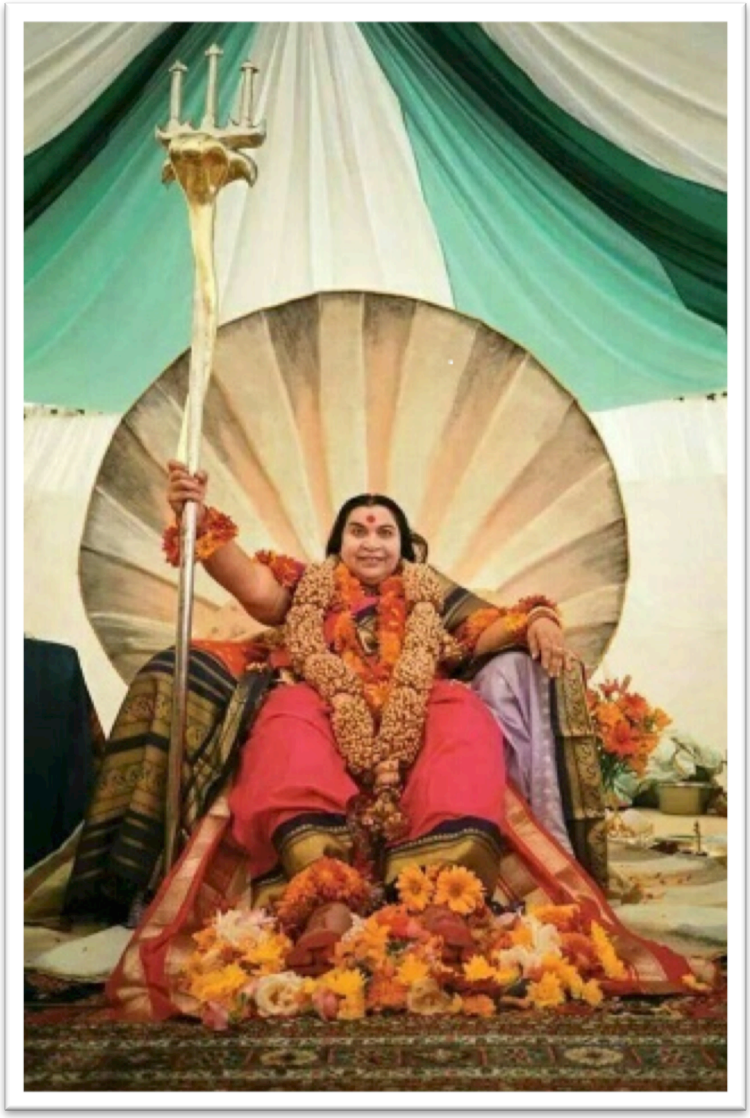

SRIMAD DEVI BHAGWAT

If you want to know Who Adi Shakti is, read Devi Bhagwat.

- HH Shree Mataji Nirmala Devi

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INTRODUCTION

The greatness of Devi Bhagwat - Ved Vyas was an ansh avatar (partial incarnation) of Shri Vishnu, and was born to Parashar and Satyawati. He divided the Vedas into four parts and taught it to his sishyas (disciples). But he knew the common man would not be able to understand it, and this troubled him. So he wrote in simple language, the 18 Puranas. He also wrote the Mahabharat. And last of all, he wrote the book which gives Divine Knowledge as well as Mukti --- The Srimad Devi Bhagwat.

In all past yugas there were various dharmas; but for Kalyug, worship of Adya Shakti is the only means of salvation. Bhagwan Vyas has written this book as a purana, explaining all the ways in which we can obtain and absorb the nectar flowing from the Lotus Feet of the Devi.

Whoever listens with devotion and attention to Devi Bhagwat, will always have Siddhi in his vicinity. The first person to benefit was Raja Parikshit, who was bitten by the snake Thakshak. His son Janmejaya went to Ved Vyas and listened first hand to Devi Bhagwat in nine days from Ved Vyas' own vani (voice). Thus he earned for his father a place at Devi Bhagawati's Lotus Feet, and arrived there as a deva.

There are no strict rules of months or days, but if we listen to this Devi Bhagwat during Navaratri, we get the benefit of Navaha Yagya. This is available, even to sinners, fools, traitors, disbelievers and nastiks, and those who did not get fruits from their various sacrifices and rituals. In other words Devi Bhagwat is the ultimate purana. It should be treated with utmost respect and always given a special seat in the house.

When Shri Krishna went in search of Prasen and did not return for a long time, His father Vasudev listened to Devi Bhagwat, and got his beloved son back.

Whichever house instals Devi Bhagwat with due respect and honour; that house becomes like a teerth sthan (holy shrine), and evil forces cannot survive near it.

_____ _____

The assembly of rishis thus spoke to Sootji (the narrator).

Sootji, you are very wise. You received your education from Shri Ved Vyas. May you live long. We have already listened with great bhakti to your gracious voice. Now we desire to hear that which is most sacred of all – The Devi Puran.

Sootji replied – You are very blessed that you have asked for something which will be beneficial to the whole world.

The rishis asked – Please tell us how Vasudev was blessed with a son. Also the story of the Syamantaka Gem, and how Vasudev got help by listening to Srimad Devi Bhagwat.

Sootji narrated thus: - Satyajit, a king of the Bhojvanshi clan, lived in Dwaraka. He worshipped the Sun God, and was given as a gift of appreciation, the Syamantaka Gem. When he wore this and came to Dwaraka every one thought it was the Sun God himself. But Shri Krishna explained that it was the gem which shone. One day the king's brother Prasen wore the gem and went hunting. A lion killed him and took away the gem. Just then a warrior king

Jambvan saw the gem. He killed the lion and took the gem away. He gave it to his son to play.

When Prasen did not return, the king began to wonder where he was and whether someone had harmed him for the sake of the gem. Suddenly rumours started in Dwaraka that Shri Krishna had been attracted to the gem and must have killed Prasen for it. Hearing this false accusation, Shri Krishna went to the forest himself, to look for it. He found Jambvan and engaged him in war for twenty-seven days. When the news of Shri Krishna's disappearance into Jambvan's den reached Vasudev, he sank into deep sorrow. At this stage Shri Narad appeared and after hearing the cause of his sorrow, advised Vasudev to do aradhana (worship) of Ambika Devi. Vasudev asked him – "Dev Rishi, who is Devi Ambika. What is Her description. And how does one do aradhana? Please tell me". Narad said – " Who can adequately describe the Great Devi? I will endeavour to give a concise description.--- Bhagawati Ambika is eternal. She is the embodiment of Sat Chit Anand (truth-consciousness-bliss). She is Primordial. She is Above All. She is the Cause of this living universe. It is only with Her permission and blessings that Brahmadeva is able to carry out creation. It was after performing stutis to the Devi that Brahma overcame his fear of Madhu and Kaitabha. It is only by Her grace that Shri Vishnu preserves the creation. Also, it was only after Her benevolent glance fell on Rudra, that he got the powers of dissolution. It is She who covers the Universe with illusion, and it is only She who grants mukti (Moksh Pradayini). She is the embodiment of supreme knowledge (Nirmal Vidya). She presides over the brave and the strong (Vira Mata), and the competent who can lead the battle against negative forces.

You must perform Navratra Puja, and in nine days you must listen to Devi Bhagwat. On completion, your son will return. Those who read, or listen to,

Devi Bhagwat, get the blessings of worldly enjoyment with detachment and liberation." Then Vasudev remembered the same advice that was given to him when Kansa had imprisoned him and his wife Devaki, and had killed six of their sons. He told Narad – "I saw that Devaki had reached the end of her endurance, so I called Muni Garg to the prison and asked him to advise a way to save the life of the seventh child. He praised Shree Bhagawati Durga who grants protection to devotees who seek Her help and advised the reading of Devi Bhagwat. At this both Devaki and I sank into despair. We were prisoners and had no access to such a ritual. So we pleaded with Muni Garg to perform it on our behalf. He graciously agreed, and taking some brahmins with him, proceeded to the Vindhya mountains. There they made necessary preparations, and started chanting and reading the praises of Devi Jagaddamba. On completion there was a voice from heaven (akaashvaani) – " Munis, I am prasanna. Your prayer will be granted. To remove the oppression of the world, I have commanded Shri Vishnu to incarnate as a child in Devaki's womb. As soon as the child is born Vasudev should carry it to Nandji in Gokul. He will bring back Yashodha's girl child and give it to Kansa. Kansa will throw her to the ground to kill her, but she will slip out of his hands and assume a Divine Form of Vishnumaya, and live in the Vindhya Mountains for the benefit of humanity." Muni Garg offered obeisance to the Devi and humbly thanked Her."

Then Vasudev thanked Narad for his advice and pleaded with him to do the great honour of himself reading Devi Bhagwat for him. Sage Narad graciously agreed and at an auspicious time and day, started the reading. Lots of Brahmins also arrived to participate. All this while the war was still going on between Jambvan and Shri Krishna. Jambvan was wounded, and realising that he was fighting none other than Shri Krishna, he prostrated before him and begged forgiveness. He then gave the gem to Shri Krishna, and also gave his

daughter Jambvati in marriage to the Lord. Shri Krishna returned to Dwaraka just as the reading of Devi Bhagwat concluded. Vasudev and all the congregated people of Dwaraka were overjoyed. The Brahmins were given the traditional farewell of food and gifts and were pleased. Sage Narad took leave and left for Brahmalok. Whoever reads this with clean attention and Nirmal Bhakti, will be blessed with fulfilment and peace.

Then Sootji said – O Munis. Now listen to another story where the reading of Devi Bhagwat granted a prayer. Once sage Agastya and his wife Lopamudra went to Kartikeya and requested him - O Slayer of Tarakasura, please narrate to us those incidents where the glories of the Mother of the Universe, the Eternal Bhagawati Durga have been sung in the form of Devi Bhagwat. Shri Kartikeya said - Who can ever justly or completely describe the eternal Devi whose nature is generosity; upon Whose meditation one gets Sat Chit Anand, and Who resides in the form of Jagaddamba in the Devi Bhagwat; and Who gives auspiciousness even to the elements of the place where it is read or heard.

Shradhadev was the son of Vivaswan. He had no children, and so he performed a puttroshti yagya presided over by sage Agastya. The wife of Shradhadev requested the Brahmin to arrange that she should bear a girl child. When the girl was born, the father questioned sage Agastya as to why the yagya produced a girl instead of a boy. In meditation, sage Agastya came to know the truth, and he did penance to Shri Vishnu; and got the boon which changed the girl Ila into a boy Sudyumna. When he grew into a youth, he mounted a horse and went to hunt in the forest. He strayed into an area which had been cursed by Shri Shiva – that any male who entered would become a female. Instantly Sudyumna and all his entourage became women, and even his horse became a mare. Now this girl wandered near the ashram

of sage Buddh, and he married her. She stayed in his ashram, and they had a son Pururav. One day the memory of being the boy Sudyumna revived, and this girl became sad. She went to the ashram of guru Vashist and told him her story, and expressed the desire to become Sudyumna again. Guru Vashist went to Kailash and began penance. Praising Shri Shiva guru Vashist said – O Dev Adi Dev, bestower of blessings and auspiciousness; having matted hair and the moon for His crest jewel; obeisance to You again and again. O well wisher of the universe who resides on Mount Kailash, Namastasye, Namastasye! O field of forgiveness; God with a blue throat who grants boons and is the support of all living beings, accept my pranaams. - Hearing these praises Shri Shiva appeared before the guru, seated on the sacred bull Nandi. Also seated was Shree Parvati . Their countenance was as bright as a thousand suns, and as white as the snow clad mountain.

He had three eyes, and the crescent moon on His hair. He was pleased, and told guru Vashist to ask for a boon. When he requested the Lord to restore Ila to the male form of Sadyumna, the Lord said – " He will be a male for one month, and a female for one month, and so on…"

Guru Vasisht paid obeisance to Jagat Janani Bhagawati Parvati, whose darshan seldom goes unrewarded. Her face has the radiance of a thousand moons, and She is ever smiling. To obtain the boon of permanent manhood for Ila, he began singing the praises of the Divine Mother. O Mother who has benevolence for Her bhaktas, praise be to You. You who are attributeless and beyond the gunas, praise be to You. Protector of those who surrender to You, praise be to You again and again (barambar). Remover of sorrow and destroyer of negative forces, Shree Durga, praise be to You. You who give darshan to your devotees, O Mahamaya, worship of Your Lotus Feet takes one across the ocean of illusion. You who grant bliss, moksha and liberation, be

pleased. Who can adequately describe You? I am only bowing to You in worship. - Shree Durga is also Narayani, and She was instantly pleased. The all knowing and wish-fulfilling Goddess spoke thus to Guru Vashist – "Go to Sudyumna's house and worship Me with dedication and devotion. You read to him the Devi Bhagwat in nine days. That purana is very dear to Me. As soon as the reading is complete he will get the boon of becoming a male permanently". Then Shri Shiva and Shree Parvati withdrew from his sight. After paying homage, Guru Vashist returned to his ashram. He called Ila and narrated the events. Then he made the necessary preparations and started the reading of Srimad Devi Bhagwat with great shraddha (faith and reverence). On the ninth day Ila became Sudyumna, and Guru Vasisht performed Abhishek (ceremonial bath before coronation); and installed him as king.

Story of Revathi. - Even after hearing so many narrations, sage Agasthya requested Shri Kartikeya to continue. Skanda said - Listen O son of Mitravarun. That which has one part describing the Great Devi; which devotes the second part to the knowledge of dharmas – Nirmal Vidya; and which imparts the meaning and significance of Gayatri – that is called Devi Bhagwat. There was a muni called Ritwaak who was possessed of vidya or knowledge. He did the putrotsav on appointed days (sacrifice performed for obtaining a son). He begot a son in the fourth quarter of Revati. He performed all the prescribed ceremonies like naming, thread, and initiation. But since the birth of the child, there was always illness and sorrow in the household. Everyone was overcome with anger and desire, and the mother was always ill. The boy became disobedient, and the father became despondent and wondered why the boy had become so bad. He had even snatched away the wife of a muni.

In great disillusionment Ritvaak exclaimed – It is better to be childless than to have a child who is disobedient and whose sinful acts push his ancestors out of heaven and into hell. He only brings sorrow to his parents. He has neither friends, nor is he any use to his enemies. Only such parents are fortunate whose sons help others and make their parents happy. A wicked son destroys the family, is inauspicious in the world, and in the end goes to hell. He became very sad, and went to Gargji and said – Sir, you are a learned jyotish. Can you tell me the reason for begetting a son like this. I have always respected my guru, and have acquired knowledge of the Vedas; I practised celibacy till I married at the proper age, and I have lived within the maryadas of a grahasti (codes of conduct for a householder). I have always shunned wrongdoing and evil desires. I only wanted a son and so I performed the necessary yagya for that. Is it due to some sin of the mother or father that we have been given this kind of a son who has destroyed our peace and happiness. Sage Garg meditated on the matter and spoke – Muni, the fault is neither yours nor that of your wife. It is the inauspicious timing of his birth – the fourth quarter of Revathi which is called Gundaanth – which is causing him to behave like this. You must worship Jagat Janani Bhagawati Durga, and when She is pleased, She will put an end to your sorrows.

Hearing this, Ritvaak muni became furious and cursed the star Revathi. At that moment she fell from the cosmos on to the Kumudgiri mountain and enhanced its beauty. It is now called Raivtak. Skand continued --- with the falling of the radiance of Revathi on the mountain, a girl child was produced, who had the beauty and brilliance of Shree Lakshmi. This child came to the notice of Rishi Pramoch. He took her to his ashram in Kumudgiri, named her Revati, and began to raise her. When she grew into maidenhood he began to look for a suitable husband for her. When he could not find anyone, he went to the temple of Agni and prayed. Agni Devata was pleased and spoke thus –

The bridegroom who is well versed in dharmas, brave, courteous, and handsome, is a king called Durdarm. At that time Raja Durdarm had come to the forest near the ashram. He was wise, strong and brave. He entered the ashram and saw only Revathi. Addressing her as 'priye' he enquired where the rishi was. Hearing that the rishi was in the agnishala he went there, and with bowed head and folded hands he greeted the rishi. The rishi immediately offered him arghya, and addressed him as 'son-in-law'. To this Raja Durdarm asked which wife of his was in the sage's ashram, as he was already married and his wives were in his palace. The rishi replied that Revathi was the girl whom the king had addressed as 'priye'.

The king asked the rishi to forgive him as he had had no bad intentions when addressing the girl as 'priye'. The rishi narrated how Agni Devata had named him as the prescribed husband for Revathi, and that no one could prevent this. Therefore the rishi began making preparations for giving the girl in marriage to the king. The girl came to her foster father and requested that the marriage be performed under the star Revathi. He replied that there were so many auspicious stars for marriage and that Revathi star was no longer a nakshatram (constellation). The girl insisted, saying that only under this star would her marriage be auspicious. Then her father told her how rishi Ritvaak had cursed Revathi to fall out of the cosmos. The girl asked her father – Is it only Ritvaak who can have powers. I know your capacity and you can surely reinstate Revathi. So rishi Pramoch did penance and meditation, and restored Revathi Nakshatram. The marriage was performed and the king left for his kingdom with Revathi. He ruled as a just and benevolent king. Once a great mahatma Lomashji visited his raj bhavan. Durdarm requested him to read the Devi Bhagawat for him as he wished for the divine gift of a son. The mahatma said – O king you are blessed. That is why a desire has awakened within you to hear Devi Bhagawat. At the auspicious hour the reading started in the presence of

the king and his wife. Havan was performed and little girls were given food and clothes. After some months, on an auspicious convergence of stars, the queen gave birth to a son whom they called Raivath. Water kept in golden pots was poured on him during his naming ceremony. As he grew he was initiated into the Vedas and he became a learned, benevolent, compassionate and competent ruler.

After this, sage Agasthya prostrated before Shri Kartikeya, and left for his ashram.

Then the rishis said - Most fortunate of souls Sootji, please do us the great favour of telling us the correct procedure for obeisance to Devi Bhagwat. How to gain the benefits and the varnan (explanatory description).

Sootji said – First of all a jyotish should be consulted for the auspicious time for starting this great reading. The month of Jyesht (third month) and the six months that follow, are auspicious. The stars Hasth, Ashvini, Mool, Pushya, Rohini, Shravan and Mrgshira are favourable. If the reading is started on these days, they grant boons. Whichever star has Brihaspati in it, count up to full moon. The count up to four, grants dharmas; the next four gives Lakshmi; the next one gives Siddhi of narration; following five give happiness; the next six give progeny; then the next four give rulership, and the last three give Pure Knowledge or Nirmal Vidya. When reading Devi Bhagwat one should put attention on this chakra. These are the instructions of Lord Shiva. To please the Devi, one should do this reading for four navratras.

Apart from this, it can be read in other months also, but attention should be paid to auspicious time, star and day. An intelligent man should understand that, just as elaborate arrangements are made for marriages, so also correct

arrangements should be made before the reading starts. Learned men who are devoid of lust and greed should be present, and four devotees of Shree Jagaddamba should sit with the main reader as help. Announcements should be made in all directions that Srimad Devi Bhagwat katha is going to be read, and all are cordially invited. Followers of all religions are welcome, because all the gods worship Bhagawati Adya Shakti. The reading is nectar-giving. All those who have divine love in their hearts should come and partake, as it is their birthright. Even if one cannot attend all nine days, they should come for as long as possible. The invitation should be given with utmost humility, and arrangements should be made for receiving the guests in a collective way. The place should be swept clean and the stage prepared and decorated. The earth should be smeared with cowdung and smoothed down. Erect a mandap and place banana plants on the sides. Silver paper decorations, streamers and flags should be tied. Place an aasan for the reader to sit on, and cover it with silk cloth. The reader should sit facing the east and north. Carpets should be placed for the guests. It is desirable that the readers should be dharmic persons who can give discourses in a convincing manner; who have discretion of right and wrong, who have conquered their senses, who are knowledgeable, who are satisfied, and who worship the Devi. The congregation should be persons who have desire for pure knowledge; should be devotees; and should know how to receive and absorb the Divine Nectar. Also they should be humble. It is not for people who are anti-social, greedy, full of lust, gossip mongers, or those who have hatred in their hearts.

On the first day the readers as well as the listeners, should prepare themselves by waking before sunrise, finish their morning ablutions, sit in meditation, and eat frugally.

The beautiful book is an image of the Devi Herself. It should be worshipped with all the ingredients used for a puja – kumkum, perfume, flowers, lamp, incense, etc. To remove all obstacles, five Brahmins should chant Durga Saptashati. After pradakshina and namaskar, the Devi should be praised thus – Katyayani! You are Mahamaya and the support of the universe. Bhavani! Your form is beneficient. I am sinking in the ocean of illusion. Please save me. O Jagaddambike! You are worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara. Be pleased with me. I worship You and offer namaskar.

After this get into meditative state to listen with attention to the reader, as if he were Ved Vyas himself. Pray to Ved Vyas to remove our darkness, like the moon gives light to the sky.

All this should be done for all the nine days. The Brahmins should be respectfully given their food and other requirements first, and then only the rest should eat. Attention should be detached from home, wife, children. The reading should be from sunrise to sunset, with a break of two hours for afternoon rest. Food and liquids should be taken sparingly, so that one does not have to go for nature's calls in between. The readers should eat only once, and preferably take fruit and milk.

Now regarding the congregation. Those who differentiate between Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar need not come. Nor those who have no bhakti for Jagaddambika. Also cheats, violent people, enemies of Brahmins, atheists and nastiks have no place here. Those who steal from Brahmins, those who covet other people's wives, and those who misappropriate God's money, have no right to sit at such a gathering. Those who come, should abstain from lust and greed, be brahmachari, sleep on the floor, speak the truth, have control over their senses, and eat food from banana leaves. They should not eat brinjal, oil,

dal, honey, burnt or stale food. No meat, masoor, radish, asafoetida, onion, garlic, carrots, greens with tubular stems. They should not associate with bad charactered people, enemies of brahmins, atheists, inauspicious people, law breakers and trouble makers. They must not listen to criticism or gossip. They should always keep calm, quiet, in balance, speak less, and be generous.

People with skin diseases, sinners, those struck down by misfortune and bad luck, childless women or women whose children have died – all these can also come and sit for Devi Bhagwat reading. Those who want to get realisation in an easy way can also come. These nine days are like nine yagyas (sacrifices), and all the devotion, alms, havan and mantras bear fruit, because it is the nature of Devi to give favours and realisation to those who seek it fervently.

On the concluding day, in order to remove all badhas, Gayatri Sahasranama or Vishnu Sahasranama should be recited. Also Durga Saptashati and havan should be performed with kheer. The reader and other brahmins should be honoured with new clothes and money. When they are pleased, all the gods are also pleased. Sumangali ladies and little girls should be given food and dakshina. Those who can afford, should give away gold, milch cows, elephants, horses and land. The fruit of this is prosperity. The Book should be draped in silk cloth, placed on a golden stand, and presented to the reader on ashtami or navami day. The man who performs this, enjoys the bounties of this world, and gets moksha when he dies.

The reader can be any person, as long as he has pure knowledge. He can be weak, old, poor, or young. There are many kinds of gurus who do impart divine knowledge. The person who sits on Vyas gaddi (seat of the reader) should not bow his head to anyone. The purana is sacred. Those who do not give undivided attention while it is being read not only lose benefits, but they

also get punished with sorrow and misfortune. Those who offer gifts, fruits, clothes, money, vessels and blankets to those who have knowledge of this purana, become worthy of Bhagawat-dham. Those who drape the Bhagwat with silk cloth and present it to others, enjoy great benefits and happiness.

The person who listens to the nine parts of Devi Bhagwat, receives all the good fortunes, especially the gift of moksha. When surrounded by enemies, or epidemics like cholera and plague, or disasters like drought and earthquake, one should listen with great devotion and dedication to Devi Bhagwat. Also to overcome the effects of evil spirits, goblins and malevolent beings, it is necessary to read Devi Bhagwat. Even those who are able to only hear half a shlok or listen to half a chapter, become eligible for a place at the Lotus Feet. Devi Jagaddamba Herself only uttered half a shlok, and from that has evolved this mighty book Srimad Devi Bhagwat.

There is no dharma greater than Gayatri, and She resides in this book in the form of Pure Knowledge. A reading of this never fails to please the goddess. It contains a description of Her abode in the Manidweep, (Nabhi Chakra), and also the explanation of Geeta that the Devi Herself gave to Himalaya. The great goddess who is worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Indra, resides in Manidweep – Bhagawati Devi Jagaddambika.

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CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1 Episodes 1 - 3

1-3 Conversation between Sootji and Shaunakji. Names of the Puranas. Narration of Shlokas. Twenty-eight names of Ved Vyas; and the description of the grandeur, magnitude and venerability of the Bhagwat.

We pray to that Devi Who resides in all beings as consciousness; Who is veritably the beginning and end of all creation, to have compassion, and in Her benevolence to transform our consciousness into collective consciousness.

Shaunakji said – O fortunate among men, you have acquired the pure knowledge of the puranas; O sinless and guiltless one, you were present and absorbing while Muni Vyas composed the eighteen Puranas. Satyavatinandan Vyasji revealed the secrets and connotations of all the puranas in your presence, and you imbibed all that knowledge. Today we are receiving the benefits of our punyas, because you have blessed us with your visit. This sacred grove gives peace and quiet to the munis, and is outside the jurisdiction of Kali. This gathering is desirous of listening to discourses connected with the puranas. Please be kind and narrate to us. O holy one. You are devoid of the threefold heat that comes from having too much knowledge, and also the ravages of age have not touched you. O Bhagwan, please narrate to us those puranas which have affinity with the Vedas. Those who have the faculty of hearing but do not listen to the puranas, are indeed unfortunate beings. Just as the six relishes or tastes quench the tongue, so does the hearing of holy texts quench the sense of the ears. Snakes do not have ears, still they lose control of their senses when sweet notes are played. Therefore those who have ears but do not listen to the sound of truth, should be called as deaf

people. O auspicious one, all these brahmins are sitting in respectful attention.

To nourish our knowledge there are so many wonderful scriptures and they have been presented in different ways. Also they are attributed with qualities. E.g. Vedant is sattwic (hindu philosophy based on upanishads). Mimansa (to become proficient in one of the six systems of philosophy by thorough investigation and examination) is called rajasic, and Nyay (truth, justice and practice) is called Tamasic. Sowmya! O auspicious one. You have once said that the purana also has the three moods – sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. You have also pronounced Devi Bhagwat as the Fifth Purana and as venerable and worshipful as the Vedas. Please be so kind as to tell us in detail about this most blessed and auspicious Bhagawat Purana. O all knowing one, you have narrated other puranas to us, but we still thirst for knowledge of Devi Bhagwat just like the gods thirsted for amrut. Obeisance to this purana which grants mukti. We have performed thousands of yagyas for this, but the fruit of a yagya is heaven, and after experiencing heaven we again have to take a birth on this earth. In this way we have been going to and fro, from birth to rebirth. So please narrate this holy purana to us so that we may get self realisation and freedom from the cycle of rebirth.

Sootji said – This is a most holy and auspicious purana, and by your asking me its secrets, I am blessed and most fortunate. Now I will start:

This Purana contains all the revelations, the unravelling of the mysteries, and description of the Advent. I bow to those Lotus Feet of Shree Jagaddamba which are adorned by Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, and all the devas, and which are meditated upon by yogis seeking satchitanand. Respected munis, this is the inexhaustible fount of all knowledge. She, Who is called in the

Upanishads as Vidya, Adya, (eternal) Para, (transcendent) Sarvagya (omniscient); Who successfully breaks the knot of transmigration; Who is all pervading and omnipresent; Who cannot be comprehended by the unworthy; and Who gives a glimpse of Her Self to those who meditate on Her Lotus Feet, be compassionate and benevolent, so that all can benefit from this narration. I meditate on that Trigunatmika Shakti, Who has created the Sat-Asat-Swaroop (real and illusory-Maya) worlds, and Who preserves it; and at the time of dissolution devours and destroys it and remains alone – the unitary basis of the plurality of the Universe. Exponents of the puranas and vedas mention Shri Brahma as the sole creator. At the same time they say that Shri Brahma was born of the nabhi-lotus of Shri Vishnu. Nor can Shri Vishnu be the sole creator as He is supported by the ocean. The ocean cannot be the sole creator as it also requires a base to contain it. The Divine Mother, Devi Bhagawati is unsupported. She is the support of the universe. She has no basis, as She is everything. I prostrate at the Lotus Feet of that Bhagawati, to Whom Shri Brahma prayed when Lord Vishnu was in yoganidra and the universe was in jeopardy. Salutations to the Great Goddess Who is attributeless, beyond the three gunas; who grants liberation from the bonds of birth and death; and who is mayaswaroopini – the Supreme Creator of illusion and confusion, even to the greatest of gods.

Srimad Devi Bhagwat is the greatest and purest of all the puranas. It contains eighteen thousand shlokas. It has been written in Sanskrit. Sage Vyas has decorated them into twelve beautiful parts. The entire purana has three hundred and eighteen chapters. Part I has twenty; Part 2 has twelve; Part 3 thirty; Part 4 has twentyfive; Part 5 has thirtyfive; Part 6 has thirtyone; Part 7 forty; Part 8 twentyfour; Part 9 has fifty; Part 10 thirteen; Part 11 has twentyfour; and Part 12 has fourteen chapters.

She who is Nirguna – attributeless; Sarvavyapi – permeating all; Most Benevolent Mother Who can be attained by yoga, and Who sustains all, Who is the fourth dimension - (Turiyaavastha); the same Bhagawati Whose energies are sattwic, rajasic and tamasic; manifests Herself in the forms of Mahalakshmi, Maha Saraswati and Mahakali, which correspond in the human body to the three channels of the autonomic nervous system –Ida, Pingala, Sushumna. Whenever there is disorder or disarray in Her creation, She incarnates to correct and protect it. Adi Shakti manifested as Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, to perform the functions of creation, protection and destruction. This act of incarnating is called Pratisarg.

The stories of the sun dynasty, the moon dynasty and Hiranyakashipu, and other demons, is called Vansh.

Stories of primal man, or particular humans, and the eras connected with them, are called Manavantar.

A detailed account of manu, his lineage and his deeds, is known as Vanshanucharit. These five characteristics feature in the narrations of this purana.

The Mahabharat consisting of one and a quarter lakh stanzas, and which is written by Shri Vyasji, also has these five characteristics, and is a chronicle or a historic account. There are the four Vedas, and the Mahabharat is considered equal to a Veda.

Shaunakji prayed - O Sootji. Please be so kind as to tell us how many puranas are there, and what is the number of shlokas contained in them. Out of fear of Kaliyug we are in hiding in this ancient forest, under the protection of Shri Brahma's chakra which he specially created for us. He also told us that we

should follow this chakra, and the spot on which it falls will be out of bounds for the ravages of kaliyug. He also told us to wait there till Satyayug manifests. So all the saints, rishis, munis and holy men have congregated in this most holy and ancient forest, where the influence of Kali cannot reach, and are waiting for Satyayug to come. It is our good fortune that you have deigned to visit us. We are eager to hear your wise and knowledgeable words. We have no other interests. We have achieved thoughtless awareness, so you can go on narrating for a long, long time. This purana contains dharma, interpretations and actions. It is also known as Brahmavidya. Just by listening to it one can get moksha. We are thirsting to hear your holy words, describing the leelas of Shree Jagaddambika who has the effect of washing the greatest of sins, and to hear that purana which is decorated with the description of Shree Bhagawati.

Sootji said – Listen O Munis! There are eighteen puranas, and the names are – Matsya, Markandeya, Bhavishya, Bhagawat, Brahma, Brahmand, Brahmavaivarth, Vaaman, Vayu, Vishnu, Varaha, Agni, Narad, Padma, Linga, Garuda, Coorm and Skanda.

The Matsya Puran has fourteen thousand shlokas.

Markandeya Puran has nine thousand shlokas.

Bhavishya Puran has fourteen and a half thousand shlokas.

Srimad Bhagawat has eighteen thousand shlokas.

Brahma Puran has ten thousand shlokas.

Brahmand Puran has twelve thousand one hundred shlokas.

Vaaaman Puran has ten thousand shlokas.

Vayu Puran has twentyfour thousand six hundred shlokas.

Vishnu Puran has twentythree thousand shlokas.

Varaha Puran has twentyfour thousand shlokas.

Agni Puran has sixteen thousand shlokas.

Narad Puran has twentyfive thousand shlokas.

Padma Puran has fiftyfive thousand shlokas.

Linga Puran has eleven thousand shlokas.

Garuda Puran has Shri Vishnu as the orator and has nineteen thousand shlokas.

Coorma Puran has seventeen thousand shlokas.

Skanda Puran has eightyone thousand shlokas.

O sinless munis. I have given you the names of the holy puranas and the number of shlokas that each one contains.

Then there are also eighteen minor puranas. These are Sanatkumar purana, Narsingh purana, Narada purana; Shiv purana, Durvasa purana, Kapil purana, Manu purana, Ushanah Purana, Varuna purana, Kalika purana, Samb purana,

Varuna purana, Kalika purana, Parashar purana, Aditya purana, Maheshwar purana, Bhagawat purana and Vashist purana.

After completing the Puranas and the minor puranas, the most auspicious Vyasji composed the historical epic Mahabharat. In every quarter of every era, Vyasji has established dharmas through the writings of the puranas. Ved Vyas is Lord Vishnu's ansh avatar (partial incarnation), and for the spiritual benefit of the world he divides the Vedas into many parts. Even after knowing this, the brahmins of Kaliyug must be ignorant and shortlived if they have not recognised Shri Vishnu in the form of Ved Vyas. Women, Shudras and brahmins who are free from worldly tasks are entitled to listen to the vedas. For their benevolence the vedas have manifested. This is now the twentyeighth quarter of the seventh Manvantar Era, presided over by Vyvasvath Manu. Satyavatinandan Ved Vyas is my guru. No one has such a complete knowledge of dharma. He is the Ved Vyas of this Manvantar. Again in the twentyninth Manvantar, Drouni will be the Vyas. Upto date there have been twentyseven incarnations of Ved Vyas.

The rishis then asked – O holy one, please give us a description of the Ved Vyas's of every yuga.

Sootji replied – In the very first quarter, Shri Brahma divided the vedas. In the second, Prajapati performed the work of Ved Vyas. In the third, Ushna, in the fourth Brihaspati; in the fifth Savita; in the sixth Mrityudev occupied the seat of Vyasji. In the seventh Maghva, in the eighth Vashist; in the ninth Saraswat; in the tenth Trighama; in the eleventh Trivrish; in the twelfth Bhardwaj, in the thirteenth Antariksh; in the fourteenth Dharam; in the fifteenth Traiyyaruni; in the sixteenth Dhananjay; in the seventeenth Meghatithi, eighteenth Vrati; in the nineteenth sage Atri; in the twentieth Gautam; and in the twentyfirst

Hurriyatma Uttam. Also in the reckoning are Vaajashrava Ven, Amushyayan Som, Trinbindu, Bhargav, Shakti, Jaatukarnya, and Krishnadvaipayan. All these constitute the twentyeight incarnations of Ved Vyas. I had the honour of hearing from Krishnadvaipayan Vyas, the recital of the most auspicious Srimad Devi Bhagawat. This is most holy, and capable of destroying the greatest of sins. Every stanza has the essence of the Vedas in it. It fulfils all wishes and grants freedom from bondage. It is held sacred and dear by all seekers. After completing the work, Shri Vyasji first narrated it to his son Sukhdev who was still unborn and unattached, as he considered him most worthy. Munis, I was present there! He gave the discourse and I absorbed all. He was very merciful. It is through his benevolence that the most secret Purana has been revealed. O Munis! Srimad Devi Bhagwat is the ripe fruit of the heavenly Kalpavriksh. To cross the ocean of illusion one must eat this fruit with awe and respect. The sinner who is entangled and whose ascent has been defiled and ruined (yoga brasht stithi) – if he can somehow get an opportunity he will definitely attain the Lotus Feet of Adi Shakti, and dwell with the yogis. That Devi Who is nirguna; Who gives darshan in meditation; She enters the innermost chambers of Her devotees' hearts, and dwells there. To cross the deep and unfathomable ocean of illusion, this is the safest refuge. He who is born a human being with the faculties of hearing and understanding; and who has opportunities to hear Devi Bhagwat; and still does not listen to a reading of it; he is most unfortunate and better off dead. He who spends all his life listening to gossip and parninda (backbiting), is most unfortunate and has wasted a life time.

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Chapter 1 - Episode 4

4 Ved Vyas' sojourn in the forest. Naradji meeting him and asking him to narrate the ancient incident of conversation between Shri Vishnu and Shri Brahma. Homage to the Devi.

The rishis requested – Sootji, please tell us about the birth of Sukhdevji and what qualities he possessed which made him so knowledgeable. Also it is said he was obtained from an arani – (drill used for producing fire). We are full of wonder and await your narration.

Sootji said – In ancient times Satyavatinandan Vyasji lived in an ashram on the banks of the Saraswati river. In his ashram a pair of sparrows had built a nest, and a hatchling had just come out of the egg. The parents were so affectionate that they used to rub their bodies against the baby. Also they spent long hours bringing food to the baby. He watched this and thought – if birds loved their children so much, how much more a human being will love his progeny. He pondered over this matter, and then went to Mandarachal mountain. He began to ponder as to which god he should pray to for the boon of a son. Should he pray to Shri Vishnu, Shri Shiva, Indra, Shri Brahma, Surya, Shri Ganesh, Swami Kartikeya, Agni or Varun. While he was thus contemplating, Naradji the most pure, appeared with his veena. Vyasji immediately greeted him, paid obeisance, and made arrangements for washing his feet. He inquired after his well being. Naradji accepted all the customs, and then asked Ved Vyas why he looked so anxious. Vyasji replied – It is said that a childless man's life has no meaning. This is causing me sadness and I am trying to find out which god I must appease and pray to, for this boon. O Maharashi! You are the ocean of kindness. Please tell me which god will grant me a son.

Naradji replied – O auspicious one. This very question was asked of Shri Hari (Vishnu) by my revered father Shri Brahmaji. Shri Vishnu is the protector of this world. Shree Lakshmi is always by His side. The divine jewel Kaustubh adorns His chest, and He holds shankh, chakra and mace. He wears pitambar (yellow) clothes. He has four arms and His emblem Srivats shines on His chest. He is the god of all gods. He was in samadhi (deep meditation), and my father was keen to know on whom this god of gods was meditating. So he asked Shri Vishnu – You are the god of all the gods; You are the protector of the universe. Please tell me why You are meditating, and on whom Your attention is fixed. I am very curious to know. I was created out of the lotus of Your nabhi, and then I created the world. So You are the most self contained. I am full of wonder as to who is more superior than You. I only know that You are the cause of all, and that by Your wish I created the world. Even Shri Shiva goes into destructive mode when You give the sign. It is on Your desire that the sun orbits the sky; and wind blows; and fire burns, and the rain falls. I do not know any god greater than You. So I am in confusion, for I cannot imagine that there is any one who can be meditated upon by You. So please explain this very clearly to me.

On hearing this vinati from Shri Brahma, Shri Vishnu said – Brahman! Listen with full attention. We all know that all creation is done by you; I protect the creation; and at the time of dissolution Shri Shiva destroys. BUT those who are learned in the vedas, say that the energy that we use for creation, protection and dissolution, is given to us by the Most Supreme Devi, Shree Adi Shakti. In order to create you have been endowed with the energy of rajas; I have been endowed with sattwic shakti; and Shri Shiva has been endowed with tamasic shakti. Without these shaktis you could not create, I could not protect, and Shri Shiva could not destroy. We succeed in our endeavours only by this Divine Shakti. The tangible and the invisible (subtle) – I will describe both to you. O

Brahma! Listen carefully. It is this shakti which causes me to sleep on Seshnaag, and to awaken whenever necessary. I am always in meditation upon this Shakti, and can never exist without it. Sometimes I am in the company of Shree Lakshmi; sometimes I wage wars with the negative forces; and at other times I vanquish the enemies of the devas.

A long, long time ago, when nothing existed, there was only the ocean on all sides. Two mighty danavs emerged from the wax in my ears, and I spent many yugas fighting them. Only with the help of Bhagawati Adi Shakti could I defeat and kill them. You were witness to this O Brahma.

Whenever Bhagawati Adi Shakti has indicated, I have incarnated on the earth – as a tortoise, a boar, Narasimhan (half lion half man); and Waman (dwarf). Many ages ago the string of my bow broke and severed my head from my body. You are a great sculptor, and you joined the head of a horse to my body. I came to be known as Hyshira (having a horse's head). All this was done with the energy of Adi Shakti. In this whole creation I do not know anyone greater or more powerful than Bhagawati Adi Shakti.

Naradji said – the narrator of this great secret is Shri Vishnu, and the listener is Shri Brahma. My father imparted this knowledge to me, and now I advise you that if you want a son, you must worship the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba in the temple of your heart. She will certainly fulfil all your desires.

Accordingly, Vyasji worshipped the Devi and journeyed to the mountains to meditate upon Her Lotus Feet.

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CHAPTER 1 - Episode 5

5 The story of Hygreev avatar, and the killing of an asura called Hygreev.

The rishis said – Sootji, this is a very puzzling event that you have narrated. The very same god Vishnu who is the protector of all; who is praised in the vedas; and who is known as Jagatprabhu Bhagwan Shri Hari – he suffered the loss of His head! This is definitely a play of the lord. Please tell us forthwith how this incident happened.

Sootji said – Munis! Bhagwan Vishnu is most effulgent and magnificent, and His play is many coloured. This incident happened many aeons ago. Shri Vishnu had engaged in battle with the negative forces for ten thousand years. At the end He returned to Vaikunth, weary and tired. He sat in padmaasan pose and set his mighty bow against the earth. It still had its string tied taut. In exhaustion He leaned against the bow, partly out of sleep and partly out of leela. At that time the devas were planning to hold a yagya. Once the decision was made, Shri Indra, Shri Brahma, Shri Shankar and other devas went to pay respects to Shri Vishnu in Vaikunth. The boon that the devas desired was freedom from obstacles in their work. But they could not get a darshan of Shri Vishnu. By going into meditation they found the place where Shri Vishnu was enthroned. They beheld Paramprabhu Shri Hari deep in Nidra Yoga, and they waited at that place for Him to awaken. But when that did not happen for a long time they became apprehensive. Indra asked for advice from the assembled gods, as to the best way of waking the Lord. Shri Shiva said – Under normal circumstances it is forbidden to break Nidrayoga, but in this case it is necessary so that the work of the yagya can be started. Then Shri Brahma

created a beetle (vamri) and said – This beetle will cut the string and the bow will straighten with a loud bang. This sound will awaken the sleeping Lord.

Hearing this the beetle objected – Salutations to Shri Lakshmikant Narayan, the supreme one, the protector of all living and non living things. How can I disturb His sleep. What benefit will I get by doing this heinous act. Every living thing does an action only for some reward. So, only if there is some benefit for me in doing this unholy act, I will consider it.

Shri Brahma made an offer that vamri will get a share of the boons of the yagya. When offerings are put into the havan kund during the yagyas, whatever falls outside, will be the beetle's share.

Sootji says – Vamri accepted this, and immediately gnawed through the lower part of the string. As soon as the tension of the bow was released, it unbent with a loud, booming sound, which frightened even the devas. Darkness fell all around, the sun's rays became weak, and all the devas exclaimed – O what is going to happen now!

Hear this O rishis! – Suddenly the head of Shri Vishnu, complete with crown and locks, disappeared in the air. When a feeble light came in, Shri Shankar and Shri Brahma beheld the body of Shri Vishnu without the head. They became very anxious. All the gods wept and began to sink into the ocean. They prayed to Shri Vishnu to enlighten them as to what was happening and what had to be done.

Shri Brahma said – this is all the doing of Kaal bhagwan, the god of time. Whatever is written will come to pass. In the same way once my head was cut off by Shri Shiva. Even devraj Indra once broke into a thousand pieces and fell from the heavens into Mansarovar. There he dwelt on a lotus. So no one

should grieve or be afraid. We must all meditate upon Vidyaswaroopini Mahamaya. She dwells in the entire creation and She will solve our problem. She supports the universe and one of Her names is Brahmavidya or Nirmalvidya. All living things are Her children and She exists within them. Then Shri Brahma invited the Vedas who were present there. He said – Brahmavidya Swaroopini Bhagawati Jagadhamba is most worshippable. It is extremely difficult to operate as a cell in the Divine Body. Bhagawati Mahamaya cleanses all karmas. So all of you should sing Her praises. Then the Vedas who had assumed beautiful forms, began songs in praise of that Mahamaya Jagaddamba, who is the fountain of knowledge.

The Vedas began their chant – O Devi! You are Mahamaya, the supreme creator of illusion and confusion even to the greatest of gods; it is Your nature to create. You are the giver of life to the entire universe. You are Nirguna (beyond the three gunas). You are Consciousness, devoid of the qualities and attributes of the mind. You are the seed energy of God's desire, the Pure Desire of Sadashiva. Shree Mata, we worship You. You are in the form of the universe to give ashraya (protection) to Your creation. You are also the individual self, vishva, in the wakeful state. You are Dhee (Pure Knowledge); Shree (Auspiciousness), Kanti (Splendour, Effulgence), Kshama (Ocean of Forgiveness), Shraddha (Object of Reverence), Medha (Intelligence), Smriti (Code of Conduct). The Half-syllable OM, the ardhmatra, is You. In Gayatri you are the Pranav (Life Force). You are Jaya and Vijaya (Royal and Victorious), You are Lajja (Bashful Modesty in all beings). You are Dhatri (One who Nourishes all with Divine Vibrations. You are Kirti (worthy of honour and worship) and you are Daya (Compassionate). We offer you our pranaams O Devi. You are the Creator and the Protector of the three worlds. You are the embodiment of Benevolence. You are the Mother of all the mothers. You are the Fount of Knowledge. It is by Your blessings alone that the true meaning of the Vedas

became clear. You are the giver of all the fruits of our prayers. Whatever You do, it is for the benevolence of all beings. You are Most Worshipful. You lift the sadness of people who are in extreme sorrow. You have always, the mantras as Your form. You are the Seed of the mantras, and You give mantras their effect – Sarva Mantra Siddhi. You destroy the darkness of ignorance. You created Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh; Indra, Agni, Saraswati and Surya. When it is Your desire to create, You cause these gods to create universes. You are without equal. There is no being, yet created, who can describe You adequately or enumerate all Your names. Those who cannot understand the small stretch of water of their existence; how can they comprehend the vast and mighty ocean that is You.

Bhagawati, even among gods there is no one who can encompass or fathom your qualities. You are Jagat Janani (Sole Mother of the Universe). Obeisance to that Goddess who is the foundation of all the organs of beings, and who is ever present in all beings. When You assume the Abhay Daan Mudra, You give boons with one hand, and protection and fearlessness with the other. You are the Primordial letters. O Mother, You look after and guide those visible and invisible gods and officials. You are the Receptacle of the entire universe. When all the scriptures could not succeed in revealing all Your Forms, Your Beauty, Your Powers; how can we mere mortals aspire to this knowledge.

What more can be said when You Yourself are not aware of Your Self. O Benevolent and Propitious Goddess, You do know that the head of Shri Vishnu has got separated from His divine body. Rather, inspite of knowing it You are testing its effect. At the present moment Shri Hari is without a head, and this is amazing us as well as causing us sorrow. It is beyond our intelligence to know the reason why You, the giver and taker of life, are delaying the rejoining of His Head to His Body. Shree Jagaddamba this play of Yours is beyond our

comprehension. Is it that some daitya or demon has done ghor tapasya and received this boon from You that Shri Vishnu should become headless; or does it please You to see Him in this condition. Shree Jagaddambe! Could it be that You are displeased with Shree Lakshmi and therefore She must be deprived of Her Lord. We accept that it is possible that You are displeased with Shree Lakshmi, but we pray for forgiveness, because She emanated from You. Please be merciful and restore Shri Vishnu's head so that Shree Lakshmi can be reunited with Her Lord. We invoke You with one voice O Devi. Please bestow life on the master of the universe Shri Vishnu, so that this sorrowful ocean can once again give salvation and regenerate itself. O Mother, we are not even aware of the place where the sacred head of Shri Vishnu has fallen. It is quite clear that without divine assistance we can do nothing. O Devi, in the same way that You nourish the devas with Nectar, so also please nourish this creation and keep it in existence.

Sootji said – after the Vedas had worshipped the Mother with body, mind and soul, the Devi Mahamaya, Gunateeta, became prasanna and a heavenly voice was heard by the Devas and the Vedas. There was benevolence in every syllable, and filled everyone with joy. They were privileged to hear this:

"Devas! Now there is no need to be worried. Calm your attention; become peaceful, and ascend your seats. The Vedas have pleased Me by singing My praises. Any mortal who reads or listens with great bhakti and shraddha to these stutis, all his sorrows and turmoils will be destroyed, and he will live in peace and joy. These stories, sung by the Vedas are equal to the Vedas. Now I will tell you the reason for the separation of Shri Vishnu's head from His body. Nothing in this creation happens without a cause. Once Shri Vishnu was seated on His throne with Shree Lakshmi. When He glanced at Her beautiful face He suddenly began to laugh. Shree Lakshmi concluded that Her face had

ceased to please the Lord, as He never laughed like this without a proper reason. Shree Lakshmi became angry. Even though She was of sattwic nature she got overwhelmed by tamoguna. As soon as this fierce tamasic energy entered, it began to actualise a predestined episode involving the devas. Shree Mahalakshmi, in anger, uttered the words – May Your Head fall off from Your body! Consequently, at this moment the Head of Shri Vishnu is floating in the salty sea. Devas, there is one more cause – that some great feat is going to be accomplished by you without doubt.

There was a demon called Hygreev. He had very strong limbs and had achieved great fame. He sat on the banks of the Saraswati river and did great tapasya. He chanted the single-syllable maya beeja mantra for a thousand years without eating or drinking. He conquered all his senses. He worshipped My Tamasic Shakti with all its ornaments and embellishments. I was pleased with his tapasya and appeared before him in the same form and with the same adornments as he had meditated upon. I was seated upon My vahana the lion, and there was an overflow of compassion and vibrations. I said – Most fortunate one, ask whatever boon you wish and it shall be granted. Upon hearing Me he was filled with worship and awe. He immediately performed pradakshina (perambulation) and worshipped My Feet. On beholding My form his eyes misted and filled with tears of joy. He folded his hands and started reciting stutis. Hygreev said – O Most compassionate Devi, Praise be to You. You are Mahamaya – supreme creator of illusion and confusion even to the greatest of gods. Creation, Preservation and Destruction are a part of Your nature. It pleases you to bestow boons on Your devotees. You are beneficient and You grant realisation of the ultimate to those who surrender to You. You are the cause which gives fragrance to the earth; sound to the akash; purity to the water; radiance to the fire; and quality of penetration to the ether. O Devi

Maheshwari! You have given senses and essences to all our organs – nose, skin, eyes, tongue, ears, and others. O Devi, they all come from You.

I said – You have done a most remarkable tapasya, and I am pleased with your bhakti. You may ask for any boon that is dear to you. Whatever is your desire I shall fulfil it.

Hygreev said – Mother! Grant that I may never face death. I desire to become an immortal yogi. Neither the gods nor the demons should defeat me.

I said – That which is born must die. And that which dies must be born again. This is an irreversible law O Rakshasraaj. Ask again.

Hygreev said – Yes Mother. I understand. Then let it be that I die only at the hands of another Hygreev. No other being should be capable of killing me. This is my desire. Please be gracious and fulfil it.

I said – Mahabhag! Now return to your kingdom and reign in peace. It will be that no one but a Hygreev can end your life.

After granting this boon, I in My tamasic mood, withdrew. The demon returned to his kingdom very satisfied and happy. This very same Hygreev is now troubling the Vedas and the munis. In Trilok there is no one who can destroy him. So the solution is that the head of a beautiful horse should be placed on the body of Shri Vishnu. This can only be performed by Shri Brahma. Then lord Hygreev will destroy this cruel and troublesome demon.

Sootji said – after saying this the heavenly voice ceased. The devas were overjoyed and immediately went to Shri Brahma. In an instant a horse's head was placed on the body of Shri Vishnu, and with the grace of Bhagawati

Jagaddambika the incarnation of Hygreev came into existence. The demon was very arrogant, and Shri Hygreev engaged in war with him for many years before killing him. All mortals who listen to this episode, get relief from their worldly sufferings. Descriptions of the compassion and benevolence, and Her victories over sin and arrogance, give peace and blessings to those who listen to this.

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CHAPTER 1 - Episodes 6-7-8-9

6 - 9 Knowledge of the grandeur of the three Vedas through reading or listening. Boon given by the Devi to Madhu-Kaitabh. Shri Vishnu goes into Yog-nidra; and Shri Brahma sings Devi stutis for waking Shri Vishnu.

The rishis asked – O gentle and auspicious one, you have just told us that when there was only ocean; and water prevailed everywhere, Shri Vishnu fought a battle for five thousand years against two demons Madhu and Kaitabh. May it please you to tell us how such terrible and ferocious demons, whom even the gods could not defeat, came into existence. We have always desired to hear of this event, and now that you have deigned to visit us, we are taking the opportunity of asking you to tell us. We will be attentive with all our senses, especially hearing and sight. It is said that knowledge comes from hearing; and seeing is registered in the attention. It is said that there are three kinds of listening – sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. Learned men have termed the hearing of the Vedas and Shastras as Sattwic; Letters and Literature as Rajasic; and stories connected with fighting or exposing the mistakes and faults of others as Tamasic. They have further divided Sattwic into three degrees – excellent, medium and low. The readings which grant moksha are considered excellent; those which grant heaven are medium; and those which give pleasure, as low or inferior. Rajas literature has also been classified into three. When the beauty and ornaments of the heroine of a drama are described it falls in the first category of excellence. When the description is that of a courtesan or concubine, it falls in the medium class; and where it describes a hermaphrodite it is of the low class.

The three classes of tamasic narration should be clearly understood. To listen to accounts where war has been fought against adharmic people falls into the first category of excellent. When the war is the outcome of enmity or hostility as in the case of the Pandavas, it is of the medium class. Wars which are fought without any cause or provocation – listening to accounts about them are of low class.

Therefore listening to Puranas is of the highest order. O learned one, be pleased to narrate those holy episodes which will give us moksha.

Sootji said – O superior beings! That which you wish to hear, and which I am eager to tell you, will surely grant us both freedom from rebirth.

In ancient times all the three lokas got submerged in the primordial ocean. Only Shri Vishnu was in existence, lying on the belly of Seshnaag. Out of the wax in His ear, emerged two demons Madhu and Kaitabh. Soon they grew young and powerful and they began their escapades. They also began to wonder many things like, who is the support of this ocean; who created it; and how. How did they come to be in the ocean. Who created them and who was their father. They determined to find answers to all these questions. But they were not able to find out anything. So one day Kaitabh said to Madhu – Brother the cause of our existence in this water is Bhagawati Shakti. She is all powerful. She is the one who created this ocean and She is the support. This Primordial Shakti has caused us to come into existence.

They were thus expressing their desire when there was a heavenly sound of a beeja mantra. The two brothers diligently repeated the sound over and over again, and then suddenly it took a shape in the sky, more brilliant and dazzling than lightning. It dawned on them that this is indeed a mantra without any

doubt whatsoever. They went into meditation and the mantra pervaded their awareness, and they got a glimpse of its qualities and attributes. They began chanting and meditating on this mantra for a full thousand years having gone beyond mind and senses. They had achieved the state of being nischint, nirvichar and nirvikalp. Seeing this Adi Shakti was filled with benevolence. The heavens were filled with the sound – "Daityas! I am pleased with your tapasya. Freely ask for a boon so that I can grant it to you". Madhu and Kaitabh said – O Devi! You who are easily pleased and bestows boons, grant us svecha maran or death at our own desire. The Devi said – "I grant you the boon that you both will die only when you desire to die. Neither the gods nor the demons can kill either of you."

Sootji says – Upon getting this boon both the brothers became filled with arrogance and pride. They began to trouble all the inhabitants of the ocean. One day they happened to see Shri Brahma seated on the lotus, and they had an urge to fight with him. They challenged Shri Brahma to fight, and if he would not fight he should leave the Brahma asan and go away. Shri Brahma was disturbed. He did not know the exact strength of his opponents. He knew all the strategies of war like winning the enemy by giving gifts; of inflicting chastisement; of secrecy; but not knowing their strength it was not advisable to engage with them in war. He glanced at Shri Vishnu, who was in deep nidra on the coils of Seshnaag. He thought – Shri Vishnu is so strong, only He can protect me. But first He has to be awakened. So Shri Brahma came down from his asan on the lotus, and prostrated at the feet of the sleeping Lord. He began sthavan (hymns of praise) to the Lord, but being overcome by nidra yoga, he could not be awakened. Shri Brahma thought- Now these demons will certainly destroy me. Is there anyone who will protect me.

Then Shri Brahmadev decided to recite the Yoganidra Stuti to the Devi, as only She had the power to protect him. It was the Devi Herself who had caused Shri Vishnu to succumb to this overwhelming deep slumber. It is clear that the Devi governs Shri Vishnu, and when He is in deep sleep even His shakti Shree Lakshmi is also governed by the same state. All the gods, including Me, Shankar, Savitri, Lakshmi and Uma, are presided over by this Shree Bhagawati Yoganidra, and therefore there is no one else but She who can protect me. Shri Brahma once again took his seat on the nabhi kamal of Shri Vishnu, and began Stuti of Bhagawati Shree Yoganidra. - O Devi! You are verily the Cause of the world. All the Vedas and scriptures are witness to this. You are the reason why the Protector of the universe, Shri Vishnu, is lying in deep repose. O Divine Mother, You reside in the consciousness of all living things. O Bhavani! You reside in all beings in various moods and forms. No one can fathom the mysteries of Your leela. The munis worship You in a mode called Sandhya (prayers enjoined to be said in the morning, noon and evening); and go into thoughtless awareness three times a day. O Mother! You abide as discretion in living beings so that they know good from evil; and the splendour and glory that the gods and goddesses enjoy, comes from You, the Shree. You preside over the universe as honour, satisfaction, effulgence, intellect, affection, faith, modesty, lustre, reflection and peace. You are the Mother of the universe. Even learned sages with knowledge of the Vedas have not been able to unravel Your mysteries and even the Vedas cannot contain Your description; as the Vedas themselves have emanated from You. During yagyas, when havan is performed, the learned ones take Your name as Swaha, otherwise the gods cannot partake of the sacrifice. It is You who gives them this privilege. Also it is You who protects them. You have protected me once before, and now I am again in danger from the demons Madhu and Kaitabh. O Devi please release Shri Vishnu from the influence of your Maya. O Most Powerful One, please withdraw the power of sleep from Shri Hari, or be

pleased to destroy the two demons Madhu and Kaitabh, or I will be defeated by them. O Devi You are the Mother of the entire universe. It is Your nature to fulfil the prayers of those who surrender at Your Lotus Feet. Those who rise beyond the worship of all gods and become totally immersed in the worship and adoration of Your Lotus Feet are indeed the blessed, virtuous and fortunate beings of the world. Knowledge, lustre, honour and other auspicious qualities are part of You. You are the embodiment of Divine Beauty. One of your energies, which is Nidra, is holding Shri Vishnu captive. You are verily Bhagawati. Your shakti envelops the entire universe, as the universe was born of You. It was You who in the beginning gave Shri Vishnu the power to sustain and protect the creation. With Your energy in the form of His Shakti, Shree Lakshmi, He was successful in the protection of the universe. But today, He lies inert, unable and completely overpowered by sleep. It is clear that whatever You desire, only that happens. O Mother, if I am to survive, and if it is Your Holy Will, please break this silence and come to my assistance. These demons are an epithet of Kaal (Yama) and there must be some reason why You have caused them to exist. Could it be that they are here to deride and scorn me? Shree Devi, I am beginning to understand Your amazing play. After completing the creation You move freely, enjoying its beauty. Sometimes You even absorb it into Yourself. You appointed me creator, and now if this creation is vanquished, it will be to my dishonour and disgrace.

