).

Mistaking the sound of Jahnu's conch to be that of Bhagīratha's conch Gaṅgā speedily went to his Āśrama (70.22).

Bhagīratha blew his conch to divert the course of Gaṅgā but mistaking that sound to be the former sound Gaṅgā was dragged towards the sage Jahnu by his great lustre (70.24). On finding the king crying, Gaṅgādevī asked him to blow the conch again (70.29) assuring him that nobody was able to confine Her (70.30).

Gaṅgā Came Out Piercing The Thigh Of Jahnu :-

After having heard that the great goddess set out speedily after having pierced the thigh of Jahnu (70.32).

By Jahnu that Gaṅgā possessing divine form and joyful face was eulogized, Who consoled him that as She had come out from his body, She was his daughter and told him that he was not at fault as regards that matter (70.39-40). Thenceforth her name would be Jāhnavī (70.41). Those who would remember Her as Jāhnavī even once in their case sins and miseries would be powerless (70.42).

Gaṅgā Refers To The Biography Of Sage Jahnu :-

According to Gaṅgā Jahnu was Her best devotee and hence those who would remember his biography with them She would always be pleased (70.43).

The idea of remembering the biography of eminent, good persons was already prevalent in Epic Purāṇic literature.

After taking leave of Jahnu, Gaṅgā began Her onward march following Bhagīratha (70.49) in the souther direction.

After having traversed some distance the tired king took rest in the middle part of the chariot (70.50).

In the meanwhile the daughter of sage Jahnu, named Padmā blew a conch with a desire to see her sister (70.51). On hearing that sound Gaṅgā rushed towards that sound in the south eastern direction to a little distance (70.52).

When in order to bring Gaṅgā to the correct direction king Bhagīratha blew a conch, Gaṅgā again followed his chariot. Thereupon Padmā became greatly enraged and transformed herself into water (70.56). That river Padmā containing great mass of water went to the eastern direction speedily and joined with the sea (70.57). Then Gaṅgā, the remover of sins speedily went towards the southern direction (70.58). Gaṅgā searching the progeny of Sagara, after having approached speedily the proximity of the sea, subdivided Herself into thousands of streams and the sea resounded by Her murmur (70.59).

The sea after having known that Gaṅgā, worshipped even by the gods had approached him with great speed, worshipped Her by offering flowers and incense (70.60).

Gaṅgā Reached The Hole And Approached Sage Kapila :-

On reaching the proximity of the sea as well as that of the hole Gaṅgā became overjoyed (71.1). After having approached the nether regions Gaṅgā went in proximity of sage Kapila (71.2^{ab}), who after having known about Her approach adored Her with water for washing the feet etc. (71.2^{cd}-3^{ab}).

Gaṅgā honoured thus by the sage asked him to show where the sons of Sagara lay in the form of ashes (71.3^{cd}-4^{ab}).

On the sage's pointing out to Gaṅgā the place where the sons of Sagara lay in the form of ashes Gaṅgā rushed towards it and overflowed the place (71.4^{cd}-5).

The Contact Of Gaṅgā With The Ashes Sanctified Sagara's Sons Who Went To Brahmaloḥa :-

As stated in 71.6^{cd}-7^{ab}, as soon as the ashes of the sons of Sagara came in contact with the current of Gaṅgā, they attained divine form and went to Brāhmaloḥa at once after having mounted an unusual chariot. This shows extraordinary sanctifying power of Gaṅgā.

Gaṅgā on hearing that sound of the conch of Bhāgīratha speedily brought those ashes from the hole to the mortal world (71.9^{cd}-10^{ab}).

Gaṅgā-Bhogavatī In the Nether Regions - Thus Tripathagā :-

One of Gaṅgā's pure streams continued to flow in the nether regions and became known as Bhogavatī, giving the fruits to all the people (71.10^{cd}-11^{ab}).

Thus Gaṅgā began to flow in the heaven as Mandākinī, on the earth as Bhāgīrathī and in the nether regions as Bhogavatī and came to be known as Tripathagā.

Gaṅgā after having successively gone thus entered water in the form of mercy and is illuminating the universe in many ways (71.11^{cd}-11^{ef}).

Thus the holy Gaṅgā who was residing in the body of Viṣṇu came on the earth for the welfare of all the creatures (71.13).

Greatness Of Gaṅgā For Those Who Come In Direct Contact With Her :-

The greatness of Gaṅgā is described in details with regard to persons who either see, or touch or bathe in its waters and thus come in direct contact with it (72.1-34).

This river of the gods is holy, the destroyer of great sins and the giver of final beatitude even by touching or seeing it (72.1).

In the case of a man remembering Gaṅgā even slightly after getting up in the morning, there is no fear of any kind of inauspiciousness even in the three worlds (72.3). In his house affluence prevails, the adversities are destroyed in a moment, his sins perpetrated in other birth dwindle away (72.4). The meritorious deeds performed by him become inexhaustible. On visualizing a bad dream or in an unsurmountable calamity a man is doubtlessly freed from it on remembering Gaṅgā even once (72.5).