Sootji says – when Brahma praised the Devi in this way, She withdrew from the pores of Shri Vishnu and appeared beside him in the form of Tamasi Nidra Devi (the goddess who abides in all as sleep). After this release, Shri Vishnu began to move. Seeing him awake, Shri Brahma's happiness and relief knew no bounds. He began perambulations around the Lord, Shri Vishnu.

The rishis made this observation – Mahabhag Sootji, after hearing this episode we are filled with astonishment and wonder. The Vedas, shastras, puranas and learned men have all described Shri Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as the most supreme, eternal and primaeval. In this entire brahmand there is no greater or superior being. Shri Brahma accomplished the entire creation; Shri Vishnu is the sole protector and sustainer; and at the time of dissolution Shri Shiva annihilates and destroys. These are the three main functionaries and they act in the three modes of sattwa, rajas and tamas. Of the three Shri Vishnu is considered the foremost. He is Master of the Universe and is known as Adi Dev. He is all powerful and no other god compares with him. Therefore it is surprising to hear that He who pervades all, should have got pervaded by Yogmaya Nidra. O please unravel this mystery for us and tell us who this Shakti is, who could command superiority over the Lord.—How She came into being, what are Her powers, and what is Her description. You have unlimited knowledge, so please help us by cutting the knot of ignorance, scepticism and wonder that is puzzling us.

Sootji replied – O honourable munis. Who can accomplish this task? Narad muni, son of Shri Brahma, sage Kapil, and other holy men have all been unsuccessful in their endeavours. This subject is fathomless and beyond thought. Who am I to even attempt. He who is the support of the earth, who is described in the Vedas as infinite and immortal, as the supreme protector is worshipped as the Param Parameshwar of all the gods, Shri Vishnu. Then there are those who worship Shri Shiva as Supreme. He is described in the Vedas as Mahadev – god almighty; Shrivatsala – darling of the goddess; Sarvasaha – bearer of everything; Svadhrta – self supported; Trilochana – three eyed; Pinakapani – holding the mighty bow, and other sacred names. He resides on Mount Kailash and goes around surrounded by bhoots. He demolished the yagya of Daksh. Those who worship him also worship the sun.

He is Paramatma. Others believe that Agni worship is the best according to various mentions in the Vedas. Still others worship Indra and Varuna as most supreme. It is the teaching of maharishis, that just as the Ganga is contained in the water of all its tributaries and streams, so also Shri Vishnu pervades all the gods.

In ancient times learned men have devised various measures for determining the authenticity of a theory or a philosophy. The three main scales or measures used for comparison were – pratyaksh, cognizable by sight, tangible or perceivable through senses; anuman – hypothesis, deduction; and shabd, voice or sound. Mimansa, one of the six systems of hindu philosophy has a reasoning whereby one topic is automatically proved with the help of another, and they have a scale of five. Those vedic scholars who are fully conversant with the puranas, have seven measures for verification. That which is beyond all these scales, testimonies, verifications, is PARABRAHMA. It is advisable that these learned men use their theories of deduction even when they experience something through their senses. Disciplined and learned men have determined that Shri Brahma is endowed with the shakti to create; Shri Vishnu to sustain; and Shri Shiva to destroy. Sesh and the tortoise are supports. Fire has the shakti to consume, and air has the energy of movement. This energy which energises, which gives shakti for action, is ADYASHAKTI. It is by this shakti that the gods get their godliness. Those on whom Adi Shakti does not shower benevolence, no matter who it may be, that person becomes incapacitated and inert. This Adi Shakti who exists in all beings is called as Brahm. It is desirable that all holy and learned men recognise, worship and awaken this shakti within themselves. If the shakti of Vishnu is absent, He will be unable to perform the protection and preservation of the world. Similarly Shri Brahma cannot create without Adi Shakti's energy, and Shri Shiva cannot destroy the negative forces in his sanharleela – dance of destruction. All those

who are still caught in the web of deductions, proofs, theories and verifications, should quickly determine this truth – It is the Adi Shakti who creates, nourishes and dissolves. No one – Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Indra, Agni, Pavan etc. – can function independently. The existence of Adi Shakti provides the energy for their actions.

Therefore Adi Shakti is Sarvagya – all pervading; Sarvopari – almighty and above all, Para Shakti. She is worshipped by holy men in two ways. Those who are desirous of perceiving Her by their senses worship Her in Sagun form, i.e. endowed with qualities and attributes; while ascetics and detached self realised souls worship Her as Nirguna – attributeless, beyond the three gunas and three nadis. She is Consciousness devoid of the qualities and attributes of the mind. She is Shamatmika – peace is Her essence. Devotees with their minds at peace are Her abode. She is Dharmadhara – the support of right conduct handed down by tradition in each age. She is Parabrahma swaroop – the ultimate power. The energy manifested in every particle as well as the Primordial Vibration is She. She is the Primal Power; the unitary basis of the plurality of the universe. She is eternal, uncomprehended by space and time. She is worshipped by the highest, and this is testified by all the shastras. She is the great, immeasurable, supreme object of attention and worship.

Sootji continued the narration of the destruction of Madhu Kaitabh at the hands of Shri Vishnu. Sootji said – After Tamasi Devi Nidra withdrew Her control over Shri Vishnu and assumed Her form in the heavens, Shri Vishnu moved His limbs, yawned several times and sat up. He observed Shri Brahma standing before Him, overcome with fear. Then the splendid, magnificent and glorious lord, protector and guardian of the universe, spoke in solemn tones. – O Padmayoni Brahma! What brings you here, far from your jap (silent

repetition of a mantra) and tap (meditation). You seem to be in fear of something.

Shri Brahma said – O Lord! Two demons Madhu and Kaitabh emerged from the wax in Your ears, and they are of horrible appearance and terrible strength. They are trying to kill me and I am overcome with fear, and my faculties are not functioning. Only You can protect me.

Shri Vishnu said – Come and take a seat and have no more fear. These demons have taken leave of their senses. They will definitely come here and challenge Me.

Sootji said – As Shri Vishnu finished speaking, the two demons intoxicated with ego and arrogance, reached the abode of Shri Vishnu, and challenged Shri Brahma thus - You have come here to hide. Do you think you can escape us. We will kill you first, and then this person who reclines on the coils of a serpent. Either you fight or surrender yourself as our slave.

Sootji says – On hearing this Shri Vishnu said to them – O gallant demons, come and fight with Me. You are very strong and are filled with unbridled arrogance. Come and fight and I will remove your conceit and false pride.

On hearing this their eyes turned red with anger. Madhu advanced first and began to wrestle with Shri Vishnu. As soon as Madhu began to tire, Kaitabh would take his place. They continued to fight, and were watched from the heavens by Bhagawati Shakti and Shri Brahma. The war lasted for five thousand years and Shri Vishnu began to contemplate their death. He thought, we have been fighting for so long, but these demons have not shown signs of tiring, whereas I feel tired. This is surprising and astonishing. Where

has My might and strength gone. How are these demons so tireless and fresh. What circumstance is this.

When the demons saw concern on the face of Shri Vishnu they became overjoyed, and spoke in thunderous tones – O Vishnu, if you are tired and cannot fight any more, bow your head, and with folded hands acknowledge that you are our slave. If you still have any strength left come and fight and we will kill you.

Shri Vishnu was seated on the deep and bottomless ocean. He listened to the spiteful and malicious utterances of the two demons, and then in sweet tones (madhurya), He spoke thus – It is an ancient maryada that when fighting a war brave warriors do not attack an opponent who is tired, frightened, whose weapons have fallen, who himself has fallen, or who is still a child. On this battlefield I have fought with you for five thousand years alone, and without a break. You two brothers of equal strength, have been resting in turns. If I also rest, I can also continue fighting.

Sootji said – Upon hearing this, the two demons went and stood afar, waiting for the fighting to resume. Shri Vishnu began to fathom the reason why the two demons seemed to be indestructible. Then He knew that Shree Bhagawati had granted them the boon that they will die only when they so desire it. That is the reason why they are so bold and arrogant, and it has become their goal to keep troubling Me. I cannot cross the boon given by Shree Bhagawati, so I must find a way to make them desire death. That will be difficult, because even a terminally ill man, or one who has suffered misfortune, does not desire death. Therefore, the only way is to prostrate at the Lotus Feet of the All-knowing, All-powerful Goddess who readily responds to the prayers of Her devotees.

Even as He was contemplating this, that Goddess, whose resplendent form pleases Her devotees, appeared as Bhagawati Yoganidra in the heavens where She had just withdrawn from the sleeping Vishnu. Shri Vishnu immediately recognised the Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, and began a stuti for the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabh. The Devi smiled and said – Vishno! You are the master of the universe. Now get prepared to fight the battle anew. These two demons can only be destroyed by deception. I will cause them to fall into illusion and delusion, and then you can vanquish them. Hearing these soothing and loving words, Shri Vishnu went back to continue the fight. The demons fought fiercely, and at one stage Shri Vishnu cast a glance at the Devi. She immediately laughed aloud. Her eyes became red, and from Her eyes She slanted glances towards the demons. The glances were even more powerful than the arrows of Kamdev – god of love – and covered the demons with the delusion of allurement. They were completely overcome by lustful and adulterous thoughts. They were completely overcome by the brilliance and effulgence of the form they beheld. Shri Vishnu, who is aware of the innermost emotions, recognised that the demons were under the illusion and confusion created by the Devi. He smiled and spoke to the demons thus – O courageous and brave demons! Ask for any boon you wish. I have fought with many demons from ancient times an have never met or seen any as strong and powerful as you two brothers. I am pleased. I will fulfil any desire you may have.

Sootji says – The demons were filled with longing. Their eyes were fixed on the joy giving form of Bhagawati Mahamaya. The haughty and conceited demons said – We have not come to ask for favours. What can you give us. We are not suppliants, we are the benevolent givers. You can ask us for a boon. We are pleased with your performance in the war. Shri Vishnu said – If you can give me a boon, grant that you accept your death at my hands. The

demons were astounded and realised that they had been trapped. They looked around in despair. Suddenly they saw that they were surrounded on all sides by the waters of the Bhavasagar. There was no land in sight. They got an idea. They said – O Janardhan. You had also promised to grant us a boon, and you always honour your promise. Therefore grant us also a boon. Kill us in a place completely dry and devoid of water. We accept our death at your hands, but you must fulfil our wish.

The Lord Sudarshan beckoned His sudarshan chakra. Then He laughed aloud and said – O fortunate ones! I am killing you on exactly such a place – dry and devoid of water. He lifted them out of the water and showed them His lap, which was perfectly dry. He then said – Now prepare to die, and henceforth both you and I will be known for honouring our promises. The two demons, whose bodies were two miles long, accepted their death.

The sudarshan chakra cut off their heads, and their souls left their bodies. The whole Ocean became diffused with their blood and marrow. From then on the name of the earth became Medini.

Sootji says – That is why eating of mud is prohibited. Munis, whatever you wanted to know I have tried my best to narrate to you. From all this it is clear that Vidya Swaroopini Mahamaya should forever be worshipped. The greatest truth is that in all the three worlds there is no one greater than Shri Bhagawati. The Vedas and shastras bear testimony to this. Whether in sagun (form), or in nirgun (formless), this Para Shakti must be worshipped.

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Chapter 1 Episodes 10-13

10 - 13 The Tapasya of Ved Vyas, and boon granted by Shri Shiva. The story of Raja Sudyumna being turned into a woman; her stuti to the Goddess; and the Goddess granting her a place at Her Lotus Feet.

The Rishis said – Honourable Sootji, you have already mentioned that Vyasji was very competent and learned. He recited the entire puranas to Sukhdev. By what tapasya did he gain Sukhdev as a son. In this connection you were fortunate to hear the story from Vyasji himself. Please be kind and tell us exactly as you heard it.

Sootji said – Sukhdev was a yogi of the highest order. How he took birth as the son of Satyavatinandan Vyas is what I am going to narrate to you. Many ages ago, Ved Vyas had a strong desire to have a son, and with this in his heart he went to the area where holy men congregate on Mount Meru, and started very austere penance. In his meditation it occurred to him again and again that worship of the Devi is of paramount importance, and absolutely necessary. He who does not worship the Devi is not worthy to exist in this world. The person who worships the Devi is exalted and worthy of respect. The place that Shri Vyasji selected for his penance had a most wondrous oleander grove with beautiful fragrant flowers of blackish red and yellow hues. Gods and ancient sages used to live in this grove. Also present were Aditya, Vasu, Rudra, Marut, Ashwinikumars and others who had attained Brahma Sakshatkar (God realisation). Divine music floated over the place. Gradually the brightness of Ved Vyasji's radiance started spreading and it enveloped the earth. His locks began to glow like golden embers. Seeing this effulgence Indra, God of the devas, became perturbed. He went to Shri Shankar, and

entered into His presence. Shri Shankar observed – O Indra! You are king of the devas. How is it you are overcome with fear. What is it that disturbs you. You should never have any misgiving, intolerance or jealousy against tapasvis. Together with My Shakti, I am worthy of reverence, worship and adoration. With full knowledge of this the munis are always immersed in meditation and tapasya. They have no unfriendly or injurious intentions towards any living being.

After hearing these words of Shri Shankar, Indra asked – Why is Vyasji performing this ghor tapasya (formidable penance). What are his intentions.

Shri Shankar replied – Ved Vyasa desires a son. That is why he is doing this difficult penance. He will soon complete hundred years of tapas. Then I will grant him a fine son.

Sootji says – Thus spoke Shri Shankar to Indra. Then Bhagwan Shankar went to Vyasji and said – Vasavinandan Vyas! Arise O Sinless One. You are going to receive the gift of a son who will be sinless, guiltless, brilliant, possessing wisdom of the highest order, who will have knowledge of the self, who will gain extensive fame and win laurels, whose conduct will be faultless, whose communication will be sweet and pleasing, virtuous, valiant, upright, prowess belonging to the highest order according to the puranas. He will be endowed with sattwic qualities and he will also be very pious.

Sootji says – after hearing these most auspicious words in the madhur vaani (sweet voice) of Shri Shankar, Vyasji prostrated in obeisance, and then proceeded to his ashram. After so many years of extreme penance he was tired. Soon he began to ponder – In order to beget this son, there has to be a wife, and I do not have one. But how to acquire a wife, because it can only

mean getting shackled in chains. Whether a woman produces children or is chaste and observes moral rules, she is still a binding force. She will want all her desires and requirements to be fulfilled. A householder's life is full of problems. How am I to accept this situation. While he was thus musing, an apsara called Ghritachi assumed a divine form and appeared before him. Vyasji saw her, but the thought came to him that if he accepted her all the host of munis who were in different stages of tapas and meditation would make fun of him. However, marriage and household does give a lot of happiness. It is said that in the state of marriage you receive the gift of children, you attain heaven, and once you get the knowledge of the self, you even get moksha. Long ago he had heard Shri Narada's reasoning in this context – there was an apsara called Urvashi who enchanted King Pururava. In the end she abandoned him.

The munis requested Sootji – There is a story of how Ila gave birth to Pururava. Please relate that to us. Sootji agreed. There was a king named Sudyumna – never an untruth or false word came out of his mouth. He had full control of his senses and faculties of perception. One day he mounted his horse and set out to hunt in the forest. He was accompanied by many ministers. He carried his splendid bow Aajgav and a quiver full of arrows. While hunting, king Sudyumna strayed into a singularly beautiful part of the forest, which was at the foothills of the holy mount Meru. The beauty was enhanced by the delicate and fragrant Parijat and other climbing plants bearing flowers. Also there were trees like bakul (fragrant flowers), tarkul (flowers used as ear ornaments), tamal (evergreen), champa (magnolia), mahua (edible sweet flowers), vaasanti (jasmine), malati (flowering creeper), jackfruit, mango, neem and fruits like banana, coconut and pomegranate. There were ponds with waterlily, and birds like cranes and swan. Continuous musical sounds came from a bamboo grove. Bumble bees were droning on the fragrant air. This forest was verily an abode of joy and peace, and Raja Sudyumna felt very

gratified. So also his attendants. Then of course all of them entered into this wonderful forest. No sooner had they stepped in, when all of them were turned into women. Even the horses they were riding turned into mares. They were greatly distressed and began to run hither and thither trying to understand what strange transformation had befallen them. The king was most distressed, and wondered who had played this trick; and how he could ever return to rule his kingdom.

The puzzled rishis said – Sootji, this is a most astonishing happening. King Sudyumna was such a righteous man, and the forest was so pleasing and bounteous. What could have happened for this kind of retribution. Please tell us.

Sootji explained – It was a long time ago that many rishis desired to have a darshan of Lord Shiva. When they entered, the Lord was in the company of Bhagawati Uma. On seeing the rishis the goddess was filled with lajja (bashful modesty) and moved away from the Lord. Her entire being was trembling with shyness. Seeing this the rishis realised that they had breached divine protocol, and they rushed to Shri Narayan for refuge.

Seeing His beloved Parvati blushing and diffident, Shri Shanker pacified Her thus – Don't be upset. To please you I declare that any male who enters these forests out of allurement and spiritual ignorance, will immediately be changed into a female. This is the ban imposed on this forest by Bhagwan Shri Shankar, and since then it has become a storehouse for men with flaws, shortcomings and weaknesses. Since then, no being who has knowledge of this, has ever made the mistake of entering this most tempting and alluring forest. Unfortunately Raja Sudyumna was unaware of this, and in ignorance he and his followers entered and had to suffer the consequence. Now the black

clouds of despair engulfed the king. Being a woman he could not return to the palace, and he and his followers began to wander here and there. His name was now changed to Ila. While still moving outside the forest, a young man by the name of Buddh son of Chandrama, met Ila. She was very beautiful and attended on by many women. Buddh expressed his desire to make Ila his wife. Ila also wished to have him as a husband. They both married, and Ila gave birth to Pururava, son of Buddh. After this Ila was again troubled by thoughts of the palace. So she visited the guru of their dynasty (kulguru), Acharya Muni Vashist. He was a very benevolent and compassionate guru, and was moved by Ila's plight. He immediately started prayers and invocations to Shri Shankar. He was pleased by the eulogies of sage Vashist, but He did not reverse the ban. He however made a concession – Raja Sudyumna would be a man for one month, and a woman for one month, in the future. After receiving this boon the king returned to the palace. During the month that he was a woman he stayed confined within the palace; the during the time that he was a man he ruled as a king. But soon his subjects reacted, and could not accept such a repulsive situation. As soon as possible he installed his son Pururava on the throne and retired to the forest. He visited Muni Narad and learned from him the Navaakshar mantra of nine syllables. He was filled with devotion and started chanting this holy mantra. Then the great Goddess who grants deliverance and salvation to all, was pleased. She gave darshan to the king. She was seated on a lion and was bedecked with ornaments. Her form was most pleasing and awe inspiring. During this visit the king was in the form of the woman Ila, and her eyes bloomed with happiness. With unbounded joy she folded her hands and bowed in worship and began to sing praises to the goddess Jagaddamba.

Ila said – O Goddess Bhagawati! I am most blessed and fortunate to have received a glimpse of Your universal Divine Form. You are verily the Supreme

Goddess who looks after and guides the visible and invisible gods. You are bedecked with different ornaments of jewels and diamonds. It is Your nature to give prosperity and rewards of penances. You open the gates of moksha for Your devotees. I prostrate before You O Jagaddamba. When even the gods have not been able to adequately describe Your magnificence how can we ordinary mortals even attempt to comprehend Your majesty. It is only by Your glance that the true meaning of the scriptures becomes clear. O Devi, I am spellbound by Your grandeur. The gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, Indra, Varun, Surya, Chandrama, Agni, Pavan, Kuber and the Vasus, have not been able to completely comprehend all Your glory and nature. How can we who are lacking in virtues even try to know Who and What You are. O Mother! Shri Vishnu is noble and splendid, but He also is unaware of Your Self and allows His feet to be rubbed by Your manifest form as His Shakti sattwic swaroop Shree Lakshmi who looks after the wealth and wellbeing of the world. Similarly Brahmaji knows You only in the form of rajas-swaroop Shree Saraswati who destroys ignorance; and Shiva knows You as tamas swaroop Shree Parvati. In comparison I am ignorant and lacking in knowledge; and this wondrous gift of a vision of Your immeasurable glory is beyond my comprehension. Bhavani I am slowly beginning to understand Your compassionate demonstration. It is Your nature to be moved by unbounded faith and ananya bhakti (where there is no other). It was only when You assumed the form of Lakshmi that Shri Vishnu succeeded in killing the demons Madhu and Kaitabh. Then why does Shri Vishnu get His feet pressed by You. I understand. As You are radiant and effulgent like fire, he gets His feet purified by contact so that He can uphold the universe, and preserve dharma. Even when sage Bhrigu kicked Shri Vishnu on the chest, he was so full of yearning for Shree Devi that he did not get angry just as the ashoka tree does not get angry with the gardener who trims it to make it look beautiful. All the gods pay obeisance to Shri Hari, but He constantly meditates upon You. You reside

on the couch of the bejewelled, expansive chest of Shri Vishnu as inseparable as lightning within a gathering of clouds. Does this not mean that Shri Vishnu is Your vahana? Mother, if You separate from Shri Vishnu, performing puja to Him will become impossible. It is evident that even if a person is honest, amiable, generous, peaceful and virtuous, if he does not have You residing in his heart, he is abandoned by all including brother and friend. O Devi of immeasurable power and majesty, please tell me -- these gods like Brahma and others who are eternally adoring and paying homage to You, were they never women. I am convinced O Devi, that they were once women and You turned them into men. O Mother! You have all the powers to make women into men, and men into women. Please be merciful to me and make me into a man.

The Devi was pleased and changed Ila into a man. Now Sudyumna prayed – O Devi! In my heart I know that You are neither male nor female; neither formless nor having a form. Whoever You are, Whatever You are, I worship You incessantly and forever. Mother! It is my earnest desire that I may be worthy to worship You always.

Sootji said – Saying this Sudyumna surrendered himself and took refuge at the Lotus Feet of the Devi. She granted him haven in Her divine abode, a place coveted even by the gods, from where there is no return. On the demise of Sudyumna Pururava started ruling the kingdom. He was brilliant, upright and virtuous, and was always concerned about the wellbeing of his subjects. His kingdom, Pratisthan, was a happy and pleasant place. He was very tolerant and had knowledge of all dharmas. He was already blessed with godliness. Under his rule vedic prayers, charity and gifts to holy men, discipline and transparency of administration were maintained. All castes and communities performed their respective rites at their ashrams in complete freedom. He

himself performed manifold yagyas and distributed presents and donations. Seeing his image of royalty and grandeur, and hearing of his valour and virtues, Urvashi became attracted to him. She desired to make him her husband. The apsara Urvashi had a curse upon her by Shri Brahma, which caused her to take birth as a mortal. She approached Pururava with a proposal for marriage, but put two conditions. Firstly he should take care of the two rams that she had, and that she would only eat ghee everyday. Also she should never lay eyes on his unclad body. If any of these conditions were broken, she would immediately leave him. Pururava agreed, and she lived with him, waiting for her release from her curse. The king was totally infatuated with Urvashi, and thoughts of her began to rule his head and heart. It became impossible for him to be without her company even for a minute. Many years passed. Shri Indra began to miss Urvashi in devlok. He called the Gandharvas and asked them to make efforts to get Urvashi back. He suggested they steal the rams from Pururava's palace. He told them to use any means, but to definitely bring Urvashi back, as his court was dull without her. So the gandharvas and the demigods descended on the palace and stole the rams. But as they were ascending back to heaven, the rams began to bleat. Urvashi loved these rams like children, and when she heard them she exclaimed to the king – you promised to protect these rams who are as beloved as children to me. By putting my trust in you I have been destroyed. You are just lying with your eyes closed like an impotent being. The king lost his senses and jumped out of bed and ran unclothed behind the thieves. It was pitch dark but the gandharvas caused a flash of lightning. Urvashi's eyes beheld the unclad king, and immediately she disappeared. The gandharvas abandoned the rams and left. The king managed to catch the rams and returned to the palace tired and weary. When he did not find Urvashi he realised that she had gone forever. He kept wandering from place to place. His appearance became like that of a mad man, and he roamed the earth looking for her. At last he saw her in

Kurukshetra and begged her to return as he could not exist without her. Urvashi said – O king you are very foolish. You have lost your sense of wisdom. Return to your palace. It is futile to be so dejected and sad. Inspite of this, he continued to sink into the mire of attachment, and suffered pangs of separation.

Sootji said – This is the story of Urvashi and Pururavas.

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CHAPTER 1 Episodes 14-15

14-15 The birth of Sukhdev. Story of Shri Vishnu floating as a child on a Banyan Leaf.

On seeing the beautiful apsara Ghritadri, Vyasji fell into a quandary. He thought – this celestial female is not compatible for me. He became so serious in his expression that the apsara became fearful that he would put a curse on her. She immediately changed her form into that of a parrot, and trembling with fear flew past him. Vyasji was puzzled to see this. Actually when he first saw her he was overcome with carnal desires for her. At that time he was churning the Arani (wooden instrument for creating fire). All of a sudden he spilled his seed on the wood, but unaware of this he continued churning. Out of this was born Sukhdev, without conception. His appearance was as grand and auspicious as his father Ved Vyas. Just as the fire of a havan shines brightly on receiving oblations of havi, so also the visage of Sukhdev began to dazzle and glow. Seeing this son, Ved Vyas' joy knew no bounds. He began to wonder what the significance of such a happening was. This was certainly the boon promised by Shri Shiva. The boy is the embodiment of agni's splendour, light and beauty. Muni Vyas took a holy dip in the Ganges and returned to the summit of Mount Meru. The tapasvis on the mountain began to rain showers of flowers on the radiant boy. Ved Vyas performed all the prescribed ceremonies of consecration, purification and investiture with sacred thread. Vishvavasu, Narada, Thumburu and other gandharvas and demi gods were pleased. They came down from heaven and sang, and paid homage to this divine child. From the heavens also descended divya kamandal (divine earthen pot), staff, and the skin of a krishna-mrg (black antelope). Sukhdev grew up and matured very fast, and as always, his face was radiant and glowing. Vyasji who was an expert in sacred precepts and ceremonies, conducted the sacred

thread initiation ceremony. Like his father, Sukhdev was also endowed with pure knowledge and all the Vedas installed themselves within him with all their mysteries and secrets revealed. Sukhdev chose as his spiritual teacher the Guru Brihaspati. He fulfilled all the requirements of a sishya, including the oath of brahmachari. While in the gurukul, he specialised in the knowledge of all the scriptures and became conversant with rites, ceremonies and sacred precepts. On completion he took leave of his guru by offering a token of gratitude. When he reached home his father pressed him to his chest many times, and took deep breaths of his forehead. Then samavarthan was done – a vedic rite performed on the return of a disciple to his household from his guru's residence.

Now Vyasji began to think of getting Sukhdev married, so one day he approached his son – O sinless and guiltless one! You are now well versed in the Vedas and scriptures. You must get married and become a householder, thus pleasing the gods and ancestors. This will relieve me of pitra-shran (one of the three debts on a man from which he is freed when he begets a son). You are very intelligent and I have a lot of expectations from you. It is your filial duty to fulfil them. After severe penances I was blessed to behold you, O Constant and Unborn One! You are of divine form. I am your father. Please look after me.

Sootji said – Having heard his father's words, this ascetic who had subdued all his passions, spoke thus. Sukhdev said – Father, tell me, in this mortal world is there any happiness without sorrow. The learned ones do not term such a state as happy. Marriage will bring me under subjection to woman. Once she gets me under her control, what freedom will I have. It is possible for a man to free himself of shackles of iron and steel, but it is impossible to get out of the bondage of wife and children. O twice born one! The body functions, and

gives out excretions. A woman's body also does the same. Why would any man, aware of the truth, wish to enter into gratification with such a body. O brahmin! I am an unborn, then why would I want to become a being that has its birth through the organ of generation. I do not wish to take birth again in the future. Why should I sacrifice the supreme joy of loving God for the odious and abhorrent carnal pleasures. Those who have experienced the bliss of spirit, will never be tempted by material pleasures. My first step was to make a thorough study of the vedas, but when I contemplated on them I found conclusively that they supported slaughter, and inclined the mind towards attachment to worldly objects in pursuit of religious performance to purify the mind. I chose Shri Brihaspati as my religious preceptor, but he was also continuously caught up in the ocean of duties enjoined for a householder. So how could he guide me. When a physician is himself afflicted, how can he practice the art of healing. This was the situation in the case of my guru. He is himself searching for the route to moksha. O how dark and gloomy is the life of a householder. I bowed to my guru respectfully and came back to you. My heart trembles at the thought of this venomous and poisonous existence. Please teach me the knowledge of the essences or principles of the elements and save me. I am orbiting this world of darkness like an assembly of planets. With this ceaseless movement I am unable to find peace, tranquility and repose. You will realise that there is no such thing as worldly happiness. The ignorant may claim that there is, but then they are like worms which find happiness in the soil where they belong. But those who have knowledge of the Vedas and scriptures, and still maintain that there is happiness in the material world, they are the most foolish and unfortunate beings. Their birth is as insignificant and meaningless as that of a dog, donkey or horse. After being born a mortal and getting an opportunity to acquire knowledge of the Vedas and shastras; if a human being shackles himself with worldly bondages, then who deserves to get moksha. Woman is a threefold maya. In this world

only he can be called as having crossed the ocean of illusion, who has successfully detached himself from her shackles. No useful purpose is served in just having the knowledge and then getting ensnared. I must study how to avoid it. Because of these fetters, griha (family abode) has come to be called graha (eclipse). Father, marriage has all the paraphernalia for bindings and attachments. I am in constant fear of this. Those who have no discrimination, those who are victims of fate, they have wasted this birth by opting for bondage.

Vyasji replies – Son! Marriage is neither a bondage nor the cause for bondage. A man can be a householder, but so detached, that he is free. He uses his wealth which has been honestly earned, as prescribed in the Vedas for good purposes. If he performs rites for the honour of his ancestors, if he always speaks the truth, and if he maintains holiness and purity, he can get moksha even inside his home. After completing their vows, the brahmachari, the sanyasi and the vanprasth come for alms at midday; and it is the dharma of the householder to offer them food and speak to them with respect and concern. This gives them satisfaction. I do not know of, nor have I heard of any state which is more important than being a householder. The wise, experienced and learned sage Vashist and other acharyas, have all been householders. O fortunate one, householders who live in accordance with the tenets of the vedas, can achieve the highest spiritual ascent, and all their desires and aspirations get fulfilled. Dharmic and knowledgeable men say that one should always observe the rules of one stage of life, before entering the second, and the third. So it is advisable that you establish a home and endeavour to perform all the duties that it enjoins. Son, the secrets of dharma are not hidden from you. Enter the state of a householder, beget sons, and give happiness to your father and forefathers. Later on you can renounce the world, go into the forests and observe the austerities of vanaprastha life.

Then, last of all, the ultimate existence of sanyas-ashram can be observed. Son, heed my advice. Let us find a suitable bride for you, settle down as a householder and you can live according to the vedic principles.

Sukhdev replied:- Father forgive me, but I cannot accept grihastashram. It is comparable to a permanent bondage. Man is continually involved in the tensions of amassing wealth and never can recognise or experience joy. In the pursuit of material possessions, he harms and kills another. Even Indra has never been able to experience the complete happiness which is enjoyed by a beggar who is content with his freedom from desires and indifferent to material wealth. Even if one gains the riches of the three worlds, he cannot experience the joy of detachment that a beggar feels. Indra is the king of devalok, but when he sees a saint in meditation he feels jealous and insecure. He becomes constantly engaged in efforts to put obstacles and hindrances and break the meditation. O fortunate one! I am your unconceived son. Then why are you pushing me into a world which is full of endless darkness, unhappiness and sorrow. Birth, old age and death, and again rebirth after occupying the unclean water of a womb are filled with gloom and sorrow. The evil that follows avarice and greed is more distressful and painful. Worse than death are cravings and addictions. When the family grows into father, mother, children, grandchildren, and all dependants, they all become instrumental in multiplying your responsibilities and problems. Father! The joy-giving pursuits are yoga shastra and gyan shastra – union of the self with the Universal Soul by means of meditation, one who seeks pure, nirmal vidya and knowledge of yoga philosophy by sage Patanjali. Give me a commentary and interpretation of these secrets. There is a science of innumerable rituals (karmakand), but I am not interested in that. Blaming fate and destiny; hoarding to provide for a secure future; and worrying and toiling for present existence; these three

activities come from ignorance and false knowledge. Teach me the way to neutralise and go beyond these actions and involvements.

Sootji said – Upon hearing these strong statements, Vyasji sank into waves of despair and began to wonder how to make a correct and positive decision. Sukhdev was shocked and amazed to see his father in such a pitiful state. He said – O father. Maya has an overpowering influence. No wonder learned men who are proficient in the scriptures, who are religious instructors and give discourses and quite authentically proved episodes from the Vedas, get swayed and lose their sense of discrimination and discretion. I am unable to understand the nature of this Maya. It must be something insurmountable, impassable and difficult to overcome, if Satyavatinandan Vyasji, who is possessed of the highest order of spiritual knowledge and wisdom, has got entangled in its chains. The most illustrious one who is the narrator of the Puranas, the noble-spirited one who composed the Mahabharat, and the skilled one who was entrusted with dividing the Vedas, he also got captivated by this Maya. Even the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer have come under the illusion and confusion created by Maya Devi. Then how can anyone else in the Triloki (three worlds) escape. Undoubtedly the strength and prowess of Maya Devi is awe-inspiring, because even the all-powerful and omniscient Shri Vishnu was overcome, and could not function in Her absence. Vyasji is an ansh-avatar (partial incarnation) of Shri Vishnu, and yet he is being tossed around in the ocean of illusion, like a sailor who has lost his boat. He has lost control, and is weeping tears like an ordinary mortal. The power of yogamaya is strange and curious, and even the discerning cannot recognise and avoid it. Who is She? Who am I and how did I come to be here. What strange illusion is this? This body is composed of five elements. It has the propensity for relationships like father, son, and others. This can deceive even fraudulent and artful beings, and is undoubtedly an infinite and boundless energy,

possessed of unlimited capability. It has caused, even Brahman Devata Ved Vyasji to shed tears from his eyes.

Sootji said – Yogamaya is the supreme causal of all causes. All the gods emanated from Her. Even Shri Brahma is under Her control. Sukhdevji worshipped Bhagawati Yogamaya in his heart and offered pranaams. His father had been reduced to a pitiable state. He was sinking into an ocean of sorrow. Sukhdevji spoke words that would be benevolent for his father.

O Fortunate One! You are the legitimate son of Parasharji, begotten by a wife who was of his own tribe. It is your nature to impart divine knowledge to all. Then why are you sinking into despair like an ordinary, illiterate and ignorant mortal. Today I am your son, but no one knows what I was in my previous birth, and what you were. Why should a learned and illustrious teacher like you fall into this trap of maya. Use your wisdom with gravity and fortitude. It is not right to contaminate your mind with dejection and sorrow. Just recognise these father-son relationships as a web of illusion. O Muni! You are knowledgeable, and the embodiment of virtue and wisdom. With your religious prowess remove my ignorance, so that I can be freed from the fear of taking birth through human process. This earth is karma bhoomi, and one does not always merit a human birth. And then if one is born in the house of a Brahmin of a high order, then it is a rare and unique event. But I feel captured and bound, and I am unable to get rid of this connection. When the mind gets caught in the worldly web, then it is the patriarch who is answerable.

Sootji said – Sukhdevji was extremely wise. His demeanour was peaceful. In his mind he was already detached (a sanyasi). Hearing these words from his worthy and capable son, Vyasji said – Son! You are very blessed and fortunate. I have written Devi Bhagwat. You make a study of it. It is equal to the Vedas.

It has five features of immeasurable value, and it is divided into twelve chapters. In my opinion this is the decoration and embellishment of all the Purans; meaning it is pre-eminent, excellent and most superior. Just from listening to it being read, one gets the power of discretion and the ability to judge right from wrong. You must study Devi Bhagwat.

Once, when Shri Vishnu found himself as a small child floating on a banyan leaf, He began to wonder – Why have I turned into a child? Which divine being has caused this to happen to Me? To accomplish which task have I been created thus? Out of what substance have I been formed? How will I obtain knowledge of all these things. Shri Vishnu was pondering thus, when Shree Bhagwati Yogamaya allayed all His fears. She uttered, in the most beautiful voice, the half-shlok which unravels the mystery of the object of a human being's creation and existence –

"I am this entire Creation! There is no other indestructible or imperishable object, BUT ME"

(Sarvam Khalvidamevaaham Nanyadasthi Sanathanam)

On hearing this awesome declaration the first thing that happened to Shri Vishnu was that he understood it in its entirety. Then He began to wonder - From whose Vaani (voice) has this awesome declaration emanated. Is the speaker a male or a female, or neither. What must I do to have a glimpse of this being. Even as He was contemplating, He enthroned the Divine Mother in His heart. He kept repeating the half shlok again and again. He became engrossed in it, but his curiosity had not left. He lay down on the leaf. When His attention became tranquil and thoughtless, then the Devi Yogamaya appeared before him. She manifested Her Divine Form of Four Arms bearing

conch, chakra, mace and lotus. Her clothes were shining. Necklaces of pearls and other jewels were adding to Her splendour. She was accompanied by Her attendants. Her face was beautiful. With a smile on Her radiant face, She stood before Shri Vishnu – the Devi Mahalakshmi Herself.

Sootji says: All around was the vast ocean. On seeing this resplendent form of the Devi so suddenly, the lotus eyed Shri Vishnu was astonished. Surrounding Her were Her other aspects, all seated on thrones – Love, Affection, Intelligence, Prosperity, Intellect, Dignity, Fame, Memory, Understanding, Faith, Prudence, Purity, Hunger, Thirst, Sleep, Compassion, Movement, Contentment, Forgiveness, Modesty, Deep Sleep, Rest, Satisfaction. They all carried weapons, for destroying negativities. They were all adorned with jewels, garlands of sweet-smelling parijaat flowers, and necklaces of pearls enhanced their beauty. Shri Vishnu began to wonder – who are all these female forms? And who am I on this leaf of banyan? When there is only Bhavasagar all around how did this leaf appear? And which unknown power has caused me to become a little child lying on this leaf? Who is this Form before me? Which undefinable power has placed this indescribable scene before me? Now what should I do? Should I go somewhere, or should I remain here in this innocent childlike form?

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CHAPTER 1 Episodes - 16-17

16-17 Conversations between Shri Vishnu and Shree Mahalakshmi; and between Shri Vishnu and Shri Brahma. Sukhdev's visit to Mithilapuri to meet Raja Janaka.

Vyasji says – On seeing Shri Vishnu is a state of indecision, Shri Mahalakshmi smiled and spoke thus: Vishno! Why are you so amazed and astonished? Because of the influence of Bhagwati Maha Shakti you are not able to recognise Me. Long before this, the cycles of creation and dissolution have been going on in rotation. And in every cycle you have taken incarnations. That Parashakti is attributeless – devoid of the qualities and attributes of the mind; beyond the gunas and nadis. You are sagun Parabrahma – endowed with qualities and attributes. You bear the duality of heat and cold – Ida and Pingala Nadis – and You stand on Sattwa Guna to protect the three worlds. Actually, I am also Sagun Shakti. It should be understood that I am verily Sattwic Shakti. Shortly from the lotus of your Nabhi, Prajapati Brahma is going to use the energy of Rajoguna and cause the universe to be created. When he attains tapasya he will be endowed with paramount power and energy. Then he will succeed in creating the three lokas or worlds. Brahma will possess and maintain Rajoguna – one of the three constituent qualities of living beings. Being possessed of prodigious and extraordinary knowledge and prowess; Brahma will create Panchabhutas – the five elements Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether. Then he will create their generative powers within them. Then he will create the deities who will mobilise these forces; and finally he will create the soul with adequate aptitude and discretion to know what is proper to be done according to his design. For this reason he has the attribute of Karta (Creator).

Most auspicious one, you are entrusted with the protection of this created universe. When you are enraged and scowl with fury, from between your eyebrows will incarnate Rudra. He will be endowed with Tamasi Shakti. At the end of a day of Brahma – consisting of 4320,000,000 mortal years – he will cause the final annihilation or destruction.

I have come so that you can perform this act of protection of the universe. Consider yourself endowed with My Sattwic Shakti. Madhusudhan! I will abide here. Your anahat is My abode. I will always be with you.

Shri Vishnu spoke: Devi! A short while ago I heard a half shlok. Its syllables were exceedingly lucid and clear. O! Most Divinely Beautiful Devi, please tell me whose voice made that supremely consummate revelation. My mind is agitated. Like a penniless man keeps recollecting and imagining wealth, in the same way that sound repeatedly echoes in my mind.

Vyasji says: On hearing Shri Vishnu's words, the Devi's countenance shone with delight. Devi Lakshmi smiled with affection and love and said: Listen O! Vishnu, I will tell you. I am verily the four-armed Goddess, possessed of attributes (saguna). This is My form. Do you not know Adya Shakti. She appears with all Her attributes withdrawn within Herself. O! Fortunate One. Know this – It is this Nirgun (attributeless) Bhagwati whose supreme voice you heard, proclaiming the ardh-shlok. This should be recognised and worshipped as the supremely pure Devi Bhagwat. This auspicious Puran gives benediction, and it reveals the mysteries of the Vedas. O vanquisher of negative forces! O inviolable and steadfast ascetic! Bhagwan Vishno. I offer respects to the gracious compassion of Devi Bhagawati who has specially revealed the secrets of the techniques of the Divine. From sakshat Mahavidya Herself we have received articulated knowledge of the science of the scriptures – the divine

nectar from Her Lotus Feet. There is no other truth in existence, which is greater than this, in the Triloki (three worlds). The Devi is pleased with you. That is why She has articulated and manifested the mystery to you.

Vyasji says – On hearing this utterance by Bhagwati Mahalakshmi, Shri Vishnu absorbed, enshrined and retained this great mantra in his heart. Sometime later, Shri Brahma who had taken form out of the lotus of Shri Vishnu's Nabhi, arrived in a state of fear, for refuge at the feet of Shri Vishnu. It was then that Shri Vishnu engaged in a terrible combat, and defeated the demons Madhu and Kaitabh. Then he chose an auspicious moment, and went into deep meditation on the supremely pure ardh-shlok. Shri Brahma watched Shri Vishnu with great joy and satisfaction. He questioned Shri Vishnu: Jaggadishwar! You are venerated by all the gods. O Deva with lotus eyes. Then whose praises are you chanting? Which being exists who is more superior to yourself; who commands your worship? And who is that whose praises fill your heart with joy?

Shri Vishnu said: The causal of all actions; the shakti within you and me, which possesses every quality, trait, capability, characteristic, nature – that Shakti is the embodiment of benevolence, Bhagwati Adya Shakti. The One Who supports the universe and Who keeps it stable and firmly established in this Ocean of Illusion, Who is brilliantly enthroned and Who, in Her manifest form is the Universe; Who appears in Her Great Splendour for the benevolence of Her devotees, and the One Who loves Her devotees as Her children; it is that Mahashakti, Devi Bhagawati Who has incarnated. She is supremely generous. She is the source and embodiment of knowledge. She is eternal, ever present, continuous. She emerges for a divine purpose for the protection of Her creation. She is the power of consciousness that dispels ignorance and confusion. She cuts the knot of Maya. Then one perceives the unreality of

individuality. O! Brahman, embodiment of purity. Know that you, I, and every living being, have been created by the Chitta Shakti – Pure Attention – of this same Bhagawati. There should be no doubt on this. That which the Devi has pronounced in a half shlok, will in the beginning of the third (of four ages) be clearly evident and will become renowned as Devi Bhagwat.

Vyasji says: Shri Brahma was seated on the lotus of Shri Vishnu's Nabhi, and there he learned the half shlok. After that he gave knowledge of it to his son Narada of immeasurable intelligence. Then the privilege of elucidating and putting it down in twelve chapters, came to me O favoured one. You must make a complete study of this great Puran which is comparable to the Vedas. It is full of excellent accounts of favours granted by Devi Jagaddamba. Every part of it is filled with the essences of divine philosophy. Among all purans, it is pre-eminent. In holiness it compares with dharmshastras – the laws of dharma. It is full of the doctrines of the Vedas. It also records the destruction of Vrittiasura and a host of other episodes. Emerging out of the mundane world of earthly existence, it is a storehouse of Brahmagyan, Nirmal Vidya, and an ocean of liberation and deliverance. O Son You are possessed of unparalleled wisdom, which makes you worthy of respect and reverence. Make an earnest and diligent study of this most superb Puran. It contains eighteen thousand shlokas. It removes ignorance and under its influence the intelligent and knowledgeable Surya begins to glow exceedingly. This praiseworthy puran bestows peace and happiness, both on the listeners and the orators, and grants long life and the blessings of children and grandchildren. Sootji is a holy man, and along with you he will also make a study of the auspicious and sacred puran.

Sootji says: After speaking thus, Vyasji began to instruct both Sukhdevji and me. Whatever extensive description, expansive commentary, and detailed

explanations that he gave, I have carefully memorised. I stayed in that most holy and purifying ashram till the completion of the instructions. But Sukhdevji could not find peace in his heart. He began to live in seclusion, but could not reduce the turmoil within. It was as if he was floundering. He had no inclination to eat food, or to fast. Seeing his son in this disturbed state, Vyasji inquired of him: Son, why are you constantly in a pensive mood. You appear like a penniless man who is always in fear of indebtedness and obligation. I am your father. If you cannot find peace in what I have advised, then I suggest you go to Mithilapuri, the kingdom of Raja Janaka. He is virtuous, saintly, he speaks the truth, and honours his promise. He is free from worldly bondage, and he is Videha (one who is detached, and thus established in the witness state). He will remove your doubts, apprehensions and ignorance. Go to him and solve your problems. Also get from him the knowledge of the tenets prescribed for the caste to which a person belongs. Most respected Janakji is free from worldly bondage, possessed of Brahmagyan, holy, pious, truthful, ever peaceful and constantly in yoga.

Sootji says: Vyasji is noble and splendid, and after hearing him speak, his son Sukhdevji said – O! Dharmatman (righteous one). It strikes me as hypocrisy and feigning piety that a person enjoying the royal life, like king Janaka, can be called jeevanmukti (free from bondages). How can a person who governs and rules, have a detached attention. Now I must meet him, as I am curious to see how he can remain detached, like the lotus-leaf which does not get wet even though it stands in water. Father! How can a person who has eaten, still be unfed; or a person who has performed an action be a non-doer. How can your generative power be separate from you? How can there be same-ness between mother-son-wife-woman of low morals. If the tongue knows the different tastes of sweet, salt, sour, bitter, how can there be detachment from food? When one knows the difference between friend and foe, then naturally

the emotions of love and hate will follow. These are the questions that are tormenting me. How can Raja Janak have these interactions and still be detached. Is there no disparity between the mind of a robber and an ascetic. If there is, then where the freedom from bondage? Father! I have not yet seen a king who is liberated from worldly bondage. And Raja Janak is also a grihasti (householder). This doubt assails my mind. I have a powerful desire to remove these misgivings. So I must go to Mithilapuri.

Sootji says: After paying obeisance to his father and touching his feet, Sukhdevji prepared for his departure. He promised his father Vyasji, that on reaching Mithila he would do exactly as directed by him. He would observe how Raja Janak rules without the law of corporal punishment, because once the rules are lifted, observance of discipline and dharma is not possible. It is fear of punishment that helps preserve righteousness. That is why I am unable to understand how Raja Janak has been able to maintain law without punishment, all these years. It is almost as if someone is saying 'this mother of mine is very venerable'. Father you are a great tapasvi. I wish to put before you my heartfelt thoughts and doubts before I leave for Mithila.

Sootji says: The desire to go to Mithila had become very strong. Seeing how strongly Sukhdev was grounded in his principles, Vyasji embraced him and said – O! Son Sukhdev, may you always be blessed. May you live long. Having so solemnly declared yourself, you may leave in peace. After your visit, you must return to my ashram. Do not go to any other place. Seeing you gives me joy. If you remove yourself from my sight, it will give me great pain. After meeting Raja Janak and clarifying your doubts and uncertainties, come back and continue your study of the Vedas. Sootji says: Sukhdevji prostrated at his father's feet, did a perambulation around him, and left with such speed and energy, it was like an arrow leaving the bow. On his journey he passed

through many prosperous and flourishing cities, forests, trees, fields ripe for harvest, saw ascetics deep in meditation, yagya hosts offering sacrifices, yogis absorbed in the practice of asceticism according to the rules of yoga philosophy, beings who had renounced their homes and entered vanprasth (the third stage in the life of a twice-born), devotees of Shri Shiva, sun worshippers, and devotees of Shri Vishnu. Passing all this, and observing the various forms of worship, Sukhdevji crossed Mount Meru, the Himalayas, and reached Mithilapuri. What he saw was wealth and prosperity, and people who were happy and satisfied, and a high standard of morality and virtuous conduct.

The guard at the gate asked who he was, and why he had come. Sukhdevji did not reply, but entered the gateway and stood, unshaken and motionless like a tree whose branches had been amputated. He was filled with amazement. He had a smile on his face, but continued to stand silent and immobile.

The guard said: Brahmin, I hope you are not dumb. What is the reason for your coming here. According to my understanding no one goes anywhere without a reason. Brahman, once you get permission from our king, you may enter the city. Neither a person of low caste, nor one of virtuous disposition, has authority to enter without permission. Oh praiseworthy one! No doubt you seem to be a noble and illustrious scholar versed in the Vedas. Be so kind as to tell me the clan or lineage you belong to, as well as the purpose of your visit, and you may enter the city at will.

Sukhdevji said: O! Guard of the gates, You are not at fault. You are always dependent and servile. It is your first and foremost duty to please your master. Through you I have been detained. Even your king is not to blame. Because it is

the duty of wise and experienced people to differentiate between thieves and enemies before interacting with them.

The guard said: Brahman! What is happiness and what is sorrow? What should a prosperous and auspicious person do? Who is a benevolent well wisher and who is an enemy? Please be kind and answer all my queries.

Sukhdevji said: Duality and duplicity pervades the length and breadth of this world. This is because some people are passionate extroverts, and others are recluses and ascetics averse to worldly pleasures. Even their determinations and resolves are of two kinds. Ascetics also have differences – known, unknown or stupid. The wise have two kinds of knowledge – acquainted with the shastras, or their own limited beliefs and understanding. Both competent and incompetent people use their intelligence to fulfil their desires and inclinations in any way possible.

The guard said: O! Twice born one. You are most superior. I am devoid of subtle knowledge. Whatever you said I am not able to understand. Please tell it to me again, in clear, simple detail.

Sukhdevji said: Whoever has desires and longings, and works towards fulfilling them, he is an extrovert. He has to go through happiness and pain. He gets his happiness and satisfaction after acquiring wife, children, wealth, fame and victory. If he fails in getting these, he becomes very unhappy.

The quest for absolute joy, for self realisation, is considered the most desirable activity. He who puts obstacles in that path should be considered an enemy. The self centred man who pursues worldly pleasures is often counted as a friend. But he who is untouched by the illusory world, is the wise one. The foolish man gets deceived by the unreal, and always lives in delusion and

confusion. To be detached from the unreal world, and to become engrossed in the dharmas of the inner self, gives absolute joy. Those who pursue outward knowledge who acquire proficiency in worldly matters, are only treading the path of trouble, sorrow and disappointments and disillusion. To the wise and auspicious man, passion, desire, anger, jealousy, conceit and attachment, are all considered enemies to spiritual ascent. Peace and satisfaction are his companions. There is no greater benevolence in the three worlds.

Sootji says: On hearing these words of wisdom, the guard realised that this was a holy and learned Brahmin. He invited Sukhdev to enter the grand mansion that was the palace. As he entered the gates, Sukhdev began to observe the citizens. The streets were filled with people. There were shops full of precious gems and jewels, and there were people selling and people buying; and a general air of abundance and prosperity. Seeing this display of wealth and opulence, surprised Sukhdevji but he continued walking. His countenance was so radiant, it glowed like the sun. When he reached the palace, the guards there also stopped him. He stopped, and stood as motionless and inert as a block of wood, and went deep into contemplation and meditation. Very soon ministers from the palace stood before him with folded hands and escorted him to the royal guest house. It was surrounded by trees bearing divinely fragrant flowers. He was given an honourable reception according to custom. The most skilful and competent musicians and dancers from the king's court were there to entertain him. They were well versed in the art of entertainment, and after instructing them to fulfil all the requirements of the guest, the minister departed. Sukhdev was all alone, and these ladies considered it their paramount duty to please him. They put before him delicious meals and the best fruits of the season. Then the ladies of the inner chambers took him on a final tour of the gardens. They were enamoured of him. He was very handsome, and spoke in beautiful tones. They recognised

him as a chaste and virtuous person, and maintained a delicate decorum around him. To Sukhdevji, all these ladies were as sisters or mothers. For a person whose attention is always on the self, such situations can give neither pleasure nor mental agony. He continued to be in thoughtless state. The ladies prepared a luxurious bed for him and spread costly drapes on it. Sukhdevji washed his feet, carefully took the kusha grass in his hand and gave notice of evening prayers. He passed the first quarter of the night in prayer and meditation. Then he retired, and slept for the second and third quarter of the night. He awoke at the fourth quarter (Brahma muhurtham) and meditated. Then he had his bath, performed the prayers enjoined to be made by the twice born, and completed his morning duties.

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CHAPTER 1 - Episodes 18-19

18-19 The meeting between Sukhdevji and Raja Janaka.

Sootji says: When Raja Janaka heard of the arrival of his guru-putra (son of Ved Vyas), he arrived at the guest house, accompanied by his council of ministers. He gave him a courteous welcome, seated him on a special asan (seat), and made enquiries about his wellbeing. A milch cow was presented according to custom. Sukhdevji acknowledged the reception and accepted the gift with grace. Then he also enquired about the king's health and well being. After he took his seat and settled into calm repose, Raja Janaka asked him: Son of my Guru! You are honourable and dignified, and free from wish or desire. Do me the honour of telling me the reason that we are favoured with a visit from you.

Sukhdevji said: Maharaj, you are pre-eminent among kings. My father Vyasji has advised me to get married, as the state of matrimony is considered the highest. But to me it appears like a binding force, and I refused. He explained that it is not an entrapment, but I still resisted. My mind got entangled in manifold assumptions and fears. Sensing this, Vyasji suggested that I come to Mithila and speak to you. He described you as a dharmic king who conducts yagyas (sacrifices) and as one who is freed from the bondages of worldly life. The title of Videha "detached attention" has been conferred on you by all who know you. He said you rule unobstructed, and have no foes or enemies. Even while ruling the country, you are untouched by the luxuries which surround you. He said that after interacting with you, all my scepticism and fanciful misgivings would be removed. "A meeting with Raja Janaka will convince you that all your fears are baseless, and that you are groping in darkness and obscurity". In obedience to my father's advice, I have come to Mithila to seek your guidance and advice. You are pure and sinless. Tell me what I should do

to become free of worldly bondages. O! King. There are various resources and means of devotion – penance; renunciation; austerity; visits to holy shrines and sacred places of pilgrimage; fasting; sacrifice; taking up residence in holy lands; continuous and regular study of the sacred scriptures. To which of these should I resort for divine protection and safe harbour. Please give me your valuable advice.

Raja Janaka said: For a seeker who embarks on the road to moksha, it is imperative that he should conform to certain requirements. He should wear the sacred thread after the prescribed investiture ceremony. Then he must take up residence at the feet of his guru. He must make a complete study of the Vedas and scriptures. At the conclusion of his education, he must offer the prescribed guru-dakshina (token of gratitude to the guru), before departing his ashram.

When the disciple returns to his own household from his guru's residence, he should be received with the customary rites. Then he should enter the state of grihasti – (enter the state of marriage and become a householder). He must keep control of the jurisdiction of his mind. There is no alternative injunction or precept. He must always strive to keep others happy. He must have no expectations from others. Not allow sinful thoughts to linger. He should perform agnihotra (ceremony consisting of offering oblations to the sacred fire); always speak the truth; and remain ever pure and chaste.

After begetting children, and grandchildren, he must enter the third stage of vaanprasth (renunciation). He must conquer the shadripus – the six enemies not conducive to meditation, namely – anger; desire for sensual pleasures; attachment (maamatva); temptations; conceit; and jealousy. Finally, he must entrust his wife into the care of his son, pledge all his faculties; and enter the

state of total surrender and asceticism (the fourth state in the life of a dwija or twice born.) He must never stray from the path of dharma. Maintain a peaceful and tranquil state of mind, uncorrupt and free from worldly desires. Only such a person can be termed an ascetic. If he is not detached, he should never enter the last state. This truth has been proclaimed in the Vedas, and no one can violate it.

Sukhdevji, the Vedas prescribe forty-eight purification rites. Out of these, our learned ancestors have apportioned forty for the grihasth (householder). In addition, the balance eight are for those who are spiritually inclined and desirous of liberation from worldly existence. It gives tranquility, bliss, control over senses, self restraint. It is the advice and direction of sages, that step by step, one must go from one ashram to another; one stage to the other.

Sukhdevji asked: If one gains mastery over sense perceptions and worldly desires; and acquires the secret knowledge for liberation, is it compulsory for him to still go through the different stages like householder or can he retire to the forest as an ascetic?

Raja Janaka said: O! Praiseworthy One! It is extremely difficult to conquer the power of the senses. With the slightest lapse in attention, it enters the consciousness and creates thoughts and desires. After renouncing the world, if one still feels urges for tasty food; soft comfortable bed; sense pleasures; longing for progeny; how can he silence these desires. Desires cannot be destroyed. They are very enduring. Therefore the impulses have to be overcome by degrees, step by step. You have to experience and then overcome. Like a man who sleeps at a height will experience the fall at some time or the other. But the man who sleeps on the floor has no possibility of falling. After entering the ascetic stage, if anything corrupts, pollutes or defiles

it, then there is no other recourse for the ascetic in this lifetime. (It is known as Bhrasht Stithi).

An ant starts its journey from the roots of the tree; and gradually, step by step, reaches the branches, and ultimately the fruits. Whereas a bird, in an effort to avoid meeting obstacles, flies with great speed. The result is that the bird becomes weary and tired, while the ant enjoys in comfort. There is no short cut to reaching the goal of self liberation. Step by step, one has to conform to the stage of life you are in, and gradually gain mastery over the mind. Even within the householder stage, one can be at peace and not allow any thoughts to disturb the attention. Reflect or contemplate on the atma, the self. There should be no reaction – no happiness in good fortune, and no sorrow in misfortune. Any thoughts that disturb the peace of mind should be dropped or surrendered, and only prescribed activities should be performed. The joy of meditation on the Supreme Being should be felt in the heart. Such a person undoubtedly gets release from the troubles and perplexities of worldly life. O! Sinless One! See how I rule a kingdom, and yet I am free and untouched. I act according to my conscience, but I am not attached to the action or the result. Just as I partake of various forms of nourishment, and perform myriad tasks, and still remain untouched and detached; so also you must strive to become free. I have told you all the causes of attachment. If you go beyond the cause, then there is no effect. The five elements are made of matter, and have no power or influence over the atma (spirit). Atma is immaculate, pure, inconceivable, incomprehensible, sinless. It can only be experienced; not perceived through the senses. Then how can it come under any influence or bondage? O Twice-born One! The cause of our sinking into this deep and unfathomable ocean of illusion, is the Mind. Once the mind becomes clean and pure, all the turbulence caused by the senses, gets destroyed and neutralised. One may go and take endless dips in holy waters, but till the mind

is washed clean, it is of no avail. O Brahmin of subdued senses! That which puts one into bondage, is not the body, soul, or senses. It is the mind which binds, and the mind which releases. Atma is eternally pure, and the embodiment of detachment. If there is no mental activity, then the causes of bondage cease to exist. Friends, enemies, sadness, dejection, are all figments of the mind. Atma is singular. As long as man is conscious of his individuality as body and mind, he cannot identify with atma or spirit. Atma is the embodiment of Brahma. I am that eternal Brahma, without doubt. There is so much ignorance, and false knowledge in the world. Because of this one feels multiplicity between atma and Brahma; and the attention is fragmented. This avidya or false knowledge can be neutralised only if one gets brahma-gyan – knowledge of Brahma on the central nervous system. Therefore it is judicious for the sage and the philosopher to acquire Brahma-gyan or Nirmal Vidya (pure knowledge). Just as you cannot appreciate the cool comfort of shade until you stand in the sun, so also, unless there is a backdrop of false knowledge, you cannot recognise the excellence and benevolence of Nirmal Vidya. It is a natural phenomenon to have variations within moods; energies within elements; and sense pleasures within situations or circumstances. The Vedas, which tend and train all of us, have laid down limits of decorum and boundaries of good conduct. If man does not conform to these prescriptions, then atheists and sceptics will wipe out authority, and dharma will go out of existence. There will be a breakdown of statutes and laws, and the very existence of humankind will be threatened. Therefore, those who abide by the value systems of the Vedas, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Sukhdevji said: O! King! There is one question that is constantly troubling me. How can one who is surrounded on all sides by maya, be free from longings and desires. Even though one has studied the scriptures, and has a sense of discretion between the eternal and the transient, man still gets entangles in

the web of maya. Then how can he claim to be free. Knowledge of the scriptures is not powerful enough to dispel the ignorance of the heart. Just having knowledge of lamps does not dispel darkness. Our wise elders have always directed that we maintain alliance and friendship with all living beings. How is it possible for a householder to observe this. O! King. The yearning for wealth, the comforts and luxuries of a royal life; victories in war, and desire for fame, will constantly be crowding your mind, so how can you be free from worldly attachments. You use guile to trap a thief. You are righteous and virtuous in the company of ascetics, and you can of course discriminate between friend and foe. So where is the detachment from qualities. You have knowledge of tastes - sweet, salt, sour, bitter, pungent and astringent. Then where is the conquest over the senses? Also you know the difference between good and evil. That is, you derive joy from good deeds, and abhor evil. You experience all the three states – waking, dreaming and sushupta (deep slumber). Then how can you be in the single state of balance at all times. You are the acknowledged master of your army, elephants, horses and infantry. You eat delicacies. Bland and tasteless food is not relished. Then how can a garland and a snake appear no different in your sight. A liberated and emancipated being is one, to whom a clod of earth and a lump of gold appear no different from each other; and who is always engaged in activities benevolent to others. Therefore I have no desire to live the life of a householder, even for one moment. My mind is resolved. I will live in seclusion, silence my desires, and live in peace and tranquillity. I will live in the company of any living thing. I will give up all attachments. I will eat fruits or flowers, or leaves, or anything that I get. I will cease to experience happiness or sorrow, and I will not collect or amass material objects. I will wander freely, just like antelope and deer.

O! King. When the desire for renunciation has already awakened within me; and all my moods of happiness and sorrow have been silenced; then what is the purpose of my entering the state of a householder – with house, possessions, beautiful wife, and other entrapments.

You are constantly speaking and thinking of various situations, and things, and still say that you are liberated from worldly attachments. I feel I am being deceived. You are beset by concerns and problems relating to enemies, to wealth and treasures. What makes you any different from the rishis and munis who live in the forest, eat frugally; who are steadfast in their meditation; who are fully aware that this world is an illusion; and yet get ensnared in the web of attachments.

By virtue of birth, the members of your clan get the title 'videhi' (one whose attention is totally detached). This is a very contradictory practice. It is just the same as giving the title Vidyadhar (bearer of knowledge) to an illiterate man; or naming a blind man Divakar (bearer of light); or a pauper being called Lakshmidhar (bearer of wealth). It has no meaning. It is nonsensical.

Raja Janaka spoke thus: O twice-born one! What you have spoken is the truth. There is no lie in it. But still, hear this:-

My Guru Vyasji is worthy of the utmost honour and respect. Agreed that you do not wish to live with him, and you want to go into the forest. But in the forest you will have to live and keep alliance with deer and antelope. This is a fact. When there is no place devoid of the five elements, where on this earth can you remain without attachments. Hunger pangs will make themselves felt at some time or other. How then will you remain unconcerned? When and how will you satisfy the longing to eat? You will keep an eye on your staff and

deerskin, in the same way that I keep a watch on my kingdom. I never get over anxious or excessively worried about its affairs. I have surrendered all anxieties and concerns, mistakes and doubts. I am in absolute joy, eating or sleeping. The world cannot bind me. If you are always in fear that –"I am caught in this worldly web", this thought itself will cause you to sink into self-doubt and distress. Therefore, be always alert, watchful and cautious. It is our responsibility to surrender these fears and live in confidence and joy. "I am this body" are the chains which bind. "I am not this body" is the release. It is this "I" consciousness, and sense of ownership, that ensnares and entraps one into worldly attachments. Attachment does not come out of the body or the home. It comes from self-conceit and possessiveness.

Sootji says:- Raja Janaka's words made a deep and favourable impression on Sukhdevji. They allayed all his doubts and misapprehensions. He immediately took leave of Raja Janaka, and set off for Vyas-ashram. Seeing his son returning home, Vyasji was overjoyed. He received him with fatherly love, made him sit on his lap, breathed over his head, and enquired after him. From that day onwards Sukhdevji lived in that beautiful ashram. He was already well versed in the Vedas and scriptures. After witnessing the tranquil and balanced state in which Raja Janaka maintained himself inspite of ruling a kingdom, Sukhdev found peace in his heart, and he decided to continue living in the ashram. He got married to a beautiful girl from his clan. Her name was Peevari. They had four sons, and a beautiful daughter called Keerti. She was given in marriage to King Vibhraj. Her son Brahmdutt was a very wise and illustrious king. He was very fortunate that Shri Narada himself imparted Brahmagyan (knowledge of Brahma) to him. After reaching the zenith of knowledge, Brahmadutt handed over his kingdom to his son and retired to Badarikashram (a place of pilgrimage in the Himalayas).

Sukhdev also took sanyas (life of an ascetic), and went and settled on the beautiful peak of Mount Kailash. He spent his days in resolute and undisturbed contemplation of the self, and meditation on the Divine. One day, shining like the sun, he ascended into the heavens. As his asana (seat) left the mountain, it split asunder and many other happenings took place. All this was witnessed by the meditating rishis and munis, and they all began to sing hymns in his praise. The entire sky was bright with this second sun shining in it.

Ved Vyas was very sad at this parting, and kept lamenting "my son, my son". Seeing the pitiable condition of his father, Sukhdevji made a reply. Hearing the sound of his voice, the Rishis and Munis knew that he had already been released from his mortal body and had merged with the Universal Soul. Upto date his voice can be heard in clear lucid tones. Vyasji was inconsolable, and kept grieving for his son. Dark clouds of mourning loomed overhead. Shri Shiva, the ever compassionate god, came down from Kailash and appeared before Vyasji. Shri Shiva consoled him – Vyas, do not grieve. Your son Sukhdev is a vast receptacle of knowledge of the Vedas and the yogashastras. He has been granted that highest state, which even the most steadfast souls do not achieve easily. You yourself are wise and learned. Therefore you should not have any worries regarding your son. By having a son like Sukhdev you have earned renown and fame".

Vyasji said: O God of Gods! What shall I do. I have become destitute and helpless. My eyes long for a glimpse of him, and I am floundering."

The Lord said: That which completely absorbed your son, and enamoured him, can be found as a reflection, in very close proximity to your self. Discover it, and you will find peace and tranquillity."

Sootji says: Very soon after that, Vyasji experienced the splendour and joy of that reflection within himself. After giving him this boon, Shri Shiva removed Himself from his sight. Ved Vyas returned to his ashram in perfect peace.

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Ved Vyasji's sojourn on the banks of the river Saraswati.

The rishis asked Sootji: After receiving the boon from Shri Shiva, what did that most eminent among sages, Ved Vyas, do. Please tell us in detail.

Sootji says: Many famous sages like Asit, Deval, and Vaishampayan came and studied under Ved Vyas. On completion of their spiritual education, they took his permission and went to different parts of the world for propagation of religious principles. After his son Sukhdev left for his heavenly abode, Vyasji decided to leave that place. Just at that time he suddenly remembered his mother, Satyawati, who was a maiden of a non-Aryan tribe. He had parted from her on the banks of the river Ganga, and he recalled how sad and inconsolable she had been. So he left the mountains and went down to the place of his birth. There he inquired from her clansmen about his mother. They told him that the pious and holy maiden Satyawati had been given in marriage to the famous and illustrious King Shantanu. The head boatman extended a respectful hospitality to Ved Vyasji. He left his birthplace and went and built an ashram on the banks of the Saraswati river. He spent his days in tapasya - (renunciation and meditation).

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King Shantanu was an illustrious and dignified ruler. He and Satyawati begot two sons. Vyasji was happy to know that he had two brothers. The elder was

Chitrangadh. He was a suppressor of enemies, and was possessed of all great qualities. The second son Vichitravirya was illustrious and wise. Shantanu had an older son Bhishma of unequalled strength and valour. Satyawati's two sons Chitrangadh and Vichitravirya were also mighty and brave. Seeing his three powerful and brave sons, Shantanu felt he was more invincible than the gods. Then Shantanu left for his heavenly abode. Just as one divests himself of old garments for new, so also king Shantanu discarded his old and worn out mortal body. The prescribed ceremonies were performed. The eldest son Prince Bhishma declined the throne, and coronated his brother Chitrangadh as king. The new king was very brave and valiant, and vanquished all his enemies in a short time.

One day king Chitrangadh took a vast army and went to the forest. A Gandharva (celestial musician), bearing the same name Chitrangadh, saw the king and descended to earth, and stood before the king. Both were very brave and strong. A great battle ensued on a battlefield called Kurukshetra. They fought fiercely for three years. At last the king fell to the Gandharva.

The new king Vichitravirya ascended the throne. He was just a youth. When he grew to manhood Bhishma began to think of getting him married. The king of Kashi had three most beautiful daughters who were endowed with all favourable qualities. The king arranged a swayamvara with a condition that the princesses would choose their husbands themselves. Thousands of kings and princes had been invited, and a very royal and respectable gathering was present. Most valiant prince Bhishma arrived in a chariot, defeated all the kings and princes, and carried away the three princesses to Hastinapura. His feelings towards the princesses was pure – as if they were his sisters or daughters. On reaching Hastinapur, he presented the princesses to his mother Queen Satyawati. Then he consulted learned priests and Brahmins, and fixed

an auspicious date for the marriage of the princesses to King Vichitravirya. One of the princesses, who was the most beautiful, said with great modesty to Bhishma -- O protector of the righteous! You are a dignitary of the Kaurava Dynasty. O son of Ganga! Please understand. I had already chosen King Shalv as my husband and he also chose me in his heart to be his bride. You are the greatest among the holy and pious, and you are also strong and powerful. In the circumstances do whatever you deem fit.

Sootji says: Hearing this, Bhishma asked for advice from Satyawati, and the priests and ministers. Then he told the princess that she was free to go with her purity and chastity intact. She went to King Shalv and said – King, in my heart I had chosen you as my husband, and I know you also chose me. I have come to you, and you may make arrangements for our marriage.

King Shalv said: O beautiful one! In my presence, and in the presence of the large and noble gathering, Bhishma carried you and put you in his chariot and took you away. It is not possible for me to marry you. No sensible man will marry a maiden who has been abandoned by another. Even though Bhishma had pure intentions, the marriage cannot take place. After this rejection, the princess went back to Bhishma weeping and sorrowful. She pleaded - O brave one! Treating me as your castaway, King Shalv has refused to marry me. Now, you must keep me here as your servant, or I will have to release my soul from its body.

Bhishma replied – O Princess! In your heart you have already accepted another as your husband, so who can accept you now? It is better for you to return to your father's house. The princess left, and wandered into the forest. She found a quiet and peaceful place, conducive to meditation, and settled down there.

King Vichitravirya lived happily with the two princesses Ambalika and Ambika. Sometimes they stayed in the palace, and sometimes they would go to the forest. In the ninth year the king died of tuberculosis. Satyawati was plunged into grief. She went into solitude for some time. Then she called Bhishma and requested him to take charge of the kingdom, and also ensure that the Yayati dynasty did not cease. Bhishma reminded his mother that to ensure his father's happiness, he had relinquished all claim to the throne, and had also taken a vow not to marry.

Sootji says: Satyawati was troubled with the problem that if there was no progeny, the line would cease to exist. Bhishma suggested to her that if the two queens produced heirs, the matter could be solved. Satyawati's thoughts turned to her son, the most pure Ved Vyas. As soon as she thought of him he arrived in her presence. Bhishma received his brother with respect and reverence. Satyawati also honoured him. The whole personality of Ved Vyas was glowing like flames from a fire. Satyawati addressed her son – Most auspicious son. You must ensure the continuity of our line. You must produce heirs for the family of Vichitravirya. To Vyasji his mother's words were his command. He agreed. Queen Ambika bore a child who was blind. He was called Dhritarashra. Ambalika gave birth of a child with pale complexion. He was called Pandu, and by unanimous decision he became heir to the throne.

Once again Satyawati called Ved Vyas and made the same request to him. This time the queens did not go to Vyasji, but sent a maid. The son born to the maid was a pious being, the embodiment of dharma. He was called Vidur. In this way, in obedience to his mother, Ved Vyas ensured the continuity of the Yayati clan.

I have narrated to you all the episodes connected with the Yayati Clan.

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CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2 – Episodes 1 - 2

1-2 The Birth of Satyawati.

The rishis said: Sootji, there seems to be a mystery in your narration, and we are confused. First of all, while Satyawati was an unwed maiden in her father's house, how could she give birth to Vyasji. Secondly, why did King Shantanu marry her after that. You are a dharmic person. Please unravel these mysteries and tell us in detail.

Sootji says: I prostrate in worship to that supreme Adi Shakti Devi, from whom human beings have received the gift of existence. Human beings have four pursuits – virtue, wealth, sense pleasures and salvation. Salutations to Adi Shakti. I will now relate to you the incidents related to this most sacred of Purans. The most amazing fact is, that if by chance, the sounds of the most eloquent beeja mantra of Devi Jagaddambika come out of a being's mouth, he becomes eligible to receive Her grace and blessings. Therefore, it should become the first priority of every being to utter the mantra and meditate on Bhagawati Jagaddambika. She is always eager to bestow blessings and benevolence on anyone who worships Her.

There was a virtuous and pious king named Uparichar. He ruled over the kingdom of Chedidesh. He was very prosperous. He respected the Brahmins. He had worshipped Indra, and that God of the Devas had given him a precious crystal chariot. King Uparichar would mount his divine chariot and roam the skies unhindered and according to his will. The chariot never touched the ground. Daily he performed religious and charitable deeds. His fame spread

far and wide. He had a beautiful queen called Girika. They had five sons, who were strong and noble-spirited.

One day the king wished to spend time with his queen, but he was directed by his elders to join a hunting expedition. He went, but his attention was all the time on his wife. His seed spilled. He wrapped it in a banyan leaf, and requested a passing falcon to deliver the package safely to his queen. The bird picked up the leaf package and flew into the sky. Another falcon saw him and thought he was carrying his prey. He challenged him in the sky; and in the tussle that ensued, the package fell into the waters of the river Yamuna.

Around that time an apsara called Adrika was bathing and splashing playfully in the river Yamuna.

She dived into the water and caught the feet of a Brahmin who had just bathed and was performing evening prayers (sandhya). He became angry and cursed the playful apsara - may you turn into a fish for disturbing and defiling my meditation. She immediately turned into a fish and roamed the waters of the Yamuna. The packet that the falcon dropped, fell near her and she immediately consumed it. After ten months this same fish was caught in a fisherman's net. When he cut open the stomach of the fish he found to his utter surprise two human babies. One was a boy child and the other, a beautiful baby girl. The fisherman took the infants and gave them to the king. The king kept the boy, and gave the girl to the fisherman. The boy grew up to be valiant and virtuous and became King Matsya. The girl was brought up by the fisherman. As her body always emitted the odour of fish, she got the name Matsyagandha.

The rishis asked: After the apsara became a fish and got caught by the fisherman who cut open her stomach, what happened to Adrika. Did she die and did the fisherfolk eat her up? How did she get released from the curse, and did she go back to heaven. Please do tell us.

Sootji says: Hearing the curse of the muni, the apsara became very forlorn and distressed. She wept and fell at the feet of the Brahmin. He was a compassionate person. He said – Don't despair! In anger I put a curse on you, but I will tell you how you will be released from it. You will become a fish and you will bear two human babies. After this you will get your release. And that is exactly what happened. As soon as the babies were taken out of the fish, the soul discarded the body of the fish. It assumed the form of apsara Adrika and went back to heaven. This is how the girl Matsyagandha was born. She lived in the fisherman's house, and grew into a beautiful maiden. The fisherman was also head boatman, and she helped him in his work.

Sootji says: One day, the most pious, the most magnificent, and the most glorious ascetic Muni Parasharji was on a pilgrimage of holy places. He arrived on the banks of the sacred river Yamuna. He said to the boatman – take me across the river to the opposite bank. The boatman was eating his food, so he instructed his beautiful daughter Matsyagandha thus – "Daughter, you are very capable and clever. This honourable and holy saint wishes to go to the opposite bank. You can take him in the boat across the river. As per her father's wishes the maiden Matsyagandha began to row the holy saint across the river. While they were still on the river, Parasharji felt stirrings within himself, and he took Matsyagandha's hand in his. She looked at him and said: You belong to a foremost clan; you are a brahmin by caste; you are learned in the vedas; you have performed penance and meditation; … am I equal or suitable to you? You are from the line of Guru Vasisht. You are wellborn and

of noble descent. You are virtuous and righteous. You have full knowledge of the dharmas. Then why do you desire me? O! Twice born one! To be born a human being is a unique gift, but I think that to be born into a brahmin clan is the rarest gift of all. O great and glorious brahmin! You possess the highest blessings of birth, natural disposition, virtues, knowledge of the vedas, and all the gracious qualities. My body constantly emits the odour of fish. How could any feelings and desires be awakened by me? In her mind she thought – truly this brahmin is a very simple minded person. But I am all alone, and there is no one to help me to divert his attention. So she said to him – Be patient. In a little while we will reach the other bank. As soon as they reached, she said – O great saint. I am unfortunate that I smell bad. When two beings are of the same quality, then only there is happiness in union. No sooner had she said this, saint Parasharji used his yogis powers and caused her body to emit the perfume of musk. Perfume of her body spread for miles around. Then Matsyagandha became Satyawati of auspicious perfume. She said to Parasharji – It is daylight. People are watching. My father is across the river on the other bank. It is not right to behave like animals. We must wait for nightfall. This is a code of conduct written in the holy books. Please control your desires. Otherwise there will be widespread and insufferable censure, slander and defamation. Hearing this condition, Parasharji used his powers to cause a heavy fog. The bank was enveloped in darkness.

Satyawati said: O holy one! I am a chaste and pure maiden. You will leave as per your wishes. But what will happen to me. If I beget a child, what will I tell my father. Be kind and tell me what I must do in such a situation.

Parasharji said - Even after fulfilling my purpose, your chastity and purity will be intact. Ask for any boon that is dear to your heart.

Satyawati said: O gracious and righteous one. You have bestowed an honour on me. Please grant that my father and mother never learn of this incident. May I have a son as magnificent and glorious as you. And may this perfume remain with me forever.

Parasharji said: O beautiful maiden. Your son will be a partial incarnation of Lord Vishnu. His fame will spread over the three worlds. It is due to some hidden, pre-ordained cause, that I behaved in this manner. Before this, I have never been attracted to any woman. Many apsaras tried to tempt me, but I never felt any urges. I was always in detached state of mind. So you can definitely assume that there is some Divine purpose in this. Your son will understand the Vedas and compile them into four parts. He will be honoured and venerated in all the three worlds.

Sootji says: Satyawati was very gratified and pleased to hear this. Parasharji bathed in the holy Yamuna and left. Satyawati returned to her parents. She was with child. When the time drew near, she went to an island in the river Yamuna and gave birth to a son. He was radiant like the sun. As soon as he was born he turned into a man. He said to his mother: O sweet mother! I am full of strength and energy. I had completely engaged myself in meditation before I appeared in your womb. You may leave me here and return home. I also will find a place and settle down in prayer and meditation. Whenever you put your attention on me I will come into your presence. At any time, if you are faced with difficulties, just think of me and I will be there to help you. May you always be blessed. It is getting late, and I must leave. Go and spend your time in peace and joy.

Then Vyasji left, and Satyawati returned to her parents. Thus, by the grace of the most holy Parasharji, Ved Vyas was born. He was a partial incarnation of

Lord Vishnu. Being aware that Kalyug had begun, Ved Vyas divided the Vedas into different parts. For this reason he got the title “Ved” Vyas. He wrote all the Purans and the great epic Mahabharata. He taught the Vedas in all its details, to great sages, including his son Sukhdevji.

Sootji says: O Munis! This is the story of the births of Satyawati and Ved Vyas. It is not proper to review or criticise the conduct and actions of men of God. Nor is it right to imitate those actions. We should only try to absorb their qualities and awaken their virtues within ourselves. There is always a hidden reason behind apparent strange behaviour of incarnations and holy saints. In this case the cause was the entry of Ved Vyas into this world. I have narrated this strange and amazing episode to you. It will not have an adverse effect on the listener. He will be forever peaceful.

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CHAPTER 2 - Episodes 3-4

3-4 The story of Mahabhish and Ganga; the birth of Shantanu. Marriage of Shantanu with Ganga, and the birth of the Vasus; and the birth of Bhishma.

The rishis said: O blessed one! You have told us about Satyawati and Ved Vyas. But one part of our request is still pending. How did Satyawati, who was Vyasji's mother, become the queen of Raja Shantanu. She was just a boatman's daughter. Also she was not very beautiful and the odour of fish always surrounded her. How then did Shantanu, descendant of Puru, and a powerful and illustrious king, accept her as his queen. Who was Raja Shantanu's first queen who gave birth to Bhishma; and why is Bhishma called a part of the Vasus. O wise Sootji! You have already told us that Bhishma was very glorious and magnificent, and was endowed with great strength. He gave his father's throne to Satyawati's son Chitrangadh, and on Chitrangadh's death he coronated the younger prince Vichitravirya. Bhishma was the eldest son of Raja Shantanu and should have had first claim to the throne. How did the youngest son become king? He was not insensitive to this fact that his eldest brother is the rightful king. Also, after Vichitravirya's death, why did the grieving Satyawati insist on the widowed queens bearing sons? Why did she not have Bhishma crowned king? Why did the valiant Bhishma never get married? O learned Sootji! You are the learned pupil of Vyasji. It should not be difficult for you to answer all our questions. We have renounced everything to assemble in this sacred grove and listen to your words of wisdom.

Sootji says: There was a king named Mahabhish, belonging to the Ikshvak dynasty. He was a very truthful, dharmic and universal being. He had

performed one thousand ashvamedhas (horse sacrifices) and one hundred Vajpeya yagnyas (the last of the five srouta sacrifices enjoined in the vedas), and impressed the king of the gods, Indra. As a boon, he was ensured free passage to heaven. One day king Mahabhish went to the abode of Shri Brahma. All the gods were in attendance on Shri Brahma. The holy river Ganga was also present. A strong gust of wind disturbed Ganga's raiments. All the gods present avoided looking at her, and bowed their heads. But king Mahabhish fixed his gaze on her, and she also slanted glances at him. They felt attracted to each other. Seeing this, Shri Brahma became angry. He put a curse – King! You are banished from Heaven! Go and take birth as a mortal. After you perform enough virtuous actions you will again merit access to heaven. For her misconduct, Ganga was also given the same curse.

King Mahabhish and Ganga were very dejected, and left Brahmaji's abode. The king began to review all the royal households in the mortal world, and finally decided to take birth in the house of Raja Pratip of the line of Puru. At this same time, the eight Vasus, accompanied by their wives had come to Guru Vasisht's ashram. There they had full freedom to go anywhere at will, and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. The chief of the Vasus was Dhyou. His wife saw the sacred cow Nandini and asked her husband – To who does this cow belong? He replied – O fair one! This cow belongs to Vasishtji. If any man or woman is fortunate enough to drink her milk, he or she will live for ten thousand years, and remain ever young.

His wife said: I have a friend who lives in the mortal world. She is the daughter of Rajrishi Ushinar (a sage who was previously from a royal family, or a Kshatriya). She is very beautiful. Please let us take this wonderful cow which gives an unending supply of milk, together with her calf, to our ashram. We will keep her there till my friend gets the opportunity to drink this most

auspicious and life-giving milk. Then my friend will be unique among mortals. She will never grow old and will not have to bear ill health.

Even though Vasu Dhyou did not have any bad intentions, he still acceded to his wife's request, and committed the grievous sin of dishonouring his host Shri Vasisht. He stole the cow and all the other vasus became accomplices in this despicable act.

After the cow was taken away, Guru Vasisht returned to his ashram after collecting fruits and flowers. His attention turned towards the cow, and he noticed that both the cow and the calf were missing. He began to search in the caves and in the forest. When he did not find them anywhere, he went into meditation, and came to know of the grave and dishonest act committed by the Vasus. He uttered aloud – For this sin of stealing, all the vasus will have to take birth in the mortal world. And there shall be no doubt in this! Such was the curse pronounced on the vasus by Guru Vasisht.

Hearing this the vasus were very distressed. They immediately went to Vasishtji, fell at his feet and tried to appease him. Seeing their pitiable condition, the sage who was most compassionate, mitigated the curse – All of you will be released from the curse after a year. But the vasu who took the sacred cow Nandini, will have to remain in the mortal world for many years.

After being sentenced, the vasus saw Ganga, the most supreme of all rivers, walking on the road. She was also very sad and dejected. The vasus respectfully greeted her and said: Devi! How will we, whose nourishment is only nectar and ambrosia, survive in the mortal world. It is very upsetting and disturbing to think that we have to be born as mortals. O Devi. We humbly request you to take human form and give birth to us. O Auspicious One! There

is a holy and pious king Shantanu. Please marry him. As and when you give birth to each one of us, you may throw us into the water.

Devi Ganga agreed. The vasus left. Ganga also left. But she kept thinking about this promise that she had given. At about the same time Mahabhish took birth in the royal household of King Pratip. He was given the name Shantanu. The prince grew up to be brave and valiant, righteous and pious. When his father king Pratip performed singing of praises and prayers to Surya, he received as a reward a beautiful maiden. This maiden came out of the water and sat on the lap of king Pratip. The king asked her – O beautiful maiden! Without taking my permission you have seated yourself on my holy right lap. What is your desire?

The girl replied: O King! You belong to the noble lineage of Kuru. I wish you to marry me. That is why I have sat upon your lap.

The King said – That is not possible. The place that you have occupied on my right lap, is reserved for my daughters or daughters-in-law. Therefore O auspicious one! You may become my daughter-in-law. By your auspicious presence, I am sure I will beget a glorious and righteous son. You may marry him.

The maiden accepted and left. The king kept thinking of the maiden in the forest as he returned home. Later, when his son Shantanu grew to manhood, the king related this incident to him. Then he directed his son to go to the forest, and if he met this beautiful maiden, and she expressed a wish to marry him, he should not question her. He should marry her, and this would bring him lasting joy and peace.

Sootji says: After giving his son all the necessary education, knowledge and instructions, he handed over the reins of government to his son, and retired to the forest, to pass the rest of his days in prayer and meditation; and singing the praises of Bhagawati Jagaddambika. Finally he discarded his body and became entitled to a place in heaven. Then the full responsibility of looking after the kingdom fell to Shantanu. He became monarch of the whole earth. During his kingship, all proceedings of the kingdom were conducted in an honest, righteous and far manner. He looked after all the needs of his subjects.

Sootji says: One day king Shantanu went hunting in the forest, along the banks of the river Ganga. He got a glimpse of a beautiful maiden wearing radiant garments and sparkling jewels. He was enchanted by this sight. He thought – this must be the maiden my father spoke about. This is more than a maiden. She seems like the goddess Lakshmi in tangible form. He looked at her without blinking and could not remove his gaze from her. He was perplexed. The maiden also felt that this was king Mahabhish in his new incarnation. She was filled with affection, and she came and stood before him. The king was also filled with affection and spoke in a soft manner - O beautiful and elegant maiden! What are you! A devi, a human, a gandharvi, a yakshasni, a nagakanya, or an apsara? You have a very pleasing appearance. O radiant one! Whoever you are, I request you to agree to become my queen.

Sootji says: Raja Shantanu did not know that this was Ganga herself, but she knew that he was king Mahabhish, who was now king Shantanu. Remembering their previous attraction towards each other, she smiled and said – O great king! You are the son of King Pratip. I am aware of who you are. Which maiden would be so foolish as to refuse the offer of marriage to you. But there is a condition. Once you promise to keep that, I will marry you.

Whatever actions I do, whether right or wrong, you must not use your position to prevent me. You must also not scold me or use harsh words. You are the most supreme monarch, but if you ever break this condition, I will have to leave you and go far away.

The vasus had already got a promise from Ganga. Also, being aware of King Mahabhish's love for her, she decided on this strategy for her present human form. King Shantanu accepted the condition and gave a solemn promise. Gangaji married him. She became the queen of the world's most powerful and virtuous king. They lived happily in the palace and the surrounding gardens.

Then Gangaji gave birth to a boy child, who was actually a vasu. She immediately threw the child into the waters of the river Ganga. She repeated this each time a baby was born. After she had thrown seven boy babies, the king became anxious. He began to wonder how to preserve the dynasty and posterity. Could it be that his wife was something evil in disguise, as she had already drowned seven children. He was afraid to interfere, as then she would leave him and go away. She was now due to have her eighth child. He somehow felt that this child was special and he did not know if he would have any more sons in the future. After much deliberation he decided, in the interest of the dynasty, to exercise his authority as king.

The eighth child was the Vasu chief, Dhyou, who had stolen the cow Nandini from Guru Vasisht. When the child was born, Shantanu stood before her and pleaded – O most delicate one! You have a holy radiance in your face. I am your servant. My prayer to you is, please give the boon of life to this child. I will care for it. You have already killed seven sons of mine. Save this eighth child. For this reason my head is bowed before you. You may ask for anything else, and however impossible it may seem, I will give it to you. But please

understand that I have to preserve my lineage. Those who are learned in the Vedas have said that a man who has no child is unfortunate and does not find a place in heaven. So please let this eighth son of mine live.

Inspite of the king's pleas, Ganga took the child and went towards the river. The king exclaimed – O evil and sinful woman! Have you no fear of hell. If you wish you may stay or you may leave. But let this child remain here. You are trying to destroy our clan. I can have nothing to do with you.

Ganga said: O king. It was also my wish to keep this child alive. But you have broken your promise. Therefore I cannot stay here. But know this – I am Ganga! I had come on this earth to help the devas complete an undertaking. A long time ago, Guru Vasisht had cursed the Vasus and banished them to the mortal world. They were very distressed, and at that time they met me. They requested me to give them a human birth. To accomplish this I married you. Please believe me. It was those same seven vasus who took birth through me. Now they are released from the curse. This last Vasu will remain as your son for some time. I give him to you. Enjoy him as your son. He will be known as Gangeya, and will have unequalled strength and valour. I will take him to the same place where I met you. I will nourish him till he is grown up, and then I will return him to you. Because, O king! Without a mother a child cannot grow or be happy. Saying this, Ganga took the child and vanished.

King Shantanu remained in his palace. He was in deep sorrow. The disappearance of his wife and son gave him endless grief. He ruled the kingdom, but the clouds of despair always hovered over him. Many years passed. One day King Shantanu went into the forest to hunt. Gradually he reached the banks of the river Ganga. He noticed there was very little water in the river. He was amazed. He spotted a young boy playing in the sand. He

had an enormous bow and he was shooting arrows from it. King Shantanu was astonished. He could not realise who this boy was. He could only stand and admire the great strength and accuracy with which the boy was wielding the bow. He spoke to the boy – O most pure child. Whose son are you?

The boy was engrossed in the bow and arrow, and made no reply. In a few moments he vanished. The king was stunned. It suddenly dawned on him that this might be his own son. But now, what to do and where to go. He calmed himself down, and sat on the banks and began to sing the praises of Devi Ganga. Then Ganga appeared to him, in the same radiant form that he had first seen her. He said – O Gange! Who is this child that I just saw. Please show him to me.

Ganga said: - Rajendra! He is your son. I have looked after him upto now. He is the eighth vasu. I am handing him to you. He will be a great ascetic, and will be known by the name Gangeya. He will be unshakeable in his meditation and religious pursuits. I have instilled in him the knowledge of the vedas, and the art and science of archery. He has complete knowledge of everything. He is well versed in interpretation, significance, and discretion. He is most holy and pure. Whatever Guru Vasisht knows this boy has already imbibed. You are a great and famous king. Take him and experience the joy of being his father. She brought the boy and gave him to Shantanu. Then she vanished.

The king's face shone with delight, and he was experiencing great happiness. He made the boy sit on his lap and kissed his head. Then he put him in his chariot and drove towards his palace. On reaching Hastinapur he celebrated his son's arrival with pomp and grandeur. He consulted priests and astrologers for an auspicious date. All the subjects and ministers were invited, and in their presence he anointed Ganganandan Bhishma as crown prince and heir to the

throne. King Shantanu was completely satisfied. Thoughts of Ganga left his mind forever.

Sootji said – O Munis! I have told you all the details of the birth of Bhishma, and Ganga's sojourn on this earth. This entire episode took place because of the curse on the Vasus. Whoever listens to this story, gets all his sins washed away. There is no doubt in this. This narration is very holy, auspicious and filled with the divine principles of the Vedas. I have told it to you exactly as it was told to me by the great Ved Vyasji.

CHAPTER 2 - Episodes 5-6

5 - 6 Bhishma's vow. Marriage of Satyawati to Raja Shantanu. Birth of the Kauravas and Pandavas.

The rishis said: O sage with the long hair! You have answered all our queries regarding the curse on the Vasus, and them taking human birth; and also regarding the birth of Bhishma. O learned one who is conversant with religious duties and customs, kindly tell us how king Shantanu got married to Satyawati, mother of Ved Vyas; and who was chaste; and from whose body auspicious fragrance emitted. Shantanu was the most supreme monarch, and she was brought up in a boatman's house. What was the reason that made him offer her marriage. Please enlighten us on this.

Sootji said: - King Shantanu was very fond of hunting. He roamed the forest for four years. He was always accompanied by prince Bhishma. He enjoyed his son's company, in the same way that Shri Shiva enjoyed the company of Kartikeya. One day, while hunting, he reached the banks of the holy river Yamuna. He suddenly got a fragrance from an unknown source. He tried to locate it. He thought – even the flowers of parijaat, kasturi, champa, malathi and kewra do not emit such a perfume. From where has the breeze wafted this fragrance.

He began to wander here and there, and tried to follow the breeze. When he reached the bank of the river, he saw a beautiful maiden sitting there. She had decorated herself and was wearing smoky, misty garments. He was surprised to see such beauty of face and limb. The whole place was filled with this most excellent fragrance. He was fascinated and wondered if she was a goddess, a human, a gandharv, or a nagakanya. He spoke thus to the maiden - Who are

you. Who is your father. From where have you come. Is there anyone else with you. Please tell me. Are you married or not. What are your dreams and desires. Please give me information about yourself.

The lotus eyed maiden smiled and said: O King! Know this. I am the daughter of the head boatman. My father asked me to sit here. I row a boat on these waters. This is our occupation. My father has just gone home. This is the truth.

The king said: I am a king of the Kuru clan O doe-eyed maiden! There is no woman in my house. You please grace the position of being my wife. I will be favourable towards you. My wife has left, and since then I have not married.

The king spoke in humble and sweet tones. Satyawati who was chaste and pure and full of sattwic qualities, got courage and felt calm. She said: - I accept all the praises you have spoken about me. Whatever you desire should happen, but I am not free to make my own decisions. My father can give permission. You may please meet him and place your proposal before him. I am not a woman of loose morals. I am the daughter of a chief. I only obey his commands. If he agrees, we can get married, but we must observe the rules of our clan.

Sootji says: - Accordingly, King Shantanu went to the boatman's house with his offer of marriage. When the boatman saw him coming, he was surprised. He offered salutations to the king and said – I am greatly honoured that you have stepped into my house. Please command me. What can I do for you.

The king said: O noble one! If it is possible, please give your daughter in marriage to me. I speak the truth.

The boatman said: - O king! If you are asking for this jewel of a daughter, I will certainly give her to you. A daughter is for giving away in marriage, and I cannot keep her forever. But O king! There is one condition. The son born to this maiden will be the king after you. Under no condition must the throne go to any other son of yours.

Sootji says:- Hearing the boatman's condition, the king was thrown into mental turmoil. He had already nominated Bhishma as heir to the throne. So, without replying he left the boatman's house and returned to the palace. He was very sad and dejected. He could neither eat nor sleep. Seeing his father in a despondent state, prince Bhishma asked him – Father. You are the king of kings. Which enemy is challenging you? I will, this moment, vanquish him. Please tell me the truth. Why are you so upset. If a son cannot discover his father's cause for worry; and cannot remove that sorrow, then it is better he was not born. In the clan of Raghu, the most pleasing personality Shri Rama came as the son of King Dashrath. As ordered by his father, he renounced the throne and went into the forest. Together with Shree Sita and Laxman, he lived on Chitrakoot mountain. Raja Harishchandra's son Rohit, fulfilled his father's wishes and got sold. He worked as a slave in a brahmin's house. O King! This body of mine, belongs to you. Tell me what I must do to help. Am I inauspicious. In my lifetime I cannot see you sad or distressed. What is troubling you? I will take my bow and arrows and demolish it, even if I die in the process. It will justify my being born. If I am successful, then you can derive honour and pleasure from it. The son who is either, not willing or able to remove the cause of his father's suffering, is worthy of contempt, and his birth is a waste.

Sootji says – Hearing all this, king Shantanu was ashamed. He immediately said – I am deeply worried that you are the only son I have. Of course you are

strong, brave, valiant, illustrious and never retreat from danger. But still. For a king of my position, having only one son is not enough. If there is a war and you fall on the battlefield, I will be left without an heir, and without support. Son this is the cause for my concern. This is why I am sad.

Sootjee says – Bhishma called the trusted ministers and said – my father seems to be bashful. He is not telling me everything clearly. You please try to uncover the truth and let me know. I will immediately work towards removing all his troubles.

The ministers approached King Shantanu and got the complete truth from him. They informed Bhishma. He immediately took some ministers and went to the head boatman's house.

Bhishma said: - O Honourable Chief! Please give your auspicious daughter in marriage to my father. She will be my mother, and I will always honour and protect her.

The boatman said: - O Fortunate One! You are the Prince. You marry this maiden. I say this because is apparent that as long as you live, her son cannot be king.

Bhishma said: - She is my mother. I do not wish to rule the kingdom. I speak the truth. Only her son will inherit the throne.

The boatman said: I accept that you are speaking the truth. But any son of yours can use his right and strength to wrest the throne from my grandson. This is possible.

Bhishma said: - I hereby take a solemn oath that I will never marry. This will forever be the truth. My vow is irreversible.

Sootji says: - Hearing this powerful oath the boatman gave his most beautiful daughter Satyawati to King Shantanu. This is how king Shantanu married Satyawati. He never ever came to know that she had earlier given birth to Ved Vyas.

Sootji says : - In this way King Shantanu married Satyawati. They had two sons, who died. Then by the favour of Vyasji, one widow of king Vichitravirya bore a son, but he was blind. He was called Dhritarashtra. This happened because the widow closed her eyes on beholding the lustrous Ved Vyas. The second widow smeared her body with white sandal paste, and her son Pandu was afflicted with white skin. The third son of Ved Vyas was born to a maid-servant. He was Vidur. Vidurji was dharmic, honest, truthful, and a most holy soul.

Because of his blindness Dhritarashtra was not made the king. Instead, the minsters placed Pandu on the throne. With help from Bhishma, the most illustrious Pandu ruled the kingdom. The learned and intelligent Vidur was minister.

Dhritarashtra had two wives. One was Gandhari, daughter of Subalraj. The other was Vyshya (daughter of a Vyshya) She managed the household affairs.

Pandu, who was learned in the Vedas, had two wives. One was Kunti, daughter of Shoorsen. The other was Madri, born in the house of Madraj.

Gandhari had one hundred sons, and Vyshya had one son.

While Kunti was still a maiden in her father's house, she had a son by Surya, called Karn. After this she was married to Pandu

The rishis asked Sootji – O Great Muni! What you have just told us is very curious and strange – that Kunti gave birth to her firstborn son, and then only got married to Pandu! Please tell us how she begot Surya's son and still remained a maiden fit to marry king Pandu.

Sootji says:- O Twiceborn souls! When Kunti was only four years old Raja Kuntibhoj asked for her from Shoorsen, and brought her up as his own daughter. She was very beautiful. Ceremonies of offering oblations to the sacred fire were about to begin in the palace. Kunti had been instructed by Raja Kuntibhoj to welcome the guests. It was the beginning of the rainy season, and an auspicious hour of dawn. Sage Durvasa arrived. Kunti received him with all the prescribed formalities and respect. He was very pleased with the care and attention he received. He gave her a rare and precious mantra, by which any of the gods could be invoked, and he would appear in person to fulfil a desire. After sage Durvasha left, Kunti went to her apartments and began to wonder how the mantra worked, and which Devata she should invite. At that time Surya was enthroned in the skies. Kunti's gaze fell on him. She uttered the mantra and invited the brilliant and dazzling Sun God. No sooner had she done this, than the Sun God assumed the form of a handsome youth and stood before her. She began to tremble with fear. Then the doe-eyed maiden bowed with folded hands and said:- Lord! I thank you for appearing thus before me. Now you may return to your heavenly seat.

The Sun God said – Kunti! You have used the great mantra, and invited me. But you do not even welcome me or offer me a seat! I am under obligation to the mantra.

Kunti said – O Deva! You have full knowledge of the dharmas. Nothing is hidden from you. I am still a maiden. I place my head at your holy feet.

The god Surya said:- Kunti! If you do not receive me, I will lay a curse upon the person who gave you this mantra, and you also will not escape the wrath of that curse. O Beautiful One! Know this truth. Your maiden status will remain undisturbed. Ordinary mortals will be unaware of this event. You will give birth to a son as radiant and brilliant as I am.

After fulfilling the purpose of the mantra, the Sun God returned to his abode. Kunti was with child, and remained confined to her rooms. Her foster parents never discovered her state. Only a midwife knew, and helped her when her son was born. He was extremely beautiful and was endowed with two beautiful earrings and a coat of divine protection (Kavach) He appeared like a second Surya, or like Lord Kartikeya. The nurse picked up the baby and assured Kunti of all assistance. Then Kunti laid the baby in a small basket and spoke to him in farewell – My Son! I am extremely sorry. There is no other alternative for me. You are dearer to me than life, and still I have to give you up. You are possessed of all auspicious qualities. I am most unfortunate that I have to part with you. Devi Katyayini is the Mother of the Universe. May that Devi Bhagawati nourish you with nectar and take care of you. Your tiny face is as pleasant and lovable as a lotus. When will I ever set eyes upon you again. You are the son of Surya. Maybe in my previous births I did not worship adequately the mother of the three worlds Bhagawati Katyayini. I did not worship Her Lotus Feet. For that reason I did not merit a happy fate. After I surrender you, I will go into the forest and perform penance.

Sootji says:- After saying this, Kunti put the child into a basket and handed him over to the nurse. Then she waited in her father's house. The nurse had taken

the child out of the gates, when she met a sooth (one who narrates ancient legends) named Adhirath. His wife Radha was also with him. They asked the nurse to give the child to them. They took him to their house and cared for him. This child grew into the strong, powerful and lustrous Karn.

The maiden Kunti became the wife of Pandu. Pandu had one more wife Madri, daughter of King Madraj. Once Pandu was out hunting, and by a terrible mistake he caused the death of a Muni (saint). At that time the muni had assumed the form of a deer, and was engrossed in play with his mate. King Pandu killed the female deer. The muni was enraged, and pronounced a curse on Pandu – If the king ever had relationship with a woman, he would instantly die. King Pandu was very repentant, but he also knew that a sage's curse always took effect. He became very sad; abdicated his throne, and left for the forest. Both his wives were very chaste and virtuous, and accompanied him into the forest, to look after him. He built a small abode on the banks of the holy river Ganga, where many other sages and saints had their ashrams. He had the good fortune to listen to Scriptures and other holy discourses. During one such discourse he heard a heavenly voice – A childless person has no access. He forfeits the right to enter heaven. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to acquire a son in any possible way. There are eleven categories of "son" -- begotten by yourself; grandson; in the absence of the husband a son begotten by another member of the clan; son born posthumously; even though husband may be living, child begotten by another; child who is already conceived before marriage and born in the husband's home; child born in secret to a maiden in her father's house; child who has been bought by paying money; foundling; child received as a gift; and child acquired from poor and distressed parents by giving money. But after the first category, the others are progressively considered vile, base and wretched.

When Pandu heard this, he repeated it to Kunti. Kunti told him about the boon she had received from sage Durvasha and assured him that the mantra worked, and that she would be able to invite any god to help them. Pandu gave her permission to use the mantra. She invoked the god Dharma and was blessed to be the mother of Yudhishtir. The god Vayu blessed her with the son Bhim, and Lord Indra blessed her with son Arjuna. Seeing this Madri also wanted a son. So Pandu requested Kunti to teach Madri the mantra. When Madri invoked the mantra, the twin gods Ashwini Kumars appeared, and blessed her with two sons, Nakul and Sahadev. In this way the Pandava clan got its five princes, born in the forest.

One day the ashram was very quiet and calm. Pandu looked at Madri and was overcome with desire. Death hovered above. Madri tried her best to dissuade him, but to no avail. Pandu fell down lifeless. Madri began to weep inconsolably. Kunti and all the princes and munis made arrangements for the funeral. Madri performed Sati by entering the funeral pyre. She had given her two sons Nakul and Sahadev to Kunti keeping Dharma as witness. Kunti and the five princes were taken to Hastinapur. Bhishma, Vidur and Dhritarashtra came to console Kunti, as also many others had come. Since everyone was aware of the curse over Pandu, they wanted to know whose sons the princes were. Kunti replied – These princes of the Kuru clan are the sons of the Gods. To convince the people, Kunti prayed and invited the Gods. They all appeared in the heavens and confirmed that the princes were verily their sons. Bhishma honoured the princes and together with the others she began to live in Hastinapur. In this way Kunti and her sons stayed in Hastinapur and were looked after by Bhishma.

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CHAPTER 2 Episodes 7 – 8

7 - 8 Short history of the Kauravas and Pandavas; the death of most of them in battle; Vyasji shows a glimpse of the dead relatives to Kunti, Gandhari and Uttara; the disappearance of Shri Krishna and Balram; Pandavas' journey to Himalayas; Parikshit's installation on the throne, and the curse of a brahman's son.

Sootji says – The most respectable Draupadi became the wife of the five Pandavas. She was a chaste and virtuous wife. She gave birth to five sons who were most beautiful. Arjun married Subhadra, sister of Shri Krishna, after carrying her away from a gathering with the consent of Shri Krishna. She gave birth to the great warrior Abhimanyu, who died on the battlefield. Draupadi's five sons were also killed in battle. Abhimanyu had been married to the beautiful daughter of Raja Virat. The clan was almost wiped out. Abhimanyu's wife Uttara had given birth to a son. He had been wounded by Ashwatthama's fiery arrow, and his body was burning. Shri Krishna saved the boy. He grew up to be Raja Parikshit.

After his sons died in battle, Dhritarashtra was plunged into grief. He stayed with the Pandavas, but he was always distressed by Bhim's taunts. His queen Gandhari was herself overwhelmed with grief at the loss of her sons. Yudhishtra occupied himself in the service of the king and the queen. He requested Vidur to console and counsel them. Arjun also tried to comfort them. But Bhim could not control his anger, and used every opportunity to say insulting words within the hearing of Dhritarashtra. But Arjun continued to pacify the old king. After living in that kingdom for eighteen years, Dhritarashtra decided to leave for the forest. He asked Yudhishtra for money

to perform the obsequies for his deceased sons. Yudhishtra had a meeting with all his brothers and decided to give some wealth to Dhritarashtra so that he could complete the formalities and customs. Bhim was furious and did not want anything to be done for the benefit of the souls of the wicked Duryodhan and others who had insulted Draupadi. After completing all the rites and offering money to the brahmins; Dhritarashtra and Gandhari left for the forest. Kunti and Vidur accompanied them. Sanjay also decided to go. All the people went with them up to the banks of the river Ganga; and returned very sad and in tears.

Dhritarashtra and others who had accompanied them, built an ashram on the banks of the Ganga. They gained control of their senses and attention, and settled down in meditation and prayer. After six years, Yudhishtra had a dream, in which he saw his mother Kunti as very weak and frail. He suggested to his brothers that they should go to pay their respects to their mother and all the elders. They agreed, and even Subhadra, Draupadi and princess Uttara, together with civilians of the kingdom left for the forest. There was a very happy reunion. But Yudhishtra noticed that Vidhur was absent. On asking Dhritarashtra he was told – Vidhur is a totally detached soul. He has no desires, nor does he collect things. He must be sitting in a secluded spot, meditating on the eternal Shri Hari. The next morning Yudhishtra found Vidhur sitting in the shade of the deep forest. His body had become lean. King Yudhishtra said, O most wise and noble one! I bow my head at your holy feet. But Vidhur continued to sit immobile like a mound of earth. After a moment, a bright light emerged from his mouth and entered the mouth of Yudhishtra. They were both partial incarnations of Dharma. In this way only the mortal body of Vidhur remained. Yudhishtra was very sad and made preparations for the last rites. Just then a voice was heard from heaven – King! This Vidhur

was a highly realised soul. It is not proper to cremate his body. Just leave it and go.

Hearing this, all the Pandavas bathed in the holy Ganga. They went to Dhritarashtra and told him all the details. At that time all the Pandava clan and their subjects had gathered in the ashram. Satyawatinandan Vyasji, Narada and many other sages and saints had come to meet Yudhishtra. Kunti offered pranaams to Vyasji and said: Dwaipayan (born on an island)! I set eyes on my son Karn only the day he was born. O great ascetic! I am very sad. Please use your powers and let me have one glimpse of him. You are in every way capable and adequate. Please grant me this wish.

Gandhari also requested him – O holy one! I have never seen my sons and all of them perished in battle. Please let me also see them, just once.

Subhadra said: Abhimanyu was a fearless warrior. I loved him more than my life. I crave for one more glimpse of him. Please make him appear before me.

Sootji says – Upon hearing all these pleadings, Vyasji performed pranayam (process of restraining the breath), and meditated on the Primordial Mother Bhagawati Jagaddambika. It was eventide. Vyasji called Yudhishtra and other Pandavas, and they all took baths in the sacred waters of Bhagirathi. Then they began to sing the praises of the Devi –

We worship that Devi, in Whom Shri Hari takes refuge; Who is formless; Who is endowed with attributes; Who is Brahmaswaroopini (of the form of creation; Who is the creatrix of all the gods; that Goddess Who resides in Manidweep --- Bhuvaneshwari. When there is nothing in existence, You alone exist. We bow our heads at Your Lotus Feet. When there was no water, air, ether; their sounds, their essences, their characteristics, ego, senses, mind,

intelligence, or sun and moon; then also You and You alone existed. O Bhagawati Jagaddambike! I prostrate before You. O Almighty and Omniscient One! Having ordained the entire creation, You become immersed in meditation until the final dissolution. There is no being, however wise or prudent, who can fully comprehend Your independent, unrestrained and all pervading Self. O Divine Mother! These people pray to me to show them their deceased relatives. Where do I have the power or adequacy to do this. Therefore please grant them the vision of their relatives who are now in heaven.

Sootji says:- When Vyasji made this prayer, the ever compassionate Mother, recalled all the princes to appear before the assembled Pandavas and Gandhari. Everyone was filled with joy and emotional tears. Vyasji offered thanks to Devi Mahamaya for this illusory vision. The dead went back; and the living returned to Hastinapur.

Sootji says:- After this, on the third day, all of a sudden, the Ashram caught fire, and Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Kunti and others died. At that time Sanjay had gone on a pilgrimage. Yudhishtra heard the news from Narad and was very sad.

Thirty six years after the destruction of the Kauravas, The Yadava clan also perished. They began to fight within themselves and this proved the curse of a brahmin. Balram renounced his body. Shri Krishna was hit by the arrow of a hunter and disappeared. Shri Krishna was verily Shri Vishnu. To materialise a curse he played out this drama. When Vasudevji heard this unhappy news, he cleansed his mortal body and went into deep meditation on Devi Bhuvaneshwari, and surrendered his spirit. Arjun was deeply grieved. He undertook a pilgrimage and performed all the necessary ceremonies for the

departed, and purification by fire. The sea engulfed the kingdom of Shri Krishna. Arjun left the place and on the way robbers and cowherds looted him of all his possessions. By then, even his prowess he had surrendered. He went to Indraprasth and installed Aniruddh Kumar Vajranabh as king. He took permission for this from Ved Vyas who told him – When God reincarnates again on this earth, you will also accompany him in the same virtuous and illustrious form. Hearing these comforting words Arjun left for Hastinapur, where he sadly related all the news to Yudhishtra. King Yudhishtra decided to retire to the Himalayas. He crowned Parikshit as king and together with Draupadi and all his brothers left for the mountains. All six of them surrendered their mortal bodies and attained heaven.

Parikshit was a dharmic king. He ruled for sixty years, and prudently and attentively nurtured his subjects. One day he went hunting in the deep dense forest. After chasing deer for the whole day he was tired, hot and thirsty. Nearby he spotted an ascetic. The sage was in deep meditation. The king, parched with thirst, requested the muni for water. The muni did not stir, nor did he reply. The already agitated king flew into a rage. He picked up a dead snake which was lying in front, and under the influence of Kali (temptation) he put the snake aroung the muni's neck. Still his meditation was undisturbed. The king left the forest and returned to the palace.

This muni had a son who was a great ascetic named Gavijat. He had attained limitless powers. He was in the same forest with his friends. They told him – Munikumar! Someone has just hung a dead snake around your father's neck! The Muni became furious. He took water in his cupped hands and as he poured it on to the earth he pronounced a curse - Whoever has put a dead snake around my father's neck, that cruel person will be bitten by the venomous Thakshak serpent on the seventh night. The king had already

reached his palace. One of the muni's shishyas (students) went before the king and conveyed the muni Gavijat's curse. Now the countdown had begun. The king called his trusted ministers and said: - A brahmin has cursed me, and I am at fault. It is inevitable that the curse will have effect. But think of some way out. Those who are versed in the vedas say that even when death is imminent, all methods to avoid it should be tried. They recommend the use of gems, mantras and medicines. Many years ago a muni's wife was struck by a snake and she died. The muni used an ancient mantra and revived his wife by forfeiting half his life. With this example, you also can try various means to neutralise the curse. But if, after all efforts, death cannot be avoided, then knowledgeable elders have said it is fated to be so.

The ministers asked – Maharaj. Who was that muni who gave up half his life to save his wife. How did his wife die. Please tell us about this incident. King Parikshit said – Paloma was the beautiful wife of Bhrigu. She gave birth to Muni Chyavan. Chyavan married Sukhanya, daughter of King Sharyati. She was the mother of the famous king Sriman Pramathi. He married Pratapi, and they had a son called Ruru, who became a great tapasvi, dharmatma and an honest and truth-loving sage.

One day the beautiful apsara from Indra's court – Menaka – was bathing in a river. A muni called Vishvavasu became overcome with admiration for her. She withdrew to a place near the ashram of Sthoolkesh muni, and gave birth to a girl child. Seeing this beautiful child abandoned on the banks of the river, Sthoolkesh muni took her to his ashram and made her his daughter. He named her Pramdvara. She grew into a beautiful and accomplished maiden, and had all pleasing manners and disposition. Muni Ruru saw this beautiful maiden in sage Sthoolkesh's ashram.

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CHAPTER 2 Episodes 9 - 10

9 - 10 Ruru surrenders half his life for Pramdvara. Sage Kashyap accepts money from Takshak. Death of Parikshit.

Parikshit says: Muni Ruru got enchanted with Pramdvara. He went home and lay down. When his father saw that he was distracted and distraught, he asked him the reason. He said to his father – There is a maiden named Pramdvara in Sage Sthoolkesh's ashram. I wish to marry her.

Muni Pramathi went immediately to sage Sthoolkesh and persuaded him to agree to the marriage of Pramdvara with Ruru. They selected an auspicious date and started making all arrangements for the marriage. One day, during that time, Pramdvara was wandering in the courtyard of the ashram. A snake was basking in the sun, and she accidently stepped on it. No sooner her foot touched it, the snake struck her and put its venom into her. She fell down, lifeless. Everyone was plunged into grief and despair. There was great confusion, because all the munis began to arrive from surrounding areas. The father was inconsolable, and Ruru sank into deep sorrow. Pramdvara was such a chaste and holy maiden, that even in death her face was radiant, and she looked as if she was asleep. All the sages went into consultation. Ruru ran outside to give vent to his sorrow. He felt that it was his misfortune that brought the fateful snake into the ashram to bite the maiden. The joy of marrying Pramdvara had been snatched from him and there was no reason for him to continue living. He sat on the bank of the river and contemplated suicide. But then he thought – If I take my own life the only fruit of my action will be, that I will always be accused of committing suicide. My father will be sad, and my mother will not be able to bear my death. Only bad luck will enjoy

my fate. My death will not benefit Pramdvara in any way. There will be more harm done than good. If I stay alive, no one will be adversely affected.

He got up, took a bath, purified himself and took water in both his hands. Then he declared: - If I have worshipped God; if I have done just deeds; if I have honoured my Guru; if I have uttered prescribed mantras and prayers; if I have meditated; if I have performed havans and sacrifices; if I have recited the holy Gayatri Mantra and done Surya Namaskar – if these have been acceptable to God; then let my Pramdvara come back to life. If not, I will give up my life. Saying this with complete worship and surrender, he poured the water on to the earth.

He had just completed this, when a messenger from God appeared before him. The messenger said:- O Brahmin! You must not grieve thus for a deceased wife. How can a dead maiden come to life. She was the daughter of the Apsara Menaka, and her lifespan is spent. She died before getting married. You find another partner and marry her. What feelings can you have for a dead girl now.

Ruru said:- O divine messenger! Whether she is alive or dead, it is now my decision that I will not marry anyone else. I will die. Seeing this devotion, the devdoot was very pleased. He offered him a most pleasing and acceptable proposal. He said:- I will tell you a strategy that the gods used in ancient times. If you give up half of your lifespan, you can get back the life of Pramdvara. Ruru said: - This very moment I am prepared to give up half of my life. I desire that my dear Pramdvara should get life and sit up.

Just then Muni Vishvavasu arrived on his vahana (vehicle). He was the king of the Gandharvas. He had heard of the death of his daughter Pramdvara and he

came down from the heavens. Both Vishwavasu and the divine messenger went to Dharmraj (Yama, God of Death) and said:- O Deva! This maiden who has just died is the daughter of Vishwavasu, and is the bethrothed of muni Ruru. She died of snakebite. Ruru is prepared to give half his life in exchange for hers. We pray you to accept this and give life back to Pramdvara. He also surrenders the fruits of all his pious prayers and actions.

Dharmraj said:- Devdoot! As desired, you may go to Ruru, and in exchange for half his life Pramdvara can be brought to life again.

Raja Parikshit says: The divine messenger went to Ruru and gave him back Pramdvara. After that, on an auspicious date and time, the marriage was performed according to prescribed rites. Thus, by using all the means available, even a dead girl could be brought back to life. It is prescribed in the shastras that all means should be used – gemstones, mantras, medicines – to preserve life. After this Raja Parikshit handed over the running of his kingdom to trusted and capable ministers; and built a seven-storeyed mansion. He took his ministers with him, and went to live in the uppermost floor. For his protection he called learned men versed in the knowledge of mantras and gemstones. Then he called for muni Gaurmukh. He sent him to the muni Gavijaat who had cursed him, to appease the muni by saying again and again – Parikshit is your servant. Please forgive him.