If in the beginning of a rite one remembers Gaṅgā, then that rite performed according to the laid down injunctions becomes fruitful (72.6).

In case one engaged in the repetition of a sacred formula or in performing a sacrifice happens to speak in the Prākṛta language, then he should once again remember Gaṅgā and perform the rite again (72.7).

If a person desirous of salvation remembers Gaṅgā anywhere then Gaṅgā remains in his proximity for his release (72.8). Gaṅgā accomplishes everything, destroys all sins and all inauspiciousnesses and is the giver of all riches (72.9). Gaṅgā is the visible nature Herself who is the giver of heaven and salvation to the human beings. He who does not remember Her at all his life is futile (72.10).

Merit Arising By The Remembrance Of Gaṅgā Surpasses All Merits :-

The merit arising by the remembrance of Gaṅgā surpasses all other merits arising by bathing in sacred waters adoration of all the gods, performance of all sacrifices and penances, alms-giving of all sorts, visiting sacred places and saluting the feet of all worthy of being saluted and by eulogizing (72.11-12).

Out of a thousand names of the goddess, Gaṅgā is the highest name which is recited (72.13). The day on which there is no remembrance of Gaṅgā should be considered as a Durdina (a bad day) as also a cloudy day (72.15). The sin arising from telling a lie, from contact with another's wife, caused by violence not laid down and caused by drinking wine as well as any other sin of whatever sort it may be all that dwindles away by the remembrance of Gaṅgā's name (72.16-17).

The Fruit Accruing To One Who Sets Out For Gaṅgā :-

The performance of Asvamedha sacrifice was considered to give rise to great merit. The performance of a hundred Aśvamedha Yajñas was capable to secure the position of the king of gods for the performer. But the setting out of a man

to reach Gaṅgā gave the fruit of the performance of an Aśvamedha and of that of a hundred Vājapeya sacrifices at every step (72.18). The manes of those who set out to reach Gaṅgā, dance in joy and heinous sins vanish from a distance (72.19).

If a man desirous of death, travels for Jāhnavī, the messengers of Yama are terrified on seeing him from a distance and they run away (72.20). Even if he dies anywhere his release should be understood there itself, particularly in Gaṅgā (72.21).

He who entertains as a guest one who has set out to reach Gaṅgā, luckily come across on the road gets great merit (72.22). He who neglects him due to infatuation that sinner is cooked in dreadful hell as long as fourteen Indras rule (72.24). If a person journeying for Gaṅgā after getting tired happens to drink water from whosoever's well, well with steps or tank, his fortune is great (72.26).

If a person himself unable to go to Jāhnavī makes one going to Jāhnavī mount a vehicle, his manes attain highest joy forever and great merit arises in his case and all his sins are destroyed (72.27-28). It should be understood definitely that he would die in the waters of the Ganges. He would attain great fame on the earth, and progeny of sons and grandsons would be everlasting and at the end he would have remembrance of Gaṅgā (72.29-30^{ab}).

The Sin Of Brahmicide - Destroyed By The Sight Of Gaṅgā :-

The perpetrator of Brahmicide is freed from dreadful sins even by the sight of Gaṅgā in a moment without doubt (72.30^{c-f}).

Devout Saluting And Restraint On Reaching Gaṅgā Fructifies Birth And Body :-

Saluting with devotion and restraint after having reached Gaṅgā makes fruitful the body as well as the birth as a human being (72.31). His ancestors are blessed and he is the most blessed. No sin attaches to him and there is no fear of death in his case (72.32).

Meeting Death In Gaṅgā Brings Incomparable Happiness :-

He who meets his death in Gaṅgā, accompanied by remembrance of Gaṅgā, attains incomparable happiness in the other world (72.33).

All the gods and sages also become those who have accomplished their objective by the sight of Gaṅgā, what to talk about the human beings ? (72.34).

Gaṅgā's Vision Through Contact Exempts One From Yama's Punishment :-

He Who sees Gaṅgā even by contact, even he is not fit to be punished by Yama, even though a perpetrator of thousands of sins (72.35).

Lord Mahādeva narrated to Nārada the fine secret history of the greatness of Gaṅgā (72.36) in this regard.

The Anecdote Of A Hunter To Emphasize The Greatness Of Gaṅgā:-

Long ago there was a hunter called Sarvāntaka, born in the race of Śabarasa who was irresistible and the highest sinner (72.37). He used to maintain his family by selling the flesh etc. of the animals killed by him throughout his life (72.38). He used to rape the wives of others, and used to usurp the riches belonging to others and never performed any meritorious deed (72.39).

Once upon a time he went to the forest, and after hunting many animals bathed into the water of a river, he had approached (72.40). In the meanwhile the great king Citrasena came to the same forest for hunting (72.41). He saw that wicked hunter lifting up load of flesh about to start for his own city (72.42).