To further ensure his safety Parikshit called priests in addition to his ministers. The guards were all young and strong, and many elephants stood in front of the gate. The arrangements were so secure, that no living thing could enter unnoticed. Even the wind was restricted. The king ate and drank, and even bathed, on the uppermost floor.

A wellknown brahmin Kashyap, heard that the king was under a curse to die of snakebite. He was eager to earn some wealth. He decided to go to the mansion where the king was now living. He was very learned in the use of mantras. But he was greedy for money.

Sootji says:- The curse was already known to Takshak (one of the eight serpents of the netherworld). The day Kashyap began his journey to the king, Takshak disguised himself as a young man and also started towards the king's mansion. On the way he met Kashyap. He asked him – Maharaj! Where you going with such determination and speed?

Kashyap replied: - A serpent is going to bite king Parikshit. I am going there to remove the venom and its fire from his body. I know the mantra for neutralizing venom. If the king still has a life span I can certainly revive him.

Takshak said: Brahmin. I am that very Takshak, and I am going to consume him with the fire of my venom. You better return to your house. There is no cure for my venom.

Kashyap said: - Serpent! The brahmin has cursed the king, so it is inevitable that you will definitely bite him. But my mantra has the power to give him back the balance of his lifespan.

Takshak said:- Brahmin! You are a holy soul. Before you try your cure on the king, show me your powers. I will put my poisonous fangs into that banyan tree.

Kashyap said:- I can revive it to it's former green state.

Sootji says: Takshak bit the tree and the venom reduced it to ashes. Then he asked the brahmin to revive it. The brahmin collected all the ashes. Then he said to Takshak:- O Serpent who spews venom! Now see how I revive the tree.

Saying this he took a handful of water, chanted a mantra, and sprinkled it over the ashes. As soon as the drops of water touched it, the tree was restored to its former green, leafy state. Takshak was astonished to see this. He asked the brahmin – Why are you taking so much trouble. Whatever you are expecting in return, tell me and I will give that to you.

Kashyap said:- I am in need of wealth. If I revive the king he will definitely reward me. Thinking of this I am making my way to the king.

Takshak said:- O twice born one! I will give you whatever amount you were hoping to get from the king. Take it and go back to your house. In this way I also can accomplish my duty.

Sootji says: - Being aware of the importance of truthfulness, the brahmin began to ponder over what Takshak said about doing ones duty. He thought, if I take the money and go home, the world will condemn me as avaricious. If I revive the king, I will get a reward and also name and fame. I will also reap the blessings that one gets on saving the life of another. Honour should always be preserved. Without honour, wealth is held in contempt. Raghu (an ancient king of the Sun dynasty and forefather of Shri Rama) gave away all his wealth to brahmins for the sake of honour. In the same way, for the sake of honour King Harishchandra and Karn, became poor and destitute. Therefore if king Parikshit burns from the venom of the serpent, how can I neglect him. If I save the king all his subjects can live peacefully and happily. Because without a king

the kingdom faces destruction. If the king dies, his death will be a sin on my conscience. I will be scorned as a greedy man.

After giving due consideration to all aspects, Kashyap went into a meditative state. He was astonished to discover that king Parikshit's life span had come to its end. So he took the money from Takshak and went home. After convincing Kashyap to go back to his house, Takshak waited for seven days. Then he took the road to Hastinapur to carry out his task of killing king Parikshit.

In the farthest part of his kingdom, and in the highest point of his mansion, sat the king, surrounded by his ministers and priests. Very strict security arrangements had been made. Takshak became anxious. He thought – if I do not succeed in injecting my venom into the king, the muni will certainly curse me. This frightened him. He went into deep contemplation to find a way to enter the mansion. He thought – this king has been cursed by a brahmin. He was foolish enough to dishonour a brahmin and incur his wrath. In the lineage of King Pandu there has never been a king so vicious as to place a dead snake around the neck of a meditating tapasvi. Knowing that the time for retribution has come; he has made such elaborate arrangements for his safety. He is trying to elude and dodge death. I have to find a way to fulfil the directive of the muni. Death does not wait. This foolish king seems to be unaware of this fact. Fate is very powerful. If he is fated to die, then even one crore precautions cannot prevent it. Inspite of knowing that he has become the prey, he is still making plans to live. That is why he is sitting atop this high building. The duty of a king is to give alms and do charitable works. He not only gets blessings, but he also gets a longer lease of life. In case the life span is not increased, and death is imminent, then if one does cleansing, charity and other pious acts, then when the soul leaves the body it goes directly to

heaven. Otherwise it languishes in hell. This king has already committed the great sin of tormenting an ascetic in meditation. To incur such a horrible curse is the worst thing that could happen. There appears to be no brahmin among his priests who can explain to him that a curse of death from a brahmin is irreversible and inevitable.

After thinking all these things, Takshak disguised all his serpent companions as ascetics, and sent them to the king. They carried fruits and flowers. Takshak turned himself into a tiny worm and got into a fruit. Then he became impatient to go and complete the job. The disguised serpents started their journey. They were stopped at the gates, by the guards who asked the purpose of their visit. They replied – we are ascetics and have come from Tapovan (sacred grove) to pay our respects to king Parikshit, son of Abhimanyu. He is the rising sun of the clan; his form is radiant and most pleasing. We have come to chant mantras from the Atharvaveda, which will ensure his long life. Kindly inform the king that we will perform abhishek (sprinkling of water), offer fruits and leave. We have visited many kings in this land and have never been turned away by the palace guards. We wish to go to the king personally and confer our blessings on him.

Sootji says: Believing them to be brahmins the guards repeated to them the king's orders – We are not allowed to permit anyone to see the king today. We request you to come again tomorrow. The king has been cursed with death and he is afraid to meet anyone today.

The ascetics said – these flowers, fruits, and water are all blessings from us. At least send these to the king.

The guards went to the king and gave him the message of the ascetics. The king asked them to bring the offerings of flowers, fruit and water; and to request the ascetics to come the next day in the morning. He asked them to convey his respects. The guards went down, conveyed the message to the ascetics and respectfully accepted the flowers and fruits. These were presented before the king. The serpents disguised as ascetics, left.

The king asked the ministers to eat the fruits, and he also picked one for himself. When he cut the fruit he saw a little worm in it. It had black eyes and a red body. When the sun began to set the king exclaimed: Now I have no fears. The sun is about to set. I will honour the muni's curse. May this little worm bite me! Saying this he placed the worm on his neck. As the sun went down the worm changed into the serpent Takshak of most fearful form. The king came face to face with his destroyer! The serpent sank his poisonous fangs into the king's neck. The ministers were astounded. They were paralysed with fear at the sight of the huge serpent. Then they began to run here and there; the guards were shouting; and there was chaos everywhere. When the king was faced with the serpent's hood he lost all his courage and strength. He could neither cry out nor could he move. The serpent sank his fangs into the king and the venom pervaded his body. The king died instantly. The serpent completed his task and returned to the heavens. All the subjects began to grieve for their king.

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CHAPTER 2 - Episodes 11-12

11 - 12 Coronation of Janmejay. Sarpayagya (serpent sacrifice) on the request of sage Uthank. Birth of Aastik.

Sootji says: After king Parikshit died, seeing that his son Janmejay was still a child, the ministers performed all the funeral rites. A pyre was built of aguru and other fragrant wood on the banks of the Ganga. The already burnt body of king Parikshit was placed on this and the pyre was lit. Alms were distributed to brahmins in the form of cows, gold, grain and different kinds of cloth.

The prince was very young, but the subjects were very pleased with him. Therefore, selecting an auspicious date and time, he was installed on the throne. He was possessed of all kingly qualities of head and heart. His foster mother had instilled all the good qualities which a king should possess. When he reached the age of eleven, learned sages began his spiritual education. He was very intelligent and quick to learn. Then Guru Kripacharya taught him the skills of archery, just as Arjuna was taught by Guru Dronacharya, and Karn was taught by Parashuramji. He became illustrious and valiant. He even pursued spiritual knowledge and understood its subtle truths. He could give discourses on the scriptures. He never spoke an untruth. He had his senses under control. He ruled his kingdom in the style of Yudhishtra. He married Vipushtma, daughter of the King of Kashi, Suvarnavarmakh. He was happy and ruled justly.

At that time there lived an ascetic named Uthank. He had been tormented by the serpent Takshak. For this past misdeed he wanted to punish him, and with this in mind, he went to Hastinapura. He wanted to use Janmejay to wreak revenge on Takshak. When he reached Hastinapur, he went to king Janmejay

and said:- Rajendra! You do not seem to have the knowledge of what should be done and when. That is why all improper deeds are being sanctioned by you and the prescribed and proper things are being disregarded and neglected. What can I say. You are so busy and involved in your royal duties that you have become insensitive. You do not recognise your enemies and you do now know how to retaliate. You are only engrossed in your routine activities.

Janmejay asked: Who is the enemy that I have not recognised or avenged. Please tell me clearly. As soon as I know I will take the necessary action.

Uthank replied:- King! Takshak is a great villain. He killed your father. Call your ministers and ask them the cause of your father's death.

Sootji says:- Janmejay called for his chief ministers and asked them. They replied: - Because of a brahmin's curse Takshak bit your father and he died.

Janmejay wisely said:- Then it is clear that if a brahmin cursed him the cause of death was the curse. Then tell me O muni! What is the fault of Takshak?

Uthank said: A brahmin versed in the art of removing venom was on his way to the mansion where your father had taken refuge. Takshak would have bitten your father, and the brahmin would have used his skills and brought him back to life. But Takshak gave him wealth and sent him away. That is why your father died. Therefore it is clear that Takshak is responsible for your father's death. O King! In ancient times muni Ruru's wife was bitten by a snake and she died. Ruru was able to bring her back to life. But he vowed that he would kill any snake that he saw in future. He took a weapon in his hand and began to roam the earth looking for snakes. One day he came upon an aged python sitting in the forest. Ruru took his weapon and began beating the

snake. It said: I have not done any harm to you. Then why are you beating me.

Ruru replied:- A snake had bitten my dearly beloved wife and she died. In a fit of anger and grief I had made a vow to kill any snake I saw.

The snake said:- I do not bite. The snakes that bite are of a different species. Only our bodies are the same. So it is not proper for you to kill me.

Uthank said:- The snake was speaking in a human voice. So Ruru asked him:- Who are you and why were you born as a snake.

The Python replied:- A long time ago I was a brahmin. I had a very close friend who was widely known as Kheehar. He was very righteous, pious and learned. One day I mischievously made a snake out of grass and deceived him. He was performing a havan, and when he saw the snake he was terrified. He was trembling with fear. When he discovered the truth he cursed me: - O foolish one! You tried to frighten me with a snake! Now you become a snake!

After a lot of effort I was able to appease his anger. He reduced the tenure of the curse saying – Muni Ruru will release you from that curse. I am that very snake, and you are Ruru. But listen carefully. It is the dharma of a brahmin to be non-violent. There is no doubt about this. A brahmin must always be compassionate.

Uthank said:- That snake was a brahmin in his previous birth. After Ruru killed him he got his release. After that Ruru never killed another snake. He revived his bethrothed and married her. Ruru took the necessary revenge for a heinous deed; but you are indifferent, and have forgotten your enmity towards snakes. You are a famous king. You should vent your anger against

the killer of your father. His soul is wandering here and there. It is advisable for you to kill all snakes and avenge your father's death. A son who does not take action against the killer of his father, is as good as dead. Until you kill all the snakes, your father's soul will not get salvation. It is now your duty to perform the Amba-Yagya. In remembering your father, snakes will be offered in the havan.

Sootji says:- Hearing Uthank's words the king's eyes filled with tears. He said:- I am so foolish. I am ashamed. I was very conceited and I considered myself to be very clever. Because of me, the snake bit my father, and he has still not got his salvation. I will now perform the yagya in retaliation. Really, it is necessary to consign all serpents to the blazing fire. Then I will not feel guilty.

Then King Janmejay called his ministers and said:- Ministers! Make arrangements for all samagri (ingredients) for the Yagya. Call all learned brahmins, and tell them to find an auspicious spot on the banks of the holy river Ganga. Carefully build a Mandap (canopy) with one hundred pillars. It is very important to conform to all the specifications enjoined in the vedas. We are going to perform a comprehensive snake-sacrifice. Takshak will be the main sacrificial animal; muni Uthank will be the chief priest. Please make all arrangements in the prescribed manner, and invite all learned brahmins.

Sootji says:- The king's ministers were very efficient. All arrangements were completed perfectly. The yagya started, and snakes were offered to the fire. Takshak ran away to Indra to seek refuge. He said: O Prabhu! I got frightened and ran away. Please protect me.

Indra assured him of safety, and made him sit near his throne. He then bestowed courage on him and said - Snake! Become fearless.

Uthank became aware of Takshak's flight to Indra and the boon of courage that Indra had given him. He was agitated. Then he called for Takshak along with Indra Deva. Takshak called to mind the powerful and pious saint Aastik, born of the Yayavar clan. He was the son of Muni Jaratkaru. Muni Aastik came to Janmejay and pleaded with him. Muni Aastik was a radiant being and wellknown as a learned sage. King Janmejay received him with the proper formalities and inquired the purpose of his visit. Then sage Aastik said: - O Fortunate One! You discontinue this Yagya.

Janmejay said he was under promise. But the Muni repeated his request. Then of course, out of respect for the great Muni the king ended the yagya. Afterwards sage Vyshampayan, who was a student of Ved Vyas, began to narrate the Mahabharat to king Janmejay. But after listening to ther entire narration, the king was not at peace. Then he asked Ved Vyas:- What must I do to get peace in my attention. I am burning inside. Please tell me what I must do. Only bad luck seems to be in my fate. That is why my father, who was the grandson of Arjuna, met with such a horrible death. O most auspicious Vyasji. For a Kshatriya, it is most desirable to die on a battlefield. But whether on the battlefield or in the house, one must die with dignity. My father was deprived of both. His soul must be wandering. O son of Satyawati! Please advise me what I should do to ensure that my father's soul is permitted to enter heaven.

Sootji says:- Ved Vyas addressed the king in front of all those present.

Vyasji said:- I am going to tell you about that most pure and sacred of Purans, The Srimad Devi Bhagwat. Many historical incidents are recorded here. I first recited it to my son Sukhdev. Now I am narrating it to you. It is most secret and not to be told to all. He who listens to it with devotion is rewarded with

dharma, wealth, and moksh (release from the cycle of rebirths). It is most auspicious and blessed, and filled with the essence of the Vedas.

Janmejay asked:- Please tell me whose son Aastik was, and why he prevented completion of the yagya. By protecting the snakes what did he achieve. You observe the highest renunciation. Be kind and tell me all this in detail, and also please narrate the most holy puran.

Vyasji continued:- There was a Muni called Jaratkaru. He was very compassionate. He did not enter grihastashram (the married state). He was roaming in the forest one day, when he saw his ancestors hanging in a cave. They spoke to him:- Son! You get married so that we can be gratified. It is only your sons who can be the cause of our attaining heaven.

Jaratkaru said:- O Forefathers! If I can get without asking, a maiden with an identical name, and who will be perpetually obedient and submissive, I will marry. Then he went on a journey to all the holy places.

At about that time a mother snake had cursed her children - All of you, fall into the fire. The story is like this.-

Muni Kashyap had two wives, Kadru and Vinta. They spotted Surya riding a chariot with splendid horses. Both of them began to argue about the colour of the horses.

Kadru asked Vinta – Can you tell immediately what colour the horses are. There should be no delay.

Vinta replied:- Those beautiful horses are definitely white. What do you think? Then we can make a wager that if I lose I will become your maid, and if you lose you will become mine.

Sootji says: At that time Kadru had a great number of small black baby snakes. She said to those children of hers – Go and cover the entire bodies of those horses so that they appear black.

Some of the baby snakes disobeyed. So she cursed them – The yagya of king Janmejay will be blazing brightly, and all of you will fall into it and turn to ashes.

The ones that obeyed, went and covered the bodies of the horses, so that they appeared to be black. The two sisters, Kadru and Vinta went to inspect the horses. When Vinta saw that they were black, her heart sank. Just then Vinta's son Garuda came. He was very strong and brave. He used to swallow snakes. He asked his mother :- Why are you so sad. It seems to be that you are weeping. Both your sons, namely me and Surya's charioteer Arun, are alive and well. While we exist, you cannot be sad, otherwise our birth is wasted. Of what use is a son if he cannot remove his mother's sorrows. O Mother! Tell me the cause of your distress, and I will immediately defeat it.

Vinta said:- Son! I have become the maidservant of my co-partner. Such a misfortune has befallen me. She now orders me to carry her on my shoulders. This is the reason I am so unhappy.

Garud said:- Mother! I will take her to her destination. Do not worry. I will remove all your troubles.

Vyasji said:- Vinta went to Kadru and Garud also accompanied her in order to get his mother released from the wager. He took Kadru and her children on his back and flew across the river. He then said to Kadru:- Mother, I salute you. Please tell me how I can free my mother from being your servant.

Kadru said: If you go to heaven and bring the strength-giving nectar and give it to my sons, your mother will be free to go.

Garud, king of the birds, immediately flew to Indralok (heaven). He fought a battle and snatched away the pot containing the nectar. He brought and gave it to Kadru. In this way Vinta got her freedom.

When the snakes (sons of Kadru) went to bathe, Indra came and stole the pot of nectar. When the snakes came back there was a carpet of kusha grass. They began to lick it. The blades of grass were very sharp and their tongues split in two.

The serpents who had been cursed by their mother Kadru went to Shri Brahma for refuge. They told him of the curse and how they afraid of dying in the yagya. Shri Brahmaji said:- Vasuke! (second of the eight prominent nagas) There is a famous sage called Jaratkaru. You have a sister with an identical name. Give her in marriage to the sage. The child that is born to her will protect you. His name will be Aastik.

Hearing Shri Brahma's auspicious words, Vasuki went to the forest and offered his sister in marriage to Jaratkaru. The girl's name was also Jaratkaru. The Muni said:- She has the identical name so I will marry her. But the moment she does anything against my wishes, I will leave her. After saying this, the Muni married her, and Vasuki returned to his house.

Muni Jaratkaru built a dwelling, and lived with his wife. One day, after eating his food, the Muni prepared to sleep. He said to his wife: No matter what happens do not wake me up. Saying this he surrendered himself to the power of Nidradevi (Goddess who resides in all beings in the form of sleep). When the sun began to move towards Asthachalpur (a certain mountain in the West, behind which the sun is supposed to set), and dusk began to settle, the Muni was still asleep. His wife Jaratkaru began to worry that he would miss the evening prayers. She was in an uncertain state of mind. She thought:- If I disobey him and wake him he will discard me. But if I do not, I will be the cause of his missing his evening duties of prayer and worship (sandhya). In the balance, I would choose to prevent him from neglecting his spiritual duties. Death is inevitable. The man who breaks his dharmas, has to suffer hell again and again. She made her decision and woke up the Muni. His sleep was disturbed and he woke up saying – You have caused a disturbance in my sleep! I am leaving. You go to your brother's house.

When he said this, his wife Jaratkaru's body began to tremble with distress. She said:- O radiant and pious lord! If you send me away how can I fulfil the purpose for which my brothers gave me to you. Then the muni calmed down and said:- Yes! That is so.

Jaratkaru left and went to her brother Vasuki's house. When her brother questioned her, she said:- When I pleaded with my husband, he just said "Astithi" (so it will be), and left. Hearing this Vasuki became confident. He knew Muni Jaratkaru was an honest and truthful man, and his words will not go fruitless. He kept his sister in his house. After some time she gave birth to a son, best in the noble line of Kuru. It is this child who became the famous sage Aastik.

O King! This is the muni who came and saved the snakes from your yagya. This is the shining light of the Yaya dynasty. His deeds are most praiseworthy, and you also have honoured him. O strong limbed one! Be at peace. Now, with great devotion, build a beautiful temple for Bhagawati Jagaddambika and reap the benefits of success in all your endeavours. If you worship Her with the utmost bhakti, She fulfils all your desires; your clan will progress in growth and prosperity; and your kingdom will never falter. O King! Observe the austerities of Navratri; listen to the reading of Srimad Devi Bhagawat. I will narrate it to you. This rare and divine puran frees one from worldly shackles, and is filled with the essence of truth and divine power. King! The person in whose pure and loving attention Bhagawati enthrones Herself, that person is blessed and elevated in spirit. They are counted among the most fortunate. O King of Bharat! The persons who do not recognise and worship Mahamaya Bhagawati Jagaddambika, they are unfortunate, unlucky, and suffer great tribulations. When all the gods, from Brahma downwards, are constantly in meditation on Her Lotus Feet, which being is there who can avoid worshipping Her and still be happy and peaceful. Whoever listens continuously to the narration of this Puran, all his dearest and purest desires are fulfilled. This most important and most auspicious Puran was first uttered as a half-shlok for Shri Vishnu. O King! It is only by listening to this Puran with full attention and devotion, that you will attain mental peace. And your forefathers will receive the blessing of a place in heaven.

End of Chapter 2

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CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 Episodes 1 - 3

1-3 King Janmejay requests Shri Vyasji to tell about the principal Gods; the creation of the Universe; and the meaning of Swaroop. Shri Brahma describes to Narada the glory and magnificence of Bhagawati Adya Shakti. Shree Devi provides a celestial vehicle and takes Shri Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh on a tour of the Universe; and their final destination – The Abode of Bhagawati Adi Shakti.

King Janmejay said: O Foremost of Sages! You have given us permission to perform the most holy rites of Navratra (nine nights of worship to the goddess). Kindly deign to tell us – Who is this Devi. How and when did She manifest. What was the purpose of Her manifestation. And, what attributes adorn Her. What is Ambayagya, and what are the rules and procedures to be observed. O Compassionate One! Please explain in detail. Also please tell how the Universe came into being. Because O Brahmin! What it is, how it is, and all that is said about it, is known to you completely.

I have heard that Shri Brahma, Shri Vishnu and Shri Rudra, are all possessed of qualities and attributes, and respectively they are responsible for creation, preservation and destruction. O Son of Parashar! I desire to hear all this in great detail.

Vyasji said; You have great intelligence. What you have asked is a very extensive and difficult subject. Many questions arise out of it. Many years ago

I had asked Naradji these questions, and whatever he replied; I remember it well. I am going to tell you. Listen well.

It happened one day, that Shri Narada, ocean of complete knowledge, was seated on the banks of the holy river Ganga. I had the honour of meeting this most wise and intelligent being. He was the embodiment of peace. It gave me great joy to see him. I went and prostrated at his feet. When he gave me permission, I sat there on the sand. At that time sage Narada was in a secluded place beside the river, and sitting on a mound of sand. After the formalities of greeting, I spoke to Shri Narada. I said - O Muni! You are most wise. Please be kind and tell me who is the creator of this entire cosmos and its myriad universes. From where did it all originate. Also please tell me, is it eternal, or will it be annihilated. Is it the work of a single creator or are many responsible for its manifestation. Without a doer, nothing can happen.

Some people believe Shri Shankar to be the cause and the creator of the world. They say he is imperishable and immortal – he neither takes birth nor does he die. He is engrossed in Atma. He governs all the gods. He is possessed of all the three modes, but he is detached from them. He is ever ready to deliver us from the worldly illusions. Therefore he is the primary cause of the creation, preservation and destruction.

There are others who extoll the glories of Shri Vishnu. He is beyond perception. He is possessed of majestic glory and supremacy. He is omnipotent. By his grace you get faith, devotion in your worship, and mukti (freedom from bondage). He is omnipresent, all pervading, refuge of the world. He is unborn and does not die.

Some others name Brahma as the prime cause of the cosmos. The credit for the creation of all living and non-living things, is given to him. This most superior of gods, having four faces, manifested from the lotus of the nabhi of Shri Vishnu.

Surya is worshipped as the creator by sun worshippers, who sing his praises morning and evening. Those who worship Indra sing his praises at yagyas. He has a thousand eyes, and he is verily the god of all living beings. He has the titles – receiver of yagyas, and lord of trilok (three worlds). He is the enjoyer of the sacrifice, and is entitled to drink som ras (ambrosia). Various others worship as the creator – Varun (god of rain), Agni (fire), Pavan (wind), Yama (god of death), Kuber (god of wealth), and Shri Ganesh. They maintain that the god with the face of an elephant, removes all obstacles and gives success to all actions.

And then, there are the wise and learned who say that Bhavani fulfils all desires. She is Adimaya, the many faceted Devi, whose form and character are beyond the mind. Adi – beyond, Primordial. She is the great power, and She resides within the creation and pervades it. There is no difference between Her and Brahma. She is engaged in creation, preservation and dissolution. She is the Mother of the gods, and all living beings. She is unborn, and does not die. She rules the cosmos. Some of Her names are Vaishnavi (Shakti of Vishnu); Shambhavi (Shakti of Shiva); Brahmi (Shakti of Brahma); Varuni (Shakti of Varun); Varahi (Shakti of Vishnu as a boar); Narasinhi (Shakti of Vishnu as Narasimhan); Parameshwari (Goddess with four arms worshipped by Shiva); and Mahalakshmi (The great lord and ruler of the Universe). She is the source of the Vedas. She is Pure Knowledge (Nirmal Vidya). She is the support of the Universe. She destroys the greatest of sins. She removes the afflictions of the Universe. She is the foundation of all the organs of beings, and is ever present

within all beings. She grants moksha to those who wish to be liberated, and She grants victory and success; and good fortune, according to the desires. When She becomes the creation, She assumes the form of the three Gunas – Sattwa, Rajo and Tamo. These Gunas expand from Her, and pervade the cosmos. She is also beyond the Gunas. She is of the form of attributes and yet She is devoid of attributes. Some of Her aspects are Vaishnavi (Shakti of Vishnu); Shambhavi (Shakti of Shiva); Brahmi (Shakti of Brahma): Vasavi (Shakti of Indra); Varuni (Shakti of Varun); Varahi (Shakti of Vishnu in the form of a Boar); Narasinhi (Shakti of Narasimha), and the most worshipful Mahalakshmi (the whole universe is Her form). She is the support of the universe. When She is pleased She eradicates all diseases and woes. Holy and learned sages say that She who is Niranjana (unstained by any limitations whatsoever), Nirakara (formless); Nirlepa (untouched by various karmas and dualisms); Nirguna (attributeless; beyond the three gunas and the three nadis. She is consciousness, devoid of qualities and attributes of the mind), and the all pervading divine source of the universe; the creator. In the Vedas and upanishads, She is described as the divine source; the brilliant light of divine knowledge. She is the Primordial Being. She has thousand eyes, arms, ears and feet.

There are others who call the creator Purushottam or Viraat. Others (atheists) say that there was never any creator. That the universe has always existed, and will continue to exist. They do not recognise Prakriti or Purush to be the creators.

King Janmejay said: All the gods are standing on Sattwa Guna, but the evil demons trouble them constantly. Then where is the maryada of dharma. My ancestors, the Pandavas, were dharmic people. Still they had to face so many trials and tribulations from time to time. O Muni Vyasji, you are learned and

spiritually strong. Please remove all these misapprehensions and doubts from my mind. This world is an ocean of illusion. Please guide my boat across. I am constantly tossed around, and I do not wish to sink.

Vyasji said: - O Strong-armed One! Among kings you are the foremost. The very same questions that you are asking me, I had asked most respected Naradji. And he said ….

Vyasji! A long time ago I too was beset by these questions. I went to my father, the radiant and effulgent Shri Brahmadeva. I asked him – O Revered Father! Please tell me, from where has this universe come into being. You have created various things. Is Shri Vishnu the Supreme Creator? Or is Shri Shiva the one who created the Cosmos. O Great God! You are the soul of the world. Please tell me clearly which gods have to be worshipped and who is the most supreme. O Sinless Brahmaji! Please have compassion on me and fulfil my heart's desire to know all these things.

O Son of Satyawati, Vyasji! When I pleaded thus, my father, the God Brahma, began to speak.

Shri Brahmadev said: - Son! What can I say! This is a very intricate question. O Fortunate One! You can get the complete answer from Shri Vishnu. In this whole world there is no being who has been able to comprehend this mystery. Only the person who has renounced; who is detached; who is desireless; and who is without envy, jealousy, anger, and conceit, becomes worthy to receive this knowledge.

IN THE BEGINNING there was only water all around. There was no life form, movable or immovable. I came into being in a lotus. The sun, moon, trees, mountains – nothing existed. I sat on the stalk of the lotus and began to

wonder – In this endless expanse of water, how did I come into existence. Who is my protector; and in this desolate place who is the supreme being who creates and destroys. There is no earth visible anywhere. Then what is supporting this vast expanse of water. From where did this lotus originate? Whether born or derived, there has to be some causal. If it is derived, then there has to be a connection, and that connection is mire or clay for the roots. But there is no soil anywhere. Contemplating thus, I descended into the water. For one thousand years I searched, but could not find the beginning or end of that water. Just then I heard a celestial voice – Meditate! Meditate!

I returned to the lotus and went into meditation for one thousand years. At the end of that, the same voice was heard – You Must Create!

I was awestruck. What must I create. What is my responsibility.

Suddenly two demons, Madhu and Kaitabh appeared and stood before me in terrifying form. They challenged me to a fight upon the waters. I became terrified. I slid down the lotus stalk into the water. There, a most amazing and wonderful sight met my eyes. I beheld a most magnificent being, dark like a rain-filled cloud. He was clad in a Pitamber dhoti (yellow coloured). He had four arms. He reclined in a couch on the belly of Seshnag. He was wearing a garland of Vaijayanti. He carried in his hands his weapons – Conch called Panchajanya; Discus called Sudarshan Chakra; Mace called Kaumodaki; and Lotus. I had the unique privilege of a darshan of the Lord, sleeping on the coils of the serpent Seshnag. Under the influence of Yoganidra, He was in deep slumber. All his faculties were stilled.

O Son Narad! Seeing the Lord thus, lying inert, made me very anxious. Then I remembered Bhagawati Yoganidra. I began to sing Her stutis (praises). The

most auspicious and benevolent Bhagawati, withdrew from every pore of Shri Vishnu, and took Her seat in the heavens. Immediately Shri Vishnu got up and sat. He engaged in battle with the demons Madhu and Kaitabh for five thousand years, and finally killed them. One glance from the Devi sent them into illusion and confusion. Then Shri Vishnu lay them on his lap and beheaded them. After that there were only two of us – The Lord and I. Shri Rudra arrived at the same place and all three of us got a darshan of Bhagawati Adya Shakti. We were completely enamoured. We sang the most elevating stutis and pleased the Devi. Then our ears were most fortunate and blessed to hear Her Divine and most Auspicious Voice (Vani).

Devi, Bhagawati Adya Shakti said - Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar. Now you can seriously start your execution of duties. Creation, Protection and Dissolution --- This is what you have to perform. Now that the demons have been vanquished, you must establish your Abodes (Lokas). By your powers you must create four kinds of subjects.

Brahmaji says: The voice of that most worshipful Adya Shakti, was sweet, beautiful and joy giving. We heard it clearly and distinctly. We said - O Wonderful Mother! How are we to accomplish creation of subjects, and other activities. There is no earth visible anywhere. There is only endless expanse of water. We would require the five elements, qualities, and subtle forms of matter (energies). But these are also non-existent.

After listening to all the difficulties and hurdles we were putting forward, that Most Auspicious Devi Bhagawati, gave a most beautiful smile. And in a moment, a wonderful airborne vehicle descended from the skies. The Devi beckoned us – Devas! Have no fear. Come into this vehicle. Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra! I am now going to show you some amazing and wonderful sights.

We obeyed with respect and reverence. We entered the gem-studded vehicle and sat down. It was decorated with strings of translucent pearls. There were tiny bells making a tinkling sound. The grand vehicle resembled Amravati (abode of Indra). Seeing us seated, in full control of our senses, the Devi, with Her powers, caused the vehicle to fly into space.

Brahmaji says: Travelling with the speed of thought, it arrived at a strange and unrecognisable place, which was filled with trees, laden with various kinds of fruits. The sight was enhanced by the melodious calls of the cuckoo. The scenery was beautiful, with vast expanses of earth, majestic mountains, dense forests and groves. There were innumerable men and women, animals and birds; holy rivers; lakes; wells; ponds; ditches; springs; and waterfalls. Further on we saw an extremely beautiful city. It was surrounded on all four sides by imposing walls. There were many stately mansions inside. In a suitable place a yagyashala was erected (canopy for performing havans and sacrificial ceremonies). Seeing that beautiful city, we desired to admire it closely. We felt, this is Heaven. But, who created it? The city was magnificent, and the saintly inhabitants were radiant like gods. They were hunting in the forests. We kept staring at them and admiring the Goddess Jagaddambika seated in the vehicle. Suddenly our vehicle got empowered, and began to hover in the air. In a moment it landed in another region. There was a grove, extremely pleasing in appearance. Under a fragrant Parijat tree, the cow Surabhi was sitting. A little distance away the glorious elephant Airawat (Indra's chief elephant) was standing. Hundreds of apsaras, yakshas (demi-god attendants of Kuber); Gandharvas (celestial musicians); and Vidyadhars (demi-gods), were singing and moving about in the Parijat grove.

Also present was god Indra. Enthroned beside him was his shakti Sachi. This glimpse of heaven was so wonderful that we were awestruck. The God of the

waters Varuna; God of wealth Kuber; God of death Yamraj; the Sun god Surya, God of fire Agni; and other Gods were all seated on their thrones. We were filled with wonder and amazement. The king of this place was undoubtedly Indra. He was sitting in silence, and came out on his palanquin. We were witnessing all this from our vehicle.

Again in a moment our vehicle ascended into the air and landed in the holy Brahmalok, abode of Brahma. All the gods stood with their heads bowed in obeisance. Sitting on the throne was another Brahma. Seeing that, Shri Vishnu and Shri Shiva were greatly surprised. There was an assembly of gods. The Vedas had assumed their respective forms and were seated. The oceans, the seas, the rivers, mountains, and all variety of reptiles and snakes had gathered. Shri Vishnu and Shri Shiva looked at me and said - O Brahma! Who is this imperishable Brahma.

I replied - I myself am in confusion as to - who this creator is, - who I am, - and what is my purpose.

In a moment our vehicle took to the skies again, and we landed on the peak of Kailash. There was a gathering of many yakshas. There was a grove of the celestial coral trees; and parrots and cuckoos enhanced its beauty. Gentle strains of sweet music from veenas and tambourines filled the air. As our vehicle landed, there emerged from a mansion, the three-eyed lord Shri Shankar. He was seated on the sacred bull Nandi. He had five faces and ten arms. He had the moon as his crest jewel. He was wearing a tiger skin. His bodyguards on either side were Shri Ganesha and Shri Kartikeya. All the ganas followed, singing the praises of the Lord Shiva. We were exceedingly surprised to see all this.

Within a second we left the top of the mountain and reached Vaikunth, where stood the luxurious palace of the beautiful goddess of wealth Shree Lakshmi. O Son Narada! The wealth, the riches, the fortune that we saw there, are beyond description. Shri Vishnu was as astonished as we were. The lotus-eyed Shri Vishnu was enthroned. His form was as lustrous as the flower of the linseed plant. He was wearing a yellow garb (which destroys samsara). He had four arms. He was seated on king of the condors – Garuda. He was adorned with jewels and ornaments. Once again we were surprised and confused, and looked at each other.

We moved again with the speed of wind. We saw a sea with water as sweet as nectar. The waves were rising high and falling again. It was filled with aquatic animals. In the middle was a pleasing dweep (island) which had beautiful celestial coral trees and sweet smelling Parijat surrounding it. Luxurious rugs covered the floor of the pavillion and exquisite paintings adorned the walls. Strings of irridescent pearls hung like garlands, and entwined the pillars. Outside were trees of Ashoka, Ketki (kewra), Bakul and Champa which perfumed the air. Cuckoos were singing in the trees, and divine fragrances wafted from every corner. The buzzing of bumble bees added to the beauty and peace of the surroundings. In the middle, there was a bed covered with rich silk and satin tapestries. The bedstead was inlaid with gold and studded with precious gems and jewels. We were still seated in the vehicle. From a distance we could see the bed. Many coloured sheets, pillows and cushions were strewn on the bed and it shone like a rainbow. And seated on the bed was a most Divine and Radiant Lady. She was bedecked in red robes and red necklaces. Her body was smeared with red sandal paste. Her eyes were of red colour, natural white, and black of the collyrium. The resplendence of Her being was as dazzling as a thousand suns. She was more beautiful than a crore of Lakshmis. Shree Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari was holding in two hands Her

weapons of goad and noose, and the other two hands had assumed the posture of Abhaydaan (granting boons and assurance of protection). Her throne had a golden canopy. Different ornaments and jewels of diamonds and other precious stones adorned Her. We had never before beheld such majesty and splendour. Devotees were chanting "Hreem" (the mantra of the Devi). Others were singing praises of Her Holy Names. Divine maidens were sitting and meditating on some of Her names – Bhuvaneshwari, Maheshwari, and others.

A six cornered mystical diagram was drawn, and inside was enthroned the Devi Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. Seeing this splendrous sight we were transfixed. We began to speak among ourselves – Who is this Divine Person. What is Her Name. We have absolutely no knowledge of Her. She has thousand eyes, thousand hands, thousand faces. Even from a distance She shines like the sun and the moon. She is not an apsara, nor is she a gandharva or a divine maiden. Son Narad! Making these conjectures we stayed on there. Then Shri Vishnu, from His inner wisdom divined that this radiantly smiling and exquisitely beautiful Goddess was verily Devi Jagaddambika. Then He told us that the Devi Bhagawati was the primordial cause of the existence of all of us. She is also known as Nirmal Vidya and Mahamaya. She is the entire creation. She is indestructible. She can only be worshipped by the wise and the brave. She cannot be worshipped by the cowardly and the stupid. She can be attained by the repeated practice and discipline of yoga. She is the seed energy of the desire of Parabrahma. She is ever young. Untouched by time. The entire universe and the Vedas are in Her, as She is the mother of the universe. She is called Sadashiva, the sacred spouse of Sadashiva. Her right eye, being the embodiment of the sun creates day. Her left eye creates the night. Her third eye, like the slightly open golden lotus, creates twilight. She is the Matrix of the Universe, worshipped by all the gods. She devours the entire creation at

the time of Pralaya, the ultimate dissolution. Universe is Her form, and also the individual self "Vishva" in the wakeful state is Her form. Shri Vishnu said: - Brahma and Shankar! She is the ultimate power. - The energy manifested in every particle – as well as the Primordial Vibration is She. Her crores of aspects are all enthroned here – You can behold them one by one. These omnipresent forms are adorned with divine ornaments and anointed with heavenly perfumes. Behold! Brahma and Shiva! All the goddesses are in attendance on Adya Shakti. Only the very virtuous, generous, compassionate, and those who are detached from worldly desires; merit darshan of this most supreme and benevolent Goddess, Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. Those who are self centred and caught in the web of worldly pleasures, never merit darshan of this Mahadevi. She is the total life force of the universe. She is the eternal companion of Sadashiva. The entire act of creation is Her play for the pleasure of Shri Sadashiva. He is just the witness, and She is the creatrix of the cosmos. She is the primal power, being the first cause. She is the unitary basis of the plurality of the universe.

Shri Vishnu continued:- O Brahma and Shiva! This is the Devi whose darshan I had on the desolate waters. I was a baby, lying in a cradle of banyan leaf and She was gently rocking me. I was lying with my big toe in my mouth and sucking it, and doing all kinds of childish play. My limbs were chubby and soft. I was in the form of a baby, and this Goddess was singing and rocking me. That was verily this same Mistress of the Cosmos, Bhagawati Adya Shakti. There is no place for doubt. Seeing Her I remember the past event clearly. The entire universe is in Her, as She is the Mother of the Universe. Whatever I know about Her, and whatever experiences I have had I will tell you. Listen.

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CHAPTER - 3 Episodes 4 – 5

4 - 5 Brahmaji beholds a vision in the toenails of the Devi. Praises sung by Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu

Brahmaji says - Then Shri Vishnu suggested that we should keep bowing in obeisance, and approach the Devi. This most worshipful Mahamaya will certainly grant us boons. We will go fearlessly, and start paying homage to Her Lotus Feet. If the doorkeepers restrain us, we will stand there and very respectfully sing Her praises.

Brahmaji says - When Shri Vishnu said this, Shiva and I were very pleased. We were overjoyed at the thought of going near, and immediately said "Yes! Certainly we must go". So three of us – Vishnu, Shiva and myself, got down from the vehicle and went and stood near the entrance. The Great Goddess looked at us and smiled. Then She laughed! In that instant, three of us were transformed into women. Each of us was decorated with jewels and ornaments, and dressed like young maidens. We were exceedingly amazed. We approached Her throne. As we neared Her Lotus Feet, She looked at us with pure love. We prostrated in pranaam, and sat before Her. We were, all three of us, beautiful maidens. We were dressed in rich clothes and ornaments. We saw a footstool. It was encrusted with emeralds, rubies and diamonds. They were radiating light like the rays of one crore suns. We stopped there. Thousands of maidens were in attendance. Some were draped in red, some in blue, and some in yellow silk clothes. They were all auspicious persons. They wore beautiful ornaments. Some were singing praises; some were performing divine dance; and others were playing music on the veena

and other instruments. Narad! I am now going to tell you of a most wondrous and amazing sight that I saw. Listen carefully, and with full attention!

The Holy Feet of Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari were soft and white and delicate like lotuses. The nails of Her Toes were like polished mirrors. In those nails I could see the entire movable and immovable Brahmands (universes) – Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Vayu, Agni, Yamraj, Surya, Chandrama, Varuna, Kubera, Indra, the mountains, the seas, the rivers, the Gandharvas, Apsaras, Vishwavasus, Chitraketu, Shwet, Chitrangadh, Narada, Tumburu, Haha, Huhu, Ashvinikumars (divine doctors), the Vasus, the assembly of ancestors, Seshnag and other serpents, Kinnars (a class of demigods having horse heads), reptiles, demons, Brahmalok, Vaikunth, and the principal Mount Kailash. Truly I saw all this! I also saw my birthplace – the lotus. I, the four-faced Brahma was seated on this lotus. I could see Shri Vishnu reclining on the coils of Seshnag. The demons Madhu and Kaitabh were also visible.

The most auspicious Brahma said - In this way I got this most awesome vision in the Nails of the Holy Lotus Feet of Devi Bhagawati. What wonderful blessing is this!! All three of us were filled with awe and gratitude. We knew that this indeed was the Mother of the entire creation. We kept glancing at this most adorable Mother with love and worship. One hundred years passed. All the maidens were very loving towards us and we were also happy to be friends with them. Shri Vishnu, in the form of a maiden, began to sing hymns in praise and worship of the Devi Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari.

Shri Vishnu sang - Obeisance to You O Prakriti Devi! Mother of the entire creation. Salutations to Bhagawati, Who is of the form of Brahma. The world made of Prakriti and Purusha has emanated from You. You who are auspicious; You who fulfil all desires; You who are of the form of Vriddhis and

Siddhis (astral beings), salutations to You again and again. You Who are the three components of the ultimate: Sat- absolute truth; Chit - consciousness ; and Anand – bliss. Obeisance to You again and again. You Who are joy and beyond the joy; You Who are knowledge and beyond the knowledge; You Who are the Brahman that everyone should know, and also the illusion; You Who are the world made of five elements, and also beyond that world; You Who are this entire visible world, Obeisance to you again and again. You are the Vedas and beyond the Vedas. You are the Pure Knowledge as You are the Source. This entire creation lies within You. Salutations to You again and again. The Universe is Your sport, and the entire creation is your Play. You are the Supreme Creator of illusion. You create all five elements from Your Own Form. Your place is in the intellect that is enlightened with the light of the atma, and that enlightened intellect receives the wealth of knowledge. Salutations to the Goddess, the bestower of auspiciousness. O Devi, Your Feet are rubbed by the gems of the crowns worn by the gods and demons. We worship You again and again. O Mother! The Divine Knowledge has come into my awareness that You are the Receptacle of the entire universe. You create and destroy at Your pleasure. The created world is proof of Your existence. All moving and non-moving things function with Your Shakti. If they become separated from Your Shakti, they cease to be. Knowledgeable men have said that without Your Shakti even God cannot perform the act of creation, protection and annihilation. You are constantly engaged in comforting, counselling and nourishing Your creation. The universe was born of You, and at the time of dissolution it attains back to You. O Devi! Who can fully comprehend the nature of Your grandeur and magnificence. Mother, You saved us from the clutches of Madhu and Kaitabh. You have shown us the splendour of Manidweep and crores of amazing sights. Bhavani! This is all out of Your compassion. O Great and Glorious Mother! When Brahma, Shiva and I are not able to fully comprehend your Supreme Nature, how can a mortal even try.

Thank You Mother, again and again, for giving us a glimpse of your creation in the Nails of Your Holy Lotus Feet. O Devi! You showed us another world in which another Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu were enthroned, and were filled with Your Shakti. Mother, how can we ever understand Your myriad creations.

Mother! We prostrate at Your Holy Lotus Feet, and pray that You forever keep this Sacred Form of Yours in our hearts. May Your praises always be on our lips, and may our eyes always preserve the sight of Your Holy Lotus Feet. May You always look upon me as Your servant, and may I always worship You as my Golden Goddess. May the relationship of mother and child always be established between us. You have full knowledge of this universe, because You are the source of all knowledge. What can I ask of You O Benevolent Mother. Do with me what You will. May Your Holy Will prevail. Brahma creates, Vishnu preserves and Shiva destroys. But ONLY when it pleases You to energise us with Your Shakti, can we become capable of executing these actions. O Giriraj-nandini (Daughter of the King of the Himalayas). You are the Universal Mother. You are the Creator and the Support of the Universe. O Beneficient Mother! When You fill Surya with Your energy he is able to give light and heat to the cosmos. You are the embodiment of Purity. From You the whole Universe gets energised and activated. O Mother! Brahma, Shiva and I exist only because it is Your desire. Sometimes we are invisible, and sometimes we manifest. Only You are eternal, ancient, and permanent. It is clear that You are the intelligence in the intellectual, and the strength in the mighty. Some of Your names are Beauty, Effulgence, and Honour. You are Faultless Brilliance. You confer happiness and moksha (bliss of liberation). You are untouched by karmas. It is Your nature to be compassionate and benevolent. You have all the Vedas and mantras within Your Self. You are the most sacred Gayatri. You are the Force that creates, the Energy that pervades and the Spirit that protects. You are the Omkara. You created the Vedas for

the sake of the gods. All life forms are mortal and transient, like the waves of the ocean. They are all a manifestation of the Creator. You are Consciousness devoid of the qualities of the mind. In Your generosity, You have given Energy and Vibrations to every particle. O Devi! You are the embodiment of Knowledge – Nirmal Vidya. Your form is pleasing and joygiving. You fulfil all desires. I place my head at Your Lotus Feet, and worship You again and again.

Brahma says - Praising the Devi in this way, Shri Vishnu became silent. Then the most auspicious Shri Shankar approached the Lotus Feet and began his praises of the Devi. The Lord Shiva said –

Devi! The most fortunate Shri Vishnu has manifested from You. So also Shri Brahma was born of You. That makes them Your sons. Then most certainly, I who perform the work of Tamoguna, am also Your son. Meaning, I have been created by You. You have created the entire universe with expertise and dexterity. O Mother! The Earth, Fire, Water, Air, Ether, intelligence, organs of action, mind and ego – whatever exists has been created by You. After that Brahma, Vishnu and I become engaged in maintaining it, again with the help of Your Shakti. O Mother! If some theories have been formulated, that from the five elements – earth-water-fire-air-ether, the creation evolved by itself; then the elements themselves are Your creation. And therefore, You are the Supreme Primordial Creator. If anything exists, it is because it has come from You. What does not come from You does not exist. Mother! It is You in the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, Who creates, maintains and sustains the cosmos with its galaxies. It is Your manifested Form. From time to time You awaken in a Formidable Form for dissolving the Universe; and then subside into the Dark Divine Deity devoted to healing and affording Eternal Joy – Ati Raudra! Ati Saumya! When You become the creation, You assume the form of Three Gunas (moods) – Sattwa Guna, Rajo Guna and Tamo Guna. It is on these

three gunas that Vishnu, Brahma and I function. So You are the Causal; You are the Source; and You are the Result.

Brahma, Vishnu and I travelled in Your celestial car, and we saw innumerable worlds. Please Bhavani! Tell us Who created them. You are eternally involved in creation, preservation and dissolution. O Benevolent Mother! Except for the Dust of Your Holy Lotus Feet, there is no other object of desire for me in the three lokas (terrestrial, celestial, atmospheric). Is there any being who would leave Your abode, and desire a kingdom? Every moment away from Your Divine Presence is equal to a yuga (an era or an age). O Mother! Those who are engrossed in prayer and meditation, but do not have Your Lotus Feet as the sole and immutable object of adoration; have most certainly been short supplied Divine Knowledge by Shri Brahma. Inspite of accumulating rewards for their austerity and piety, they are deprived of the supreme gift of Moksha. O Unborn Mother! Just by worshipping the Dust of Your Lotus Feet one gets moksha so speedily. Whereas, those who spend lifetimes in tapasya, prayer and sacrifice, without keeping You in their attention; do not get liberated from the ocean of illusion and the cycle of birth and death.

O Devi! Please counsel us and reveal to us that most secret mantra that grants final emancipation and liberation. Just reciting and meditating on that all-encompassing mantra we will attain absolute joy – Niranand. Proximity to Your Lotus Feet is moksha.

Brahmaji says:- The most splendid and magnificent Lord Shankar completed his song of praise, and the Devi was prasanna (pleased). In clear and distinct tones, She enunciated the most secret mantra of nine syllables. Shri Mahadev was very blessed and fortunate to hear it. He bowed his head and continued to sit before the Devi. He commenced recital of this great mantra together

with the beeja mantra. Seeing the Lord Shiva engrossed in chanting, I also prostrated before the Devi and said -

O Mother! You are the Purest Form of the Creatrix of the Universe. It is not that the Vedas (Divine Knowledge revealed by Brahma) do not fully describe all Your qualities. It is just that for such an ordinary purpose Your Glory should not be used. In all yagyas You are invoked as "Swaha" (one who consumes). In all the three worlds there is nothing that is not known to You. It was my false pride and false notion that I am the creator and no one is more powerful than I. I am the sole receiver of oblations and gratitude because I am Brahma. This was all my arrogance and vanity. Today I have received the Dust of Your Lotus Feet and I consider myself blessed and most fortunate. By Your compassion I have received vast and accurate knowledge. You liberate the universe from fear and doubt. I am Your most obedient servant. Please protect me. Those who do not know Your true nature, have named me as God. In ignorance and with heaven as their goal, they perform sacrifices and yagyas. You are unfathomable, all-pervading, totally elusive, and transcending all categories of perception. It is You who installed me as Brahma, and caused me to create the four kinds of life forms – born from the egg, born from the womb, born from heat and damp, and sprouting from the earth. O Adimaya! Please forgive me for the ego-filled notion that this knowledge to create, was known only to me and no one else. Please forgive me. Those who strive for liberation by tirelessly pursuing the eightfold paths of yoga, have only succeeded in blunting their brain. Mother! They do not know that just out of pure interest if one utters Your Holy Name, they can get moksha. O Bhavani! Vishnu and Shiva are primary beings. They have knowledge and experience of Your true nature. You could have created the world all by Yourself. One glance of Yours would have caused the four life forms to come into existence. But as a diversion, or a play, You made me Brahma and entrusted the creation to me. Mother! How

You came into existence has neither been heard or seen. From where did You come. This also is not known to anyone. In this entire creation, no one knows. You are alone, without maya, the basis of plurality. You are Unsupported, Unformulated, Undifferentiated. You are Infinite. When You emerge, You appear in Your great splendour. O Mother! It is only by Your energy that we have succeeded in our various endeavours – I, Brahma in creating; Vishnu in preserving, and Shiva in annihilating. If You withdraw Your Energy from us, we will become ineffective. O Mother! Your creation is wonderful in its variety and diversity. The unwise and foolish get into doubt and controversy. Adidev Vishnu is akarmi (not the doer). All his qualities are manifest. He has no desire, nor designation. He is nothingness and yet he is complete. He is engaged in maintaining and sustaining Your Divine Play. You support the form and the formless. There was no one before You, no second, nor third. The unitary basis of the plurality of the world. O Mother! I cannot comprehend this! Please be kind to me and clarify my confusion. Also, please tell me, are You male or female. Kindly unravel these mysteries and please forgive me for asking.

CHAPTER 3 Episode - 6

6. Shree Jagaddabika describes Her Form. Shaktis given to Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar. Injunctions to the three Gods.

Shri Brahma says - In this way I prayed and entreated the Devi to enlighten me. She began to speak to me in a Sweet, Divine Voice.

Devi said - Brahma and I are One. There is not even an iota of difference between Brahma and Me. Whatever he is, I am. And whatever I am, he is. The deception and delusion of the intellect perceives a difference. Wisdom will give subtle knowledge of our nature. There is no obstacle in the way of the wise and subtle being from crossing the ocean of illusion, and getting liberation. Brahma is one. It is only during creation that he assumes the dual role. Then one gets the false notion of Dwaitya (where you think this world is separate from God). Like light is one but it shines with different intensities from different lamps; or different mirrors reflect one object in different ways. In the same way Brahma and I are one. Still, because different transactions and undertakings are done under different designations and titles in the creation of this illusory world, one gets different images and impressions of the same Doer. O Brahmaji! In the forging, structuring and constructing of the universe, it will always appear as if the doer and the creator are different. When we assume two separate forms to accomplish a function in the creation, then the known quantity which is visible and perceptible, should be accepted as completely and entirely a united, single, Doer. In the vast nothingness before creation, I am neither man, nor woman, nor neuter. Then when the creation is begun, these speculations and assumptions appear. I reside in the

creation, as – intelligence, prosperity, satisfaction, honour, memory, faith, wisdom, compassion, bashful modesty, hunger, thirst, forgiveness, lustre, peace, desire, sleep, laziness, old age, youth, knowledge, ignorance, longing, power, weakness, fat, marrow, skin, sight, truth, untruth, error, substance, Vani or sound; Paravani, sound which is silent; Pashyanti sound which is witness; Madhyama – sound which is still in the throat; and then Vaikhari, the sound when it speaks. I am also the various types of nadis. Outside of Me, there is no substance that exists. Brahmaji! Every existing thing is of My Form. I am everything. This is the Universal Truth. Brahmaji! In this entire creation, I am all pervading. It is I Who is known by the names of the various deities. This is the Absolute Truth. When I am Para Shakti, I am the Ultimate Power. The Energy manifested in every particle as Primordial Vibrations is Mine. I am the Shaktis – Gauri, Brahmi, Raudri, Varahi, Vaishnavi, Shiva, Varuni, Kauberi, Narasinhi and Vasavi. They are all My Forms. To perform different functions, I assume different forms; and it is My Energy in these forms that accomplishes. I am the cool wetness of water, the heat in the fire, the radiance in the sun, and the cool light of the moon. I will tell you an Absolute Truth. If I withdraw My Energy, all movement in all life forms will cease. If I separate Myself, Shiva will forever be incapable of destroying negativities. When I withdraw, even minutely from a human body, the being feels extremely weakened. And that unfortunate being is never referred to as being minus Rudra, or minus Vishnu. When any body lies prone on the earth, unable to help himself; who is in fear; whose heart is palpitating with anxiety; then he is always said to be minus 'Energy' or 'Shakti'! Therefore, consider Me as the prime cause of all activity. You are desirous of creating, but it is only when I provide the Energy that you can carry out the act of creating the entire Cosmos. In the same way, Vishnu, Shankar, Indra, Agni, Chandrama, Surya, Yama, Tvashta, Varun and Pavan – all achieve success in their endeavours, only with the support of My Energy. The earth can only become stable and sustain and support life when I permeate it

with My energy. If I withdraw, she will not be able to support even an atom. Seshnag, Kachhap (tortoise) and Diggaj (the eight celestial elephants who support the world), also work only on My Energy. Drying up of all the waters of the world; extinguishing the flames of all fires; changing the directions of winds; are all contingent to My Desire. At this very moment, anything that I desire will be done. Brahmaji! If My Energy departs, the entire life forms in the universe, will be rendered lifeless. One must not even think that they can exist in any other way. Just as there is a distinction between a whole earthen pot and its broken pieces of clay, so also, between a living body and a body devoid of My Energy, there is a distinction. Today there is no earth --- if we reflect on this we can understand that every atom and molecule has been destroyed. But inspite of being transient, the soul does not dissolve into nothingness. It is eternal, yet it appears perishable. Because it is subservient to the Doer. It has seven significant differences.

Brahmaji! I give you this Mahat Tattwa (the soul). Accept it. Out of this comes the ego or 'I' consciousness. After this you must do the work of creating the universe with all its life forms, in exactly the same way as you did in the past. Now you may go, and establish your abode and execute the responsibilities that I have entrusted to you.

Brahmaji! Accept this Shakti as your wife. She is of unequalled beauty. Her face is radiant and ever smiling. She is known as Maha Saraswati, and is possessed of the qualities of Rajo Guna – action and creation. She is wearing a white saree and is decorated with a snow white garland. She is seated on a white lotus. Rare and supernatural ornaments enhance her splendour. She will be your companion and loving wife. Consider her a part of my majesty and glory, and give her the due honour and respect. Never reproach her or treat her with disrespect and disregard. It is not desirable. Now you take her to

Satyalok. The time has come for you to start. Make use of the soul I have given you and create the four life forms. Along with the soul there is life breath, consciousness and body. Use the same methods as you did for your prior work, and start creating anew. But keep this always in mind – The creation should conform to the causals of time, season, purpose, occupation, nature, principle, disposition, attributes, merits, virtues – whether movable or immovable.

Vishnu is possessed of the right to receive honour, reverence and respect from you, because, being stationed on Sattwa Guna, he is supreme in all respects. Whenever Dharma declines and evil prevails, he will reincarnate himself on the earth; in a place of worship or in heaven. Sometimes he will manifest in the human kingdom, and at others he will manifest in the animal kingdom. It is his innate nature to destroy evil. The extremely powerful Mahadev will also help you in time of need. After creating the gods, you can rest and enjoy recreation. The brahmins, kshatriyas and Vaishyas will perform yagyas and sacrifices with great care and devotion, and worship the gods. At these sacrifices, gifts will be distributed in abundance as dakshina. During every ceremony or sacrifice, My names will be uttered with reverence and devotion. It is certain, without doubt, that this worship of Me will gratify the gods and give them satisfaction and contentment. Shankar is also to be respected and honoured. In every puja he is to be worshipped.

I repeat, that whenever the demons and negative forces surround you and terrorise you, My Shaktis will assume forms of dazzling beauty and defeat and devour the enemy. Varahi (Shakti of Vishnu in the form of a boar); Vaishnavi (Shakti of Vishnu); Gauri (Mother of Ganesha); Narasinhi (Shakti of Vishnu in the form of half-man half-lion); Shiva (Shakti of Shiva); and besides these there are innumerable Shaktis that emanate from Me.

Brahma! Start the creation of the Universe and the Cosmos. I endow upon you the seed, and the attributes of the most powerful mantra of nine syllables. It bestows liberation and complete happiness. With full attention and deep meditation, you must chant it constantly, while you engage yourself in the act of creation. Recognise and accept this as the most supreme of all mantras. Enthrone this mantra in your heart, and you will accomplish the creation with perfection.

Brahma says - Speaking thus to me, the most worshipful and divine Goddess Bhagawati Jagaddamba turned to Vishnu. The Goddess said:

Vishno! Take this most dazzling and resplendent Mahalakshmi. Enthrone her in your heart. She will reign supreme. She is auspicious and generous, and fulfils all desires. I give her to you as your partner and companion. You must never insult, disrespect or treat her with contempt. Respect and honour her. For her sake I give you the name Lakshminarayan.

For the support and maintenance of the gods, I have instituted various forms of worship and sacrifice. All three of you, graciously accept your share of the offerings and oblations. You, Brahma and Shiva, and all these gods, have all come into existence as My manifestations. Therefore all are equally entitled to receive honour and worship; and a share of sacrifices. There is no place for doubt in this. The ignorant and obstinate, who create distinctions, multiplicity, and disunion among the deities; will certainly go to hell. He who is Vishnu, is verily Shiva; and Shiva is Shri Hari himself. He who makes distinction and differentiates between them, gets thrown into hell.

Brahma should also be considered as one with Vishnu and Shiva. It is inadvisable and undesirable to have any thought contrary to this.

Vishno! I will clearly tell you the variances in moods and attributes. You are the great being. In you, Sattwa – Evolution awareness and righteousness of the highest region – should be predominant. Rajo Guna and Tamo Guna will be subordinate and subservient to you. In the diverse creations you will combine with Rajo Guna – the mood of creative action – and enjoy the company of Mahalakshmi. Ramakant! The first seed "Aiim" of speech, learning; "Kleem" the second seed of desire/action; and "Hrim" the third seed of illusion and unreality --- These are My Mantras: The Beeja Mantra of the Devi, which is the combination of Viyat which is "Ha" (ether) and "Ra" (fire), bedecked with crescent moon, fulfils all desires. This beeja mantra "Hrim", is described as a single letter containing the Brahman, and is meditated upon by yogis of Pure Attention, who are verily the knowledge, with great bliss.

The Mantra "Aiim Hrim Kleem Chamundaya Vicche" gives Brahman Realisation.

The third mantra unveils the knowledge of the significance of the mantra. Chant this mantra unceasingly and experience the pure joy, the Niranand. At the time of dissolution, when I absorb the entire creation within Myself, you all will enter into My Being. This Mantra bestows bhakti, devotion and faith; and mukti – freedom, and should be preserved close to your heart. Those who desire auspiciousness, should also chant the life-breath holy monosyllable "OM!" You shall create Vaikunth and reside there. I am the constant, immovable, motionless, steadfast, eternal Adya Shakti! Keeping Me constantly in your attention, you must meditate, and reflect.

Brahmaji says:- The Goddess Bhagawati is attributeless. She is beyond the three gunas, and beyond the Prakriti (material cause of the universe). After

saying all these things to Vishnu, the Great Goddess turned to Shiva and spoke to him in sweet tones.

The Devi said:- Shankar! This most enchanting Mahakali is also known as Gauri. Accept her as your wife. Create your abode Kailash, and go there and live in joy with her. In your functioning, Tamo Guna (Pure Desire, Existence), will be the predominant aspect. Sattwa Guna and Rajo Guna will be subordinate. Together with Rajo Guna you must start the destruction of the asuras. You have already performed the necessary tapasya to get permission to meditate on the Primordial Being. Mahadev! You are a very auspicious being. God is the embodiment of peace and tranquility. In Him Sattwa Guna (Evolution Awareness, and Righteousness) abounds. You must seek His protection.

The three of you are fully endowed with the three attributes – Creation, Protection and Dissolution are your functions. In the entire universe there is no substance that is without these three qualities. Every thing that exists in this universe, possesses these threefold principal qualities. Anything that is Nirgun, and can still be seen, can never be and never shall be in existence. Only the Supreme Spirit is Nirgun, and never fully visible to anyone. Because anything that comes within the range of sight is transitory. Nirgun Energy can only be realised through faith. The Universal Consciousness that is felt in all beings, is the highest self. Shankar! According to the situation and time, I take the forms of manifest and unmanifest. My Form is the highest and most auspicious. I am always the Causal. I never enter the field of action. In the Causal State I am Sagun – endowed with qualities and possessed of attributes. When I dwell with the Most Supreme Primordial Being, I am in Nirgun state. Ego, sound and touch are the qualities of Mahatattwa – the soul. All functions in the universe are carried out, day and night, by virtue of causal and action.

Ego is born out of Me. Also, I am within My Ego. This introduces the aggregate of intellect – mind, sense, wisdom. Energy of Ego is of three kinds – Jnana (knowledge), Kriya (action) and Artha (effect, result – subtle forms of matter known to the senses). Knowledge is produced by the energy of Sattwic aham. Power by which activity or motion is produced is by Rajasic aham. And the power by which sense objects are generated, is Tamasic aham. From the Ego, subtle forms of matter are born. And this is a ceaseless, uninterrupted, perpetual process. These subtle forms of matter, become the causal of the Panchabhutis – five elements – earth, water, fire, air, ether. By different combinations and computations of the three gunas, come the five Tanmatras or primary atoms, which are the building blocks of the entire creation. From these are produced the five Karmendriyas (organs of action) – hands, feet, larynx and generative organs, excretory organs; the five Jyanendriyas (organs of senses or perception) – eyes, ears, tongue, nose, skin; the five Vasus or vital breaths – pran, apan, vyan, saman and udan; and the sixteenth is the mind. Out of these, some are causals, and some are functions. It is the assemblage of these sixteen different inclinations, in different proportions and combinations, which becomes the LIFE. Paramatma is the Primordial Being. He is neither the Causal nor the Action.

Shambho! I have given you a concise account of the mode and order in which creation is accomplished. O glorious and illustrious Gods! Now you must go to your respective abodes, and start your functions. Whenever you face any difficulty or obstacle, remember Me with faith and pure attention, and I will appear before you. O Devas! You must constantly meditate and reflect on the Supreme Being, and on Me. If you do this, all your actions will be blessed with success and auspiciousness.

Brahmaji says:- After this, the Devi gave us permission to leave Her presence. From among Her Shaktis of good and pure moral character, She gave Mahalakshmi to Vishnu; Mahakali to Shankar; and Mahasaraswati to me, as our spouses. As soon as we left She restored us to male forms, and then She and the beautiful island disappeared from our sight. The only thing we could see was our airborne vehicle. Then we reached the ocean, where Shri Hari had destroyed the demons, Madhu and Kaitabh.

CHAPTER 3 Episodes 7 – 8 – 9

7 – 9 On Narada's request, Brahmaji describes the subtle and gross aspects of the Paramatma; the Threefold Creation; and the qualities and attributes of the Gunas.

Brahmaji says:- In this way Vishnu, Shankar and I had a most joy-giving darshan of the most majestic, mighty, and powerful Devi. O most fortunate Narada! All Her hidden aspects began to manifest as most beautiful goddesses.

Vyasji says:- Hearing his father speak thus, Narada was very pleased. He began to ask Brahmaji- Father, please be kind to tell me about that Primordial Being who is the first, who is indestructible, who is without attritubes, who is eternal, absolute and imperishable. Tell me what you saw and what you experienced. O You who were manifested from a lotus! I have already had a darshan of Trigunatmika. Now please tell me about the Nirgun Shakti. Tell me

both the forms together. In order to obtain their darshan I went to Shwetdeep (abode of Vishnu), and performed many austerities. I had a darshan of perfect yogis; mahatmas; and saints who had conquered anger and lust. But that Parabrahma Paramatma eluded my sight. Please describe that Supreme Being to me.

Vyasji says:- This is how Narada pleaded with his father, the lord of creation, Prajapati Brahmaji. Then Brahmaji smiled, and the Vaikhari (power of speaking) flowed from his mouth: equivalent to a Mantra!

Brahmaji said:- Muni! The Nirgun form cannot be seen with the eyes, because Nirgun is formless. How can formless come within the range of sight. The Nirguna Energy or Param Purush, can only be realised through faith. It is felt as Universal Consciousness on the Central Nervous System. One who meditates with complete faith and devotion can have the experience. It can never be felt by those who doubt or have feeble faith.

The Universal Consciousness that pervades all beings is the Highest Self. The most glorious, radiant and lustrous Paramatma dwells in many-sided forms in different living beings. Narada, Paramatma and Adya Shakti are all-pervading. They exist everywhere, and there is no place where They do not exist. They exist together within all beings, and no being can exist without Them. They are both indestructible, equal, almighty, attributeless and pure. Shakti is Paramatma, and Paramatma is Shakti. This is the Truth. Even after making a comprehensive study of the Shastras and the Vedas, and its branches, if the desire for ascent is not awakened within, or one does not achieve freedom from worldly desires, that being can never experience the subtle forms of Purusha and Prakriti. Son, you belong to the eminent class of knowledgeable

persons. How can a gross, material body know the subtlest, formless Brahman. Therefore you must worship God in a Form.

Naradji said:- Father. You are the most respected of gods. I want to know what form the three Gunas take. Please elucidate clearly how Sattwic, Rajas and Tamo Gunas come out of Ahamkar (Ego). O Supreme One! Please enlighten me with this knowledge. Please also define the characteristics and qualities of the different Gunas.

Brahmaji says: O sinless Narada! Ahamkar has three kinds of energies – Jnyana Shakti (rationality and understanding); Kriya Shakti (action and movement); and Arth Shakti (known by the senses).

The Jnyana or knowledge is produced by the power of Sattwic Ahamkar.

The power by which action or movement is produced is by Rajasic Ahamkar.

And that by which objects of the senses are produced is the Tamasic Ahamkar.

Now I have told you about the three energies or Shaktis. I am going to tell you about their merits and workings. Listen carefully and with full attention.

Out of the Dravya Shakti (energy in matter) of Tamas, come sound, touch, form, taste and smell. From these come the five Tanmatras or subtle elements (primary atoms). The quality of the element Akash is sound; Vayu is touch; Agni is form; Water is taste; and Earth is fragrance. These ten (five gross and five subtle) materials, when combined, become endowed with power to work out results in the shape of earth, water, fire, air and ether. When these combine with the Panchikarana process (organs or instruments of senses), the

building of the whole Cosmos takes place, as a natural consequence of the Tamas Ahamkar, endowed with the energy of generating material substances.

Next I will tell you about Rajas Ahamkar. Listen. The five Jnanendriyas (organs of senses) – Ears (hearing); Tongue (taste); Eyes (sight); Skin (touch) and Nose (smell); and the five Karmendriyas (organs of action) – Voice, Hands, Feet, Generative Organs, and Organs of Excretion (rectum); plus the five Vital Breaths – Pran, Apan, Vyan, Saman, and Udan – the collection of these fifteen substances is called the Rajas Shakti. They are all endowed with the energy of action or motion. Their eminent causal is said to be mood or mental disposition.

Jnyanashakti (knowledge, intelligence, perception) is born of Sattwic Ahamkar. The five presiding deities of the five organs of perception – Vayu, Sun, Varuna, Direction, and Aswini Kumar; The five Vasus who preside over the five Karmendriyas (organs of action); the four presiding deities of Antah:Karana (Buddhi-understanding, Manas-mind, Ahamkara-soul, Chitta-conscience) named Moon, Brahma, Rudra, Kshetragya; and the Mind.—These fifteen substances are born out of Sattwic Ahamkar.

The Highest Self – Paramatma, has two forms – Gross and Subtle.

The Subtle is the Formless – the Consciousness incarnate – the Primary Causal of all this phenomenal Cosmos. Sadhakas get a glimpse of this subtle aspect in their meditation, as vibrations in their gross body.

Brahma says:- This my body, is called Sutratma or the Divine Formula. My body and soul, having the nature of a string or thread called Hiranyagarbha, is also the Gross Body of the Paramatma. I have already described the five Tanmatras (subtle forms of matter – light, melody, aesthetics, ganges and

fragrance). When the Panchikarana work (organs of sense) is done, then the five Tanmatras (subtle elements) are converted into the five Gross elements – Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether. From this combination is born the Gross Body.

I will even tell you the secret of this Panchikarana Process. Once the individual elements manifest in their pure divisions and forms, each is endowed with a characteristic, and its own speed and degree of advancement or evolution. Akash – ether, has only one guna – sound and no other. Vayu – air, has sound and touch. Agni – fire, has sound, touch and form. Jal – water, has sound, touch, form and taste. Prithvi – earth, has sound, touch, form, taste and fragrance.

By various combinations and computations of these gross and subtle elements, is produced the body of the Brahmand, the grand Cosmos. These jivas or life forms number eightyfour lakhs.

Brahmaji says:- Son Narada! I have told you in concise form, the process of the creation of this Universe. Now I will tell you about the Gunas. Assemble your mind to single-point attention and listen.

Sattwa Guna is Pure Love and Affection. From Joy comes Love. The causals of this immovable and stable Love are simplicity, sincerity, truth, virtue, purity, faith, reverence, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, satisfaction, bashful modesty, peace, tranquility, contentment. Sattwa Guna is resplendent and lustrous, and of a bright white colour. Sattwa Guna promotes righteousness, faith, observation of dharmas (codes of good conduct). Those whose faith, reverence, trust and confidence is pervaded by Sattwa Guna, are endowed with a continuous flow of grace and inspiring love. Those who are a-Sattwic, suffer deficiency or complete disappearance of affection and pure love.

Munis and philosophers have named three kinds of Shraddha (faith) – Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

Rajasic shraddha is of the colour of blood. It does not produce love and affection. It has grief and sorrow as its causals. This is the truth. Where there is Rajasic shraddha, there will arise hatred, malice, ill-will, resentment, spite, venom, malevolence, rebellion, avarice, obstinacy, disobedience, concern only about obtaining the desired fruits or object of the sacrifice, and sleep. The main aim is to establish authority or superiority. Rajas is the source of arrogance, self-conceit, haughtiness, vanity, mental perversion and deterioration, and restlessness. The wise man can recognise a Rajas temperament from these symptoms.

Tamasic shraddha is black and dark. It flounders in delusion and confusion, and results in melancholy, depression, gloom and inactivity. Unlettered ignorance, wretchedness, misfortune, fear, quarrelsome nature, argumentative tendency, cowardice, anger, rage, cruelty, crookery, deception, slyness, radical, sceptical, enjoys listening to gossip. – These are the characteristics of Tamas. Under its influence a person indulges into tormenting, teasing, inflicting pain and grief, causing anxiety, and cannot live in collectivity.

It is advisable for those who desire auspiciousness and righteousness, to be Sattwic, to gain control and check Rajas, and to completely renounce and relinquish Tamas.

Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas are inimicable to each other. They are hostile, but sometimes they get fused or mixed up. There is no being in which only one

guna exists. All the three gunas bind the embodied being, and they co-exist, interdependent on each other.

Narada listen! Anger; lust; greed; spiritual ignorance – mistaking unreal for real; ambition; hatred; arrogance; intoxication; jealousy; envy – are all defects and evils. As long as one does not renounce and relinquish them, he cannot become a punyatma (realised soul). Unless one discards these evil tendencies; all pilgrimages and sacrifices will only bear fruits of strain, exertion, fatigue, and more desires. For example, a farmer toils by ploughing the uneven, rough and disagreeable land, and makes it fit for sowing. Then he buys costly seeds and sows them. Day and night he labours tirelessly, guarding the field. And all the time he is full of expectation of rich returns. Then the winter season comes. The grain is ripening. At that time the guardian of the field is overcome with sleep. Deer, antelope and other foraging animals come and eat away all the crops. The poor cultivator is full of despair and sorrow. Son! In the same way, all spiritual pursuits come to nought if evil tendencies are not removed from within.

Knowledge of the Shastras gives birth to the pre-eminent principle Sattwa Guna. On account of its stainlessness it is luminous and free from evil. It does not get attached to Tamasic qualities or substances. Sattwa manifests by overpowering Rajas and Tamas. Greed and avarice cause Rajas to overpower Sattwa and Tamas. Delusion and spiritual ignorance give predominance to Tamas, and gradually step by step it progresses and advances, and overpowers Sattwa and Rajas. I will now tell you in detail how one Guna overpowers another.

When Sattwa manifests and advances in a being, then it binds one to religious sentiments, pious thoughts, chaste behaviour; and through all the sense-

openings of the body, the light of knowledge radiates. In this state, none of the Rajas or Tamas qualities in matter or perception, enter his awareness. He is indifferent and does not get disturbed or disappointed. He is alike in pleasure and in pain. He is absorbed in the Self. The same in honour and dishonour; the same towards friend and foe. Habituated to renounce all actions, such a person transcends the Gunas.

When Rajogun predominates, the person abandons ancient and traditional religion and follows new and diverse practices and customs. He pursues pleasures and enjoyments, and gets attached to work which promises riches. Then Sattwa Guna recedes, and even Tamo Guna does not reside in the vicinity.

When Tamo Guna prevails excessively, the being is unable to have faith in the Vedas and Scriptures. Darkness, ignorance, inactivity and delusion makes him indulge in wasteful extravagance. He spreads the disease of animosity, hatred and revenge. He is always restless, and finds no peace anywhere. He indulges into deceit, dishonesty and cunning; he scorns Rajo and Sattwa; and blunders wilfully and unobstructed, into grandiose and expensive pleasures and enjoyments.

There is no place where Sattwa exists alone, or Rajo, or Tamo. They all co-exist in a mutual, reciprocal way. Nowhere can Sattwa Guna exist without Rajo Guna, and nowhere can Rajo Guna exist without Sattwa. O foremost among men Narada! Without Tamoguna Rajas and Sattwa do not find balance or support. They are, all three, interdependent. Similarly without Sattwa and Rajo, Tamoguna cannot exist by itself. The law of this trio is like mithun-dharma, like male-female, or pairs. But their functions are different from each other. They stay as supports to each other and never separate. One Guna

gives birth to the others, as they are governed by the Prasav Dharma (natural laws) of begetting. Sometimes Sattwa gives birth to Rajo and Tamas; and sometimes Rajo gives birth to Sattwa and Tamas. And sometimes Tamas gives birth to Sattwa and Rajas. In this way one becomes the originator or janak of the others. Like clay produces a pot, and a pot produces clay. Within the mind, these Gunas, by their reciprocal action, give rise to attainment of knowledge. Knowledge, Knower and Knowable – form the threefold impulse to action. The instrument, the object and the agent, form the threefold basis of action. For example, in a sacrifice, the Devdoot-presiding deity, Yagyadutt-giver of the boon, and Vishnumitra-the boon itself – all combine to execute the performance and completion of the yagya. It is said that from Rajo is born Sattwa; from Sattwa is born Rajo; and from Tamo are born both Rajo and Sattwa.

Narada says - In this way Father described the three Gunas to me. After hearing all, I questioned him again. Most revered Father! You have been kind to describe to me the Gunas. That which came out of your Divine Voice was so eloquent and sweet like nectar; that I still thirst for more. I desire to know distinctly and completely the true nature of these Gunas. This knowledge will give satisfaction, peace and tranquility to my soul.

Vyasji says - Born of Rajogun, Brahma the creator and father of the Universe, and also father of Narada, spoke thus to his son –

Brahmaji said:- Narada! I am going to elaborate on the Gunas. Hear me carefully. Sattwa Guna alone is not conceived anywhere. Threefold is the natural gunas of embodied beings. All the gunas exist together. For example, a beautiful woman, adorned with rich clothes and jewels, and endowed with charm and pleasing manners, gives pleasure to her husband. Also she is the

source of various kinds of happiness to her parents, brothers, sisters, and friends. But she also causes great distress to the co-wives. In the same way, when Sattwa Guna is in the female role, and combines with Rajo and Tamo; then the states of Rajas and Tamas temperaments are born.

When Rajo and Tamo are in the female form and they combine with Sattwa, then Sattwic state is born. The combination of one with the other produces the corresponding state or attribute or guna. A person does not get classified into subdivisions of caste, by virtue of the guna that is suporting at a given time. The state changes according to which guna is dominating. For example there is a pretty maiden. She is possessed of all good qualities of bashful modesty, sweet disposition, humility and other manners. According to the requirements of the codes of good conduct (dharma shastras), she is also conversant with the arts of giving pleasure to her husband. She gives pleasure and happiness to her husband, but gives heartburn and jealousy to her co-wives. Even though she manifests Sattwa guna qualities, still people say that she causes pain and distress to others. Similarly, Sattwic Guna sometimes gives the suggestion of Tamasic traits or effects. Like, for instance, the guards of a kingdom provide protection and peace to the holy sages who are tormented by robbers; but to the robbers the guards are a source of fear and misery. So according to the stuff that a person is comprised of, according to his natural faith; the guna combines and produces a state. A person is verily what his faith is. For example; Clouds cover the sky and make the day cloudy. Lightning flashes, and darkness pervades. Rain begins to soak the earth. This situation distresses the farmer who has just ploughed his field; but gives joy to the farmer who has already sown the seeds. The greatest misery is felt by the builder who has not yet laid the tiles on his roof. This proves, that the gunas, according to the nature of the person in whom they combine, result in favourable or unfavourable attributes and conditions.

Brahmaji says - O son Narada! I will tell you the traits or characteristics of the Gunas. Listen! Sattwa is luminous, stainless (nirmal) and free from evil. Just as, during infancy the sense organs like nose, eyes, ears and others are tender and small; and the pure soul does not get diverted to the affairs of matter; so also the light of knowledge radiates from the body where Sattwa reigns supreme. Yawning, sleeping, inactivity, lethargy and delusion prevails when Tamas predominates.

When Rajas predominates, then greed, restlessness, passion, attachment, activities which cause physical pain, and undertaking of travels for gain – all these prevail. He becomes quarrelsome, and argumentative; and this makes his attention wobbly. He gets blinded by success and his desires increase unbounded. He gets filled with the weight of self importance, and this quickly covers and dulls his senses. He is possessed of desires, attachments, and causes senseless torture to the elements in the body as also the Self. He is always agitated and suffers from sleeplessness. Narada, understand these to be the characteristics of the Gunas.

Narada said - Respected Father! You have shown the three Gunas to be of different tendencies. Then how do they co-exist and constantly work in cooperation with each other. Because the different temperaments are enemies of each other. So please tell me the secret of their mutual and reciprocal working.

Brahmaji said - Son! I will tell you this mystery. Listen carefully.

These Gunas can be likened to a deepak (lamp). The lamp throws light and makes objects visible. The three components – oil, wick and flame – have no affinity. They are opposed to each other. Yet, the oil supports and wick, the

wick supports the flame, and by the cooperation of all three, light is shed and everything around gets enlightened.

Naradji says - Satyawatinandan Vyasji! This is how the Gunas got manifested by Prakriti. Whatever forms take birth, have as their causals, the three Gunas born of Prakriti.

Vyasji says - O King! Upon my asking Naradji explained all these Gunas, their descriptions, their qualities and characteristics, and their modes of functioning, in great detail. The truth is, that the one from whom this entire Universe has emanated, The Primordial Shakti, should be worshipped exclusively and entirely. According to the nature and requirement of the circumstance, She presents Herself in form or formless state. The indestructible, undesiring, eternal Purusha (Paramatma, the God Almighty) is not free to create without His Energy, the Adi Shakti. He is a non-doer without the Mahamaya. Creation of the real and unreal is all done by Mahamaya. Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar, Surya, Chandrama, Indra, Ashwinikumars, the Vasus, Kuber, Vayu, Agni, Varun, Swami Kartikeya, and Ganesha; and other deities, can perform their functions to perfection, only when they are filled with the energy of Adi Shakti. It is the Parameshwari who is the Cause of the Universe. It is She, whom you must praise and worship. Perform all ceremonies and rituals, and become fully engrossed in your worship of Her. She is verily Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati. She is the presiding deity of all living things. All the causals have emanated from Her. She fulfils all wishes. She is the embodiment of Peace. She is to be worshipped in joy. She is extremely compassionate. Just by invoking Her Divine Names, She grants all desires. All the gods, including Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar, have worshipped Her in the past ages. All the munis and sages desirous of moksha, have worshipped Her and prayed to Her. With complete attachment and dedication to Her, even ambiguous and

inarticulate chanting of Her names causes Her to grant rare and difficult-to-obtain favours. When surrounded by dangerous and ferocious beasts in the forest, and hasty chanting of Aii omitting the nasal sound Aiim, also elicited Her protection. O king! As an example there is a story of a brahmin who had taken a vow to always speak the truth. This was narrated by a saint at a congregation of pious sages. I heard it with my own ears. There was an ignorant and unlettered brahmin called Satyavrath. He saw a wounded hog and exclaimed the sound Aii. Actually Aii with the nasal sound 'm' (Aiim) is the Mantra of the Devi. In ignorance he continued to chant Aii, and this impressed the Devi so much, that in Her overflowing compassion, She transformed him into a highly accomplished prince of poets.

CHAPTER 3 Episodes 10 - 11

10 – 11 The story of how the foolish Athathya became a great poet by the Grace of Devi Bhagawati.

Janmejay asked:- O twice-born One! Who was that fortunate brahmin. To which country did he belong and what was his nature. Please be kind to tell me everything – how he heard the mantra and how he started chanting it. And how he instantly got the divine blessings. Please tell me in detail this story which gives joy to the spirit.

Sootji says:- When king Janmejay pleaded thus, Satyawatinandan Vyasji, who is most generous and noble-minded, spoke thus, in holy and sweet tones.

Vyasji said:- I am going to tell you this story which has connection with the Puranas. Listen. A long time ago I heard this story in a gathering of munis. I had been on a pilgrimage and reached the holy forest of Naimisharanya. Many munis had gathered there, and after paying obeisance, I sat among them. They were all tapasvis of the highest order, practising severe austerities and totally free from worldly attachments. The proceedings began with sage Jamdagni. He said: All you respected and auspicious munis! Of all the gods, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Indra, Agni, Varun, Kuber, Pavan, Twashta, swami Kartikeya, Ganesha, Surya, Ashwinikumars, Bhag, Pusha, Chandrama and all the Planets, who is the most important; who commands worship, reverence and prayer. Who is capable of granting the highest boons. In whose worship does one experience the greatest joy (Niranand), and who gets pleased

instantly. O you who are always immersed in spiritual pursuits! Nothing is hidden from you.

In answer to this question sage Lomashji spoke thus – Hear me all! Those who are desirous of auspiciousness and good fortune, should worship Mahashakti. She is Primordial, Omnipresent, Omniscient (has knowledge of things which are beyond the range of perception), the material cause of the universe. She is the Matrix, and from Her all the illustrious and glorious gods emanate. She is the foundation, and the causal of the tree of life. She is overflowing with compassion, and the simple utterance of Her praises causes Her to grant all desires. I am going to narrate a simple, pure and holy story of how, just by uttering one syllable, a simple minded brahmin got his moksha. Listen carefully.

A brahmin called Devdutt lived in a country called Kosaldesh. He had no children. He conducted the Putryoshti Yagya with the desire of obtaining the boon of a son. Very elaborate arrangements were made. A canopy was erected on the banks of the Tamsa river. The havan kund was prepared according to prescribed dimensions and requirements. All brahmins who were well versed in the procedures of havan were invited. The havan fire was established according to custom. Devdutt invited sage Suhotra to be the presiding priest; Yagyavalkya was named Brihaspati to offer articles of oblation to the sacred fire, Piyle to sing the hymns of praise, and Gobhil to chant Sama Veda. He also invited many other sages to come as participants. The yagya began with sage Gobhil chanting Sama Ved in seven heavenly swaras, which should reverberate with sound, neither too long nor too short. But he kept taking constant intakes of breath, which spoiled the swaras of the mantras, and consequently he said the mantras without the correct intonation. This

upset Devdutt, and in anger he scolded sage Gobhil – You are very foolish. You have spoiled my sacrifice by wrong intonation of mantras.

Hearing this sage Gobhil was overcome with fury and he pronounced a curse – May you get a son who is foolish, devoid of intelligence, and also who is sly and cunning. Every living thing has to breathe, and air comes and goes from the body. So it was no fault of mine if I had to take a breath in the middle of a mantra!

Devdutt realised the enormity of the curse, and became immediately repentant. He pleaded with sage Gobhil to forgive him, and reminded him that those who renounce the world and spend time in meditation should never get angry. They should be compassionate. He pleaded with the Muni – I am already sad because I have no son. And now you have increased my woes by cursing me. Even the Vedas say it is preferable to have no son at all, than to have a foolish child. According to the brahmins, a foolish son is worthless and fit to be abandoned. A foolish brahmin is comparable to an animal or a low caste person, and he never gets authority to perform pujas or accept gifts. He is treated with ignominy and disrespect, and never offered a seat during ceremonies. The kings avoid such people, and only give them the job of cultivating fields. It is better to conduct obsequies with a mat of Kusha grass, than to have a foolish brahmin in attendance. A foolish brahmin should only be given as much food as he can eat. He should not be given wealth and gifts. A king who entertains such a brahmin is an insult to his kingdom. He should always be able to differentiate between a brahmin, learned in the scriptures and procedures; and a worthless, illiterate, foolish brahmin. Only an inauspicious and unfortunate king will disburse his wealth to foolish brahmins. It is like a neem tree which is laden with fruit. Only crows come and eat that. No one else touches those fruits. Where the wise and learned brahmin

performs ceremonies, there the ancestors achieve heaven and live peacefully. Then O learned Gobhilji! Why have you pronounced such a fearful curse upon me. In this world a foolish son is worse than many deaths. Please mitigate this curse. You are wise and benevolent. Have pity on me. I place my head on your feet.

Lomashji said - In this manner Devdutt tried to appease the sage. He sang his praises, and his eyes were filled with tears. Then Gobhilji turned towards the repentant Devdutt. The anger of great souls, cools in an instant. It is only the sinful one who nurses his anger and prolongs it indefinitely. It is the nature of pure water to cool down. When it is put in a vessel on the fire it does get heated up, but when the fire is removed it cools to normal temperature. Sage Gobhil's heart filled with compassion, and he said to the sorrowing Devdutt - Your son will be born foolish; but later he will become wise and learned. This is verily the truth.

This assurance comforted Devdutt. He completed the ceremonies, and distributed wealth and gifts to all the brahmins and they departed.

In due course Devdutt's beautiful wife Rohini became with child. All the prescribed ceremonies were performed in the third month. Gifts were distributed. Later, on a day when the planets were in auspicious formation and the presiding star was Rohini, a son was born to Devdutt. At the proper time the naming ceremony was performed. Keeping in mind the past events, Devdutt named his son Athathya, which means truth or reality. In the eighth year, the initiation or second thread ceremony was performed. He was sent to a guru for his spiritual education, but he did not learn a single word. He just sat like a foolish child. Then his father tried different methods of teaching but the child could not absorb anything. Devdutt sank into despair. Even after

being taught for twelve years the boy could not even master the evening prayers. Everyone got convinced that Athathya was foolish and devoid of brains. Wherever he went, people derided him. Even his parents began to condemn him. Seeing all this Athathya became reclusive. Then one day he decided to leave and go into the forest. He built a small abode on the banks of the river Ganga, and with full control over his material body and its requirements, he lived with a vow to always speak the truth. This boy neither knew the Vedas, nor did he know how to chant mantras and prayers. He had no knowledge of posture, control of breathing, restraint, cleansing techniques, mantras to be said on a bed of nails; how to recite Gayatri mantra. Also, he did not know the rituals for bathing, excretion, rinsing of mouth with water, awakening the digestive system before taking food; offering of sacrifices and performing havan in the evening. This brahmin used to get up in the morning, and without uttering mantras would rub his teeth with a piece of greenstick from a tree; and without proper protocols of toilet ablutions, would enter the holy Ganga for a bath. Then he would collect from the forest, any and every fruit without discrimination, and would satisfy his hunger. But! He always spoke the truth. Never an untruth came out of his mouth. For this quality people of the surrounding area gave him the name Satyavrath (one who has vowed to speak only the truth). He never caused harm or emotional upsetting to anyone, nor did he take part in improper activities. He was a satisfied man, and slept peacefully at night. Nor did he ever know fear. He had only one cause for concern – when will my body die in peace. I am leading a life of difficulties in the forest. A foolish man is an insult to the living. It is better than I should die. The only reason I am a foolish person is because God made me like this. Inspite of taking birth in a high caste brahmin family, I am of no use to anyone: just like a barren woman or a tree which does not produce fruit, or a cow which does not give milk. I am useless. But how can I blame God for this. Maybe in my previous lives I did not author any holy books and

present them to brahmins; or I did not impart pure knowledge to my juniors. As a result I am now suffering the ignominy of being a foolish brahmin, held in contempt by all. Maybe I did not meditate; I did not welcome saints and holy men into my home with reverence and respect, and I did not respect brahmins and give them gifts. There are so many young brahmins well versed in the Vedas and other scriptures and procedures. I, most unfortunate one, do not even know how to meditate. In what form shall I worship. But even this desire is of no use because I am ill fated.

Athathya passed his days with these thoughts always in his mind. He had his humble abode in a sacred space on the banks of the holy river Ganga, far from human habitation. Even at this young age, he was sitting and waiting for death to release him. Fourteen years passed, and he neither performed any pujas or rituals, nor did he recite any mantras or hymns of praise. But he never spoke an untruth, and he was known all over the world as the sage who has vowed to speak only the truth – Satyavrath!

It happened one day, that a tribal hunter chanced to come near his ashram. He was armed with bow and arrow, and in this lonely place he looked like Yama, the god of death, himself. He had a fearsome appearance, and seemed to be an expert hunter. A wild boar had been wounded by his arrow, and had rushed in pain and fear to Athathya's grove. Its body was trembling, it was completely covered in blood, and was a most pitiable sight. As it passed Athathya, he was overcome with pity and compassion and uttered the syllable "Aii" which, unknown to him, is the beeja mantra of Shri Saraswati. He had never heard, nor did he have previous knowledge of this most sacred mantra, but by some good fortune it came out of his mouth. He was ignorant, and had no knowledge of the Saraswati beeja mantra, but in a moment of intense compassion he uttered the sacred syllable. In one corner of a grove, the

wounded boar hid, shivering with fear and pain. The hunter came and stood in front of Athathya with his arrow drawn to his ear. He asked him – O realised soul! Where is the boar? I know that you are the famous Satyavrath. I ask you, where is the boar that has been wounded by my arrow? My family is suffering from hunger pangs, and I have to provide sustenance for them. Brahma has entrusted to me the care of those who depend on me, by whatever means available. My children are dying of hunger. Please tell me where that boar went.

While the hunter was questioning him many thoughts rose and fell in Athathya's mind. In what manner can I tell him that I have not seen the boar and still not break my vow to speak the truth. And also, how can I point to the boar because he will surely kill him. That is not truth which causes bodily harm to someone. Even an untruth can be considered truth if it is for the benevolence of a being. Still he could not reach any decision.

When he had uttered the syllable "Aii", the Devi Bhagawati heard it, and was instantly pleased. At that moment She bestowed on Athathya, Nirmal Vidya or Pure Knowledge. He became inspired and knowledgeable in the same way as sage Valmiki. He looked at the hunter and uttered a shloka – The eyes that see do not have the capacity to speak. And the organ that has the power of speech does not have the power to see. So why are you questioning me again and again.

Hearing this the hunter left the ashram and went away. He gave up hopes of finding the boar.

Athathya received from the Devi Bhagwati all the knowledge, all the wisdom, and all the fame, just like sage Valmiki. At every gathering of saints and sages,

his glories were always sung. His father, who had disowned him, heard of his blessings, and came to his ashram and paid him due reverence and respect; and invited him back to the house.

So Rajan, one must always worship with full bhakti and total surrender, the Adi Shakti Bhagawati Jagaddambika. The most worshipful Parashakti is the Causal of the entire creation. Now Maharaj, you occupy yourself with preparations to perform Yagya with all prescribed materials, and rituals, to Shree Bhagawati. It will grant you your desired wishes. - This is already well known to all. If you invoke with full faith and devotion, the holy names of the Devi; if you perform Puja to Her Lotus Feet; if you meditate on Her most beautiful forms, and if you recite with full respect and reverence, the praises of Her Holy Names; She grants even the most impossible requests. O King! Those who are afflicted with ill health; in pitiable condition; starving; steeped in poverty; foolish; surrounded by adversaries; in the bondage of slavery; lowly caste; without limbs; madness; never satisfied; constantly engrossed in sense pleasures; slave to desires; greedy; physically weak and sick; should be recognized by the wise, as those who did not worship the Shakti. And those who are endowed with wealth; who have been blessed with children and grandchildren; who have a healthty body; who is satisfied; who is knowledgeable in the scriptures; who has royal dignity of Rajlakshmi; who is respected by brothers and friends; and who has all good qualities; such a person should be recognized as being a worshipper of the Devi Adi Shakti Jagaddamba. They have worshipped with full faith, devotion and surrender. Hence they are happy.

Vyasji said – O King! All the munis had congregated in Naimisharanya. I heard this narration from the mouth of Sage Lomashji. O King! Now you must engage yourself in bhakti and aradhana of Devi Bhagawati.

CHAPTER 3 Episode 12

12. Three kinds of yagyas; importance of yagya done in the mind; and Vyasji's advice to Janmejay to perform Devi Yagya.

Raja Janmejay said – O Holy One! Kindly tell me the proper and correct manner of performing worship, and the rituals and ingredients necessary for the Yagya to Devi Bhagawati Jagaddambika. How many Brahmins should participate and how the gifts and wealth are to be presented.

Vyasji says: Rajan! Listen carefully. I am going to tell you all the procedures. There are three types of yagyas – Sattwic, Rajas and Tamas. Sattwic is for the munis to perform; Rajasic is to be performed by Kings, and Tamas is to be done by Rakshasas. The learned sages and ascetics who have renounced worldly attachments, should perform the Gnanmay Yagya – yagya performed by the attention.

For the Sattwic yagya it is of utmost importance that the place, time, wealth used, mantras, brahmins and devotion should all be Sattwic. For example

Place. A place like Kashi; or any other holy spot.

Time – within six months from the month of Magha when the sun is to the north of the equator – summer solstice.

Wealth - That which has been honestly earned.

Mantras - Those which are prescribed in the Vedas.

Brahmins –Those who have vedic background and knowledge.

And Disposition -should be pious and devout.

Such a yagya is called as Sattwic Yagya. Any ceremony which is performed by spending ill-gotten wealth, does not give any fruits in this lifetime; nor does it give any benefits in the next. Therefore, if one desires prosperity in this lifetime, and peace and happiness in the next; he should perform all holy and auspicious actions, using money earned by honest and fair means. King! You were witness to the best and foremost Rajasuya Yagya performed by the Pandavas. During the closing ceremony, much wealth and many gifts were distributed. Shri Krishna of the Yadeshwar clan, Himself graced the yagya. Sage Bhardwaj and all other learned sages were assembled there. It had continued for one whole month. Inspite of all this, the Pandavas had to face many hardships and difficulties. They were exiled into the forest. Panchali (Draupadi) was insulted and dishonoured; the Pandavas lost in a game of dice. So where was the fruit of the yagya? Instead they had to suffer humiliation and great hardships. Also all the Pandavas served as domestic servants in the palace of Raja Viraat. Keechak troubled the saintly Draupadi. And when the beautiful and faithful Draupadi was dragged by her hair, not a single Pandava could save her. If a correctly and properly performed yagya results in desired fruits and

boons, then wise men should understand that definitely there was some irregularity in the yagya performed by the Pandavas. Men who are learned in the rituals and procedures, say that any shortcomings in the performer; mantras; or wealth used; results in negative and reverse fruits.

In ancient times God Indra had invited sage Vishvaroopji, to be the main acharya or chief priest in his yagya. Vishvaroop wanted to benefit the demons who were connected to his maternal side. So he began to chant contrary mantras. Again and again he said – "May this yagya benefit the Devas and the demons", hoping by this, to protect the demons. Seeing the demons healthy and robust, Indra became angry. He took his thunderbolt and removed Vishwaroop's head from his body. From this it is clear that any defect in the performer of the yagya will produce negative fruits. If there are still doubts about this, it is not good.

When Panchal-naresh King Draupad got angry he arranged a yagya to get the boon of a son who would kill Acharya Drona. He got a son, Dhristadyumna; and an additional child, a daughter, Draupadi. In another ancient yagya, Raja Dashratha performed the Putroshti Yagya for begetting a son as he had no children. As a fruit from the yagya he begot four sons. So here we see that if a yagya is done correctly and according to procedures laid down, it definitely grants desired boons.

So king, it is proved, that any departure from the prescribed rituals, mantras, wealth, and performers' purity; will result in negative fruits. So definitely, there was some irregularity in the yagya performed by the Pandavas. King Yudhistra was a very dharmic king, and Queen Draupadi was a saintly lady. The other brothers were also pious souls. But, there was something inequitable and questionable in the wealth that they used for the Yagya which proved to

be the obstacle. Or it can also be that they were full of vanity and conceit and this contaminated the yagya.

Maharaj! Sattwic Yagya is said to be very rare, unique and extremely exacting. Only those who have renounced this world, and retired to a life in the forest can perform this yagya. Those who are constantly in a state of meditation; those who eat only sattwic food; those who know which fruits ripened naturally are beneficial; and those who prepare kheer and perform havan; those who do not drive a stake into the ground for tying the sacrificial animal - that is those who do not offer animal sacrifice; and those who are immersed in worship and surrender; - such a yagya is called as Sattwic Yagya.

A Yagya in which a lot of money is spent, inspite of being sacred, is Rajasic, and to be performed by Kshatriyas and Vaishyas; and the Yagya which is performed solely for vanity and self conceit, is Tamasic; and to be performed by Shudras. The great and learned souls have explained that yagyas performed in wrath or anger for revenge; or in self conceit for recognition, name and fame; are the yagyas performed by demons and asuras. Their yagyas are defamatory, filled with malicious intent, and quite despicable.

For those who are desirous of salvation, who are free from the worldly bondages; who have renounced all anti-ascent elements; for them the ultimate yagya is Mansik Yagya – performed in the mind with full attention and single-pointed devotion. In the yagyas of such mahatmas (great souls) there is no deficiency of any quality or quantity of samagri (ingredients). In other yagyas there is always a possibility of some shortcoming or other, because it is only with the purest wealth; shraddha (devotion); kriya (ceremonies); Brahmin priests; place; and time; – can a Yagya be perfectly performed. With the

exception of Manasyagya, in no other yagya is it possible to obtain all materials and requirements in their entirety.

First of all it is important to have a pure and clean mind. It should even be devoid of qualities and attributes. It follows that if the mind is pure, the body also becomes pure. He whose mind has ceased to come under the influence of the senses, and who is in balance, he is authorised to perform such a yagya. First of all, in the mind, he should erect a spacious and expansive mandap measuring many yojans (a measure of distance equal to four, eight or sixteen miles), and he should fortify it by using the wood of sacred trees. Again, in the mind, he should build a grand altar, and establish the holy fire on it. Then in the mind, he should respectfully select and invite the officiating priest (brahma); the priest who recites the mantras (adhvaryu); the priest who offers the oblations to the sacred fire (hotha); priest who sings the hymns of praise (prastota); one who sings the Sama Veda (udgaata); and all other participants. All the senior priests should be ceremoniously received. The five vital breaths or forces – pran, apan, vyan, udan, and samaan, should be established at their various seats on the altar. They are very illustrious and magnificent forces. Place Pran on the seat of householder; Apan on the place reserved for sacrificial oblations; Vyan on the place where gifts for the priests are kept; Saman to be placed where hymns will be sung; and Udan to be given the most decent place.

In the mind one should picture the desired wealth to be spent. A most pure and holy mind, devoid of qualities and attributes, performs the roles of host and priest offering oblations to the holy fire. The presiding deity of such a yagya is the indestructible, unstained, and pure Brahma Himself. The most auspicious goddess Bhagawati Jagaddambika comes in Her Nirgun (formless) state and grants boons. She is sakshat Brahmavidya, the Pure, Divine

Knowledge. The entire universe is supported by Her. She is all pervading. The realised soul, who performs this yagya in his mind, uses Her own Divine energy as the provider and support of the yagya. After this, the totally free and detached attention, together with the vital life breaths, should be surrendered through path of sushumna, to dissolve into the eternal brahma.

This entire ceremony is to be performed with Shuddha Iccha. After that, with the mind at total rest, and peace, one must enter the meditative state at the Lotus Feet of the everloving Bhagawati Adi Shakti. Then the soul begins to see Parabrahma pervading all living things, and all living things as Parabrahma, then his realisation is complete, and he gets a glimpse (jhanki) of the most compassionate, most benevolent Bhagawati Jagaddambika. She grants Sat-Chit-Anand to Her children, and the precious gift of Nirmal Vidya. At that moment all illusions and delusions are consumed, and the body is maintained only for the divine experience of god realisation. Such a soul, after death, attains the Lotus Feet – Nirmal Dham. He who meditates on the Devi, becomes complete. – Nothing is left to be done. After that there is only one occupation in life – to meditate on the Holy Lotus Feet of the Mother of the Universe, the most Divine Goddess, Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

O King! Such a yagya grants the fruit of self realisation – and there is no doubt in this. This is eternal. The fruits of all other yagyas are temporary. It is the advice of learned men, and a directive of the Vedas, that all those desirous of obtaining heaven, should perform the agnishtom yagya (offering of oblations to the fire). This is correct. But in my mind it is clear that when the term of the fruit expires, the soul has to take a rebirth and enter the mortal world. Therefore, the yagya performed in a clean and pure mind; with clean and pure ingredients, and clean and pure intentions; grants the eternal boon of moksha. And this is the most desirable yagya to perform.

But a king who is desirous of victories, cannot perform this yagya. O King! The serpent yagya that you performed recently, was a Tamasic Yagya, because it was done to wreak vengeance on the serpent Takshak for striking your father with his venom. You burnt alive, crores of snakes in that sacrificial fire. Maharaj! Now you perform, in all its purity, the Devi Yagya that Shri Vishnu Himself performed, even before creation. You must perform a similar yagya. I will give you all the details and instructions.

First of all you must identify brahmins who are learned in the Vedas and proficient in all the rituals. Also they should have knowledge of the beeja mantras of the Devi, and they must be able to chant the mantras in the correct swaras. They will be appointed as the presiding priests. You will be the provider or host. Perform the yagya as per prescribed procedures, and whatever boon you receive, offer it for your deceased father; and his soul will attain salvation.

The sin that accrues from insulting a brahmin, cannot be expiated by anyone. O Sinless, Guiltless One! Your father was under such a curse for disrespecting a meditating sage; and even his death due to serpent-bite was inauspicious. At the time of death he was not even laid on a mat of holy kusha grass. He died before that could be accomplished. He did not die like a warrior on the battlefield; nor did he die like a saint on the banks of the holy river Ganga. O foremost of the Kuru clan! Your father died without ablutions (snaan) or distributing alms (daan). He was in the uppermost room of the palace, and his soul departed from his body in that room. At a time like that, there is one, every effective measure for peaceful entry into the next world; but he did not make use of that. Every living being should at all times, be prepared for death. He should detach his attention from all worldly enticements and attachments, and should take refuge in the safe harbour of meditation. He should always be

aware of the fact that this body, made of five elements, should not be the cause of sorrow. If not today, even any other chosen time, one has to shed this body like a garment. Why should the indestructible, immortal soul get so attached to it. That which has to be destroyed has got to be relinquished. Why should it cause so much concern and fear. Without doubt, I am the eternal, unblemished, undisturbed atman. Whatever connection I had with this body was the result of previous karmas – to be enjoyed, or to be paid for, and they are separate from me. Happiness and sorrow are experienced because of these five elements which constitute the body. In reality "I am the Spirit". In this way a person is always in readiness to leave the body, and never take a birth again. This is the most supreme state to be in, and is very difficult even for Yogis. O king! The brahmin cursed your father. Even then your father did not take recourse to this path of certain salvation. Instead he explored all other avenues of medicine, gems, mantras and yantras. He made arrangements to live in a secured room on the topmost floor of the palace. As a result, he died in an inauspicious way. So now, you must engage yourself in performing the yagya for his salvation.

Sootji says: Hearing these words of advice from the most honourable and highest of noble souls, King Janmejay became frightened. Tears fell in a stream from his eyes. He said – My life has been wasted and empty. What must I do this very moment, to obtain the right of passage to heaven for my father.

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Danava – a human being who does not live by all 10 valencies becomes a Danava.

Rakshasa – has no atma or kundalini; and has cat's eyes.

Rajo gunis are very active and efficient. But when they get yash "success" it is the beginning of their downfall.

CHAPTER 3 Episode 13

13 - The Ambika Yagya performed by Shri Vishnu; and the akashvani (voice from heaven).

King Janmejay asked: Grandsire! Shri Vishnu is the greatest of all gods and the causal of the Universe. Then how could he perform a yagya? Please tell, who were those fortunate brahmins, who had full knowledge of the Vedas, and proficient in the procedures, who participated as priests in this great yagya. O Great Ascetic Sage! Please be kind and tell me all that you know about this unique and rare yagya. I will listen with full and uninterrupted attention, and will try to follow the same rituals and procedures in my Yagya.

Vyasji, most exalted sage, said - O fortunate King! Listen. I will tell you how that most auspicious and greatest Bhagawati Yagya was performed. When Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, projected from Her most Divine Being, the three Shaktis, and sent them forth; they took the male forms of Brahma,Vishnu, and Shankar. Each was given a seat on a vehicle. At that time the primal gods could see only vast and awesome expanses of ocean, inundating everything. A veritable deluge. As per the directions of the Adi Shakti, they began to create abodes for themselves. They created the earth and stayed on it. The supporting and sustaining Energy was provided to the earth by Adi Shakti, and only then could it come into existence and become established. It contained fat and marrow which had come from the bodies of Madhu and Kaitabh. This combined together and gave the earth its name Medhini. For providing a base or support to all things, Earth is also called Dhara; and because it is expansive and outspreading, Earth is also called Prithvi. Because of its weight and mass,

Earth is also called Mahi. Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari brought the earth to rest on the forehead (mastak) of Seshnag. In order to keep it stable and steady, the mighty mountains were created. The mountains were made to function like iron nails and bolts, which are driven into wooden structures to ensure that they remain immovable, firm and steady. For this reason the learned pundits call mountains as Mahidhar. Devi Bhagawati selected the most expansive Mount Sumeru, with a circumference of many yojans, and decorated it in a most beautiful manner. She crowned the peak with precious stones.

Marichi, Narada, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu, Daksh Prajapati and Vashisht – These are known as Brahma's sons. Kashyap was born to Marich. Daksh Prajapati had thirteen daughters. These thirteen daughters gave birth to a host of gods and demons. From then on, the Kashyapi creation started, which branched into humans, animals, reptiles and various other kinds of creatures. From the right half of Brahma's body, the first Manu, primal man, was born. And from the left half of Brahma's body, the first woman Shatroopa, was born. Two sons were born to Manu and Shatroopa – Priyavratt and Uttanpad. Also, three most beautiful daughters, possessed of all good qualities and attributes was born to them. Born of the Lotus, Brahma created his abode on the peak of Mount Sumeru.

Then Shri Vishnu created, for the sake of Shree Lakshmi, his abode in Vaikunth. That most beautiful and grand Vaikunth was situated above all the lokas (worlds).

Bhagwan Shankar also created an enchanting abode which is known as Kailash. There he lived amidst a congregration of spirits.

Besides the mortal world and the netherworld, there is a third world called heaven, presided over by Indra. It is also situated on one of the peaks of the mountain Sumeru. It is decorated with gemstones and very rich drapes, and the God Indra resides here. During the churning of the ocean, many things came out of it – like the fragrant Parijat tree, the four-tusked elephant Airawat; the wish-fulfilling cow Kamadhenu; Ucchaishrava – the white horse of the sun, and the beautiful apsara Rhamba and other apsaras. Indra took all these to his palace, to enhance its beauty. Also from the churning, came Dhanwantari (physician to the gods), and Chandrama. They also resided in Heaven.

O King! In this way three kinds of creation came into being. This creation consists of Gods, animals, and man. It is classified according to the way it comes into existence: – Andaj from egg; Pindaj born from the womb; Swedaj from heat and damp; and Udbhij, sprouting from the ground.

Having completed the work of creation, Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar settled down in their respective abodes, to live in peace and joy. While Vishnu was enjoying the company of Lakshmi in Vaikunth, He suddenly remembered the jewelled island Manidweep, in the ocean of nectar, where he was fortunate to get a glimpse of Devi Mahamaya; and also the mantra that he had been given. Once this memory came to Him, He could not remain separate and aloof from the Goddess. He immediately decided to perform the Ambika Yagya. He descended from his abode. He invited Mahadev Shri Shankar; Brahma; Indra; Varun; Kubera; Agni; Yama; Vashisht; Kashyap; Daksh Prajapati; Vamdev and Brihaspati. Preparations were begun for a Yagya of enormous proportions, and all the samagri (ingredients) were made ready. Priceless, Sattwic items were procured. The divine architects designed a most beautiful altar and canopy (Yagyashala). The highest tapasvis and realised brahmins were

nominated as the presiding priests. To enthrone the holy fire, several altars were erected. The brahmin clergy began chanting the beeja mantra of the Devi, that is, the Maya beej. According to the sacred rites, oblations were offered to the sacrificial fire, and the havan began. After the entire samagri was offered as oblation, a divine voice was heard in the heavens. Directed at Vishnu, the most madhuriya tones, and the sweetest and kindest words, were heard clearly by all – Vishno! You will be called as Param Parameshwar. In all yagyas you will be worshipped first. All those who perform yagyas will offer obeisance to you. Not only this, but the entire janata will worship you, and you will be known as the giver of boons. When the gods are troubled by the demons, they will come to you for help. O Purushottam! Foremost among gods and men! You will grant them refuge and protection. All the purans and the extensive Vedas will contain your praises and songs of your glory. You are verily the god who commands honour and worship. Whenever Dharma is in danger on this earth, you will incarnate partially or wholly, to protect and preserve. This will be your prime responsibility. All your incarnations will manifest one after the other, in this world. The great souls will recognise and worship you. All your avatars will have yogis as your disciples. Madhusudhan! You will be known all over the world. In every incarnation, you will be helped by My Energy, which will manifest as Varahi, Narasinhi and others, who will be the main cause of your success in fighting the negative forces. They will bear innumerable weapons, will be most beautiful in appearance, and will be adorned with jewels and ornaments. Madhav! By the help of these Shaktis, you will be able to defend and protect the gods. By My benefaction, you will have success in all your endeavours. Do not ever disrespect or disregard these Shaktis. You should always recognise, respect and honour them. If human beings worship these Shaktis in their hearts, all their desires will be fulfilled. Also your praises and worship will spread throughout the creation and the seven islands. In the world all the unsuccessful human beings will worship you

and your shaktis and obtain boons. They will perform pujas to you, sing your praises to please you, and you will fulfil their desires. By all this honour and worship you will become known in the mortal and heavenly worlds.

Vyasji says: After saying all these things in sweet and kindly tones, the heavenly voice became silent. Shri Vishnu was filled with awe and joy in every part of His being. He performed the concluding part of the yagya, bid farewell to Brahma and his devas who departed for Brahmalok; and Himself mounted His vahana Garuda, and returned to Vaikunth. The rishis and munis were overwhelmed, and slowly left for their respective ashrams. They were filled with joy and happiness, and the heavenly voice awakened in them deep bhakti for Devi Bhagawati. From that moment they began to meditate on that Devi Bhagawati who grants boons, and Who is described in the Vedas.

CHAPTER 3 Episode 14 - 15

14 - 15 - King Janmejay requests Shri Vyasji to describe the Devi. The war between King Yudhajit and Virsen. Sojourn of Manorama and son Sudarshan in sage Bhardwaj's ashram.

King Janmejay said: O twice-born One! Shri Hari performed the yagya to Bhagawati Jagaddambika. You have kindly described the entire proceedings in beautiful detail. Now please deign to tell me the glory and the Divine Aspects of the Almighty Devi Bhagawati. It will be like sacred prasad and will transform my life and make it holy.

Vyasji says: I am neither fully qualified nor capable, but I will try my best. I will start with an ancient, historical event. Listen. In Kosaldesh there was a king of the Surya dynasty, son of a great king Pushya. His name was Dhruvsandhi. He was dharmic, truthful, practised austerities and fasts; and a supporter of the ashram way of life. His kingdom was the famous and prosperous Ayodhya. During the reign of King Dhruvsandhi, brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishyas, shudras and other communities lived peacefully and righteously within their respective maryadas and boundaries. One could never find a robber; backbiter; fraud; ingrate; miscreant; or foolish man in his kingdom. His rule was just and kind. He had two wives who were named Manorama and Leelavati. For their comfort and pleasure he used to accompany them to his various palaces, gardens, hills, forests and lakes. Manorama had a son who had all the royal qualities in him. He was named Sudarshan. Queen Leelavati also had a son, born on an auspicious day and time, and he was named Shatrujit. He was born one month after Sudarshan.

King Dhruvsandhi loved both his sons equally. All the ceremonies of induction, holy thread, tonsure, were performed as prescribed. Both the princes won the hearts of all in the kingdom. Shatrujit had a winning personality and a sweet speaking manner like his father, which unfortunately Sudarshan did not seem to have. So the king grew fonder of Shatrujit.

One day the king went to the forest on a hunting trip. From a thick grove a huge lion jumped in front of him. The king aimed an arrow and wounded the animal. This made it very ferocious; and with mane spread out and tail up in the air, the lion charged the king. But, even though the king bravely fought back with spear and shield, the lion tore him with his sharp claws. The king died. His ministers were distraught, and sprayed arrows on the lion and killed it. Soldiers rushed to the palace to convey the sad news; and all the senior ministers and priests came to the forest and performed the last rites for the king. Guru Vashisht performed all the ceremonies that ensure safe passage to heaven. After that, all the ministers and priests started making arrangements to coronate Sudarshan as King as he was the eldest son, and was of a calm and peaceful disposition. But Leelavati requested her father, King Yudhajit of Ujjain, to come and wrest the throne for her son Shatrujit. Manorama's father, Virsen, was king of Kalinga, and when he heard of the developments, he came to retain the throne for his grandson. Both kings had large and formidable armies, and the situation became alarming. They held a consultation with the ministers. First King Yudhajit asked who the elder prince was, as he has the right to the throne. To this King Virsen replied that Manorama's son Sudarshan was elder, and therefore by all considerations, he should be crowned as king. Then Yudhajit argued that Shatrujit was endowed with all the qualities of a ruler and that made him more eligible. He then accused the ministers of conspiring to instal Sudarshan, so that they could cheat and take away all the wealth from the treasury. The arguments turned

into a declaration of war; and neighbouring petty kings also arrived in the hopes of looting and attaching the fragmented kingdom to theirs. The news continued to spread that the king had died; the princes were still in their youth; and the grandfathers had engaged in war. All the bandits and robbers arrived to ransack and plunder the war ravaged kingdom.

Vyasji says: The war began, and both kings were incensed by anger and ambition. Yudhajit had very strong arms. He stood on the battlefield with huge bow and arrows. He had innumerable chariots and a large army. Raja Virsen was illustrious and radiant like Indra. He considered it the mission of a kshatriya to fight for the right; and he was fighting for his grandson to be coronated. He rained arrows upon Yudhajit just as a cloud pours a deluge on a mountain. This king, who always stood for justice, was now filled with anger. He splintered every arrow that Yudhajit sent towards him. The battlefield was a fearsome sight, filled with chariots, elephants, horses and soldiers. The gods, the saints, and the mortals, were watching in awe. Crows and vultures began to circle the sky in anticipation of death. Hundreds of elephants, horses and men were slain, and the blood ran like the river Vaitarni, which flows through Yamlok instilling fear into the sinners who behold it. It flowed so fast, that it cut deep banks, and heads floated on it like gourds floating on the river Yamuna thrown in by children playing on its banks. Clouds of dust rose from the battlefield, and blocked the sun, like on an eclipse; and day turned into night. Then, when the dust settled on to the red, wet earth, the sun came out again. This fierce fighting continued and became more fearsome as king Yudhajit kept up an endless stream of lethal arrows, till Virsen fell to the ground, lifeless. His head was cut off from his body, most of his army had been demolished; and the remaining soldiers fled from the scene. When Manorama heard that her father had died on the battlefield; she was filled with fear. She remembered her father's warnings that king Yudhajit would not

hesitate to kill her son Sudarshan, to ensure that his grandson Shatrujit became king. What could she do now, and where could she go. Both father and husband were dead, and there was no one in that kingdom who could give her safe refuge for herself and her son, prince Sudarshan. She had heard that greed and ambition gave birth to many sins, and under its evil influence, even eminent kings have been known to kill father, mother, brothers, sisters, friends and relatives. A greedy man will eat tainted food, and go to undesirable places. He abandons dharma for the sake of his desires and ambitions. Even Leelavati was capable of harming them for the sake of her son. She must do something before Yudhajit returned from battle, otherwise he may put her and her son into prison. There is a story of how Indra was overcome with envy and jealousy; and cut into seven pieces the child in Aditi's womb. He reduced his thunderbolt, and also assumed a tiny form himself, and entered the womb of Aditi to kill her unborn child. He further cut the seven pieces into seven pieces each. It is these fortynine winds that are now installed in heaven. There is another story of a queen who wanted to destroy the unborn child of a rival wife by putting poison in her food. The child took birth with the poison embedded in him. He came to be called Saggar. King Dashrath, in his lifetime, banished his son Rama to the forest on the instigation of a greedy and ambitious rival queen, who wanted the throne for her son.