In the meanwhile the king saw a most handsome antelope speedily running away and discharged an arrow (72.43-44). The antelope pierced by it approached the proximity of that hunter, smeared by oozing blood (72.45). The hunter not seeing the king and after having seen the afflicted antelope tied it and caught it. But the king saw that (72.46). Thereafter the angry king came there and tied that sinner with different nooses (72.47). Then the king took with him that antelope and that sinner and started for his city after having mounted a horse (72.48). Then the king ascended a boat and crossed the Ganges. The hunter saw that goddess on account of connection (72.49). The king after having arrived at his city imprisoned that wicked one (72.50).

After a lapse of time that hunter called Sarvāntaka died. The messengers of Yama tied him with their nooses and went away (72.51).

The Messengers Of Śiva Defeated Those Of Yama And Took The Hunter To The World Of Śiva :-

In the meantime, the messengers of Śiva came there on account of Śiva's command and after having defeated the messengers of Yama took him to the world of Lord Śiva (72.52).

This is exactly parallel to Ajāmilopākhyāna in Śrīmadbhāgavata in which it is stated that on visualizing the messengers of Yama who had come to take away the soul of Ajāmila, he, a great sinner uttered the name of his beloved son Nārāyaṇa. On hearing it the messengers of Lord Viṣṇu appeared on the scene considering that last utterance of Ajāmila as the uttering of the name of Lord Nārāyaṇa and prevented the messengers of Yama from taking away the soul of Ajāmila. Vide Śrīmadbhāgavata VI.1.28-68 and VI.2.7-20.

Then those messengers of the god of death approached Yama and told Him about the happening and about the behaviour of the messengers of Śiva (72.53). Thereupon Yama asked Citragupta as to why that hunter was taken to the proximity of Lord Śiva (72.54). Yama ordered him to check the merit or demerit of the hunter and added that He was unable to see any merit except sin in his case (72.55). Then that Citragupta, discriminating between merit and demerit informed Yama about his vision of Gaṅgā through contact which was the destroyer of great sins and the creator of merit (72.56-57^{ab}). After having

heard that Dharmarāja was astonished and after having saluted Gaṅgā ordered his messengers thus (72.57^{c-f}).

Extra-Ordinary Splendor Of Gaṅgā :-

The reward of seeing Gaṅgā through contact, remembering Gaṅgā, meditating devoutly upon Her, worshipping Gaṅgā or dipping into its waters and abandoning the body in the current of the Ganges is exemption from the punishment of Yama despite the persons' being the perpetrators of hundreds of sins or being the perpetrators of great sins (72.58-63^{ab}). Thus the splendor of Gaṅgā is referred to by Yama in the rising scale as shown above. Not only that but as stated in 72.62 those who give up their bodies in the current of the Ganges bring the god of death also under their control and themselves become fit to be bowed down by the best of gods.

Yama's messengers were very much astonished to listen thus to the greatness of Gaṅgā from the mouth of Yama, the knower of righteousness (72.63^{ab}).

Polluting Gaṅgā By Physical Filth Is Forbidden :-

One should not discharge urine and stools in Gaṅgā. In case of breach of this rule one goes to hell as long as fourteen Indras rule (73.33).

One Should Be Beyond Mental, Moral And Verbal Pollution On Reaching Gaṅgā :-

Not only that but one is also forbidden to tell lies, to slander others, to envy others, to commit sins and to be greedy after reaching Gaṅgā (73.34).

Thus not only one should refrain from physically polluting Gaṅgā but one should be free from mental and moral, physical as well as verbal pollution. In case of violation of the above mentioned rules as a result of infatuation one should leave the sacred place after taking a bath and after bowing down to Gaṅgā for the sake of appeasing the sin (73.35).

Gaṅgā - The Supreme Śakti-Brahmamayī, Complete, That Has Transformed In Liquid Form For Protecting The People :-

He who considers the great goddess Gaṅgā, the nature in the form of water to be a river on account of infatuation goes to many hells (73.36). One should consider Gaṅgā as the first and foremost Śakti, which is Brahmamayī in person, which is complete and which has come out in liquid form for the sake of the protection of the people (73.37).

Gaṅgā is of easy access everywhere, except at Haridvāra, Prayāga and at Gaṅgāsāgarasaṁgama (73.38). Therefore Gaṅgā is the giver of great fruit especially there. So one should take bath and give alms etc. with self controlled mind (73.39). After putting a tilaka mark in the forehead by the mud of Gaṅgā whatever rite one performs, that is fulfilled (73.47).

Wherever one performs the adoration of gods or a Śrāddha or Abhiṣeka etc. by the waters of Gaṅgā knowingly or unknowingly even if it be devoid of laid down rite or performed with hypocrisy or done without riches or done by

means of impure things by one whose mind is sinful even then it becomes the giver of complete fruit (73.48-50).

The above statement is in sharp contradiction with the statement made in 73.18 that the performance of Śrāddha elsewhere by the waters fetched from Gaṅgā is prohibited and the performer should do expiation for performing it. Moreover in 73.34 it was stated that even mental, moral and verbal pollution should be avoided on reaching Gaṅgā. Both these statements are contradicted by those made in 73.48 and 49-50.