The ministers who were in favour of Sudarshan, were powerless, and even Manorama's brothers were not prepared to fight on her behalf. Ill fate and destiny had brought her to this state. However, she decided to try her best to get out of her difficulties, and to leave the results to the Divine. She sent for a faithful minister, Vidhal, who was held in high esteem by all. With great humility she requested him for his advice and help. He suggested that they should not stay for even a moment in the palace, but should go into the forest near Kashi, where his uncle lived. He was a rich and powerful man and would

offer protection. He advised her to tell the guards that she wished to go and meet King Yudhajit, and in this way, leave the palace with her son. Taking a trusted maid with her, Manorama left the city and was full of sorrow and fear. She met Yudhajit and performed the last rites for her father. After that she travelled for two days till she reached the banks of the holy river Ganga. On the way, robbers waylaid them and stole whatever little wealth she was carrying, and even took away her chariot. Trembling and weeping, she took her child and maid, sat in a boat and crossed the holy river, and reached Chitrakoot. She made her way to Muni Bhardwaj's ashram. On seeing many holy saints meditating in different spots, some of her fear left her. When the sage saw her he said:- O sinless and virtuous lady! Who are you, and whose wife are you? And what has caused you to undertake this difficult journey to come here. Tell me the true facts. Are you celestial or mortal. And who is this child with you. O You with lotus eyes! It appears as if you have lost a kingdom. Manorama was so overcome with grief that she stood dumb, and only tears flowed down from her eyes. She pointed to her minister. Then Vidhal explained – She is Queen Manoram, wife of King Dhruvsandhi of the Surya clan. He was on a hunting trip when he was killed by a lion. This is his son, prince Sudarshan. Queen Manorama's father, the most illustrious Virsen, died in battle, trying to get the throne for his grandson. For fear of King Yudhajit, the queen has come into hiding, to this forest. O Great Muni! Only you can give her protection. It is written that one gets greater punyas by protecting and giving refuge to a helpless being, than by just performing prayers and yagyas.

The sage offered full protection to Manorama and her son, and told her to have no more fear. So Manorama and her son began to live in peace, in the sage's ashram, together with her maid and minister Vidhal.

CHAPTER 3 Episodes 16 – 17

16 - 17 Yudhajit's visit to the ashram of Muni Bhardwaj; his threat to take away Manorama and her son; Muni Bhardwaj's mysterious reply; and Devi Jagaddambika's blessings on Sudarshan.

Vyasji says: After the battle, Yudhajit returned to Ayodhya, and immediately left in search of Sudarshan. He sent his soldiers all over to look for Manorama. After consulting the brahmins he chose an auspicious day and coronated his grandson Shatrujit. Verses from the Atharva-Ved were chanted, and abhishek was performed by pouring waters of sacred rivers over his head. By the beating of drums and blowing of conches, the celebrations began in the kingdom of Kuru. Brahmins read the Vedas; pundits recited invocations and all instruments were playing tunes of victory. The whole of Ayodhya seemed to be celebrating the new king's ascension to the throne. But there were some who remained in their houses, grieving over the whereabouts of prince Sudarshan and the saintly queen mother, Manorama. They also deplored the death of King Virsen at the hands of the greedy and ambitious King Yudhajit. After installing his grandson Shatrujit on the throne, he went back to Ujjain. After reaching home, he got the news that Sudarshan was in the ashram of a muni. He immediately set out for Chitrakoot. There was a non-Aryan king called Durdarsh who ruled over Shringverpur. He was very strong and brave. Yudhajit appointed him as his chief and took him along.

When Manorama heard that the king was coming with an army she became terrified. She went to muni Bhardwaj and pleaded with him to do something. Yudhajit had already killed her father, and now he was going to harm her son. Then she narrated to the muni, an ancient story that she had heard. – The Pandavas lived in the forest, in the ashram of saints and munis. Devi Draupadi was with them. One day, all the five Pandava brothers went hunting, and Draupadi was left alone. In that sacred grove many other holy men lived, like Dhoumya, Atri, Galav, Pyle, Jabali, Gautam, Bhrigu, Chyavan, Kanv, Jatu, Kratu, Vitihotra, Sumanthu, Yagyadutt, Vatsal, Rashasan, Kahod, Yavkrit, Yagyakrit, and many other holy men. They were all chanting the Vedas. That place was filled with saints and sages, and Draupadi lived without fear with her maids. At that time the king of Sindhudesh, the prosperous and successful Jaydrath, passed that way with his army. Hearing the chanting, he approached the ashram, and alighted from his chariot to go and pay homage to the saints. Seeing the saints engrossed in singing, he sat there with folded hands. All the maidens of the ashram, and also the wives of the munis came to have a glimpse of the king. Among them was Draupadi. Her beauty was so exquisite, that she appeared like a second Lakshmi. Jaydrath's glance fell on her, and taking her to be a divine maiden, he asked sage Dhoumya who the maiden was, with a beautiful face and dusky complexion. Whose daughter she was, and what her name was. He said she looked like royalty and not like a sage's wife. Dhoumya replied: O Ruler of Sindhudesh! This is the pure wife of the Pandavas, Devi Draupadi. She is a princess from Panchal, and is possessed of all auspicious qualities. At this moment she resides in the ashram.

Jaydrath enquired where the Pandavas were, and on being told that they were out hunting, he approached Draupadi. He greeted her with respect and folded hands, and said that the Pandavas had probably gone out because their sojourn of eleven years in the forest had ended. She thanked him for his kind

enquiry, and requested him to wait in the ashram till the Pandavas returned. Suddenly the king was overcome by evil thoughts which were an insult to the sanctity of the ashram. He desired to abduct Draupadi.

It has rightly been said that an intelligent person should not blindly trust strangers. Those who blindly trust, usually come to harm. A prime example of this is Raja Bali.

Son of Virochan, Shriman Bali was pious, righteous, generous, virtuous, ready to give protection, and of high moral nature. He was the grandson of Prahlad. Adharmic thoughts never entered his mind. He had performed ninety-nine yagyas, and given much wealth as dakshina. In those days the devas and yogis used to worship Shri Vishnu in their yagyas, and to fulfil the desires for which the yagyas were performed, Shri Vishnu's partial incarnations were born into this world. The ansh avatar of Shri Vishnu, took the form of Vamana, to deceive King Bali, as per the desire of Indra, and was born in the house of Kashyap. He tricked Bali and seized from him his kingdom, and the entire land of the earth upto the boundaries of the oceans. Bali was an honest and upright king who honoured his word. Shri Vishnu played this trick on Bali to fulfil a boon that Indra desired.

Manorama said she had heard this story, and if Shri Vishnu could carry out an intrigue like this to actualise the fruit of a yagya, then what can one expect from a mere mortal. Therefore one must never fully trust another. Because when one falls under the influence of greed and ambition and desire, he can sink to any depths, and are mindless of the punishments of the nether world. Those whose attention is devoured by greed, try to misappropriate another's possessions and wealth by any means – cunning mind; hypocritical communication; or sinful deeds of force and cruelty. Many persons perform

prayers and sacrifices for wealth and possessions. It is of course understood that the gods do not hand over the wealth in person, but in due course the wealth passes to the person who desires it, from someone else. The gods are very proficient, and skilful in giving wealth and prosperity. Traders do yagyas and pray the gods to give them grain and cloth which they can sell and become wealthy. But in the process of selling and profiteering, are they not appropriating the money of others. As soon as a trader acquires the goods, he immediately puts a higher price on it. In this way everyone divests others of their money. Then how can one trust another. For those who are overcome be greed and desire, it is futile for them to undertake pilgrimages, charitable acts, and study of the scriptures and holy books. All their good actions get neutralised by their bad. Therefore Manorama pleaded with the sage to send Yudhajit back to his kingdom. Just as Sita lived in Valmiki's ashram, she also would live in Bhardwaj's ashram with her son, and in fearlessness and peace. Hearing her plea, sage Bhardwaj went to Yudhajit and requested him to return to his kingdom.

Yudhajit said – O sage of the highest qualities! Do not resist me. Make Manorama leave your ashram. I will not go without her. If you refuse, I will take her away by force.

The Rishi Bhardwaj said: As in ancient times, Vishwamitra got ready to forcibly take the sacred cow Nandini from Muni Vashisht; so also, if you have the shakti to remove Manorama from my ashram, you may do so.

Vyasji says: Upon hearing these words, Yudhajit called his trusted minister and said – O faithful one! You are exceptionally clever. Tell me, in the present situation, what must I do? Should I use force to remove this gentle, maternal, soft-spoken lady. Because, even a compassionate man must not misjudge or

under-estimate an enemy, however small or weak. Given time, it can grow into a life threatening proportion, like the disease of tuberculosis. In this place there is neither an army, nor a guard, who can resist me. I can easily catch and destroy my grandson's rival Sudarshan. And if I succeed in this, my grandson can have the kingdom without any thorns. It is also assured, that once Sudarshan is dead, my grandson can rule without fear.

The minister said – O King! You must not act in haste. You have heard the sage's words. He has kept before you the example of Vishwamitra. It is an ancient story. Vishwamitra, son of Gadhi, was a famous king. One day he happened to pass the ashram of muni Vashisht. He offered pranaams to the muni, who offered him a seat. Then the muni invited him to eat food. The king was not alone. He was accompanied by a large army. By the grace of the cow Nandini, every one ate till they were satisfied. The king became very impressed by the cow. He requested Muni Vashisht to give it to him.

Vishwamitra said – Muni! You are a great ascetic. I pray you to do me the favour of giving me this cow. In return I will give you one thousand milch cows.

Vashishtji replied – O King! This cow provides all the ingredients required as oblations for yagyas. Under no circumstances can I give her to you. Let your one thousand cows remain with you.

Vishwamitra said – Sadhu! I am willing to give you ten thousand, or even one lakh cows of your choice, but you must give me this cow Nandini. Otherwise I will take her by force.

Vashishtji said – Rajan! As you please. You may remove her from here by force, because by my will I cannot send her away from my ashram to your palace.

Hearing these words of the saint, the king ordered his army to seize the cow. The soldiers were very proud of their strength, and immediately caught and bound the cow. Nandini began to tremble with fear and tears rolled out of her eyes. She asked Vashishtji – Master! Why are you relinquishing me. Look! These men have bound me with ropes and are dragging me.

Then Sage Vashisht said – O sacred cow that produces milk of the purest quality! I am not abandoning you. It is this king who is taking you away by force. And only just now I had welcomed him into the ashram. I had no intentions of parting with you.

When she heard this, every cell in her body became filled with anger and she began to bellow furiously. Frightening sounds came out of her mouth, and fearsome demons appeared from her body, bearing arms and covered in armour. They shouted - "Wait, wait! Stop, stop!" And in a short while they had completely destroyed king Vishwamitra's army. They rescued Nandini and freed her from her bonds. The king was dejected, and went home disappointed. In his depressed state he condemned the courage and strength of the kshatriyas; and the meekness of the brahmins; and decided to go into tapasya. He went into a dense forest and performed severe penance, and renunciation. He gave up the kshatriya status, and at the end of his sojourn in the forest, he became a Rishi.

The Minister said: Therefore, O King! Do not incur the anger of this highly evolved sage Bhardwaj. To enter into a dispute with a saint, is virtually

pushing your clan into the mouth of Kala (destruction). It is my humble advice that you go to sage Bhardwaj and give him an assurance that in future you will not disturb the peace in his ashram. And you will allow Sudarshan to dwell there in peace. How can that poor boy, who has no worldly possessions, be any threat to a powerful king like you. It is not good to bear ill will towards a weak orphan. Maharaj! You should be forever compassionate. This entire universe is controlled by God. So there is no use in bearing malice and rancour towards anyone. Whatever has to happen, will happen. One command from God can cause a thunderbolt to become as harmless as a blade of grass; and at another time cause a blade of grass to become as powerful and devastating as a spear or thunderbolt. There is no doubt in this. This same divine energy can cause a hare to become the destroyer of a lion, or a mosquito to destroy an elephant. Therefore O King! Don't let your mind get clouded by anger and haste. Ponder over my advice, which is for your benevolence, and turn away from this undesirable act.

Vyasji says: On hearing his prime minister's words of wisdom, that famous king Yudhajit prostrated before Muni Bhardwaj and placed his head at his feet. Then he left for his home. This gave Manorama great relief and laid all her fears at rest. She spent her days in the ashram, looking after the child. Sudarshan grew into a young boy and played with his mother. One day Sudarshan was with Vidhal when the little son of a muni playfully called Vidhal as "Kleeb". Out of this word, the syllable "Klee" registered deeply and clearly in Sudarshans attention, and he began to chant it. Actually, "Kleem" with the nasal sound, is a mantra containing the seed energy of the desire of Bhagawati Jagaddambika. This mantra got embedded into him and he chanted it continuously with full respect and attention. Maharaj! As a result of auspiciousness unknown to him, he was endowed with this invaluable and priceless beeja mantra. At that time Sudarshan was only five years old. He was

already well versed in Rishi (a sage who composed a Vaidic mantra); Chhand (the metre in which the Vedas are to be sung); meditation and renunciation. The child Sudarshan repeated this mantra in his mind while eating, playing, and even sleeping, because it had become a part of him. When he completed eleven years of age, Rishi Bhardwaj performed his initiation and sacred thread ceremony, and inducted him into the study of the Vedas. By the grace received from chanting the mantra, he easily absorbed all the divine knowledge from the scriptures, and also the art and science of archery, and the skills of political administration.

And then, one day he was blessed with a sakshat darshan (personal apparition) of Devi Bhagawati. The Devi was dressed in red coloured garments; Her form emitted a red glow; and even Her ornaments shone with a red radiance. That most magnificent Devi Vaishnavi was seated on Garuda. On beholding this vision, Sudarshan's face lit up with joy and adoration. He was now fully endowed with Nirmal Vidya, and the prince settled into constant meditation on Bhagawati Devi Jagaddambika. He continued to live in the same forest on the banks of the holy river. The Devi also presented to him a bow, sharp arrows, a quiver, and a coat of armour.

The king of Kashi had a beautiful daughter called Sashikala. She had all the noble qualities that a princess should possess. She had heard that in the forest adjoining the ashram of sage Bhardwaj, there lived a prince who was not only highly accomplished, but was also as beautiful as Kamdev, the god of love, and that his name was Sudarshan. She made a decision in her mind to marry him, and from then on she surrendered to this idea.

One auspicious night, the Devi Ambika appeared in Sashikala's dream and spoke to her in pure, clear tones. The Devi said – O slender and beautiful

maiden! Ask for any boon. Sudarshan is my devotee. Heed me and marry this prince who fulfils all expectations. Sashikala was filled with awe and joy at receiving this auspicious vision, that she kept laughing aloud. Each time she remembered the dream, her face would light up with joy. Her mother asked her again and again, the reason for her happiness, but she was too shy to tell. She narrated her entire dream to her close friend. One day the doe-eyed princess, accompanied by her friends and attendants, strolled into the forest. The perfume of champa flowers pervaded the air, and the princess began plucking the flowers. Just then she saw a young brahmin seated on a deer, coming towards her. She asked him, in gentle tones, from which region he had come. The brahmin said – I come from the ashram of sage Bhardwaj on a very important errand. Is there something you want to know.

Sashikala said – O most fortunate one! What object is there in the ashram which is most wonderful, most valuable, most praiseworthy, and most pleasing to the eye.

The brahmin replied – O auspicious one! There resides in that ashram a prince called Sudarshan, son of King Dhruvsandhi. His qualities match his name. Truly he is most beautiful to behold, and those who have not seen him have deprived their eyes of a most pleasing sight. The creator, Shri Brahma, seems to have concentrated all the good qualities in him. I consider him the ocean of goodness. He is the most suitable husband for you. Your union has been pre-ordained, just like a precious stone, and gold.

CHAPTER 3 Episodes 18 – 19

18 - 19 Princess Sashikala, in her mind, acknowledges Sudarshan as her husband. Her mother Queen of Kashi's advice to her. Sashikala's declaration; and holding of Swayamvara

Vyasji says – Hearing the brahmin's description of Sudarshan, Sashikala's heart overflowed with admiration and affection for the prince. She had already decided in her mind that he would be her husband. She became fearful and despondent. She confided in her close friend – If just by hearing about him my body reacts with good vibrations, then surely he belongs to a gracious family. I have seen this prince in my dream. He is still an innocent youth, and as radiant as the god of love. Since then I cannot get his image out of my thoughts. O dear friend! Everything has begun to seem strange to me. The sandal paste which is brought for my bath appears like poison; necklaces look like serpents; and the gentle rays of the sun seem to burn like fire. My mind does not find peace, either in the palace, the forests, the mountains or the lakes. By day or by night, none of the luxuries of the palace give me any comfort. My silken bed, the betel leaves, the songs and dances, -- nothing pleases me. Nor do any of the sights satisfy my eyes. Now my only desire is to go to that forest where the prince lives. But I must avoid spoiling the reputation of the clan. So I cannot take such a step. Unfortunately my father is not keen to hold a swayamvara. If he did, I could have expressed my choice of a husband. I know there are thousands of wealthy and highly accomplished princes; but I am not interested. My mind is set on Prince Sudarshan, even if he has been dispossessed of his kingdom.

Vyasji says: Prince Sudarshan had no companions, nor did he possess a kingdom or wealth. Neither was he a famous warrior. He lived the life of an ascetic, living in the forest and eating fruits and roots. His only possession was the invaluable and priceless Kambeej (seed mantra of the desire) mantra of Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, enthroned in his heart. It never left his attention, even for a moment; and the chanting was unbroken and continuous.

One night, that most radiant and effulgent Devi Jagaddambika, gave him a Darshan of Her Poorna-Brahma Swaroop (the entire Universe as Her Form). This compassionate and benevolent Goddess grants untold wealth and well-being to Her devotees.

The ruler of Shringverpur , King Nishad, came to Sudarshan and presented him a grand chariot drawn by four magnificent horses. The chariot was well appointed, and equipped with necessary implements and weapons, and was decorated with banners and pennants. He was convinced in his mind, that Sudarshan was a valiant and victorious king, and he extended this gesture of friendship. Sudarshan was pleased, and he gave him a proper welcome; and offered him flowers and fruits from the forest. After King Nishad left, the sages and munis who were meditating in the forest expressed their pleasure. They blessed him and said – By the grace of the Devi, you will shortly become an independent king. This is the immutable truth. There is no doubt in this. O chaste and pious One! The Devi Bhagawati is gracious, compassionate and benevolent. She gives light to the whole world. She is pleased with you. Now you have even got a friend. You must have no fear. Then they spoke to Manorama – O one with the beautiful face! Now your son is going to become the emperor of the world.

Manorama said – Most holy rishis! May your prophecy come to pass. My son will always be at your service. There is no obstacle that cannot be overcome by the power of prayer. Take this example. I have neither army nor wealth; nor ministers; nor powerful allies. So my son can never hope to get a kingdom. But you have the power of prayer and meditation, and by your blessings and pure desire, I have no doubt in my mind, that my son will definitely become king.

Vyasji says – Sudarshan had completed all his studies and acquired the necessary knowledge. Whenever he mounted his chariot and went out, he appeared so glorious and powerful, that it seemed as if he was accompanied by a big army - Akshowhini Sena - (which, when complete, consists of 109350 foot soldiers, 65610 horses, 21870 chariots, and 21870 elephants). Sudarshan continued to chant the beeja mantra, that he had learned as a child. It was the effect of this mantra, that caused him to shine with so much shakti and effulgence. One cannot imagine any other cause.

"Kleem" is the beeja, the seed energy of the desire of Adi Shakti Devi Bhagawati. Any person who receives this mantra as deeksha from a Guru, and chants it with reverence and single minded attention, gets all his pure desires fulfilled. O King! There is no obstacle or problem in heaven or on earth, that cannot be resolved by the grace of Devi Bhagawati. They are most unfortunate, ill fated, and afflicted by disease and disorder; who cannot maintain deep and constant devotion to Adi Shakti Bhagawati Jagaddambika while performing Puja to Her Holy Lotus Feet. She is the same Devi, who in ancient times was worshipped as the source, the Mother of all the gods. She has descended on this earth, and abides in all, in the form of Buddhi – wisdom;

Mathi – intellect; Kirti – fame and honour; Dhriti – firmness and steadiness; Lakshmi – prosperity; Smriti – memory; Shakti – strength and energy; Shraddha – faith. This is the absolute truth. Those who fail to recognise this, are those whose senses and faculties are overpowered and clouded by maya. They waste their energy and intelligence by entering into controversies and disputes. They burden their minds, and bodies, in the pursuit of worldly pleasures, instead of decorating their lives by worshipping the most benevolent, the most loving Devi Bhagawati. Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Indra, Yama, Kuber, Vayu, Agni, Sun, Ashwinikumars, Adityas (twelve forms of the sun, appearing distinct in each of the twelve months of the year); Vasus, Rudra, Vishwadev and Marudgan (deities of the wind) – all of whom are entrusted with the Creation, Preservation and Dissolution of the universe – are all constantly engrossed in worshipping and meditating on Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba. All learned persons pay obeisance and reverence to Adi Shakti Parabrahma Swaroopini – (the entire universe is Her Form). Sudarshan forever enthroned this magnificent Goddess in his heart, and in his attention. She who exists as Vidya and Avidya (knowledge and non-knowledge) is the very same Parabrahma. She is not easily accessible to those who are casual. It is only through meditation that the yoga, the connection, takes place. She is the destination for those who desire salvation. It is only through Her that one can know and experience the Almighty. Sudarshan constantly meditated on that Supreme Being, Who is daily manifesting Herself in this threefold creation. He lived in the forest and experienced more peace and joy than he could ever have got by possessing a kingdom.

Sashikala's father, realising that his daughter was of marriageable age, started careful preparations for the holding of a swayamvara. Learned elders have prescribed three kinds of swayamvars, and the rules are the same for kings and commoners.

"Iccha Swayamvar"- where the bride chooses the husband herself by garlanding him.

"Prann Swayamvar"- where the contenders have to fulfil a condition. Like Shri Rama strung the bow of Shri Shiva to marry Sita. And

"Shouryashulk" Swayamvar"- where the most valiant and brave hero becomes the bridegroom. This last swayamvar is only for warriors.

In King Subahu's durbar, arrangements were made for "Iccha Swayamvar". Architects and artisans built many platforms, and these were draped in rich silks. Many canopies and pavillions were installed. All materials and essential requirements for the marriage ceremony were collected. Sashikala began to be afraid. She called her trusted friend and requested her to go and tell her mother, in confidence, that in her heart she had already chosen the son of King Dhruvsandhi, to be her husband. She could not choose anyone else. And, it was with the blessings of Bhagawati Jagaddamba that Sudarshan was already her husband.

Vyasji says: Sashikala's friend was very gentle and soft spoken. She took the mother to a private place, and told her in sweet tones – O chaste and virtuous one! Your daughter is very distressed. She has sent me to you with a prayer. Please hear it; and try to do something that will be benevolent for her. There lives in the holy ashram of sage Bhardwaj, a prince called Sudarshan, son of King Dhruvsandhi; and in her heart she has acknowledged him as her husband. Therefore she cannot accept any of the princes who will be coming for the Swayamvara.

Vyasji says – After hearing Sashikala's friend, the Queen met her husband at the earliest opportunity, and told him of their daughter's decision. The King

began to laugh and addressed his wife (daughter of the King of Vidarbha). He said – O beautiful One! Don't you know who this Sudarshan is? He has been banished from his kingdom, and is living in the forest with his mother. Raja Virsen was his grandfather, and was killed by Yudhajit. O You with beautiful eyes! How can that pauper aspire to marry my daughter! It is possible that she does not mind his situation; but still, you should tell her that the princes who are coming, are, one wealthier than the other.

Vyasji says – Heeding her husband's instructions, the Queen went to Sashikala. She affectionately placed her on her lap, and gave her comfort and encouragement, and said –Daughter! Why are you thinking unpleasant and improper thoughts. It has caused your father great distress, because Sudarshan is an ill-fated youth, who has been deprived of his kingdom, and has no safe harbour. Also, he does not have any money. His friends and relations have forsaken him. He lives in the forest with his mother, and eats only fruits and roots to satisfy his hunger. Such an unfortunate and weak inhabitant of the forest is not a fitting husband for you. O Daughter! Besides Sudarshan there are innumerable intelligent, handsome, honourable and wealthy crown princes, who are worthy suitors. This same Sudarshan's brother is a fine youth who rules the kingdom of Kosaldesh. He is very handsome, and possesses all good qualities. O beautiful daughter with dark eyes and eyebrows! I have heard one more thing which I want to tell you. Listen! King Yudhajit is constantly making efforts to kill Sudarshan. He had fought a mighty battle with Virsen and killed him, to crown his grandson Shatrujit as king. He even took an army and went to Sage Bhardwaj's ashram. The sage advised him to return without Shatrujit. So how can this prince be worthy to marry you.

Sashikala said – O loving mother! That prince who lives in the forest, is the most suitable one for me. Just like Sukhanya obeyed her father Sharyati, and

married Chyavan muni and spent her life attending on him; so also I wish to spend my life in the service of Sudarshan. Women who are virtuous and devoted wives, not only attain heaven, but also receive the gift of moksha. Unconditional devotion to the husband brings blessings and happiness. Devi Jagaddambika Herself appeared in my dream and directed me to marry Sudarshan. So how can I even think of choosing any other prince.

Vyasji says – In this way the princess placed before her mother, her reasons for her decision. The Queen conveyed all this to the King. But arrangements for the swayamvar continued. The day drew near and the princess became restless. She secretly sent a brahmin, with a message, to the ashram of Sage Bhardwaj. The message was for Sudarshan.

My father and mother have made arrangements for a swayamvara for me. Many rich and famous kings will be attending. In my heart, and in every way, I have acknowledged you as my husband. The Devi Bhagawati appeared in my dream and advised me that you, who possess all divine qualities, will become my husband. I would rather consume poison, or immolate myself in the holy fire; than marry any prince that my parents choose. I have promised myself to you through my mind, voice and actions. By the grace of Devi Bhagawati, everything will work out. Please come to the palace today. Nothing, and no one, can change what has been ordained by the Devi, who is the Supreme Creator of this universe. Even Shankar and all the gods, are under Her control.

The brahmin immediately went and gave the message to Sudarshan, and convinced him to come to the palace the same day.

Vyasji says – Seeing her son making preparations to go to the swayamvara, Manorama began to worry. Her body trembled with fear, and she imagined all

kinds of dangers. Tears fell from her eyes, and she said to Sudarshan – Son! Where are you going? That place is only for Kings. You have no protection, and your enemies are very powerful. Please think clearly. Yudhajit will definitely attend the swayamvara, and he is waiting for an opportunity to kill you. There is no one to help you. Son! Please do not go there. You are my only child, and if anything happens to you, I will have no one in this world. Yudhajit killed my father, and I am so fearful that if you go alone, he will harm you.

Sudarshan said – O auspicious Mother! Whatever has to happen, will happen. It is no use thinking about it. It is out of obedience to the will of Devi Jagaddambika, that I am going to the Swayamvara today. O You who have given me birth! You are a Kshatriya Queen, and it is not proper for you to be afraid. I am under the protection of Devi Bhagawati, and I have no fear whatsoever.

Vyasji said – Before leaving, Sudarshan went and took his mother's blessings. She said – May Devi Jagaddambika protect you from the front. May Parvati protect you from the back and from both sides. May Bhagawati Shiva protect you everywhere. May Bhagawati Varahi protect you in difficulty. May Goddess Durga comfort you in sorrow. May Kalika protect you on the battlefield, and when you are afraid and surrounded by enemies, may Parameshwari protect you. When you enter the pavillion, may Goddess Matangi protect you; and during the Swayamvara, may Bhagawati Sowmya protect you. May Bhagawati Bhavani, who cuts the knot of maya, protect you in the court of kings. May Devi Girija protect you in the mountains; Devi Chamunda protect you on the crossroads; and in the jungles the eternal Shree Kamga protect you. O Son! You who are a descendant of the clan of Raghu, in the event of battle may Bhagawati Vaishnavi protect you. When surrounded by enemies on the battlefield, may Bhagawati Bhairavi protect you. Mahamaya

Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari is the mother of the whole world. She is Sat-Chit-Anand. May all the gods protect you at all times.

Vyasji says – After blessing Sudarshan, Manorama insisted on accompanying him. She said – It is not possible for me to leave you even for a moment. Wherever you are going, you must take me with you. She took a maid with her, and prepared to leave. All the brahmins blessed them, and they left. Three of them rode in the chariot and reached the Kingdom of Kashi. King Subahu received them with a proper welcome, and made arrangements for their stay in a beautiful bhavan. Food and water were immediately put before them, and attendants looked after all their needs. Many kings and princes had come from far and near, and Sudarshan met them. King Yudhajit was there with his grandson Shatrujit. Kings also came from Karush (referred to in the Ramayana, as being on the banks of the Ganga); Madra (an ancient country lying between the rivers Ravi and Jhelum); Sindhu; Mahishmati (ancient kingdom in Southern India). They were all valiant and brave kings. Splendid warriors had also come from the kingdoms of Panchal, Karnataka, Chola, Vidarbha and other mountainous regions. All of them had brought armies with them, complete with foot soldiers, cavalry, horses and elephants. Hosts of soldiers moved all over the area. Other petty chiefs had also come to witness the Swayamvara, and they had arrived on caparisoned elephants and decorated horses. Princes met each other cordially, and many observed that Prince Sudarshan had come in a very simple and quiet manner, and had come alone, with his mother. All the other princes and Kings, had come with large armies and impressive weapons. They wondered how Sudarshan could even think that the princess would choose him. Just then King Yudhajit joined them. He said – In order to win the princess, I will even push Sudarshan into the jaws of death. There is no doubt in this.

The King of Kerala, who was well versed in the ethics and codes of conduct, said – O King! This Swayamvara is being held so that the princess can choose freely, whichever King or Prince she wishes to marry. It is neither right, nor desirable, to enter into any dispute or violence. This is not a Swayamvara where the bride is won by force. It is also not proper to offer wealth to obtain the bride. Here the princess has the freedom to marry whomever she chooses. So there is no cause for debate or dispute. O King! It is well known that you caused Prince Sudarshan to go into exile, and unjustly installed your grandson on the throne. Prince Sudarshan, born in the Raghu Dynasty, is the son of the King of Kosala, and the rightful heir. How can you kill him? If you do, you will have to pay a heavy price for the crime you are committing. You must know, that there presides over all, the Supreme Almighty, Father of the Universe. Good always prevails over evil. King! Heed my advice. Do not commit this sin. Overcome the temptation and renounce your evil plan. Your grandson is also here, and he is a fine, accomplished King. It is possible that the princess may choose him. There are many mighty kings and princes here, and she is free to choose any one of them, also. So there is no question of dispute or dishonour; and a wise and intelligent person should not harbour intentions of using force in this matter.

Vyasji says – To this Yudhajit replied – O King of Kerala. You are known as a chaste, truthful, and virtuous king. You have described the correct ethics for a Swayamvara. But O King of noble birth and gentle breeding! When there are such grand and powerful kings present, would you approve of some unworthy suitor marrying this jewel of a princess. It is like a jackal stealing away the prize from a tiger. Just consider whether Sudarshan is worthy of getting this beautiful princess. Maharaj! The power of a brahmin is the Ved; and the power of a King is the Bow. I firmly believe that in a royal marriage, it is acceptable to win by strength and force. The most powerful and strong prince should win the

princess. There is no place here for the weak and poor. This rule should be followed. Otherwise there may be an unpleasant reaction, and even fighting might erupt.

This caused a stir among the assembled kings and princes. King Subahu was called to the council hall. They said – O King! In this Swayamvara, all the rules governing royalty should be observed. Please tell us clearly what kind of a Swayamvara you are conducting. Have you already decided on whom your daughter is going to marry.

King Subahu said – O Most honourable Kings! The truth of the matter is that my daughter has decided in her heart that she is going to marry Sudarshan. I have tried my best to advise her, but she is not changing her decision. What can I do? I am not able to influence her in any way. Also, Sudarshan has already arrived; and even though he has no army, or guards, there is no sign of fear in him.

Vyasji says – Then all the kings requested that Sudarshan should be brought to meet them. He came alone and unattended; and took his seat in a peaceful and dignified manner. They spoke to him in gentle tones – O Prince who is most auspicious! You have lived a life of great renunciation and penance. Did you receive an invitation, or have you just come here on your own. You have no army or ministers; kingdom or wealth. Nor are you physically strong or powerful. Then why have you come? Please tell us the truth. Many kings have come prepared for battle, and have brought large armies with them. They have all come with the intention of winning the beautiful princess. Your brother, the brave Shatrujit, has also come for the same purpose. His grandfather Yudhajit is here to give him all support. What prompted you to come to a place like this, without support or protection? After you answer all

our questions, you can decide whether you wish to stay or leave. You are free to do whatever you wish.

Sudarshan replied – Army, power, wealth, kingdom, fortress, friends, guards, kings and allies – even though I do not possess any of these, on hearing about the Swayamvara I have come to watch. Devi Bhagawati appeared in my dream and directed me to come here. I obeyed, without any hesitation. I do not have any other ambition. I am only carrying out the directive of the Devi Jagaddambika. Whatever the Devi Jagaddishwari has ordained, only that will come to pass, and nothing else. There should be no doubt about this. O Royal Kings! In this whole wide world, I have no enemies. I see this whole creation as a reflection of Bhagawati Jagaddambika. If anyone bears enmity towards me, or wishes to harm me, even there Bhagawati Mahamaya presides over the action. I do not put my attention on the ill feelings of others. Most respected Kings! Whatever has to happen, will happen. No one can erase a single moment. Then why should I worry. I am always surrendered to the Lotus Feet of the Mother. It is this Bhagawati Jagaddamba Who gives shakti to all the Gods, demons and human beings, as well as all living things. Without this shakti nothing is possible. Whomever She wishes to make a king, he becomes king; and whomever She wishes to become a pauper, he becomes a pauper. So do not worry about anything. She is the most powerful mother. She is the Primordial Shakti, and without Her energy, even the Gods cannot move. I am just an ordinary mortal. Whether there is adequate strength in me or not, whatever situation I am in, I am satisfied. It is in obedience to Her command that I have come here today. Whatever She wills, will happen. I have no doubt in my mind. By worrying I cannot achieve anything. You also should not worry. I am telling you I have no fear. It is the concern of that Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, Who has directed me to come here.

Vyasji says:- The kings listened very carefully to Sudarshan, and when he finished, they looked at each other. They said – Prince! You are very gentle and respectable. But Yudhajit, King of Ujjain, intends to kill you. We feel sad for you, and that is why we are informing you. Give this matter careful consideration, and then take whatever action you deem fit.

Sudarshan said – You are all so kind and unselfish. You have given me good advice, but my mind is made up. I need not repeat all what I said earlier. But no living thing can die at the hands of another, because the entire universe is under the control of the Divine. Nothing, and no one, can be independent of this energy, because it pervades the entire creation. The rule of action and reaction governs all beings, and every one has to pay for his deeds, and misdeeds. Philosophers and learned men have mentioned three kinds of karmas – by thought or attention; by present actions, and by destiny or fate. Time, action and disposition or tendency – the whole world rests on this. Without the advent of time, even the gods cannot kill a human being. If at all a human being is killed by another, then it is merely the efficient causal. The great destroyer is the indestructible Kaal, or Time. For example, my father who was merciful to his enemies, was killed by a lion; and my grandfather died at the hands of Yudhajit. One may take crores of precautions and protection; but when Kaal or Destined Time comes, death is inevitable. On the other hand, if it is the will of God a man may also live for a thousand years. O you Dharmic Kings! I am never in fear of Yudhajit. I have faith in the greatness of God, and my mind is always at peace. My attention never strays, even for a second, from the Lotus Feet of Devi Bhagawati Jagaddambika. The one who has created this universe will look after my benevolence. Whatever good or evil a person has done in his previous life, he will get the fruit in this lifetime. There is no doubt in this. Then why should a person be afraid. When the fruit of previous action comes in the form of punishment, he tries his best to prevent

or neutralise it. Unlike these unwise people, I feel neither fear nor apprehension. Therefore I have come to this assembly of kings without any fear in my heart. As per the advice of the Devi Jagaddambika, I have come here alone and unattended, to witness this grand Swayamvara. I only recognise instructions from Devi Bhagawati. I do not know anyone else. Whatever happiness or sorrow She has ordained for me, I accept. O Kings! I desire that Yudhajit is always happy. I have no enmity with him.

Vyasji says – The kings were very impressed and pleased with Sudarshan. They all went back to their bhavans. Sudarshan also went back quietly and peacefully. The next day, at the auspicious hour, King Subahu invited all the Kings and Princes to the main hall. Many platforms had been erected, and draped with rich silks and velvet cloths. All the Kings arrived, resplendent in jewels and decorations. They all looked like gods seated on their vahanas. They presented a grand spectacle. The hall was filled with guests who had come to witness the Swayamvara. There was eager anticipation to see the beautiful princess. They all wondered who the fortunate king would be. If she placed the garland on the prince in exile, then surely fighting would erupt. The musicians began to play, and the sound of music rose to the sky.

The princess was being adorned by her maids and friends. She wore a rich and heavy silk saree, and jewels enhanced her radiance. She also wore a garland of fragrant flowers. She was in full bridal finery, and looked like the Goddess Lakshmi Herself. Her father said to her – Daughter! Take this Varmala and come with me to the assembly hall. Listen my daughter! There are assembled there, many Kings and Princes. Choose wisely, a king or prince who is possessed of virtues and dignity, and who comes from a good clan . All of them are seated in a decorated pavillion. You may choose a husband according to your desire.

Vyasji says – Princess Sashikala was a quiet person and didn't speak much. But she felt she had to express her chaste and holy sentiments to her father. She spoke in sweet and respectful tones – O Revered Father! It is my earnest prayer that I do not wish to appear before the gathering. Other maidens may not object to acting like puppets and going in front of aspiring suitors. But I have read in the Holy Scriptures that a woman should only lay eyes on the man she is going to marry, and no other. A woman who appears in front of a large gathering of men, endangers her chastity, because the men cast adulterous and covetous eyes on her, desiring her as a wife. Even when a noble-born maiden reaches the swayamvara hall with a garland in her hand, she is no different from a woman of low moral character. These unfortunate women, go into the marketplace to find someone who will support them. They get habituated to surveying men, and judging them. Must I also go and make my selection in the same manner. Can I not observe the procedure laid down by our ancestors? It is not proper for me to go there. I wish to follow the principles of a virtuous wife. I cannot go there, survey the men with a view to selecting a husband, and then place the garland on the one I have chosen. O Gracious Father! You are aware that in my heart I have chosen Sudarshan as my husband. I cannot think of marrying anyone else. Therefore, if you desire my benevolence, please fix an auspicious date and perform my marriage to Sudarshan.

Vyasji says – O King! On hearing his daughter's decision, King Subahu was filled with anxiety and concern. He thought – what my daughter says is correct, but what do I do now. All the kings and princes are here with their attendants and armies. They are extremely strong and powerful, and will fight at the slightest provocation. They have all taken their seats on the dais. If I tell them at this late stage that the princess is refusing to come for the Swayamvara, they will kill me. They are all proud and haughty. I have neither a large enough army,

nor a fortress to which I can escape. This slightly built Sudarshan is also without friend, army or wealth. My position is very precarious. King Subahu pondered for some time, and then went to the assembly hall. He greeted the kings and princes, and then spoke in humble tones – O most noble and illustrious Kings! I am very sorry that my daughter is refusing to come for the Swayamvara. Her mother and I have advised her, but still she refuses. I am your servant, and I bow my head at your feet. Please stay for the puja. I will give gifts of precious gems, rich robes, elephants and horses, and chariots. Please forgive me. The princess is not in my control, and even when I threatened to punish her, she is willing to die. This is causing me great sorrow and distress. You are great and noble souls, very auspicious and very forgiving. This disobedient princess can be of no interest to you. I am in your debt. Please allow me to be of service to you. And please, consider the princess as a daughter of your house.

Vyasji says – Most of the kings remained silent; but Yudhajit's eyes turned red with anger. He was furious. He turned to the king and said – You are most foolish! How can you speak to us after insulting and dishonouring us. If you had any doubts about your daughter, you should not have arranged this Swayamvara. Why did you invite all these kings. They accepted your invitation, and came here, and now you say there is no Swayamvara. This is unacceptable. Are you going to bypass these kings and get your daughter married to Sudarshan. This is mean and vile behaviour. You have organised this Swayamvara without any thought or consideration. If you make Sudarshan your son-in-law, I will kill both of you. Then I will get the princess married to my grandson. While I am here, no other king can think of marrying the princess. Then who is this penniless Sudarshan to challenge me? When he was in Sage Bhardwaj's ashram I almost killed him. It was only when the sage intervened, that I left him. But now I will not spare his life. Now you, your

Queen, and your daughter give this matter careful consideration, and agree to the marriage of the princess with my grandson. This way you can become my relative and can be under my protection. Sudarshan has neither kingdom nor protection. What happiness can he give her. Before giving a precious daughter, one has to consider the lineage, wealth, strength, appearance, size of kingdom, fortress or stronghold; and allies that the bridegroom possesses. Just marrying for happiness is of no use. You should have considered all the merits, as well as all the permanent and indestructible possessions, before making arrangements for a marriage. You are my friend, and I am giving you advice for your benevolence. You bring your daughter, with all her attendants, to the Swayamvara. If she chooses any prince, other than Sudarshan, I will have no dispute with you. The marriage should be such that all your wishes are fulfilled. O King! All the Kings and Princes assembled here, are from famous clans; are very wealthy, and very powerful. They are suitable in every possible way, and there can be no objection to her choosing any one of them. So you may go and bring your daughter. Do not get into unnecessary conflict with all of us.

Vyasji says – Hearing Yudhajit's threats, Subahu was very perturbed. Breathing heavily he went to his palace, and spoke to his wife – Most gracious wife! You are aware of all virtues and merits. Go and tell our daughter that there is turbulence and conflict in the assembly hall. What action am I to take. I cannot take a decision alone, as I am subject to your wishes.

Vyasji says – The Queen immediately went to the Princess and said – Your father is extremely distressed. The assembled kings have reacted very strongly to your refusal to come for the Swayamvara. The situation has become serious, and a source of great tension for your father. Please give up Sudarshan and choose some other king. If you insist on marrying Sudarshan, then that

powerful Yudhajit will certainly kill both of you, and your father and me, also. He is full of ego, and very proud of his strength. O beautiful daughter with eyes like a deer! If you wish for your happiness as well as ours, please choose another prince.

The princess listened to whatever her parents said, but did not change her decision. She said in fearless tones – O Father! What you say is true. But you are aware of my decision. I cannot leave Sudarshan and choose any other prince. If you are afraid of the princes, and if this is causing you pain and grief, then please hand me over to Sudarshan. He will take me quietly in his chariot, and we will leave the kingdom. After that, whatever is in my fate, will happen. Whatever has been ordained by the Divine, cannot be changed by any one. So we should not worry about this. Whatever is pre-destined will happen at all costs. No one should doubt this.

King Subahu said – A wise person should not act rashly. Those who are learned in the Vedas, advise that it is dangerous to cross the wishes of a majority. Then how can I send you out of the kingdom with that prince. After you go, these kings will definitely destroy me in every way. Daughter! If you are agreeable, I can put a condition in the Swayamvar, in the way that Raja Janaka did for Sitaji. The challenge was, to string the bow of Shri Shankar. I can also set some impossible task as a pre-condition. This seems to be the only way out for us. Whoever succeeds, will marry you; whether it is Sudarshan or some other brave and valiant prince. No one can have any objection to this, and I can perform your marriage with all due ceremonies.

The princess said – Father! I have no hesitation or doubt in my mind, that it is foolish to do so. In my heart I have already chosen Sudarshan. Whatever deed one commits, whether good or bad, it is the mind which gives the inclination.

When my mind is already set on marrying Sudarshan, why should I change it. O Father! When I come for the Swayamvar, I will be under subjection to all. It is possible that more than one prince succeeds in performing the task set by you. Then, in any case, there will be dissension and conflict. What action will you be able to take, if that happens. I do not wish for such an ambiguous and uncertain situation. Therefore, without any worry or anxiety, perform our marriage as per the custom, and let me go with Sudarshan. The Devi who blesses all those who praise Her, that same Devi Chandika, will protect us. Offer obeisance to Paramshakti Bhagawati, and discreetly perform this ceremony. It will be advisable to go to the hall and respectfully request the kings to assemble for the Swayamvara in the morning. Then, tonight, according to Vedic rites, you may give me in marriage to Sudarshan. Then, after offering him the prescribed dowry, you may send us away. Sudarshan, son of King Dhruvsandhi, will certainly take me away. After we leave, there will definitely be anger and hatred; and many will want to fight. If that happens, Bhagawati Chandika will help us; and with Her grace, Sudarshan will face the enemy. In this battle, if Sudarshan is killed, I will immediately commit sati. Father! I pray for your good fortune. Please remain in the palace with your guards. I will go alone with Sudarshan.

Vyasji says – O King! Hearing his daughter speak thus, King Subahu made his decision. He accepted what she suggested; and gave her his assurance.

CHAPTER 3 Episodes 20 – 21

20 – 21 Marriage of Sashikala and Sudarshan. War of the Princes. Manifestation of the Devi. Death of Yudhajit and Shatrujit. Worship of the Devi by Subahu.

Vyasji says – King Subahu was a pure and holy soul. He went to the kings and said – Most respected Kings and Princes! Please retire to your apartments. The Swayamvara has been postponed to tomorrow. All arrangements for your food and comfort have been made. Please accept them. Kindly assemble here in the morning, and we will have the Swayamvara. My daughter is not in a position to attend today. I will advise her, and bring her here tomorrow. In our wise society, there is no place for strife or anger. We are lenient with those who are under our protection, and I beg you to forigve the princess. Tomorrow morning we will bring the princess, and we will conduct the Iccha Swayamvar. The princess will pick a husband of her choice. Please be present in the morning.

The kings accepted, and retired to their respective quarters. They remained in the vicinity, to ensure that nothing further happened, to prevent the Swayamvara.

Deep inside the palace, a marriage canopy was erected. King Subahu fixed an auspicious time, and invited learned brahmins to perform the marriage ceremony. The bridegroom, Prince Sudarshan, was anointed and bathed, and dressed in appropriate, rich robes. He was brought to the mandap, and pujas

were performed. Subahu was a very illustrious and dignified King. According to the custom, he gifted to his son-in-law, water for rinsing the mouth, two sets of clothes, valuable jewels, two kundals (heavy rings for the ears), and a cow. Then he brought his daughter, and according to Vedic rites, performed the marriage. The open hearted Sudarshan accepted these gifts graciously. At that moment he felt that Sashikala was as superior as the daughter of Kuber himself, and he felt humbled. Even the ministers honoured Sudarshan by offering him garments. They had fearlessly accompanied the bridegroom to the marriage mandap. Ladies with artistic talents decorated the princess, and dressed her in bridal apparel. They seated her in an ornamental palki (palanquin), and brought her to the marriage mandap. An altar had been built for the sacred fire, and the priests had already installed the havan. The bride and groom offered parched rice to the sacred fire, and then they did pradakshina (circumambulating the sacred fire with the right side towards it). Then all the customs of the clan and dynasty of Sudarshan were fully observed. King Subahu gave two hundred chariots drawn by well bred horses. The chariots were richly decorated, and equipped with bows and arrows. The King of Kashi owned elephants as tall and massive as the mountains. With great love he presented to Sudarshan as dowry, one hundred and twenty five caparisoned elephants, decorated with golden ornaments. One hundred maids, complete with gold ornaments; and an equal number of female elephants were also given. One thousand guards, resplendent in uniforms and fully armed; all kinds of precious gems, silk robes, rich bed covers and blankets; appropriate sacred objects and materials for worship; many stately mansions and places of residence were also given. King Subahu also gave two thousand thoroughbred horses from Sindhudesh; together with three thousand huge camels, capable of moving heavy loads. Two hundred brightly painted bullock carts were laden with foodgrains, ghee and other provisions.

All this was the dowry that King Subahu gave with his daughter, Princess Sashikala.

Then King Subahu went before Manorama, and spoke to her with bowed head and folded hands. O Royal Lady! You belong to a superior and honourable clan, and are a Queen. I am your servant. So please say to me whatever you wish.

Manorama replied in sweet and humble tones – O King! May you always be blessed. May your clan grow and prosper. You have greatly honoured me by giving your most precious daughter to my son. Bards and minstrels are expert in singing praises of glory and splendour. I am not the daughter of a poet, so I do not know how to adequately describe your great qualities. By this alliance we have become one family, so it is not necessary to praise you. You are a renowned and powerful king, and by this marriage my son has been elevated to the heights of Mount Sumeru. You are most virtuous and righteous. How can I adequately sing your praises. You have given your daughter to my son, knowing that he has been displaced from his kingdom. What a noble act! Sudarshan lives in the forest. He has no wealth. He survives on wild fruits. His father died many years ago. He has no army. And yet, you passed over all the eligible kings, and gave your daughter to my son. This is no ordinary decision. It is a normal practice to make an alliance with a person of equal rank, status and wealth. In his present situation, who will ever consider Sudarshan as a suitable bridegroom for his daughter. So many wealthy, powerful and valiant kings have come here, and at the risk of incurring their displeasure, you have made this decision. I bow to your strength of will and tranquility of mind.

Hearing Manorama's words of praise and appreciation, King Subahu was pleased. He spoke to her with folded hands – This kingdom of mine is very

wide and famous. Please accept it. Henceforth I will function as Chief of your army. If you don't agree, at least accept half my kingdom . It is fitting that you should stay here with your son and enjoy the comforts of a palace. It is against my sentiments to see you living in the forest instead of Kashi. Yes. It is certain that the kings will all be angry. I will go and explain the situation to them and try to make peace. I will accept whatever demands they make, either for penalty or punishment. If they do not agree, then of course, there will be war. Good always triumphs over evil. So the side which is dharmic will win. Those who fight an unjust war cannot be victorious. Those who support adharma, are wrong, and cannot win.

Subahu's pronouncement was firm and unwavering. Manorama was in a meditative state, and began to speak of his benevolence. She said – O King! May you prosper. May you and your progeny rule long and fearlessly. My son also, will rule the kingdom of Ayodhya. There is no doubt in this. Now please give me permission to return to my abode. Devi Bhagawati Jagaddambika will bless you. I always worship the most adorable Devi Bhagawati Jagaddambika. Therefore, you need not have any worries about me. In this way Subahu and Manorama addressed other, with utmost respect.

Morning dawned. And when the kings discovered that the marriage had already taken place, they burst into fiery rage. They came out of their rooms and shouted angrily that Sudarshan was not fit to marry a princess. They said – Today we will kill that dishonourable and disgraceful Subahu and Prince Sudarshan; and snatch away the princess and the kingdom. Otherwise, we will have to return to our kingdoms in shame. Can all of you hear the sounds of drums, tambourines and conch? Songs and music are floating in the air. It is evident that King Subahu has completed the marriage ceremony. He has deceived us with sweet talk, and has carried out all the formalities of the

marriage. So now, what should we do? Let us give this matter due consideration, make a decision, and act accordingly. Just then Subahu, unparalleled in dignity and majesty, and matchless in virtues, approached them. He had just completed the marriage ceremony of his daughter, and he had come to invite them for a reception. He was accompanied by prominent citizens, and close friends. Seeing him, the kings did not move. They were silent with anger, and remained seated. Subahu bowed before them and spoke humbly and with folded hands – I respectfully invite all of you to come to my house and have food. The princess has married Sudarshan. In the circumstances there is nothing that I can do now. I would request you to be gracious and pardon her.

Hearing this, the kings shook with rage. They said – King! We have eaten. You may go to your house. You have taken your own decision and acted accordingly. Now go home and complete any other task that is still to be done.

King Subahu became apprehensive and fearful, and turned towards his home. He thought – All these kings are filled with rancour and hatred. They are capable of doing anything in their anger. His mind was filled with foreboding. After he left, the kings made a decision – "We will block the road, and kill Sudarshan, and take away his bride." There were others who just wanted to leave the place and go home. They did not wish to take revenge on Sudarshan. The other kings formed a barrier across Sudarshan's route. King Subahu returned to his palace and set about completing all the formalities. For six days feasts were prepared for Sudarshan. Then, in consultation with his ministers, the appropriate dowry was given. When the king heard from his emissiaries that the other kings and princes had blocked all roads, he was overcome with sadness. Seeing that, his virtuous son-in-law said – Please give us permission to leave. We will go without any fear. We will go to the holy ashram of Sage

Bhardwaj, and select a place nearby, to live. O faultless One! Do not fear the kings and princes. Bhagawati Jaganmata will protect us all.

Vyasji says – The king gave due consideration to what Sudarshan said. Then he surrendered to Mother Jagaddamba, and made arrangements for their departure. Sudarshan left, and Subahu followed with a large army. Sudarshan was wearing all the adornments of a royal bridegroom, and was seated in the chariot with his bride. He was escorted by many chariots. As he left the palace, he noticed the armies of all the kings. Subahu also saw the armies, and he felt alarmed. But Sudarshan looked calm and peaceful. He put his attention on Bhagawati Jagaddambika, and meditated on Her Lotus Feet, and experienced in his entire being, a total surrender. The single syllable kaambeej is the most paramount of all mantras. He began chanting the sacred sound, and both he and his new bride felt calm and fearless. With a great battle cry, the kings advanced on them, with the intention of snatching away the princess. King Subahu got ready to attack, but Sudarshan restrained him. Still the kings who were intent on killing each other, declared war. Sounds of conch and drums filled the air. Shatrujit was the first to appear with a fearsome army. His grandfather was beside him in full battle dress. Shatrujit was Sudarshan's brother, and still he desired to kill him. Intoxicated with hatred and anger, they both struck arrows at Sudarshan. Subahu came to the aid of his son-in-law with his army. A most dreadful battle started. Just then, all of a sudden, the Goddess Durga appeared, seated on a magnificent lion. She carried in all Her arms, weapons of destruction. Her captivating form was adorned with beautiful ornaments. She was draped in Divine Garments which were radiant. A garland of fragrant flowers adorned Her. All the kings were filled with awe and amazement. They asked – Who is this Goddess seated on a lion, and from where did She come? Sudarshan offered pranaams, and then said to Subahu. –" O King! Look! This most worshipful Goddess Ma Bhagawati

has appeared here for my benevolence. She is the most excellent, incomparable Goddess. She is exceedingly compassionate. It is due to Her grace that I am fearless." Then both, Subahu and Sudarshan bowed in adoration to the Devi. The lion began to roar ferociously. This frightened the elephants of the opposing armies. A terrible tempest arose. All quarters became dangerous and fearful. Sudarshan ordered his army chief to proceed in the direction of the kings blocking his path. He said – The Devi has come for our protection. No one can harm us. Go through their ranks. They can do nothing. I have surrendered to the Devi, and in response She has appeared before us. Have no fear whatsoever." Obeying instructions, the army went forward, through the enemy. Yudhajit was furious with the other kings. He said – "Why are you so afraid. This is the right time to kill Sudarshan and take away the bride! This youngster has insulted us, and is now fearlessly passing through us with his bride. Are you afraid of a woman seated on a lion? Show your strength and prowess, and kill Sudarshan, and take away the princess. Don't allow a fox to run away with the lion's prize!" Yudhajit rounded up his army. He took Shatrujit with him and advanced upon Sudarshan. They fitted lethal arrows in their bows, and pulled the strings to their ears. They shot many arrows at Sudarshan. Yudhajit was spiteful and malicious. He rained arrows at Sudarshan but he was able to deflect all of them. This caused the Devi to become angry. She took aim at Yudhajit. Devi Durga was manifesting in many forms, and She had various weapons in all Her Hands. A most fearful battle ensued. Very shortly, both Yudhajit and Shatrujit fell from their chariots. Their life span came to an end.

When the other kings saw this, they were shocked and amazed. King Subahu was overjoyed. He prostrated before Bhagawati Durga, and began to sing Her praises. He said – O Devi who supports the Universe! Obeisance to You, again and again. Everlasting praise to Bhagawati Shiva. Praise to Goddess

Bhagawati Durga who fulfils all desires. O Most Auspicious Mother! Shiva, Shanti, and Vidya, are some of Your Names. You grant the priceless gift of Self Realisation. You pervade the entire creation, and the universe is Your Play. Praise be to You, again and again. We cannot comprehend You, as You are beyond the mind, and the mind is Your Creation. It is clear that You are formless and attributeless, and we are mere mortal beings. You are Param Shakti. It is your nature to remove our sorrows and difficulties. Today You have shown us this! What can I say to adequately praise You. You are sakshat Bhagawati Saraswati. You reside in all beings as intelligence, understanding, movement, and knowledge. What words can I use to describe You, when it is You who presides over the minds of all. You are all encompassing. O Mother! Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh, the principal gods, ceaselessly sing Your praises; and yet they have not succeeded in fully describing You. Then how can I, who have limited intelligence and knowledge, and who have so many faults, even attempt to praise You. But yes, the company of saints, sages and ascetics helps to cleanse the attention. My son-in-law Sudarshan is a true devotee of Yours, and because of his connection, I have had the great blessing of Your darshan. Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Indra, and all the gods have all the divine knowledge. Mother, the very glimpse they have been yearning for, You have so graciously and generously bestowed upon us. And this, without any penance, self restraint, or meditation on my part. Inspite of being so ill equipped and ignorant, You have given me that glimpse, which grants moksha to the whole world. O Devi! Nothing is hidden from You. – You are omniscient. The ganas are constantly engaged in Your worship. It is Your nature to be merciful, and that is how I received this priceless gift. How can I fully describe the mercy You have shown to Sudarshan in his most difficult hour. Both his enemies were very strong and powerful; and You killed them in such a short time. You have shown how merciful You are to your devotees. But this is no difficult task for You, because it is You who sustains and protects

the universe. In Your great love and concern for Your devotee Sudarshan, You destroyed his enemies. You did this to illumine and beautify the total surrender of a devotee. For this reason Sudarshan married my daughter, and was victorious in battle. O Mother! You release Your devotees from the fear of birth and death, and other difficulties. So how can we wonder at the speed with which You fulfil their pure desires. You are completely devoid of sin or merit. You are formless and attributeless. O Mother! You reign supreme over the entire creation. By this darshan my life has been given meaning to itself, and I am most blessed and fortunate. I do not know Your beeja mantra, nor do I know how to sing bhajans. Today, after beholding You with these inadequate eyes, all this knowledge has also come within me.

Vyasji says – The Devi was prasanna (pleased) with Subahu's demonstrations of love and worship. She said to him – O pure and virtuous king. Ask Me for a boon!

CHAPTER 3 Episodes 22 - 23

22 – 23 Subahu receives a boon from the Devi. On the request of the kings, Sudarshan sings the Mahima (description) of the Devi. Enthronement of the Devi in Ayodhya; and coronation of Sudarshan.

Vyasji says – Hearing the Devi, Subahu became filled with vibrations and prostrated before Her. With great devotion he spoke - If we put all the kingdoms of heaven and earth on one side; and a glimpse of Your Divine Form on the other; those material things can never compare with Your darshan, O Devi! There is nothing in the Trilokas that can measure up to this precious, priceless darshan. Devi! What boon can I want. My birth on this earth has been given its full meaning. My only humble prayer is that You bestow on me, resolute, unshakeable, and unswerving bhakti for You. May my attention remain ever connected to Your Lotus Feet. In Your compassion and benevolence, please permit me to enthrone You in Kashi. You are known by the name of Durga. Please protect Kashi and Varanasi as You protected Sudarshan today. Bhagawati Durge! You are the ocean of mercy and compassion. As long as Kashi exists on this earth, please reign over it. That is all I desire. What else can I want!

Vyasji says – After this sincere prayer, Subahu sat before the Devi. Bhagawati Durga spoke - Rajan! I will stay permanently in Kashi. As long as the earth exists I will be in Kashi to protect it from all evils.

Then Sudarshan came there. His whole body was vibrating with Divine grace. He bowed with great humility and began praising the Devi. He said – O Devi! I am so inadequate! How can I fully describe the mercy and compassion that

You have shown me. I am deficient in devotion and worship of You, and still You have protected me in the most amazing manner. The whole world exists because of You. You support even those unfortunate beings who do not have bhakti for You in their hearts. Devi! It is said that You are the creator of the entire universe. After creating, it is You who nourishes and sustains all things, and at the time of dissolution it is You Who causes the destruction and annihilation. So there should be no wonderment at the way You protected me. O Devi! I am Your servant. Please command me. What shall I do. Where shall I go. In future I surrender all my movements, my way of living, and my life to You.

Vyasji says – The Devi, full of mercy, spoke in enchanting tones. –

The Devi said – O Fortunate One! Go to Ayodhya, and in accordance with the maryadas of your dynasty, ascend the throne and start ruling the kingdom. Keep Me always in your attention, and perform pujas to Me. I will look after your welfare, and your kingdom will be firm and stable. It is important that you perform pujas on the eighth day of the lunar fortnight (Ashtami); the fourteenth day of a lunar month (Chaturdashi), and most important of all, on the ninth day (Navami) of each fortnight of a lunar month. O Sinless One! See that you enthrone an image of Me in your kingdom; and pujas should be performed with bhakti and diligence three times a day. During the autumn season (Sharad) in the month of Ashwin (seventh month of the Hindu year), Navaratri Puja should be performed in a very special way, for nine nights. Maharaj! In the months of Chaitra (first month), Ashwin (seventh month), Aashad (fourth month) and Magh (eleventh month) of the Hindu year, the first nine days of the bright half should be celebrated with special festivals. During those days special pujas must be performed. Rajendra! Knowledgeable men

should continuously perform My pujas on the eighth and fourteenth day of Krishnapaksh (dark fortnight).

Vyasji says – After giving these injunctions, Bhagawati Durga, the remover of all sorrows, disappeared. Sudarshan was singing Her praises with extreme modesty and humility. Seeing that the Devi was no longer in their midst, the kings and princes came before Sudarshan and bowed to him so respectfully, it seemed they were paying homage to Lord Indra himself. Subahu also bowed to Sudarshan, and stood there, very pleased and impressed. Then all the kings addressed the King of Ayodhya, Sudarshan. – Maharaj! You are our lord and master; and we are your servants. Please rule over Ayodhya. We are dependent on you for protection. Maharaj! It is due to your devotion that we were fortunate to have a darshan of Jagaddishwari Bhagawati Jagaddamba. This compassionate Devi is Adi Shakti. By Her grace and benevolence one attains the four fruits of righteousness, purpose in life, desire and liberation. You are very saintly and glorious, and your birth on this earth has been fulfilled. Because it is for your sake that the eternal Devi Bhagawati made Her appearance. Rajendra! We have all been ignorant and unacquainted with the power of Bhagawati Chandika, because we have been totally covered by Tamo Guna, and under the attraction and influence of Maya. We have always been engrossed in material wealth, wives and children. We have only been diving in and out of the ocean of illusion, which is teeming with fishes of desires and pleasures. O Auspicious one! You are complete with Nirmal Vidya. Your wisdom is very profound. We wish to know from you all about this great Shakti. – Who She is. From where She manifests. And all about Her power and majesty. Please do tell us. Become the boatman, and steer our boat across the stormy waters. It is the nature of saints to be compassionate. Therefore, O King who are the pride and light of the Raghu Dynasty! Please be kind and narrate to us, the greatness and magnificence of Devi Bhagawati. O King! We

wish to hear everything. – Description of Her form and nature; and how She manifests. Please tell us.

Vyasji says: - Hearing this pure request, Dhruvsandhikumar, King Sudarshan, closed his eyes, and meditated on the Devi. Then he began to speak.

Sudarshan said – O Kings! How can I presume to know anything about this Devi, whose greatness and excellence are not fully comprehended by Indra, nor Brahma, nor any of the gods. O Kings! Bhagawati is the Primordial Being. When Adi Shakti manifests as Mahalakshmi, it is this form that is Sattwic in nature, and sustains the creation. When She assumes the Rajoguni form She creates the universes; the Sattwic form protects; and the Tamasic form carries out the final play of dissolution. Because of this She is known as Trigunatmika. Paramshakti Bhagawati also has a formless, attributeless state, through which all the desires get fulfilled. She is the causal of the coming into existence of Brahma and all the gods. Yogis and ascetics try various methods, but they are not able to experience the Divine Goddess within themselves. Wise persons always worship the Goddess in sagun state (formful).

The kings said - You had to go into the forest from a very young age; and were constantly in danger of your life. Then how did you discover the Paramshakti Bhagawati Jagaddambika? In what ways did you praise and worship Her and cause Her to be pleased, and to come to your help in difficulty.

Sudarshan said - Kings! When I was still a child, I found the sound “Kleem”, which is the paramount seed mantra of the Devi Bhagawati. I began to chant it ceaselessly, and still continue to do so. The rishis in the ashram of Sage Bhardwaj taught me about the Devi. From then on, day and night, I worship the Devi with my whole body, mind, and attention.

Vyasji says:- Hearing this, the kings were filled with devotion. They were fully convinced that there is no greater power than Devi Bhagawati. The kings returned to their respective kingdoms. Subahu also took leave of Sudarshan and went to Kashi. Sudarshan proceeded towards Ayodhya. When the ministers heard that Shatrujit had died in the battle, and Sudarshan was now the rightful king, they were overjoyed. When the people of Ayodhya heard that their new king was coming, they took all the necessary materials to hold a reception and welcome Sudarshan. In this way, all his subjects went and met him halfway, and accompanied him with much fanfare, to Ayodhya. King Sudarshan, accompanied by his bride, his mother, and all his subjects, entered the kingdom of Ayodhya. Bhajans were being sung; sounds of music and drums filled the air; and little maidens showered flowers along the road.

Vyasji says – As soon as Sudarshan reached the palace, he first went to the quarters of the queen who was Shatrujit's mother. She was in deep grief. He offered pranaams to her and said – I take an oath on your feet that Shatrujit and father Yudhajit were not killed by my hands. They had just come on to the battlefield when they were slain by Bhagawati Durga. I am not guilty. Fate cannot be stopped by anyone. O Sorrowing Mother! Please do not grieve over the death of your son. Every being is governed by the rule of making payment for past actions; and he spends his life reaping rewards or suffering punishments. Mother, you are already aware of the divine laws. I am your servant. Just as Manorama is my mother, so also you are my mother. I see no difference between both of you. Whatever good or bad we do in our previous lives, we have to accept the fruits of those actions. Therefore we should not sink into grief when sorrow comes. We should assume the witness state, and not allow our attention to get entangled. This is all fate and destiny. The spirit has no control over it, nor any connection. And that is why the wise man, does not dry up the spirit with expressions of grief. Just as a puppet dances to the

manipulation of the puppeteer, so also a human being is governed by his karmas. If he wants to be untouched, he has to assume the witness state.

Mother, even when I had to run away into the forest, I did not feel distressed, even for a moment. I have to make reparation for my past actions – this was constantly a reminder for me. Even now this awareness is within me. My grandfather was killed, and my mother was inconsolable. She was full of fear and took me into a dense forest. On the way robbers attacked and took away everything from her. I was still a child and she had no one to protect her. My mother took me to the ashram of Sage Bhardwaj. All the munis and their wives were very kind. They fed all of us with wild rice and fruits, and we lived with them. There also I did not feel any distress. And now that I have got the kingdom and all this wealth, I am not puffed up with pleasure or pride. Anger and revenge never enter my attention. Instead of eating rich food, it is better to eat rice and wild grains. Those who indulge in rich food may also go to hell, whereas those who eat frugally never see the gates of hell. Wise men should keep their senses under control and live according to the divine laws. Mother! This Bharat is a holy land. It is very fortunate to be born in this land. Food, and a place to stay, are available in all the yonis (classes into which animate beings are divided – 84 lakhs). But, when one reaches this rare and most fortunate birth, he should live his life in a dharmic and elevated way, which will grant him moksha and Nirmal Dham.

Vyasji says – Hearing Sudarshan's words, Leelavati felt ashamed. She stopped mourning for her son, and spoke to Sudarshan with tears in her eyes.

She said – "Son! I have sinned against you, and the cause of my guilt is my father Yudhajit. It is he who killed your grandfather, and deprived you of your kingdom. I tried to dissuade my father and my son; but they would not listen.

My father was solely responsible for all that happened. He has paid for his sin with his life. You are not responsible for his death. I am also not sad about my son's death. I am disturbed over all his evil deeds. Son! May you and my sister Manorama be always blessed. Son! I bear no anger or ill-will towards you. O fortunate one! May you rule successfully. The people need protection. By the grace of Bhagawati Jagaddambika, you have got this kingdom which is free from trouble or danger." Sudarshan was overcome with compassion, and he bowed before Leelavati.

Then he went to his palace where his mother Manorama was waiting. He summoned his ministers and astrologers, and asked them for an auspicious date and time. He ordered a golden throne to be made, so that he could enthrone Devi Bhagawati and worship Her continuously. He made it known that only after this enthronement would he allow himself to be coronated. This was the tradition followed by Rama and other kings. Devi Jagaddambika would be worshipped by all in his kingdom. Everyone in the kingdom became engrossed in carrying out the command of the king. Architects and artists made a beautiful and most joygiving image of Devi Bhagawati. On an auspicious date and time, Sudarshan invited learned brahmins to instal the image with all the proper ceremonies and protocols. Shlokas and bhajans were sung on that day, and every day after that.

Vyasji says- King Sudarshan worshipped the Devi in his temple, every single day. After the celebrations in honour of the Devi; Sudarshan ascended the throne and was crowned King of Ayodhya. From that time, Devi Bhagawati reigned over Kosal Desh.

Sudarshan brought all the smaller kingdoms under his authority. He always acted within the maryadas of dharma, even in his victories. He followed the

traditions of Rama and Raghu, who always guided their subjects on righteous and dharmic way of life. All the kings of Kosaldesh built temples in every kingdom, and performed pujas to Devi Bhagawati Jagaddambika every day.

In Kashi also, King Subahu installed a beautiful image of the Devi, and pujas were performed according to prescribed rites. All the people worshipped Bhagawati Durga in the same way that they worshipped Bhagwan Shankar. O King! The Devi began to reside on earth, in all these places. People became more and more devoted to Her, and they worshipped Her as Bhavani Devi. They sang stotras from the Vedas, and chanted Her praises. During Navaratri, pujas, havans and yagyas were performed as part of nine days' celebration and worship.

CHAPTER 3 Episodes 24 – 25

24 – 25 Vyasji tells the procedure for Navratra; rules for selection of maidens for performing puja.

Janmejay asked: O Twice-born One! Please tell me what are the procedures for Navratra, especially during Sharatkaal (autumn). You are most wise and knowledgeable. Please tell me what are the fruits of fasting and austerity during Navratra, and how they are to be observed.

Vyasji said – King! I will tell you. Listen carefully. The way that Navratri is celebrated in Saratkaal, the same procedure should also be followed in Basant Ritu (Spring). These two seasons are called Yamdanshtra (jaws of Yama), and they cause hardship and tribulations for all living things. The wise spend all their time in worship of Durga Devi. These are dangerous seasons, and bring sickness and ill health with them, and even death. Holy men should guide everyone to become engrossed in the worship of Devi Chandi. During Chatra (first month) and Ashvin (seventh month), which are holy months; on Amavasya day the material for puja should be collected. Food should be taken, only once. A mandap should be erected on a level ground. The dimensions of the mandap should be of sixteen handspans – nine spans long, and seven spans broad. It should have decorated pillars and flagpoles. It should be smeared with wet cowdung and lime (white chunam). In the middle there should be an altar measuring four spans in length, four spans in breadth, and one span in height. That is the seat to be offered to Devi Bhagawati. There should be an arch, festooned with flowers and leaves, and a canopy of white

cloth. The same night brahmins should be invited. They should be knowledgeable and well versed in the Vedas and other scriptures relating to the Devi; righteous, virtuous, temperate, self restrained, and self realised beings. On the first day of the fortnight of a lunar month, in the morning; one should bathe either in the sea, river, lake, well, or in the house, and complete all the morning ablutions. After that, the brahmins should be welcomed by washing of the feet; offering pranaams, and giving water for rinsing the mouth. Then, according to one's capacity, gifts and clothes should be offered. If there is wealth in the house, it is inauspicious to be miserly. It is only through the satisfaction of the brahmins that the puja can be properly complete. The puja can be performed by nine; five; three; or even one brahmin; but it should be done intently, and with the deepest devotion. Mantras of benediction should be recited as prescribed in the Vedas. A singhasan (throne) draped in silk, should be placed on the altar, and on that should be enthroned the image of Devi Bhagwati. The Devi should have four arms; bearing weapons. She should be adorned with precious jewels, and a necklace of pearls. The most auspicious and beautiful Mother, should be dressed in divine raiments. She should be seated on a lion, and hold in Her hands, conch, discus, mace and lotus. There is also a regulation and design for the Goddess with eight arms. The remaining weapons can be placed at the back of the image during the puja. The Kalash should be filled with holy water, and five precious items should be put in (panchratna) – gold, diamond, ruby, pearl and amethyst. Also there should be placed on the Kalash, the leaves of five trees – mango, rose, apple, citron and bilva. While all this is being prepared, mantras from the Vedas should be chanted. All the puja materials should be kept nearby. For auspiciousness, it is necessary to have musical instruments playing divine music. If the day coincides with Hasth Nakshatra, it is said to be most auspicious. The puja that is performed on the first day, in accordance with all the procedures, that brings fulfilment of all desires of human beings. A complete fast; a one-meal

fast; or a fast where food is taken only at night; should be observed before this puja.

Then a prayer should be said – "Devi! You are the Mother of the Universe. I am observing the highest renunciation during Navratra. Please help me in all my endeavours". One should make every effort to observe all the rules for this great puja. Mantras should be chanted correctly, and with deepest devotion and involvement. All the most fragrant flowers should be picked for the puja, like Madaar, Lotus, Ashok, Champa, Kaner, Malathi, Brahmapushp, and others. The great puja perfumes like Sandal, Aguru, Kapoor and Kesar should be used. Bilva leaves, lamps, and incense. Also various kinds of sweet fruits should be offered – Coconut, Pomegranate, Chikoo, Apples, Pears, Papaya, Jackfruit, and Sitaphal. Then, very respectfully, food should be offered to the Devi.

For Havan, a three-sided kund should be prepared. Even an altar can be made, but it should be three cornered. Three times in a day – morning, noon and evening, puja should be performed to the Devi, with pleasing and fragrant substances. Celebrations should be in the form of music, singing and dancing. Everyone should sleep on the floor. Unmarried maidens should be worshipped by giving clothes and tasty food and sweets. The first day it should be done for one girl; the second day for two girls, and so on, till the ninth day; when nine girls are invited. Money should be spent according to one's means; and it is undesirable for a rich man to be stingy and miserly. For the puja, it is not right to call a child who is just one year old, as she has not yet fully developed a sense of smell or taste. The girl should not be less than two years old. Three year old girl is called Trimurthi; and a four year old is called Kalyani. Five year old – Rohini; six year old – Kalika; seven year old – Chandika; eight year old – Shambhavi; nine year old – Durga, and ten year old is called Subhadra. Girls who are older than this, should not be called, because they have reached the

age of culpability (be answerable for their actions). So one should get girls of the above qualifications.

The fruit of this puja has also been described. It removes sorrows and misfortunes. This puja destroys enmity, and gives wealth, long life and strength. By worshipping Bhagawati Trimurthi, one gets dharma, purpose of life, and fulfilment of desires. Also, there is prosperity and well being for the progeny as well. The king who desires knowledge, victory, kingdoms and peace, should perform pujas to Devi Kalyani. To overcome enemies, worship Bhagawati Kalika. Devi Chandika grants majesty, good fortune and wealth. To captivate or enchant someone, to win victory in battle, or to remove misfortune, one must worship Bhagawati Shambhavi. To overcome insurmountable difficulties; or to destroy dangerous enemies, one must perform pujas to Bhagawati Durga. She also grants joy which is beyond the mundane world. All one's hopes can be fulfilled by Bhagawati Subhadra. For relief from disease and illness, one must worship Bhagawati Rohini. With utmost respect and devotion, one must chant auspicious mantras, or the beeja mantra of the Devi. The meanings of the mantras are –

I worship that Kaumari Devi who created the essences of Skanda, Brahma, and all the Gods. I worship Bhagawati Trimurthi, who is attributeless but assumes the forms of the three Gunas, and then innumerable forms; and Who pervades all dimensions of time.

I worship Goddess Kalyani who fulfils the pure desires of Her bhaktas.

I worship Goddess Rohini who is the cause of the proliferation of all living things.

I worship Bhagawati Kalika who, at the time of dissolution, absorbs the creation into Herself.

I worship Bhagawati Chandika, who destroyed the demons Chanda and Munda, and Who is always angry with evil forces.

I worship Bhagawati Shambhavi, who is the embodiment of the Vedas, and who caused the Vedas to be manifested; and whose nature it is to be benevolent to all.

I worship Bhagawati Durga, who is the great protectress; who is deeply devoted to cleansing the sinful souls; and who cannot be comprehended even by the greatest of gods.

I worship Bhagawati Subhadra, who destroys all that is unholy and inauspicious.

These are the mantras to be used in worshipping the little girls who are invited for the puja. They should be offered clothes, jewels, malas and chandan during the puja.

Vyasji says – Selection of these girls should be made carefully. Do not invite anyone with flaws; defects; body odour; of questionable birth; those who are born without sight or with a squint; or with one eye; anyone who is disfigured; whose body is covered with too much hair; invalid; or one who is in the menstrual cycle. Also do not call one who is very weak; one who is born after the mother is widowed; or who is born to a woman before marriage. It is desirable to select girls who are free from disease, who are pleasing to the eye, and who are born of good parents. It is also recommended that for fulfilment, it is best to get girls from brahmin families; for victory in battle, to get girls

from kshatriya families; and for success in business, girls from traders' or labourers' families. If a brahmin or kshatriya is performing the puja, then brahmin girls should be called. For vaishyas, the girls can be brahmin, kshatriya or vaishya; Shudras can call girls from all families. Artisans should get girls from their own community and worship them. During Navaratri, pujas should be held continuously. If for some reason this is not possible, then it is compulsory to have a puja on Ashtami.

It is an ancient story – The destroyer of the Yagya of Daksh, Bhagawati Bhadrakali, was incarnated on Ashtami day. She was of a frightful appearance, and She was accompanied by crores of yoginis. For this reason, regularly on Ashtami, the Devi should be worshipped with offerings, scented articles and garlands. On that day offerings and oblations should be put into the sacred Havan; food should be offered to brahmins, and fruits and flowers should be given as gifts. Everything should be done with the purpose of pleasing Bhagawati Jagaddambika. Rajan! It is said that if one cannot observe the fast for the entire nine days; even three days of fasting entitles one to the fruits. Fasting should be done on Saptami, Ashtami and Navami nights. Devi puja, havan, kumari puja, and feeding brahmins, is considered the complete worship for Navratri. No other fasts, acts of charity, or pujas, can compare with Navratri, because Navratri gives as fruits – wealth and prosperity; happiness and posterity; freedom from sickness, and long life; and heaven as well as moksha. Therefore, those who are desirous of getting knowledge, wealth, or children, should definitely observe this fast, which gives auspiciousness and prosperity. Those who are desirous of obtaining pure knowledge, and perform this puja, are blessed with Nirmal Vidya. If a king who loses his kingdom, performs this puja, it has the capacity to grant the boon of re-instatement on the throne. This is the absolute truth. Those who did not perform Navratri puja in their previous births, and born in this lifetime either sick, unfortunate,

or childless; those who take birth on this earth and fail to observe Navrati, can never hope to be prosperous, or enjoy the blessings of heaven. The person who offers bilva leaves, smeared with red sandal paste, to Devi Bhavani in puja, he becomes king on this earth. Bhagawati is the embodiment of auspiciousness and prosperity. She is neither born, nor does She die. She is constantly engaged in removing sorrows. She is the giver of boons. The person who does not worship Her is truly sorrowful, surrounded by enemies, and full of misfortune. When all the gods, including Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar, Surya, Agni, Varun, Indra worship this most majestic Bhagawati Chandika, why cannot man worship Her? Manu has said – (Manu - the fourteen sons of Brahma who were progenitors of the human race), that uttering Her mantras Swaha and Swadha, gives satisfaction to the forefathers. All the great munis combine these with their mantras when performing yagyas. This most benevolent Bhagawati is the same at whose desire Brahma created this universe; Vishnu takes various incarnations to preserve it; and Shiva dissolves or destroys it. Then why cannot man recognise and worship Her? Man, serpent, birds, animals, imps and demons, and gods – not a single one exists without the energy of Bhagawati Shakti, nor can anyone move by themselves. Even in every home, it is the generous and benevolent Bhagawati Chandika who provides all requirements. Dharma, good conduct, desires, and freedom – who is it who desires all these fruits but does not recognise and worship Devi Bhagawati. Even if the greatest sinner performs the Navratri Puja, he gets liberated from the burden of his sins.

This is a story of ancient times.—There was a trader who was very poor, and miserable. A friend from Kosaldesh arranged his marriage. He had a family with many children, and he could never satisfy their hunger. Somehow he and his children found some food at night and survived. He worked hard as a servant for others. In this way, after undergoing many hardships he managed

to feed his family. Inspite of all these difficulties, he was a very dharmic person. He never told lies; had all his senses under control, and was righteous. He never got angry, and had no ego. He worshipped the gods, did pujas for his forefathers, offered food to his family, and then ate his food. This was his daily routine, and many years passed in this way. Because of his gentle, amiable nature, he was called Susheel. Perplexed by hunger and misery, he once asked a peaceful muni – O Brahmandevata! You are very wise. Please tell me how I can get out of my present difficulties, and change my miserable condition. I do not want great success or wealth. I just want enough to satisfy the hunger and simple needs of my family. My children are always crying from hunger, and there is not even so much grain in my house that I can give each one a fistful. Hunger has driven them out of my house, and I have renounced them. Now my heart burns. But what can I do to acquire some money. My daughter has reached marriageable age, but I cannot afford to get her married. My mind sinks again and again into the sea of distress. O compassionate one! Nothing is hidden from you. Please tell me some way in which I can become capable of supporting my family. – Whether by fasting, charity, tapasya, mantras, or chanting. I am not praying for excessive wealth. Only enough for my needs. It is only through your advice that I will be able to satisfy the requirements of my family.

Vyasji says:- Rajendra! Upon Susheel's prayer, the wise brahmin was greatly pleased. He said to Susheel – O Vaishya! Now you must perform the most superior and grand Navratri vow of austerity and puja. In this you are required to do puja to Devi Bhagawati Jagaddambika, perform a havan, and feed brahmins. The Vedas have to be read from beginning to end; mantras of Devi Bhagawati have to be chanted; and oblations have to be offered to the sacred fire. But in your present circumstances only do what is possible for you. Your desire will definitely be granted. There is no greater religious vow or puja in

this entire universe. This most holy and joy giving puja is called Navratra Vrat. By observing this with bhakti and humility, one not only gets Nirmal Vidya and even Moksha; but also children get memory and wisdom, and enemies get destroyed. Rama was banished from the kingdom, and Sita was abducted by Ravana. Deeply sorrowed and distressed, Rama went into the cave of Kishkinda and performed Navratra Vrat. He worshipped with great devotion and humility, Devi Bhagawati Jagaddambika. She was pleased, and Janaknandini (daughter of Janaka), Sita, was restored to him. He built a bridge across the ocean. He killed Ravana and Kumbhkaran. Meghnad, son of Ravana was also killed. He got the kingdom back for Vibheeshan, and made him king of Lanka. Then he returned to Ayodhya and ruled the kingdom. O noble Vaishya! By performing the Navratra Puja, Bhagwan Shri Rama received so many boons from the Devi.

Vyasji says - Susheel made the brahmin sage his guru, and received from him the Maya Beeja Mantra of Devi Bhuvaneshwari. Then he observed the prescribed fast and began chanting the sacred mantra with deepest devotion. Within his meagre means, he collected items for puja. For nine years, on every Navratra, he kept chanting the sacred mantra. In the ninth year, on the day of Ashtami, at midnight, Bhagawati Jagaddambika gave him Her Darshan. Also, She gave him many boons, which fulfilled all his humble requirements.

NAVARATRI - SHREE MATAJI NIRMALA DEVI

" So many powers Mother has to have to protect Her children and to look after them. These powers are all there, working relentlessly all the time – twentyfour hours. So anybody who surrenders to Mother, these powers express themselves and try to help you out of your problems. But, first thing is surrendering. IF YOU ARE NOT SURRENDERED, IF YOU ARE NOT IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, THEN THIS IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MOTHER. Then it might be, that some negative force might take over and destroy you."

You are Sahaja Yogis. What is your destiny? Your destiny is to achieve spiritual success (spiritual ascent).

PRAYER TO THE DEVI

O Devi! Please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies.

SHREE MATAJI EXPLAINS AND TRANSLATES 'JOGAVA'

Saint Eknath was from Pratishthana called as "Paithan", and he is the one who has written this Jogava, means the Yoga and at that time he sang this in a very village language, and it is sung by so many people all over Maharashtra. You can imagine that this song was written so many years back, and now they have converted it into a kind of a – for Sahaja Yoga – but it is a very – absolutely precisely described – what they wanted at that time. Now, in the beginning he says – The Goddess of Maharashtra was called as "BAYA". You will be amazed – In My childhood My name was Baya. They used to call Me in My family as Baya. So he is saying that I will ask Mother to give me the Yoga. In the villages it is said "Jogava" – again he says – "Bayecha Jogava".

Now "ANADI NIRGUNI" – the one which is without any gunas has manifested this "Bhawani" on this earth, and She has come to kill this Mahishasura. Also She has come "TRIVIDH TAPANCHI KARAVAYA JHADANI" to remove our three types of heating pains and now She is going to come for our 'Nirvana' that time he had said. He says that what I will do when She will come for my Nirvana-Dwaitya – I have got, means I am thinking about myself as separate from God. 'Dwaitya' is that you think this world is separate from God. Then I will remove this Dwaitya and I will put a garland to Her and in my hand I will take the flag of enlightened knowledge (already he is describing it). And without any discrimination about caste or religion or anything, I will go to visit Her. Then what I will do, for nine days I will do nine types of Bhakti of this Goddess, and then I will give up all other asking or anything, and I will ask for a son who is knowledge.

Then I will do (this is a lady singing. He sings like a lady). So he says that this world is full of ego. 'Dambha' is false pride, so I will give up that kind of bad

son. It is the bad son and what will I do in the PARADI (basket) is the place in which you carry flowers for the God. In the Paradi I will put complete, enlightened knowledge and all the ASHA MANISHANCHA means all the desires and all aspirations I will finish them, completely break them. MANOVIKARA VIKARA KAREEN KURVANDI all my Manovikaras, you see all the mind which is so much conditioned; (like they say in Hindi you take out the bad eye). So I will take out as that from my mother earth. AMRIT RASACHI BHAREEN ME DHURDI - basket I will be filling with the Amrit Rasa, that is the ambrosia.

AATA SAZANI (She is telling her friend) O my friend, now I have become completely detached NISANG, and my husband who was a doubt, I have given up living with that husband of mine. Means the doubt has disappeared from me. Then she says that the KAMA AND KRODHA – these two are Mang, is the one, scheduled caste people who burn the bodies, and I have given them up and what ever left I have made my – I have opened out my tunnel – that is of Sushumna – see now. Such a Yoga I have asked and kept it with me when I got it. I went to the great door and I thanked the God Almighty and I have now come out of this life and death problems.

At that time he wrote all this, and today you are getting the results. Just that, so clearly and a lady singing this, we have to take some vows, something about yourself and about others. You have to remember one great thing – that we are yogis now. That too, we are Sahaja Yogis, and as Sahaja Yogis we have to be 'par excellence'. Now some of you find that you have very good brain, I mean intelligence – but you lack in your heart. Some of you have got very large heart but you lack in your brains. So the balance must be brought. But the greatest knowledge is to know that GOD IS LOVE. HE IS LOVE and if you cannot even love a Sahaja Yogi then also must know that there is something very wrong in you, which must go out. The love has to be there, and this love

is what we call as 'Nirvajya' means there is no interest on you, just the capital. Meaning you love each other in such a manner that you just give and don't expect anything. Just give, and enjoyment of giving is the highest.

I tell you from My experience. To Me the greatest joy is when I can give Realisation, second one is when I can give away things. The third one could be that I can give it to others. So now, as you are not the people who are sitting at the receiving end, but at the giving end, you must know what you have given to others. On the contrary, even now, if you just give your tempers, you show your greed and all kinds of things that does not behove a Sahaja Yogi, then you have to know that there is something still left behind. Or else, if you are so particular about small things like clothes, food, comforts, then know that there is something missing, that personality is not full, and also remember one sentence always – ask a question to yourself – HAVE I FULFILLED MY DESTINY.

This is one question you should ask – Have I fulfilled my destiny? And that will clarify the situation for you. Because now you are a Guru of your own. You know. You understand. You know so much about Sahaja Yoga mentally. But when it penetrates into your being, and the whole knowledge becomes a part and parcel of your being, then it is a very different thing.

The whole attitude about facing anything is very different for a realized soul. Like Me, I would say, if I see a problem I immediately go into meditation, immediately, and the problem is solved. Because that's My power. In the same way if you see a problem, and if you go into meditation, the problem will be solved by Me. That means, in meditation you surrender to Me. Then it is My job. But if you start solving it mentally or orally, you will fall into traps. So the best thing is, any such problem that bothers you, you should just go into

meditation; don't have to even pray – just go into meditation with that problem and you will come out victorious.

What today you have been asking Me for the victory, I have to tell you that you are very safe in the fort of your meditative state, and very well in meditation only you can grow. You cannot grow otherwise. It is like the sunshine for any tree. You have to be in meditation – in Nirvichara, you don't have to oppose anybody, you don't have to agree with anybody, you don't have to say anything. Especially for other Yogis. You don't have to say anything. Anybody whom you find to be funny, just go into meditation and you will be amazed how things will change, and this is your power. How many people have got realization in this world? Very few. They are growing up – all right, they are working it out. But what is lacking in them is the Meditative Force.

THE BEST WAY IS TO SURRENDER, AND THE SURRENDERING IS EASIER YOU JUST PUT ME IN YOUR HEART, ALL THE TIME. THE SIMPLEST WAY. THEN YOU CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT IT. YOU CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT IT. YOU FEEL COMPLETELY LOST. IT'S KIND OF A VERY DETACHED LOVE. YOU JUST FEEL ABSOLUTELY RESTED, BLISSFUL AND CONTENT. THEN YOU DON'T WANT ANYTHING. THAT IS THE STATE ONE HAS TO ESTABLISH. IT IS SO EASY FOR YOU BECAUSE I AM IN PERSON WITH YOU. ONLY PROBLEM THAT IS THERE AS I TOLD YOU IN SAHAJA YOGA, THAT YOU HAVE TO RECOGNISE ME TO BEGIN WITH.

But to recognize Me is rather difficult, because I am a Mahamaya and so normally you might come into that mess created by Mahamaya. But as I told you the other day, that you could not have faced Me in My other form. Imagine a person with a sword in the hand, sitting on a lion. Could not have

faced it. So I had to be Mahamaya and this is what it is, that in this form you can come close to Me, you can talk to Me, you can also take My advice, if you want. So this counselling can be done better. I could decode everything to you. I could tell everything about it. But TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE SITTING BEFORE MAHAMAYA ITSELF IS VERY HELPFUL. So don't get lost into the garb of Mahamaya. In your protocol, in your understanding, in everything, you have to remember that we should not make mistakes and we should try to surrender. Automatically you will learn everything. There is nothing to be taught to you.

That state is such – like a tree. When it comes to its full bloom, it gives flowers, and the flowers come to its own maturity that give fruits. That is how you are built in. That is how you grow. What then happens, you yourself feel your own growth and enjoy it, and just live happily with it. So ultimately My destiny is one that I should make you all very happy and joyous. That is My destiny. That is why all this struggle is going on. I hope I fulfil My destiny, and your destiny too. MAY GOD BLESS YOU.

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CHAPTER 3 Episode 26

26 – Narration of that part of Shri Rama's life which has connection with Navaratri.

Janmejay asked – Please tell me the reason why Bhagwan Rama performed the Navaratri Vrat; why he had lost his kingdom; and when Sita was abducted, what did he do.

Vyasji says - This happened in ancient times. Sriman Raja Dashrath ruled over Ayodhya. He belonged to the Suryavanshi clan. In his kingdom the gods and brahmins were greatly revered. He had four sons – Rama, Lakshman, Bharat and Shatrughan. They were very wise and good natured young men, and made their father very proud and happy. Ram was the son of Kausalya. Kaikeyi was the mother of Bharat; and Sumitra was the mother of Lakshman and Shatrughan. They were twins. Even as children, these boys played with bows and arrows. The ceremony for investiture with sacred thread, was performed; and the king was completely happy and satisfied. Just then sage Vishvamitra came and requested the king to send his eldest son Rama to protect the yagyas of the rishis from the demons. Rama was only sixteen years of age. The king sent Rama and Lakshman with the sage. On the way they killed the female demon Tadaka. She always troubled the sages, and with one arrow Rama destroyed her. He also killed the sinful Subahu; and Mareech. In this way he did the duty of protecting the yagyas of the munis, from being defiled by the negative forces. Then Sri Rama, Lakshman and Vishvamitra left for Mithila. On the way he released Ahalya from her curse, and she became pure and holy

again. Then they reached Janakapur. At the Swayamvar, he completed the task of breaking the great bow of Sri Shiva. Raja Janak performed the marriage of his daughter Janaki (who was a partial incarnation of Sree Lakshmi), to Sri Rama. Janaka had another daughter Urmila, whom he gave in marriage to Lakshman. Janak had a younger brother Kushdhwaj. His two daughters were given in marriage to the noble Bharat, and Shatrughan. In this way, all the four sons of King Dashrath were married according to custom and rites, in Janakapur. King Dashrath saw that his oldest son Rama had matured into wisdom, and he decided to coronate him as King of Ayodhya. Seeing this, queen Kaikeya quickly demanded fulfilment of two promises that the king had made to her many years ago. Her first demand was that her son Bharat should be made king; and the second was that Rama should be banished to the forest for fourteen years. Rama, Lakshman and Sita according left to live a life of exile in the forest. King Dashrath became very sad, but he also remembered a curse that was upon him. He could not bear the separation, and gave up his life. The righteous and compassionate Bharat knew that his mother was the cause of his father's death. He loved his brother, and refused the kingdom. Bhagwan Rama lived in Panchvati in the Dandaka forest. Ravana's younger sister Shoorpanaka came there, and was under the influence of Kamdev (cupid). Lakshman disfigured her face, and she went before her brother with her nose and ears cut off. Khar and Dooshan, the two giant brothers of Ravana, and other demons, began to fight a fierce battle with Sri Rama. They were very strong and powerful, but Sri Rama overcame them and killed them. Shoorpanaka was a very devious demon. She went to Lanka and, with face bleeding, appeared before Ravana and gave him the shocking news of the death of Khar and Dooshan. Ravana started shaking with anger. He mounted his chariot and went to Mareech. Mareech was accomplished in the art of illusion and conjuring. Ravana ordered him to change himself into a golden deer to lure Sita. Under the impulse of fate, Sita got attracted to the deer and

requested Sri Rama to get her the golden deer. Sri Rama did not even ponder. He left Lakshman behind, picked up his bow and arrow and followed the deer. Using his powers, Mareech used to appear and disappear from Sri Rama's sight, and gradually lured him into another forest far away. When he was within a short distance, Sri Rama aimed an arrow and shot him. Even as he was dying, Mareech shouted in a loud voice, disguised as Sri Rama's, and said – "O Lakshman! Now I am dying!" These words were heard by Sita. She was alarmed, and requested Lakshman to go immediately and find Sri Raghunandan and help him. But Lakshman said: O Mother Janaka-nandini. Raghavendra instructed me to stay here and protect you. I cannot disobey him. Have no fear. There is no one born on this earth who can kill Bhagwan Ram. I will not leave you alone and disobey Raghavendra.

Vyasji says - Sita was afraid, and tears fell from her eyes. Even though she was a calm and gentle natured person, she scolded Lakshman. Hearing her angry words, Lakshman became perplexed. He said – O You who are born of this earth! You have spoken in very stern and severe tones. How and why did these harsh words come out of your mouth. I am afraid of the final outcome." Lakshman left Sita, and went looking for his brother Sri Rama. Tears fell uncontrollably from his eyes. He was very sad. As soon as he left, Ravan came to the ashram, disguised as a mendicant. Thinking he was a sanyasi, Sita respectfully placed fruits and food before him. He spoke to her in deceptively sweet tones. – O You with beautiful eyes! Who are you, and why do you live alone in the forest. Who is your father, who is your brother, and who has married you. Why are you living like a primitive woman, all alone, and unattended. Dear one! You are as beautiful as a goddess, and you should be living in a palace. What is the reason that you are living in the forest like the wife of a muni?"

Vyasji says:- Janaka-kumari Janaki, still under the influence of destiny, thought Mandodari-pati Ravana was a holy man. She said – There is a prosperous and famous king called Maharaj Dashrath. He has four sons. The eldest is famous by the name of Rama. He is my husband. The king has sent my husband Rama out of the kingdom on the instigation of his queen Kaikeyi. His brother Lakshman also came with him. My father is Raja Janaka, and my name is Janaki. Sri Rama broke the bow of Shri Shankar and married me. I am here in this forest under his protection. He has just gone out to hunt a golden deer for me. On hearing his call for help, Lakshman has also just gone. It is these two powerful brothers who look after me, and I live here fearlessly. Both of them will return shortly, and worship you in the proper way. Sanyasis represent Sri Vishnu, and you have already become the receiver of my puja. This forest is full of ferocious demons. I request you to tell me the truth. Who are you, and why are you disguised as a sanyasi?"

Ravan said: I am Ravan, the powerful king of Lanka. My wife is called Mandodari. O beautiful one! It is to get you that I have come in this disguise. My sister Shoorpanaka has caused me to come here. She gave me the horrible news of the killing of Khar and Dooshan. So now you must leave your husband and become the wife of the King of Lanka. Rama has lost the kingdom; he is always sad and depressed; and he lives in a forest. You can become my queen. Mandodari will be subject to you, and I will be your servant. I have been victorious over many kingdoms, and yet I bow my head before you. Take my hand and promise to be my queen. I had earlier approached your father Raja Janaka for your hand, but he said that he had laid a condition that Shankar's mighty bow had to be broken. I was afraid to break the bow of Bhagwan Shankar, so I did not attend the Swayamvara. But since then, I have been uneasy and unhappy. I heard that you were living in this forest, and that is why I came. Now you must reward all my efforts".

CHAPTER 3 Episodes 27 – 28

27 - 28 Sitaharan (abduction of Sita). Rama and Lakshman discuss fate and destiny. Naradji advises Navratra-Vrat.

Vyasji says:- Hearing these despicable and contemptible words of Ravan, mother Sita was overcome with fear. Her whole body began to tremble. Then she stilled her mind, and spoke – O Son of Pulasthya! Why have you got entangled in lust and desire; and why are you speaking in this despicable way. I am not a woman in the market-place. I was born in the lineage of Raja Janaka. O Ravan! Go back to Lanka! Sri Rama will certainly kill you, and I will be the cause of your death. This is the absolute truth.

Saying this Bhagawati Janaki went to the room made of leaves, where the sacred fire was still burning. She kept warning the wicked Ravan – "Stay far! Stay far!" He followed her, and assuming his true demonic form, he forcibly held her. Sita began to weep, and kept calling "O Ram! O Lakshman!" Ravan carried her to his chariot, and immediately left the place. On the way he was stopped by Son of Arun – the sacred vulture Jatayu. In the same forest, there was a fierce battle, and Jatayu became weary and weak. Ravan took Sita and went away to Lanka. He made arrangements for her stay, in a grove of Asoka trees, and put rakshasis to guard her. Gentle words, gifts, threats and punishments – nothing moved Sita from her virtuous conduct.

In the forest Rama killed the golden deer and was on his way when he met Lakshman. As soon as he saw Lakshman, Sri Rama said – Brother! Why have

you committed an irresponsible action like this? Why did you leave Sita alone and unprotected? What was the reason. Was it the scream of this unfortunate deer that brought you?" Lakshman recalled Sita's stern words to him. He said – Prabhu! This is a bad time which is overpowering. It is under it's influence that I came here. This is the truth." Then both of them entered the room of the sacred fire, and saw the place in disarray. They sank into deep sorrow; and both the brothers began to search for Sita. They reached the spot where Jatayu, king of the birds, had fallen. The earth had held him in her lap. He was still alive. He said – "Just a short while ago Ravan has taken Janak-nandini Janaki away. I intercepted that vile demon, but in the end his strength prevailed, and he laid me down on the earth." After saying this, Jatayu breathed his last. Contact with god had made his body pure and holy. Sri Rama and Lakshman performed the last rites. Then they moved on. They killed Kabandh and freed him from a curse. Kabadh introduced Sugreev to Sri Rama, and they became friends. The brave Vali attained heaven at the hands of Sri Rama. To fulfil one of the purposes of his incarnation, Sri Rama handed over the prosperous kingdom of Kishkinda to Sugreev. Sri Rama and Lakshman stayed a long time in that place. They were constantly thinking of Sita who was in Ravana's custody. One day Sri Rama said to Lakshman – "Son of Sumitra. We have not been able to find Sita. Without her, my death is very imminent. I cannot set foot in Ayodhya without her. The kingdom has passed out of my hands. I am living in exile in the forest. My father is dead. My wife has been abducted. I don't know what further play destiny has got for me. I was born in the foremost clan of Manu. Royal life was at my disposal. Still I am roaming, homeless, in the forest. You have also renounced the palace, and accepted the hardships of fate. Videha-kumari Sita also innocently came away with us. This vile and wicked fate has placed this heavy burden of sorrow upon her. How will she tolerate life in that horrible demon's house. She is sinless. She loves me dearly. She can never live there. She who was born in the house

of Raja Janaka, can never live like an ordinary, unprincipled, lady. O Bharatanuj (younger brother of Bharat). If Ravan compels her, she would rather give up her life. This is the absolute truth. O brave Lakshman! If Sita gives up her life, my soul will also leave my body. This is inevitable." Thus the lotus eyed Bhagwan Ram lamented the loss of Sita. Then the virtuous Lakshman comforted his brother – O You with mighty arms! Overcome this depression and dejection, and take courage. I will go to Lanka, kill that evil demon, and bring Sita to you. The wise man keeps balance in happiness and in sorrow. To get attached to failure or success, is the mistake a foolish makes. Meetings and partings happen in life, and one should not grieve. Just as you have lost your kingdom and have been parted from Mother Sita; so also you will get back your kingdom, and be reunited with Sita. There is no need to think otherwise. So please renounce your grief. There are lots of monkeys here. They will go in all four directions in search of Janakiji. With their help, Mother Sita will definitely be found. As soon as I find a route, I will go there, vanquish Ravan, and bring other Sita back with me. I can even ask brother Bharat to come with Shatrughan and his army, and three of us will kill the enemy. Please do not grieve. Raghav! Long ago Maharaj Raghu sat on the same chariot and won victories in all directions. You are the light of that clan. So it is not right for you to be dejected. I alone can vanquish the gods and the demons. But I have so many supporters. So there can be no difficulty in defeating him. I will even call Raja Janak as an ally. Raghunandan! With all these efforts there is no doubt that the tormentor of the devas, Ravan, will die. The cycle of happiness and sorrow; and sorrow and happiness; goes on unceasingly. One situation cannot prevail permanently. A weak person who succumbs to the influence of happiness or sorrow – he sinks into the ocean of illusion. He can never be joyous. But you are beyond this state. Raghunandan! It happened a long time ago. Even Indra had to undergo pain and hardship. All the gods got together and put Nahush on the throne of Indra. Indra left heaven in great fear and hid

in the pod of a lotus. He lived there for many years, but finally times changed, and he got back the throne of heaven. When Nahush set eyes on Indra's queen Indrani, and wanted to abduct her; and at the same time he began to disrespect the brahmins; muni Agasthya became angry and cursed him. He immediately turned into a python and fell to earth. Because of his lust, he earned a place in the Sarpayoni (reptile class). Therefore O Raghav! When faced with difficulties it is not proper to grieve. The wise man keeps his balance and watches as a witness. O auspicious one! Nothing is hidden from you. O Lord of the World! You are Omnipotent and Omniscient! Then why are you behaving like an ordinary mortal and sinking into deep sorrow?"

Vyasji says - Hearing Lakshman's words Sri Rama's discretion and wisdom began to manifest. He renounced grief, and became peaceful. Both sat in deep meditation. From the akash came Rishi Narada, and the air was full of sweet notes from his veena and his chanting of the Sama Ved. He stopped in front of Sri Rama, who immediately stood up. He offered him a seat of honour. He offered water for washing of feet; and water for rinsing the mouth. Then with the sage's permission, Bhagwan Ram sat beside him. Lakshman was also present. Muni Narad made enquiries regarding their well being, and then he said - Raghav! Why are you in deep sorrow like an ordinary human. Ravan has abducted Sita. I am aware of this. I had been to Devalok and I heard the news there. Not knowing that death is hovering above his head, Ravan fell under the influence of infatuation and committed this heinous act. He has to be killed by you. That is the purpose of your present incarnation, and that is why Sita was abducted.

"In her previous life, Janaki was the daughter of a muni. It is her nature to be in tapasya. She was meditating in a forest, when Ravan first saw her. He asked her to marry him. She became very angry and scolded him. He caught her by

her hair. Immediately she decided to abandon the body that he had defiled by his touch. Before she died she cursed him – "You vile and wicked man. For your destruction I will take birth on the earth, but I will not be born of a mother. I will be born of the earth." This is the same Sita, who is a partial incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi. Under a delusion, Ravan has put a snake of doom around his neck mistaking it for a mala (garland). Raghav! The wronged brahmins had prayed to Shri Hari to cause Ravan's death. As a result, you have taken your birth in the clan of Raghu. O You with strong arms! Maintain your fortitude and courage. Sita, who is on the tattwa of dharma, and who is sakshat Devi, cannot come to any harm. Her attention is constantly upon you. Indra himself has made arrangements to send milk of the divine cow Kamadhenu for Sita to drink. The lotus-eyed Sita can never suffer hunger pangs after drinking the nectar-like milk of the heavenly Surabhi. I have seen this myself.

Raghav! Now I will tell you how you can kill Ravan. During this month of Ashvin, you start the Navratra Vrat. Keep a fast, worship Devi Bhagawati, chant Her mantras, and perform Homas. You will get all the siddhis (powers). Before this, all the gods – from Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, to Indra in the heavens, have all performed the Navratri Vrat. You must also do it. Any person who is in great difficulty, should perform this vrat. Raghav! Even the great sages like Vishvamitra, Bhrigu, Vashisht, and Kashyap, have all done it. So Rajendra! Before vanquishing Ravan, you should perform the Navratra Vrat. Before killing Vritrasur, Indra did it; and before killing demon Tripur, Sri Shankar also did the Navratra Vrat. Before killing Madhu, Bhagwan Sri Hari performed this vrat on Mount Sumeru. Therefore O Raghav! Take the utmost care and perform this Vrat.

Bhagwan Ram asked – O compassionate One! Be kind and tell me who is this Devi. What is Her effect. From where did She incarnate. And by what names is She called?

Naradji said – Listen O Ram! That Goddess is Adi Shakti. She is eternal. By Her grace, all actions are performed. When She is worshipped, it is Her nature to be benevolent and compassionate. Raghunandan! She is the causal of the existence of all things, starting with Brahma! Without Her energy, nothing can move or breathe. My father Brahma creates; Vishnu protects; and Mahesh destroys. The energy which is used for these auspicious activities, comes from Her. In the three worlds, whatever is existent or non-existent; the causal of it is none other than this Devi Adi Shakti. When there was nothing in existence, even then She reigned Supreme. Every single being comes into existence from Her and gives Her joy.

This is about the beginning of the creation. At that time She was in Nirgun state – unmanifested, and without attributes. Then this Devi manifested; and the three lokas came into existence. First Brahma and all the gods were endowed with Her energy. When a being realises this Supreme Goddess, then he is liberated from the bonds of life, death and rebirth. It is of utmost importance to know the Goddess. The Vedas were created after this. Which means, the privilege of composing the Vedas was given to them! Brahma and the other gods have described Her qualities, and sung praises of Her actions; and have given innumerable names to the Devi. How much of it can I tell you! Whatever sounds exist between A (er) and Ksher, can be made into Her names, and still not be adequate to describe Her. She is beyond description!

Bhagwan Ram said:- O all knowing One! Please tell me concisely, the procedures to be observed for this most glorious act of worship. I wish to perform Navratra Vrat.

Sri Narada said - Ram! Select a level ground and instal a singhasan. Invite, most respectfully, Bhagawati Adi Shakti to take Her seat, and then for nine nights observe fast, and perform the pujas. They should be correct, and as per procedure. I will preside over the puja as head priest, because I am keen that the desire of the devas gets fulfilled.

Vyasji says – Sri Rama accepted entirely what sage Narada said. He constructed a beautiful singhasan, and enthroned an image of the most benevolent, the most compassionate, Bhagawati Jagaddambika. He fasted for nine nights while performing the puja according to prescribed rites. The month of Ashwin arrived. Arrangements had been made on the auspicious Kishkinda mountain. For nine days Sri Rama was totally absorbed in the pujas and homas. They closely obeyed all the instructions that sage Narada gave, and both the brothers performed the puja with full attention. On the ashtami, at midnight, the Devi Bhagawati appeared. She came, seated on a lion, and gave darshan to Rama and Lakshman. On that mountain, seated on Her vahana; Devi Bhagawati spoke in clear, loud, and deep tones. She was pleased with the single-minded devotion and love with which the puja was performed.

The Devi said – O You who are blessed with strong and powerful arms! Rama! I am very pleased with your vrat and puja. Whatever you desire in your heart, ask for it. You are a partial manifestation of Bhagwan Narayan. You were born in the foremost clan of Manu. It is for fulfilling the prayer of the Devas, for the destruction of Ravan, that you have been incarnated by Me. Before this also, you incarnated as a Matsya (fish) to kill a demon. At that time you fulfilled the

prayers of the gods, and protected the Vedas. Later, you incarnated as a Tortoise and anchored the mountain Mandrachal on your back, while it was being used to churn the ocean. From this churning, the gods received the urn of nectar which gave them My Energy. Ram! You have also incarnated as a Boar. You had lifted Mother Earth between your tusks and destroyed Hiranyaksh (brother of Hiranyakashipu). Then you incarnated as Narasimha (half man, half lion) to kill Hiranyakashipu, and protect Prahlad. In your incarnation as Vaman (dwarf) you put down the oversized ego of Bali. You also incarnated as the younger brother of Indra. You also came as a partial avatar of Vishnu and were born as the son of Jamdaghni. You defeated the kshatriyas and restored earth to the brahmins. Raghunandan! In the same way, you have incarnated again, and taken birth as Rama, son of Dashrath. All the gods prayed to Me for you to incarnate again, because the demon Ravan is troubling them. Rajan! All these strong and powerful monkeys are actually incarnations of the devas; and they will help you. They are all energised with My Shakti. O Holy One! This younger brother of yours, Lakshman, is the incarnation of Sesh Nag. He will destroy Ravan's son Meghnad. You should have no doubts about this. Now your first action should be, in the season of Vasanth, to perform with single-minded attention and devotion, My Puja. After that, kill Ravan, and rule as a king, in peace and joy. For eleven thousand years your kingdom with prevail. After that, you will return to your abode."

Vyasji says - After this, Bhagawati removed Herself from their sight. There were no bounds to the joy that was felt by Rama and Lakshman. After completing the Navratra Puja, on the tenth day, Rama started his journey. Rama is known in the entire world as Janakivallabh (Lord of Janaki). He fulfils all desires. He went with Sugreev, to the shores of the ocean. Lakshman also accompanied him. They built a bridge across the ocean and went to Lanka. There, Ravan, the scourge of the Devas, met his death at the hands of Sri

Rama. The person who worships Devi Bhagawati, Adi Shakti, with wholehearted bhakti and single minded attention; not only gets his desires fulfilled, but also gains a place in Nirmal Dham, at the Lotus Feet of Adi Shakti.

End of Chapter 3

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4 Episodes 1 - 3

1 – 3 Janmejay questions Vyasji about incarnations. Kashyap is cursed by Varun and Brahma; and Aditi is cursed by Diti.

Janmejay said –" O Muni Vyasji! You are the vessel of inexhaustible knowledge. Your mind is pure. You have enhanced the auspiciousness of our clan. I have heard that (son of Shoorsen), the most auspicious Vasudevji, was a most righteous man. He was so holy that God Himself incarnated as his son. Inspite of all this, he and his wife Devaki, suffered imprisonment at the hands of Kansa. What was their transgression that caused this grief. Also, why were the six sons of Devaki killed at birth. Kansa belonged to the same clan of Yayati. Then why did he commit such heinous acts. What was the reason that Sri Krishna took birth in a prison?" In this way, Janmejay expressed many doubts and confusions that he had had in his mind, regarding the incarnation of Sri Krishna and the Pandavas. "Those who are born kshatriyas do not torment brahmins. Then why did my father insult a meditating brahmin? All these doubts are invading my attention, and disturbing me. You are like a father to me. All knowledge is within you. Please be kind to me and clear my attention of all these thoughts."

Sootji says:- Parikshitkumar Janmejay questioned Satyawati-nandan Vyasji in this way, and then settled quietly to listen. Then Vyasji, who possessed the entire knowledge of the Puranas, began to speak. Vyasji said – Rajan! What can I say! The movement of destiny is very profound and unchangeable. Even the gods have not been able to fathom its depths; then what can mere mortals hope to understand. From the time the threefold creation has come into existence, the law of action and reaction is intertwined with it. Karma is the causal of the birth of a creature on this earth, and its circumstances. Even if a life form is exempt from birth and death, still the seed within is subject to karma, and causes it to take birth and die in many yonis (strata). Once the karmas have been paid for, the being has no more subjection or connection to fate and destiny. There are three attributes in this world – supreme, culpable (blameable), and mixed. The wise sages who know the secrets of the tattwas, have divided karmas into three categories – gathered or collected; fated or destined; and the present. In fate, there is a mixture of all the three categories. Rajan! From Brahma downwards, all are subject to it. Maharaj! Happiness and sorrow; old age; death; pleasure; grief; desire; anger and lust. – All these qualities are connected with fate. As fate, it exerts its effect on everything. Even heaven is not devoid of this, because it keeps its connection with the gods, humans and animals. These different forms are the result of fate. According to the actions performed in past lives, whether in love or hostility and hatred; they find abode in that kind of body. If the karmas do not decrease, it is impossible for a living thing to ascend. Karma is the cause of ceaseless births and deaths. This gives the general belief that the creation is eternal and immutable. But even the sages who meditate on this, are not able to discover whether the world is eternal or temporary. In the illusionary world, it seems eternal. As long as the cause is present, action will not cease. Entangled in this knot of karma, the world is changeable. Beings have also to descend into lower yonis. If they were free of this cycle, this situation would

not have prevailed. Who would want to give up the joys of heaven, to live in the mortal world of fear, filth and excreta. Who would give up the opportunity of playing with flowers and cool springs, and sitting on a throne; for the sojourn in the womb. Which wise man would opt for lying face down in the womb, when he can have a heavenly bed and soft silken pillows. Is there a person who would prefer the noise and pollution of hell to hearing divine music and dance. In the three worlds, there is no greater hell than the mortal womb. For fear of this, the munis go into difficult renunciation and tapas. Even kings who desire liberation from birth, renounce their kingdoms and go into the forest. Worms bite in the womb! And the heat of the digestive system burns. And one is mercilessly tied down. Rajan! What happiness is there in such a place! It is better to be in jail, or to be bound in iron chains. But even a moment inside the womb is not desirable. To stay there for ten months is the biggest ordeal. Even emerging from the womb is an ordeal. The road which leads outside is horrible. Then in infancy, the inability to walk and talk is insufferable. Hunger and thirst add to the woes. He cannot do anything by himself, and is always in fear. When the child cries from hunger, the parents think he is unwell, and give him all kinds of medicine. After seeing all this, which intelligent person will desire another birth. O King! The gods, humans and animals take on a body to receive or make payment for all their past deeds, good or bad. By doing tapasya, yagyas and acts of charity, a person can attain heaven. But as soon as the payment for good deeds gets exhausted, even Indra has to take birth again. There is no doubt in this.

When Sri Rama incarnated, all the devas also incarnated as monkeys to help him. To assist Sri Krishna the gods came as Yadavs. In this way, God incarnates in various yonis, for different causes. O King! Like the wheels of a chariot, the various incarnations are not similar. It is the prerogative of God to destroy demons. He is the Supreme Being. Sometimes he incarnates partially; and

sometimes in part of the partial; and comes on to the earth to accomplish a purpose. I am now going to tell you the divine story of Krishna avatar. Sri Vishnu himself incarnated and took birth in the Yayati clan. The most glorious Vasudevji is a partial incarnation of muni Kashyap. He had previously come under a curse, and that was the cause of his taking birth as a keeper of cows. Muni Kashyap had two wives, Aditi and Sursa. They have incarnated as two sisters, Devaki and Rohini. In anger Varun cursed all of them, and they had to take birth on this earth.

King Janmejay asked - What mistake did Muni Kashyap commit that made Varun so angry that he cursed him and his wives. Bhagwan Vishnu is always enthroned in Vaikunth. He is Parabrahma Parameshwar (God Almighty). What was the reason for his incarnating in Gokul. Bhagwan Narayan is indestructible. All the gods are in his jurisdiction. He is the support of the universe. Who can control him. Why does he leave his abode and come into the mortal world. What human happiness could have attracted the Lord. The supreme lord, Sri Hari, took the incarnation of Sri Rama. He suffered years of exile in the forest; Sita was abducted; and he suffered the pangs of parting. Then he suffered the hardships of war with Ravan; and even after rescuing Sita he again suffered the heartache of sending her away. Shri Krishna's avatar was also full of pain. He was born in prison. Then he was taken to Gokul. There he lived the humble life of a cowherd. After much difficulty, he killed Kansa. Then he went to Dwaraka. He faced a lot of hardships, and I cannot understand why. Muni! You have the complete knowledge. Please clear all these doubts which are disturbing my attention.

Vyasji says – Bhagwan Vishnu has incarnated many times, and the circumstances and situations in this manifest world, become the cause of the incarnation. Each time, the lesser gods also incarnate on this earth – and for

that also there are causes. First I will tell you what caused the incarnation of Vasudev, Devaki and Rohini. Listen carefully.

It happened long ago. Shriman Kashyapji performed a yagya and brought Varun's sacred cow for its milk. After the yagya Varun asked for the cow, but he did not return it. So Varun went to Brahmaji and asked – What shall I do? Inspite of asking many times, Kashyap is not returning my sacred cow. Therefore I have cursed him that he will be born on the earth as a keeper of cows; and will live as a human. May his two wives also take mortal birth. In the absence of my cow, the calves are starving and crying. That curse will be the cause of Aditi taking birth on the earth. She will be kept in prison and she will suffer trials and tribulations."

Vyasji says – After hearing Varun's complaint, Brahmaji sent for muni Kashyap and said – "O Fortunate One! Why have you not returned Lokpal Varun's cow to him. There is nothing that you do not know. You are very wise. Knowing the workings of divine justice, how could you fall into this trap. Greed is a very strong force. It does not spare anyone. Under its influence many sins are committed, and the result is hell. No one has been able to conquer it. Even Kashyap failed in renouncing greed. We salute those saintly munis who have been able to defeat it. They live in forests, and their minds are always at rest. They do not even accept charity or gifts. The most powerful enemy on earth is greed. It makes one impure and unholy. By his love for materialism and greed, his ascent has been interrupted." After saying all this, Brahmaji also placed a curse upon Kashyap muni. Even though he was his dear son, in order to protect the maryadas of dharma and righteousness, Brahma pronounced his decision – Kashyap! You will incarnate on the earth, and take birth in the clan of Yadu. Your two wives will also accompany you. You will live there as a farmer of cows."

Vyasji says – As per the curses of Varun and Brahma, Kashyapji took a partial incarnation. In another instance, coming under great sorrow and stress, Diti cursed Aditi thus – "As soon as you give birth to each of your seven sons, they will die."

Janmejay asked – O Great Muni! Diti and Aditi were real sisters. Then how could Diti give such a horrible curse to her own sister Diti. Please tell me the reason. Also, what sorrow befell her.

Sootji says – When King Janmejay asked this, Vyasji told him the entire story.

Vyasji said – Rajan! Daksh Prajapati had two beautiful and virtuous daughters, Diti and Aditi. They had the good fortune of becoming the wives of sage Kashyap. Aditi gave birth to the majestic Indra. Diti also desired to have a son just like Indra. So she said to Kashyapji – Lord! I also wish to have an illustrious and pious, strong and brave son." Kashyap said – "Have faith and carry out the vrat that I tell you, and you will also have a son like Indra." She immediately started the fast and austerity that her husband had advised. In a short while she became with child, and she continued to lead a pure life, and observed the payovrat (drinking milk and water). When the child was fully formed within, a glow began to spread from Diti's body. When Aditi saw this, she began to fear that Diti's son would eclipse Indra. The proud and haughty Aditi called her son Indra and said – Your rival is going to be born of Diti. You must think of a plan to destroy the child before it is born. I cannot bear the thought of any other child outshining you. If you wish to please me, use any means you can, and destroy the unborn child.

Vyasji says:- After hearing his mother's words, Indra became thoughtful for a while. Then he went to his step mother. Sinful thoughts had already entered

his mind. He offered pranaams, and spoke in sweet tones, which disguised and poison which was in his heart. Indra said – Mother! You are fasting and you have become weak. I have come to serve you. Order me to do whatever you wish. Shall I press your feet. By pleasing elders one gets blessings and good fortune. Just as my mother is Aditi, so also you are my mother. Indra began to massage her feet. She was tired from fasting, and she was lulled and relaxed. She was overcome with sleep. She trusted Indra fully. As soon as Indra saw that Diti was asleep, he assumed a tiny form, took a sharp weapon in his hand, and entered her body. By his yogic powers he went inside the womb, and with his vajra (spear), he cut the womb into seven pieces. The child cried out in pain. Indra further cut each of the seven pieces into seven more. So the child became the fortynine pavans (winds). Only after it was over, the beautiful Diti awoke. She realised that her womb had been cut, and she also realised that Indra had deceived her. She was greatly shocked. She was filled with anger. She knew that her sister Aditi had played a part in this despicable deed. The normally placid, pious, and sweet tempered Diti was so enraged that she cursed both Indra and Aditi. She said – "In the same way that Indra deceived me and destroyed my child, he will also lose kingship of Trilok (the three worlds). And, in the way that the sinful Aditi caused the death of my unborn child, she also will lose every boy child that is born to her, immediately after birth. She will also be in prison. For all this she will take a human birth."

Vyasji says – As Diti was pronouncing the curse, Kashyapji heard it. With great love he tried to pacify her. He said – O Auspicious One! Do not be angry. The children born of you will be very strong and powerful, and will be in the category of gods. They will be designated deities of the wind, and they will be friends of Indra. This curse that you have pronounced, will take effect in the twentyeighth part of the third of the Four Ages. This beautiful Aditi will take a human birth and suffer the curse. Both the curses will run parallel to each

other. Therefore it is imperative for Aditi to take a human birth, and you have provided the cause.

CHAPTER 4 Episode 4

4 - Janmejay asks and Vyasji explains the importance of Maya.

Raja Janmejay said - O Illustrious One! This episode has put me into great confusion. The world seems to be the embodiment of sin. What is the strategy to avoid entanglement. Indra was the son of Kashyap. Inspite of that he committed such a heinous crime – killing without mercy an unborn child. He who is the ruler of all; the protector of dharma; and the lord of the three worlds – Trilok, stooped to such a deed, then how can ordinary people escape sin. O Jagadguru! War began in Kurukshetra. The Kauravs and Pandavas were both aware that the world is an illusion. The Pandavas were considered incarnations of the devas. They were well anchored in Dharma. Then why did they indulge in this reproachable act. Bhagawati Shruti says the first step of Dharma is Truth; the second is Purity (freedom from defilement), the third step is Compassion; and the fourth is Generosity. Those who are well versed in the Purans, also say the same. In the absence of these qualities how can Dharma exist. All actions that go against Dharma, cannot bear good fruit. Sri Vishnu who is Jagatprabhu, also resorted to deception when he came as Vamana to King Bali. King Bali had completed hundred yagyas; he observed the teachings of the Vedas. He was righteous, generous, truthful and had successfully subdued all his senses. But by the deception of Vaman Avatar, he suddenly was deprived of his kingdom. Vyasji! Please tell me, who was the

victor? Bali or Vamana. You are the author of the Puranas. You know the rules of Dharma. Please enlighten me.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Victory was Bali's, because he gave away the world. Narendra! He who is known as Trivikram, had to come as Vaman due to the influence of guile and duplicity. Later he stationed himself as a gatekeeper of King Bali. In other words Rajan, the foremost Dharma is truth. But, to observe this in its purest form, is very difficult, and almost impossible, because Trigunatmika Maya is present in myriad forms, and is very powerful. This world which exists, is covered by the three attributes of this maya. Therefore, it is very difficult to find truth which has not even a spot of maya in it. There is always an adulteration in the truth. Yes! Those who live in isolation in the forest; who have no attachments; who do not take anything from anyone; who do not give favours; and who have all their senses under control, such saints and ascetics can attain truth in all its purity. They are in a situation where there is no necessity to speak an untruth. They can be used as an example with the three gunas – Sattwa, Rajo and Tamo. And they are in different combinations as they cannot exist alone. Dharma is Truth; but the attention cannot stay fixed on it for long, because of the indelible maya. The senses constantly stir the attention, and the mind gets entangled in the web. This gives rise to various emotions and desires.

Rajan! Every living thing, movable and immovable, is subject to Maya. The whole world is Her sport. It is Her nature to cause illusion and delusion, even to the gods. Man always takes recourse to untruth to accomplish his ends. Therefore a man, before embarking on a mission, should always avoid thinking. Because this thinking leads to anticipating situations and taking devious actions. Then the overpowering anger, lust and greed rear their ugly heads. Then one loses discretion and does not know what is good and what is

bad. If they become wealthy they get filled with ego, conceit and arrogance. Then comes illusion and delusion, and finally and inevitably, comes doom and death. In such circumstances all kinds of resolutions and doubts assail a person. He becomes cunning, and this gives birth to sin. A man loses his discretion, and no longer knows what actions are good, and what are bad. If he becomes wealthy, then he becomes proud, arrogant and aggressive. The mind gets filled with envy and jealousy, and this further causes hatred, malice, enmity and spite. When the mind is under delusion and spiritual ignorance, it falls prey to desires, expectations, greed, and ambitions; and what follows is dissatisfaction, unhappiness, hatred, and in severe cases atheism or non-belief in God. An egoistical person always says I, I, and mine, mine. Actions done in anger or out of greed are considered impure and unholy. It is advisable for a wise man to always consider the consequences before committing an action. He must ensure that he does not cause harm, bodily or emotionally, to anyone. That is a dharmic action. Those who enter into transactions which hurt or harm others, immediately come under the laws of karma and have to suffer the fruits of their actions.

That is why purity of mind is so important. Especially during yagyas and pujas – the presiding brahmins should have pure and chaste attention. If all the participants are pure and chaste, then only a puja can be sampoorna (complete and acceptable to the Divine). Also there should be only pure desire. If one performs puja for gain, or for causing destruction or harm to one's enemies, he reaps the opposite effect. A selfish man has no discretion. The Vedas mention that gods are born from Sattwaguna; human beings are born from Rajoguna; and animals and the rest of creation are born from Tamoguna. For this reason the gods are considered the quintessence of Sattwa. But they also stoop to intrigue and hostilities. So, if animals do the same, it is not surprising. It has become the main occupation of the gods to

disturb and break the tapasyas of each other. They are always wary of each other. They are always scheming and plotting. O King! This creation itself, was born out of ego. Therefore it cannot escape desires, illusions, and delusions.

CHAPTER 4 Episodes 5 - 6

5 - 6 Indra fails to break the tapas of Nar-Narayana. He sends the Apsaras as a last resort.

Vyasji says:- Rajendra! There is no use talking any more about this. It is very rare, and almost impossible to find a person whose attention is pure, and whose mind is free from desires; because this entire creation is permeated with desire, illusion and delusion. It has become a common practice to retaliate – an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But, to attack or cause harm to a non-violent and innocent man is considered very low class and despicable. It is said that collective actions are the causals of the various yugas. For the Sattwic temperament there is Satya Yuga; for the Rajas there is Treta Yuga; and for the Tamas temperament there is Kaliyuga, always before us. A person who is always dharmic and righteous, can claim to be a Satya Yugi. Of course in the other Yugas also people are trying to be dharmic. The first and foremost requirement for a dharmic life is Pure Desire. But desire is always prone to contamination and adulteration. Impure desires never allow Dharma to remain pure and perfect.

All the dharmas are said to be sons of Brahma. They were born out of his heart. Those who observed Dharma in its entirety, existed as Brahmins. They were married to the ten daughters of Daksh Prajapati. The marriage was performed with all the proper rites and ceremonies. The most truthful and righteous Dharma produced many sons. They were called Hari, Krishna, Nar and Narayan. Through Hari and Krishna the rules of Yoga Philosophy were constantly observed. Nar and Narayan went to the Himalayas, and began their tapasya and meditation on a mountain peak called Badarikashram. They are considered the most famous of the ancient tapasvis. It had become their

regular practice to sit on the expansive banks of the holy river Ganga, and meditate on Brahm. The two brothers who were a partial incarnation of Sri Hari, stayed on the mountain for a thousand years, immersed in deep meditation. They began to radiate light all over the world. This gave rise to envy and fear in the heart of Indra. He began to plan and plot – "What shall I do now. These great tapasvis will definitely receive boons, and then they might covet my throne. What obstacle can I put in their way, so that their meditation is disturbed and rendered incomplete." These thoughts gave rise to anger, hatred and greed in Indra's mind. He mounted his vahana, the elephant called Airavat, and proceeded to the Gandhmadan mountain, with the sole intention of breaking the tapasya of Nar and Narayan. As he approached, he saw their sacred ashram, which was glowing like the rising sun. He wondered – Is this a manifestation of Sri Vishnu himself, or have two suns risen today. What is it that these two sons of Dharma are trying to achieve?" Then he addressed Nar and Narayan – "O Sons of Dharma! You are most fortunate and auspicious. What is it you desire. I am prepared to grant any boon that you ask. That is why I have come. Even if you ask for a boon, out of proportion to your tapasya, I will grant it."

Vyasji says:- Indra stood before the meditating sages, and kept repeating his offer. But they did not answer. They were in deep thoughtlessness. There was no agitation in their minds. Then Indra spread the Mohini Maya of enchantment all around. Wolves, lions and tigers made fearsome sounds. Then he created fire, storm and rain. But nothing affected the meditating sages. Seeing this, Indra returned to his seat. He was neither able to tempt them with an offer of boons, nor could he disturb them with fearful events. Adi Shakti Bhagawati Jagadishwari is also known as Mahavidya. She manifests in the creation, and She is eternal. For those who are engrossed in meditation upon the Lotus Feet of Adi Shakti, there is no maya that can distract or disturb them,

as Maya also is Her creation. So how can a Deva, or a demon, ever hope to succeed in breaking the dhyana or meditation of a devotee whose attention is fixed on the Lotus Feet of Devi Bhagawati Adi Shakti. A Devi bhakt becomes immune and devoid of all sin. The most important and powerful mantras of the Devi are Vaagbeej, Kaambeej and Mayabeej. When these mantras become a part and parcel of a devotee's attention; then there is no one in this creation who can put obstacles in the way of a Devi Bhakt. Indra realised that his powers were useless before Nara and Narayan. So he requested Kamdev, the God of Love, and Ritu the King of the Seasons, to help him. "Come with Spring and all the Apsaras to the Gandhamadan Mountains, to Badarikashram, where the foremost of rishis Nara and Narayan are immersed in deep meditation. You are my last resort. You have got to pierce their attention with your cupid's arrows. In this whole world there is no Deva, demon or human, who has not falled victim to your darts of desire and love. Even Brahma, myself, Shankar, Chandrama and Agni Devata have succumbed to your charmed arrows. So to what category do these rishis belong, that they can withstand your arrows? I give you this bevy of beautiful apsaras to assist you. Tilottama or Rambha can accomplish this job, and so can you, all by yourself. So if all of you combine your efforts, you just cannot fail. I will fulfil any demand that you make. I even offered these two rishis any boon they desired, but they did not respond. They did not even flicker an eyelid. Nor did they try to protect their bodies when I created an illusion of fire, storms and dangerous wild animals."

Vyasji says – Kamdev assured Indra – O Vasav! I will certainly help you. No matter which god they are meditating upon, I will be able to pierce their attention and break their meditation. But, if they are meditating on the Devi, then there is no way that I can disturb them. "Kleem" is the most powerful Kambeej mantra of the Devi. Anyone who meditates on this, with full

attention, goes beyond my power. Therefore, if these two rishis are true devotees of that Maha Shakti, then my arrows will be ineffective against them.

Indra said – You are my well wisher and it is imperative that you should use all the means at your disposal and succeed in this job.

Vyasji says – The first to arrive on the Gandhamadan mountains, was Spring, unusual and untimely. It was as if the lion of spring had pierced the fierce elephant of winter with his claws, as testified by the budding of the Palasa flowers. Cuckoos were warbling; bees were flying about lazily; and the air was heavy with the fragrance of flowers. All the trees – mango, bakul, tilak, palash, sakhu, palmyra, tamaal and mahua, were heavily laden with flowers and fruits. The goddess of Spring has the Raktasoka flower as the palm of her hand; the Kimsukha flower as her excellent feet; Neelasukha flowers as her black hair; the full blown lotus as her eyes; the bel fruit her breasts; the Jollykunda her teeth; Manjari her beautiful ears; red Bandhu flowers her lips; Sindhubara her wonderful nails; Peacocks her ornaments; sounds made by the Saras birds the jingling of her payals; wreaths of creeper flowers her waist ornaments; the Goose her gait, and the filaments of Kadamba flowers the fine hairs on her body. The birds, bees, and other creatures were overcome with desire and passion, and were indulging in the play of love. Even the two sages found their senses becoming overwhelmed and slowly getting out of their control. Judging the time to be right, Kamdev, with Rati, surrounded Badarikashram with his arrows. The eight thousand five hundred damsels sent by Indra, were also present, led by Rambha and Tilottama. They were very accomplished, and began to sing and dance. Their music, combined with the songs of the birds and the buzzing of the bumble bees, succeeded in breaking the samadhi of Nar and Narayan. They began to wonder what had interfered with the cycle of nature, and brought winter to an abrupt end; and ushered in a premature

Spring season. Narayan began to suspect that someone was trying to destroy their tapasya. Since apsaras were singing, it was evident that Indra had a hand in this. Just then the group from heaven became visible. Kamdev was leading. Nar and Narayan watched in amazement. There were the apsaras Menaka, Rambha, Tilottama, Pushpgandha, Sukeshi, Mahashweta, Manorama, Pramdvara, Ghritachi, Geetagya, Charuhasini, Chandraprabha, Shobha, Vidyunmala, Ambirjyakshi, and Kanchanmalini. There were many more. Altogether sixteen thousand and fifty. They bowed to the munis, and began to sing music so beautiful and appealing, that no parallel could be found on earth. Muni Narayan was pleased, and said – O Intermediaries! Be pleased to stay here! You are our honoured guests, and we extend our hospitality and welcome."

Vyasji says – The muni Narayan succumbed to his ego and decided that he would amaze them all by creating an apsara whose beauty would surpass that of the apsaras sent by Indra. He slapped his thigh, and lo there appeared a woman of great beauty and form. All the apsaras who were present, were stunned with amazement. Then muni Narayan created the same number of apsaras as those sent by Indra. Then the apsaras from heaven apologised to the two munis – "We were so foolish to even try to disturb your meditation. We now know that you are the ansh (partial) avatars of Bhagwan Sri Hari. You are complete tranquility and bliss. We did not come for any purpose of our own; but were sent to accomplish a task by Indra. At least we had the good fortune to have your darshan. We must have done some punyas in our past lives. We have committed a serious offence, and deserve to be punished. But, wise saints do not squander away the powers derived from austerities, on trivial things like cursing others".

Vyasji says – In this way the apsaras begged forgiveness. The munis heard them without reacting. They had become self controlled and desireless. Blazing with the cool fire of their tapas, they asked the apsaras to request for a boon, which they would immediately grant. They also said – Take the beautiful apsara Urvasi as our gift to Indra, and also the new apsaras who have just been created. Now all of you please leave us and go to heaven!" But the apsaras pleaded – You are Dev Adi Dev Bhagwan Narayan. We have surrendered to your Lotus Feet. Where can we go? O Madhusudhan! Your eyes are like lotus petals. If you WILL give us a boon grant this – You please marry us so that we can spend the rest of our days here. Let Urvasi and the sixteen thousand and fifty apsaras that you have created, go to heaven and stay in the service of Indra. Please honour your promise of a boon to us.

Bhagwan Narayan said – We have been meditating here for a full thousand years. Our senses are under control. How can we destroy this tapasya. We have no desires or lust, as these completely destroy Sattwic joy.

The apsaras said – Of all the senses, touch gives the most pleasure, and we are well versed in the art of giving pleasure. You can live permanently on these Gandhamadan mountains with us.

CHAPTER 4 Episodes 7 – 8 - 9

7 – 9 Narayan realises the dangers of Ahamkara

Vyasji says – Hearing this, Narayan, the son of Dharma, realised – The present trouble has arisen entirely due to my ahamkara. This ahamkara can tear dharma to pieces. Wise men have said that ahamkara is the root of the tree of the world. When the damsels from heaven came to tempt me, I should have maintained the vow of silence. But I communicated with them and fell into the trap of ego and created all those apsaras. I am now caught in the web of my own creation like a spider. Now I must think carefully what I should do. If I ignore their request, they will certainly curse me and leave. Then I can settle down to severe austerities and penance in this forest. Therefore, this seems to be a correct decision.

The second great enemy is anger. It causes untold hardships to those who come under its influence. People have declared anger to be more dangerous than lust and greed. In anger, people also commit murder, which is the source of hell. Just as trees, rubbing together, cause a fire in which they themselves get burnt; so also the heat generated by anger ultimately burns up the body. All these fears hovered over his head like black clouds, and he was greatly distressed. Then his younger brother Nar began to advise him.

Nar said – “Narayan! You are most fortunate and auspicious. Stay away from anger. Become peaceful in your mind, and remove this ego. You might recall that once before, we came under the powerful influence of ego and broke our tapasya. We had also fallen into the trap of anger, and had fought with Daityaraj (king of demons) Prahlad for a full one thousand divine years. We

suffered extreme hardships then. So please renounce your anger and become peaceful. The sages have declared peace to be the root cause, and the only object, of Tapasya." Hearing his brother's advice, Dharmanandan Narayan became peaceful.

Janmejay asked – O Great Muni! A doubt has arisen in my mind. Prahlad was a great soul, and a devotee of Bhagwan Vishnu. His mind was always at peace. Then why was there a war between him and Nar Narayan in ancient times? The two sons of Dharma were tapasvis whose minds never got disturbed or agitated. Then what caused the war between them. Prahlad was a dharmatma of the highest order, full of wisdom and divine knowledge, and a foremost devotee of Shri Vishnu. Nar and Narayan were also endowed with these qualities. Also they never spoke an untruth. And yet there was a conflict between them! It appears that religion and asceticism; tapasya and dharma, were just actions performed superficially. One lakh years of severe asceticism were rendered useless by just one act of ahamkara. If these two rishis could not conquer their ahamkaras, then how can we mere mortals, subjugate our ahamkara. I am now quite convinced that in this universe, no one has ever been free from ahamkara; nor will anyone be free of it in the future. It is easier to free oneself from the bondage of iron or wooden chains, than to escape the clutches of ahamkara. Just as the rising sun dispels darkness, so also the seed of ahamkara germinates and devours all the punyas. If such spiritually evolved beings could not gain vistory over their ahamkaras, what will happen to ordinary beings like me.

Vyasji says – Bharat! It is certain that the effect cannot be different from the cause. For example gold and golden earrings, though different in form, have the same causal, i.e. gold. Thread is the cause of cloth. So also, this universe has sprung from ahamkara. Therefore it can not be free from ahamkara. All

this moving and unmoving universe, including a blade of grass, is fashioned out of Trigunatmak Maya. So the wise recognise every phenomenon as unreal. Ahamkara gives birth to lust, anger, greed, and attachment. Under their influence man has no control over his actions.

Janmejay said – They are really great souls who have been able to free themselves of these powerful influences. Those who have renounced desires and attachments, and who have conquered their senses, have won a victory over all the three lokas. The foolish man always has his eyes on the honey, but does not see the dangerous place from which it comes. He loses all fear of hell. Please tell me the ancient story of the war. It is common for wars to be fought over wealth or women. But Nar and Narayan were beyond these vices, and so was Prahlad. So what was the cause. Please tell me in detail.

Sootji says – Vyasji began his narration to satisfy the curiosity of Janmejay.

Vyasji said – O King! When the fearful Hiranyakashipu died, his son Prahlad was crowned king. He was a devotee of the Devas and a protector of brahmins. During his reign, yagyas were performed with all the procedures and protocols. The Brahmins were supported in their performance of tapasya, spreading of dharma, and visiting places of pilgrimage. The traders did their business of buying and selling, and the shudras served everyone. The lord Narasimha had ordered Prahlad to settle in Pataal. So he ruled his kingdom there and cared for his subjects.

It happened a long time ago. The great tapasvi Chyavanji, son of Bhrigu, went to the holy river Narmada to have a bath. This holy place is also known as Vhyahritishwar Teerth. As he was going down the steps to the river Rewa, a venemous snake caught hold of him, and dragged him down to Pataal. Muni

Chyavan was filled with terror, and he began to remember Dev Adi Dev Bhagwan Vishnu. In his mind he began to recite the holy names of the Lord. No sooner had he started, than all the poison from the serpent's body vanished. This filled the snake with fear and apprehension, that this great ascetic would put a curse on him. He sent all the beautiful Nag-kanyas (serpent maidens) to perform puja to the muni. Then Chyavanji entered the abode of the Demons and Nagas. One day Muni Chyavan was out walking in that country, when Prahlad, King of the Daityas, spotted him. Prahlad offered him obeisance, and enquired – Bhagwan! How is it you have come here! Please do tell me. Indra bears enmity towards us. Can it be that he has sent you here to spy on our kingdom. O Twice-born One! Please tell me the truth.

Chyavan Muni said – I have nothing to gain from Indra, that would make me come as his spy. Please know that I am the son of Bhrigu, and my name is Chyavan. I am blessed with eyes that have divine perception. Do not for a moment think that I have been sent by Indra. I had gone to bathe in the holy river Narmada, when a great snake caught hold of me. I immediately called to mind Bhagwan Sri Vishnu, Who caused the snake to lose all his venom. Then it released me. O King! After that I came into your kingdom and have had the good fortune of your darshan. O King of the Daityas! You are a devotee of Sri Vishnu and you must recognise me also as a devotee.

Vyasji says – Chyavan muni spoke in a very sweet and pleasing manner. Prahlad began to ask him about all the holy places that he had visited.

Prahlad asked – O Munivar! How many holy places are there on earth. Also tell me about the holy places that exist in heaven and in Pataal (nether regions).

Chyavan Muni said – O King! The person who has a pure mind, word, and body; for him every step is a Teerth. For the corrupted and defiled man, the Ganga even seems more unholy than Magadh. If the mind and attention is purified, then all his filth and impurities leave him; and all places become auspicious and holy by his presence.

Otherwise, there are many holy spots along the banks of the river Ganga. Besides this, there are also a lot of little villages and hamlets, which have sprung up. O King! These places are also inhabited by primitive tribes, fishermen, Huns (a tribe of Mongols), some tribes of Bengal, Khas (ancient tribes of Garhwal) and others who are all low born persons who indulge in sinful lifestyles. But O Sinless King! Not a single person there, dies in a state of purity and grace. A man whose body and mind are filthy, what can he benefit from a teerth sthan (holy place). In such a situation, the mind should be considered the main cause. Nothing else. Those who are desirous of getting cleansed, should first of all purify their attention and their mind, even before setting out for the holy place. If his mind is full of deceit, then even in a holy place he is considered a sinner. Sins committed in a holy place, bear extremely harmful fruit. Therefore a man who visits a holy place, should first cleanse his mind and attention. The material body automatically gets cleansed. There is no doubt in this. Similarly, the conduct should also be clean and dharmic. Then one becomes completely holy. One must not commit despicable acts in a holy place, nor should they keep company with immoral people. One should be compassionate to all.

O King! If you still want to know, I can tell you of holier places. The foremost is an ancient forest called Naimisharanya. Then there is Chakra Teerth and Pushkar Teerth, and many more on the earth. It is not possible to name all.

Vyasji says – Hearing this, Prahlad decided to go to Naimisharanya. Filled with joy he gave orders to his demon subjects. Prahlad said – Most fortunate Daityas! Arise. Today we will proceed to Naimisharanya. There we will have a darshan of Bhagwan Sri Hari – Dressed in Pitamber (yellow silk), He will be seated on his throne.

Vyasji says – All the Daityas rejoiced, and a big horde of Daityas and Danavas left Pataal. On reaching Naimisharanya, they all took a customary bath. Then they visited all the holy places there. They beheld the most sacred Saraswati river. The water was clear and pure. Prahlad's heart began to swell with great joy. He bathed in its pure waters, and completed the rituals, and the giving of alms. That most holy place became the cause of great happiness and joy to Prahlad.

Vyasji says – After completing all the rituals, Prahlad saw before him a huge banyan tree, giving extensive shade. He noticed a lot of arrows lying there. They were of different designs, and all had the feathers of vultures at the end. They had been sharpened so much, they were shining. Seeing this Prahlad began to wonder – Whoever these arrows belong to, what can cause him to stay in the vicinity of rishis, ashrams, and holy places. He had hardly thought this, when there came into sight the sons of Dharma – Nar and Narayan. They were dressed in the skin of black antelope. Their matted hair was wound on top of their heads. Lying in front of them were two shining bows. Bearing powerful emblems, these bows were known as Sharng and Aajgav (Bows of Lord Vishnu). There were also two quivers filled with many arrows. The two rishis were in deep meditation. Seeing this, Prahlad's eyes became red with anger. He addressed them – "What is this hypocrisy! This is what is destroying Dharma, and turning it into Dust. This kind of a situation has neither been seen nor heard, in the whole world. On the one side there is intense tapasya,

and on the other the hands are lifting bows and arrows! This was never considered fit, even in the past ages. When Brahmins are engaged in doing tapasya, where is the need for them to possess weapons. When a person wears a jata on the head, and then carries weapons also, it is only a display of arrogance. You are both divine personalities. It is fitting for you to observe dharmic conduct.

Vyasji says – O King! Hearing Prahlad's words Narayan replied – King of Daityas! Why are you showing unnecessary interest in us and our tapasya. We are Samarth (give complete meaning to ourselves). The whole world knows this. War and tapasya – we have an involvement in both. There is nothing you can do about it. It is better for you to leave. Do not indulge into idle chatter. One gets divine effulgence (Brahma-tej) after very severe penance and tapasya. Those who desire happiness should not cast aspersions on a Brahmin.

Prahlad said – O Tapasvis! You are being conceited and arrogant for no reason. I am the king of the Daityas, and the support of Dharma. It is improper for you to insult me in such a holy place. O Great Ascetic! What powers do you have. Come and show it on the field of battle.

Vyasji says – Prahlad was a matchless warrior. He took a vow that no matter how many boons these tapasvis had received, and no matter how much they had conquered their senses, he would somehow defeat them.

Vyasji says – Prahlad picked up his bow and strung it. Then he pulled it, and it made a great, resounding noise. Nar also picked up his bow and fixed one of the sharp arrows. Filled with anger, he shot all the arrows at Prahlad, who in turn used his brilliantly coloured arrows to slice through the arrows sent by Nar. Seeing this, Nar shot five quick arrows and wounded Prahlad in the arm.

Indra and the other gods came on their vahanas to watch the fight from the skies. By turns they applauded the two warriors. Prahlad's arrows came quick and fast, like rain from a cloud. Then Narayan picked up his huge bow Sharng, and fixed a golden feathered arrow on it. This time all Prahlad's arrows were shot to pieces by Narayan. At that time, the eternal Lord Sri Hari had incarnated in the house of Dharma as his sons Nar and Narayan. He it was, who stood in front of Prahlad; who was raining arrows on Him. Narayan let loose a shower of razor-sharp arrows which caused deep injuries to Prahlad.

Vyasji says – The fierce fighting continued. Narayan broke Prahlad's bow, and he quickly picked up a new one. That too was broken by Narayan. In this way he broke many bows. Then Prahlad picked up a spear and threw it at Narayan's arm. But before it could reach him, Narayan cut it with nine arrows; and with the tenth arrow he injured Prahlad. Then Prahlad picked up an iron mace and hit it on the thigh of Narayan. But Narayan stood, steady as a rock. The mace also was broken to pieces by Narayan. Prahlad threw a sword at Narayan, which he cut into seven pieces with an arrow. Then he aimed seven arrows at Prahlad. The fierce fighting continued for one thousand years and would not end. Then Bhagwan Vishnu appeared in that ashram. He was in his Divine Form, with four arms. He wore yellow silk cloth. In His four arms he bore the Shankh, Chakra, Gadha and Padma. He set his holy feet in the ashram of Prahlad. Prahlad was overcome with joy. He folded his hands and bowed his head in worship. Prahlad said – Madhav! You are worshipped even by the Gods. You govern the entire creation. It is your nature to be compassionate to Your devotees. Lord! Please tell me why I have not been able to defeat these two tapasvis. I have been fighting with them for a thousand years, and have not been able to defeat them.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – O Noble Soul! These are divine personalities. They are partial incarnations of Myself. So you should not wonder. They are completely self-controlled; and they are known as Nar and Narayan. You cannot be victorious over them. Therefore O King! Return to Pataal; instal Me in your heart; and always meditate upon me. It is undesirable to get into conflict with these tapasvis.

Vyasji says – Prahlad immediately obeyed Sri Vishnu. He took all his Daityas and Demons, and returned to Pataal. Nar and Narayan resumed their tapasya.

CHAPTER 4 Episodes 10 - 11

10 - 11 Victory of the Devas over the Daityas. Daityas get protection from Shukracharya; Shiv tapasya.

Janmejay said - Vyasji! I do not understand one thing. Nar and Narayan were partial incarnations of Sri Vishnu; they were always in tapasya; they lived in the forest and ate only roots and berries; they never spoke an untruth; they were sattwa gunis, and yet they entered a battlefield and fought for a thousand years. Why did they break their tapasya. Why did they renounce the joy of peace, and pick up arms against Prahlad. O Most Auspicious One! Please tell me what caused Nar and Narayan to fight with Prahlad.

Vyasji said – The all knowing sages who have got their realisation, have declared that the threefold ahamkara is the cause of this creation. Therefore these two munis, Nar and Narayan, being creatures of this world, cannot forego their ahamkaras. Without any cause, there is no action. When Sattwic guna predominates, it becomes the cause of yagyas, tapasya, sacrifice and charity. Quarrels arise from Rajo or Tamo. Everything arises from ahamkar, whether good or bad. This is the absolute truth. There is nothing that binds a soul like ahamkara. It is out of ahamkara that the universe is created, so how can anything or anyone in it, be free from ahamkara. Rajan! All living things take birth again and again, according to the law of karmas. The gods, mortals and animals have to hang about in various yonis (strata of animate beings – eighty four lakhs in number). Like the wheels of a chariot, this creation revolves in a series of changes. The Lord of the Universe, incarnates in various

forms according to the situation, for the preservation of Dharma. In the seventh Vaivasvat Manavantar (the fourteen sons of Brahma who were the progenitors of the human race, were called Manus; and the era of each was a Manavantar). Sri Hari took many avatars. Listen carefully. I will tell you about them.

Once Bhrigu muni wished to curse the Lord; and to fulfil this curse, Lord Vishnu gave him a boon to cause the Lord to incarnate on the earth. From then on, Shri Vishnu took many forms and came on earth.

Janmejay said – Why did Bhrigu curse Sri Vishnu. He is the Supreme Lord of the entire universe. What action of His could have upset Bhrigu muni so much, that he had the audacity to curse the Lord.

Vyasji said - Rajan! I will tell you the reason why Bhrigu cursed the Lord. Listen carefully! This is an ancient story. There was a king called Hiranyakashipu. Kashyapji was his father. In those days whenever there was fighting between Daityas and Devas, the whole world would be shaken. When Hiranyakashipu died, his son Prahlad became king. He also engaged in war with Indra. The battle lasted for a hundred years. The Devas fought so valiantly, that Prahlad had to concede defeat. But this had a wonderful effect on him. He realised the eternal religion, and understood its importance. He handed the kingdom over to his son Bali, and left for the Gandhamadan mountains to meditate and undertake tapasya. King Bali also fell into conflict with the devas, and again war started between Devas and Daityas. With the support of Indra, the Devas were again victorious. Bhagwan Vishnu had also helped Indra by depriving the Daityas of their kingdom. After losing the battle, all the Daityas retreated to the ashram of their guru Shukracharya, to seek his protection.

They said – O Brahman! You are so powerful and yet you did not help us. You have knowledge of all the mantras. If you do not help us, we cannot stay on the earth. We will be forced to go to Pataal.

Vyasji says – Shukracharya Muni was very compassionate. He said – Do not be afraid. With my powers I will make arrangements for you to stay here. I will use mantras and medicines to look after you. Be confident and don't worry.

Vyasji says – After this assurance, the Daityas were no longer afraid. Spies conveyed this information to the Devas. They went into consultation with Indra. They were aware of the power of Shukracharya's mantras and they became afraid. They all decided to act fast, so as to prevent Shukracharya from using effective mantras. They would start a war and kill as many Daityas as possible, and chase the rest into Pataal. With Indra's permission the Devas led a surprise attack on the Daityas. The Daityas ran to Shukracharya crying –"Help us! Save us!" Shukracharya stood up and said loudly – "Do not fear!" Hearing this and fearing that he would use his mantra, the Devas fled. Then Shukracharya spoke to the Daityas – O Fortunate Danavas! A long time ago Brahmaji told me something. Listen and I will tell you. Bhagwan Vishnu is always alert to destroy the Daityas. A great destruction of Daityas is about to take place at his hands. When He incarnated in the form of a boar-Varaha, he killed Hiranyaksh. His incarnation as half-man half-lion – Narasimha – destroyed Hiranyakashipu. In the same way he is going to destroy all the Daityas shortly. He is full of zeal and valour and no one should under estimate him. So I advise all of you Daityas to wait here. I will go to Bhagwan Shankar and get from him the knowledge for making my mantra effective. After receiving all this knowledge, I will come back and teach it to you.

The Daityas said: O Muni! We have been defeated, and we have become weak. We will not be able to wait on the earth for very long. All the brave and strong Daityas have been killed. Those who are remaining, are unfit for anything.

Shukracharya said: It is absolutely necessary for you to wait here till I bring back the mantra from Bhagwan Shankar. Even if you have to become tapasvis, you must do so. Intelligent and brave men use any measures like conciliation, alliance, gifts, bribes and even serve their enemies and lull them into complacency. Once their own strength improves, and their army increases, they fight. So pretend your meekness and keep the peace till I return. Through the grace of Bhagwan Shankar, as soon as I receive the mantra, I will come back, and with His protection we can start a war. Shukracharya left, and the Daityas took his advice and started peace talks with the Devas. They said – "O Devas! We are tired of fighting. We are laying aside our weapons, we will wear the bark of trees and lead a life of asceticism". The Devas believed them and went away, very relieved. Now that the Daityas had renounced their weapons there was nothing to fear. The Daityas settled down in sage Kashyap's ashram, to await the return of their guru. Shukracharya reached Kailash. He offered obeisance to Bhagwan Shankar. The Lord asked him why he had come. Shukracharya said – Bhagwan! I desire to receive that mantra, which even Brihaspati does not possess. I wish to use it for the defeat of the Devas, and the victory of the Daityas.

Vyasji says – Shri Shankar went into meditation. He thought – What must I do in this situation. This Shukracharya is the Guru of the Daityas. He has come with the intention of getting a mantra, and using it to defeat the Devas. Then he opened his eyes and gave the muni a difficult austerity to perform. He said – For a full thousand years, you must stand with your head downwards and

your feet upwards, and only inhale the smoke from burning husk. If you complete this austerity, you will receive the mantra. Shukracharya bowed his head and said – O Venerable One! I will go immediately and start the austerity as per your command.

Vyasji says – Shukracharya started the severe austerity and sustained himself only on the smoke from burning husk.

The Devas realised that the Daityas were only in the garb of ascetics, waiting for their guru Shukracharya to return with the mantra. They also began various rituals and fasts, to obtain mantras for themselves. Then they picked up their weapons and went to the place where the leaders of the Daityas were staying. Seeing the Devas approach, with arms, the Daityas were filled with fear. They immediately stood up and faced the proud and confident Devas; and began to confess. – We have kept away our weapons. At this moment our Guru is in the midst of severe penance. O Devas! It is not fitting for you to try and kill us in these circumstances. Also, you promised us safe harbour. It is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, that it is wrong to attack unarmed, fearful, or persons under your protection.

The Devas said – You have sent Shukracharya to obtain a mantra to be used against us, and with this deceit in your hearts you are sitting in meditation! We have become aware of your falsehood. That is why we are here to fight. Take up your arms. It is a general practice to defeat the enemy whenever an opportunity presents itself.

Vyasji says: The Daityas consulted each other, and then left the place in great fear. They ran for protection to the mother of their Guru. She immediately took them into her house. The mother of Shukracharya said –“Do not be

afraid. As long as you are under my protection, no harm can come to you." So they settled down in her ashram to wait for their Guru.

The Devas followed their footprints and arrived at the ashram, and began to beat the Daityas who had none of their weapons with them. Kavyamata, mother of Shukracharya, pleaded with the Devas to stop, but they continued killing the Daityas. Kavyamata flew into a rage and invoked Nidra to overwhelm all the Devas, including Indra, with deep sleep. All the Devas lay mute and helpless, and Indra became weak and drowsy. Seeing this, Lord Vishnu said – "O King of Devas! Come to Me. I will transport you". Indra found himself in the presence of Sri Hari. He got back his energy, and Nidra could not overwhelm him. When Kavyamata saw that Indra had revived, and was filled with his former energy, she became very angry. She cried out – "Indra! By my powers I will swallow you and Vishnu. All the Devas will watch helplessly."

Vyasji says – Shukracharya's mother was well versed in yogic practices. She caused all the energy to drain out of Sri Vishnu and Indra. Both became weak and pale. The Devas watched in helpless amazement. Then Indra addressed Sri Vishnu. He said – Madhusudhan! I am extremely sad to see you like this. Prabhu! Please strike this demoness immediately. She has become arrogant because of her powers obtained by tapasya. Before she attacks us, please destroy her. Do not delay".

The pure desire of Indra was heard by Sri Hari. He immediately put his attention on Sudarshan Chakra; which is always in readiness, awaiting the Lord's command. It arrived instantly. In response to Indra's prayer, Sri Vishnu used the Sudarshan Chakra and separated the head of Shukracharya's mother from her body. Indra and the Devas began to praise the Lord with jai-jai-kars. Since then the dreadful act of killing a woman filled the hearts of Sri Vishnu

and Indra with fear that Shukracharya's father Bhrigu Muni, would put a curse on them.

CHAPTER 4 Episodes 12 – 14

12 – 14 Bhrigu Muni curses Bhagwan Vishnu. Regeneration of Bhrigu-patni (Shukracharya's mother); and return of Shukracharya.

Vyasji says: Seeing the horrible death of his wife, Bhrigu Muni was filled with a burning rage. His body shook with anger and grief. He went before Sri Vishnu and said – You are the fount of Pure Knowledge. Still you committed a despicable act of killing a brahmin's daughter. It is well known that you are Sattwaguni; Brahma is endowed with Rajoguni; and Shankar is Tamoguni. Then what caused you to become Tamasic. An innocent woman should never be killed. How did you get involved in killing this woman. For this I can only curse you. To protect Indra you killed my wife. I therefore curse you to take many births on earth, and suffer the pain and ignominy of remaining in different wombs.

Vyasji says:- Because of that curse, Sri Vishnu descends on the earth from time to time.

King Janmejay asked;- After the death of his wife, how did mahatma Bhrigu continue his life as a householder.

Vyasji says:- After cursing the Lord in anger, Bhrigu Muni picked up the head of his wife, placed it on her neck and said: O Devi! You were killed by Vishnu; but I am now bringing you back to life. If I have knowledge of the dharmas; and if I have lived a pure and holy life, then by my truthfulness, let this Devi come back to life. This is the test of truth. Let all the gods be witness to my powers. He sprinkled holy water on the body and pronounced these words – If

I am righteous, virtuous, truthful, moral, well versed in the Vedas, and a true tapasvi, then may you come back to life."

Vyasji says:- No sooner did he sprinkle the water, than life returned to the body of his wife. She sat up and smiled happily. Her face was filled with grace. To the onlookers it seemed as if she had awakened from sleep. Everyone praised them and blessed them. Indra and all the Devas who watched were filled with wonder. Indra said – Here Bhrigu Muni has brought his virtuous wife back to life; and there Shukracharya is performing severe austerities to obtain a mantra. Once he gets it, I wonder what he will do.

Vyasji says – O King! Indra was so full of fear that he spent sleepless nights. Then he got an idea and went to his daughter Jayanti and said – Daughter. Shukracharya is a great ascetic. I have given you to him. Dear daughter! Go to him. Serve him. Please him in every way, and get him under your control. Please do this for my sake." She was very beautiful, and an obedient daughter. She left for the ashram of Muni Shukracharya. When she reached she saw the muni in deep meditation, inhaling smoke. She remembered her father's request and began to minister to the muni. She broke off a banana leaf and fanned him. Then she kept a container of cool water close to him. In it she had dissolved fragrant substances. During the day she made a tent of cloth to shade him from the sun. She looked after him just like a wife. She brought sweet, ripe fruits as prescribed in the shashtras; kusha grass as long as the span between thumb and forefinger. Never did she show fear, nor did she try by word or gesture, to disturb his tapasya. She served him, devoid of anger, and in complete celibacy. She had a melodious voice, and softly she used to sing his praises. Shen he woke up in the mornings, there was always water for his ablutions. In this way she looked after all his comforts, for a thousand years. On completion of his tapasya, Shri Shankar was very pleased and said –

O Son of Bhrigu. Whatever exists in this Universe; whatever you see with your eyes, and whatever cannot be described in words, you will be the lord of all this, and the conqueror of all. No creature can kill you. You will be the ruler of all beings, and will be considered the best of all brahmins.

Then Shri Shankar vanished from his sight. Shukracharya spoke to Jayanti – O beautiful One! Who are you? Who is your father? What is your wish. Why have you undertaken this difficult life. What is your purpose, and what do you desire. O beautiful maiden with lovely eyes! Tell me. I am prepared to grant you the most difficult boons. I am pleased. " Hearing this, Jayanti's heart filled with joy. She said – Lord! By your powers you can guess my wish."

Shukracharya said – Yes! I am aware. But still, you have to express the wish yourself. I am pleased with your care, and I am bound to grant your desire.

Jayanti said – Brahman! I am the daughter of Indra. My name is Jayanti. My father has given me to you. Please honour and accept me.

Shukracharya said – You can stay here for ten years.

Vyasji says – Saying this he took her hand and took her into his house. He married her and lived with her for ten years, in the shade of maya, unseen and unobserved by any living thing. The daityas heard that Shukracharya had successfully completed his tapasya and had received the boon from Sri Shankar. They went to his ashram to meet him, but could not see him as he was with Jayanti. They were very disappointed and began to wander around aimlessly. Indra approached his guru Brihaspati and asked what step he should take next. Since Shukracharya had covered himself with maya and was not visible to anyone, Brihaspati decided to go to the Daityas, disguised as Shukracharya. All the Daityas thought he was Shukracharya and gave him a big

welcome. He told them that he had received the mantra, and would teach it to them. He also advised them to perform tapasya themselves, and please Sri Shankar. The Daityas were overjoyed and agreed to everything.

Janmejay said – O Great Muni! Please tell me what the disguised Brihaspati did, and when the real Shukracharya finally came.

Vyasji says - Brihaspati used maya and became Shukracharya. The Daityas accepted him without any suspicion. They trusted him completely. The Daityas were extremely selfish. Greed blunts the intelligence. After the completion of ten years, Shukracharya began to think of the Daityas. He thought – They must be eagerly awaiting my return. They are devoted to me, and I must guide them and free them of fear of the Devas. He spoke to Jayanti – "O One with Beautiful Eyes! The ten years that I had to spend with you are over. My devotees, the Daityas, are waiting for me. I must go and instruct them. I will try to return to you as soon as possible". Jayanti was aware of all protocols. She did not wish to obstruct the muni, and sent him peacefully on his way.

When Shukracharya reached he saw Brihaspati sitting with all the Daityas around him. He was teaching them wrong procedures and rituals. Shukracharya was shocked. He knew that Brihaspati bore enmity towards him, but he was amazed that he was misguiding the Daityas. "Greed is the root cause of sin. It is despicable. It exerts so much temptation that even a guru like Brihaspati has stooped to tell lies. A person who is considered an authority on dharma – the guru of the Devas – has become a pawn in the game of intrigue. This is the speciality of greed. The mind gets filled with filthy desires, and then a person commits undesirable actions. That is why this foremost of rishis is indulging into deceit and befooling my sishyas. They too are so gullible."

Vyasji says – Thinking all this, and with a smile on his face, Shukracharya approached the Daityas. O Daityas! This is Brihaspati who has disguised himself. How did you allow him to deceive you. I am Shukracharya. This is Brihaspati, guru of the Devas. He has come here on their instructions, to cheat you. You have fallen into his trap. Leave him and follow me." Hearing this, the Daityas looked at Brihaspati and then at Shukracharya. Both looked alike and the Daityas got confused. They were about to accept Shukracharya, when Brihaspati in disguise spoke – "This newcomer is Brihaspati. He has disguised himself as me, to confuse you. Do not believe him. I have received the mantra from Sri Shankar, and that is what I have been teaching you. We will defeat the Devas. That is my promise." The Daityas began to believe this falsehood, and inspite of appeals from the real Shukracharya, they decided to accept Brihaspati. He had been with them for ten years and had fully convinced them. They asked the real Shukracharya to leave. The Daityas were dull and foolish. They were rude and disrespectful to their real guru.

Then Shukracharya became angry. He cursed them. – Inspite of my appeals and advice you have disowned me. As the fruit of your actions, you will suffer great defeat and calamity. You showed me disrespect, and very soon you will suffer. Then you will realise the falsehood of this man."

Vyasji says – Saying this, Shukracharya left in a temper. Brihaspati was full of glee. He stayed on for some time. Then fearing the curse of Shukracharya, he left the place. On the way he reverted to his original self. He went to Indra and said – "I have done your job. The Daityas have been cursed by Shukracharya, and abandoned by me. They now have no support or protection. Let all the Devas get ready for battle. The Daityas are in a very critical situation, created by me."

Indra could not contain his joy on hearing this news. All the Devas roared with laughter. They praised Brihaspati. Then they discussed their war strategy, and went to face the demons. They were full of zeal and impatient to start the war. The Daityas realised that they had been tricked by Brihaspati. They began to speak to each other – Shukracharya is our most revered guru. He has left in anger. Brihaspati succeeded in befooling us. Now what shall we do, and where shall we go. How can we appease our guru and obtain his forgiveness. They went to Shukracharya and bowed at his feet. Then they stood there in silence. Shukracharya looked at them. His eyes were red with rage. He said – O Sishyas! I tried to convince you in many ways, but you were so wrapped up in the maya of Brihaspati, that you ignored my words which were for your benevolence. You were disrespectful and arrogant, and defiled the purity of my words. For the sin of insulting your Guru, you are now suffering. Go to that person who deceived you for the sake of the gods. I am not a fraud and imposter like Brihaspati.

Vyasji says – As the guru was scolding them, their king Prahlad caught his feet and began to pray - Prahlad said – "Most revered Shukracharyaji! We are your sishyas, and we are here at your service. We are in great difficulties. Please do not abandon us. We are like your children. While you were away, the cunning Brihaspati came in disguise and deceived us that it was you who had returned. He convinced us by his sweet talk. But you are gracious. You will not get angry over a mistake that was committed in ignorance. O All-knowing One! You are the object of our devotion and respect. By the powers gained during your tapasya, you will be able to recognise our sincere surrender to you. So please renounce your anger. It is said that holy men do not remain angry for long. The nature of water is coolness. When it is placed on the fire it gets heated up; but when it is removed from the fire it becomes cool again. Anger is the nature of chandalas (low born and villainous). Men of superior

nature should renounce anger at once. So please leave your anger and smile upon us again. If you do not forgive us, and instead you abandon us, we will definitely end up in rasatal (the sixth lower world according to the Puranas. - Hell.)

Vyasji says – After Prahlad spoke, Shukracharya perceived the truth, and became pleased. He smiled and spoke to the Daityas. He said – O Daityas! You are my wards. Do not be afraid. You will not go to Pataal. My mantra will protect you. In ancient times, I heard Brahma speaking. Listen. I will tell you what he said. It is benevolent, it is the truth, and it is inviolable (atal). Shri Brahma said – That which has to happen, will definitely happen. There is no being on earth who can change destiny." Because of your bad time, your energy has become depleted. Therefore this time you will have to face defeat at the hands of the Devas and go to Pataal. The present situation indicates this. Just a short while ago you were victorious and received all the Rajlakshmi. Destiny gave you the fruits by which you were the undisputed rulers for ten yugas. During this time the Devas were subservient to you. Again, in the coming Savarni Manavantar (the era of the eighth Manu), you will again become the rulers. Your grandson Bali will conquer the three worlds, and will be the supreme ruler." When Bhagwan Vishnu incarnated and came on the earth as Vaman avatar; and when he deprived Bali of his kingdoms, at that time these words were spoken in favour of Bali. Also, when Sri Hari took away Bali's kingdoms at the Devas' request, he spoke to Bali and said – In the future Savarni Manavantar, you will come as Indra.

Shukracharya said – Prahlad! The Bali with whom Sri Hari spoke, is your grandson who is not yet visible to all beings. Out of fear he is in hiding, waiting for the right time. It happened a long time ago that Bali turned himself into a donkey and hid in a deserted house. He was in fear of Indra. Just then Indra

came there and shouted out – O Leader of the Daityas! Why are you in the form of a donkey. You are king of all the three worlds, and head of the Daityas. O Ishwar of the Rakshasas! Aren't you ashamed to be a donkey. Bali answered – What is there to be ashamed. The Lord, Bhagwan Vishnu had himself assumed the form of a fish – Matsya Avatar. I too have taken the form of a donkey. It is as per each one's understanding of it. At one time you also tried to escape Brahma by hiding in the stalk of a lotus. I too am in hiding. O Indra! When one is governed by fate, there is no shame or sorrow, or happiness. It is all the same. The truth is, destiny is free to act as it deems fit.

Shukracharya says – In this way Bali and Indra had a profound talk. Their minds became satisfied and peaceful. Each went his own way. I told you this story to prove that gods, humans, and daityas, are all governed by fate.

CHAPTER 4 Episode 15

15 – War between the Devas and Danavs. Intervention by Devi.

Vyasji says:- Shukracharya was a great soul. Hearing him Prahlad was very pleased. He realised that the Devas were very powerful. He called the Daityas and said – If we enter into war with the Devas we cannot win. But the ambitious Daityas became vain and said –"It is imperative that we fight. We do not believe in Destiny. Those who are afraid of exertion support this belief in Destiny. Who has seen fate. Where has it been seen. How does it look. And who has made it? It is just a mental projection. And that is why we will assemble an army and go to war. O King! Your knowledge is pure. Please do us the favour of leading us. We will do the rest." Prahlad was capable of destroying any opponent. On the request of the Daityas he became their commander. They reached the battlefield and began to provoke the Devas. The Devas had also prepared themselves for war. Very soon the armies of Prahlad and Indra began to fight. The war went on for a hundred years. Prahlad dominated the fight, and with the protection from Shukracharya, the Daityas won the war. Then, on the advice of Brihaspati, Indra began to meditate on Devi Bhagwati. She is the remover of all sorrows. She gives auspiciousness, and grants moksha to those who surrender to Her.

Indra prayed - O Devi! Victory be to You. Mahamaya! You are the mother of the entire creation. You are seated on your Singhasan. You hold in Your Hands trishul, shankh, chakra, mace and sword. It is Your nature to give protection to all who seek it. Shree Mother! Obeisance to You. The whole universe acknowledges Your supremacy. The six schools of philosophy, and the ten tattwas come from You. Mahabindu is Your form. You are verily the Maha-

Kundalini. You are the embodiment of Sat Chit Anand. You are the fire, and You are the oblation of the Mahayagya. You are effulgent like the flame of a deepak. I offer You my pranaams. O Mother! You are the Panchakoshatmak – the five receptacles within the body. You are the joy giving Brahmaswaroopini. You are praised in all the upanishads. Mother! Oblige us by being pleased. Jagaddambe! We have become weak. We have no energy. The Daityas have defeated us. O Devi! You are generous to those who come to Your Lotus Feet. Please save us from this calamity. The whole world is aware of Your Shakti. O Devi who cuts the knot of difficulties. All the Shaktis are within You. Those who meditate upon You get eternal joy. And those who separate their attention from You, suffer trials and tribulations. Those holy souls who desire moksha, and are free of ego, meditate upon You and successfully cross the ocean of illusion. Devi! You are the Mother of the Universe. All sorrows vanish in Your presence. You assume the form of Kaala for the dissolution of the creation. With our ordinary and limited brains, how can we comprehend You! Even the gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Surya, Indra, Yama, Varun, Agni, Pavan, and the Vedas, are not able to adequately sing your praises. Only those can be considered blessed and fortunate who worship You in their hearts. They are free from the afflictions and agonies of this world, and are immersed in the deep ocean of joy and Niranand. O Devi! Those unfortunate beings who do not know You, can never cross this ocean of illusion, and are forever caught in the cycle of birth and death. And then there are those, most blessed and fortunate beings who feel the Divine Cool Breeze of Chaitanya flowing over their heads; who are given opportunities of enjoying collectivity; and who have everything available for their ascent. Surely in their previous births they have worshipped You with precious materials and pujas. The person who is honoured by all; who rides a most wonderful elephant; and who has great kings as his allies; I do believe that he also must have worshipped You in the past.

Vyasji says – Indra prayed thus; and very soon Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari appeared before him. She was seated on a lion. She had four arms, and was holding Shankh, Chakra, Gada and Padma. Her eyes were most beautiful. She wore red garments. Heavenly necklaces adorned Her. She was pleased, and Her face was radiant. She spoke in wonderful tones. – Devas! Do not be afraid. I will grant you success". Then She moved on Her Durga Vahana, and went where the ego-intoxicated Danavs were standing. When they saw Her approaching, they were filled with fear. They said to each other – Now what shall we do. It is certain that the Devi has come after consultation with Bhagwan Narayan. This is the same Shakti who killed Mahishasura as well, and Chanda and Munda. This is Bhagawati Jagaddamba, whose slanting gaze destroyed Madhu and Kaitabh. Now She has come to destroy all of us.

Prahlad advised them not to fight but to run away from there. Still the Danavs were confused. Then sage Namuchi spoke – We are in a situation where this Jaganmata will get angry with us and definitely destroy us". Then he turned to Prahlad and said – It is better to avoid pain and death. Let us immediately sing the praises of the Shakti and take Her permission and go back to Pataal."

Prahlad said – I will start the Stuti immediately. She is Mahamaya. Creation, Preservation and Dissolution are Her Play. She is the Mother of the entire universe. Protecting Bhaktas is Her nature.

Vyasji says – Prahlad was a devotee of Bhagwan Vishnu. He knew how to obtain Divine protection. He humbly folded his hands, bowed his head, and began Stuti to the Devi –

I worship that Goddess Who wears the whole creation as a garland. I salute that Devi who is the origin of creation, and the embodiment of "Hrim". This

moving and non-moving creation is born out of You. Those who appear to be the creators, preservers or destroyers, have also emerged from You. Devi! Praise be to You! Mahamaya! You are also called the Matrix of the entire creation. Devtas and Danavs are both Your creation. Then why this discrimination. A mother can have children who are either good or bad; but it does not make any difference to Her love. So please do not differentiate between the Devas and us. No matter how the Danavs are, they are after all Your children. Because in the Puranas You have been described as the Mother of the Universe. Just like us, the Devas are also selfish. There is no difference between them and us. But whatever conflict has arisen is due to our spiritual ignorance. Just as we are attached to our wives and children, so also the Devas are attached to their families. Then where is the difference between the Devas and the Danavas. They are also the descendants of Kashyapji. Then why, O Mother! Do you feel differently towards us. Shree Mata! When the whole creation has been born of You, then You must treat the Devas and Danavas equally. According to the permutations and combinations of the Gunas, the Devas and Danavas came into existence. Then why are the Devas, who are a storehouse of Gunas and have a body; more dear to You than we are. Lust, anger and greed – are present in all beings. No one can be consistently tranquil and peaceful. It is possible that this conflict between the Devas and Danavas is part of Your Leela, and it is You who have sown this seed of discord. You who are the source of Dharma and Pure Knowledge! We are all aware of Dharma and glory. But it is the pursuit of pleasures that causes us to fight constantly. O Ambike! In the whole universe there is no one greater than You. All the Danavas are at Your Lotus Feet. According to Your Holy Wish You may forsake us or protect us.

Shree Devi said – O Danavas! All of you renounce your fear and anger, and go to Pataal, and live there as you please. Right now you have to await Kala. Kala

is the causal of good times and bad. Those who have started their ascent by becoming free of worldly desires, for them every situation gives only joy. Those who are greedy and ambitious, even though they might conquer the three worlds, they never see the face of joy. For those who are full of desires and wants, even the fruits received in Satya Yug have not given them the experience of pure joy. Therefore, renounce this world and make arrangements to return to Pataal. You are all blameless and not guilty. Obey Me and carry out all My advice.

Vyasji says – All the Daityas bowed in obeisance and accepted the Devi's advice. They took the road to Pataal. The Devi had promised them Her protection. Then the Devi vanished from their sight. The Devas also went back to their abode. The Devas and the Danavas had given up the idea of war. They lived peacefully and happily. Whichever fortunate being reads or hears this most sacred narrative, gets released from his sorrows and bondages, and becomes eligible to approach the Lotus Feet of the Devi.

CHAPTER 4 Episodes 16-17

16 – 17 On the request of Janmejay, Vyasji describes the various avatars of the Lord.

King Janmejay asked – Munivar! All the actions of Bhagwan Vishnu are marvelous. O Great Guru! Please tell me how Shri Hari allowed Bhrigu's curse to get actualized; what incarnations He took; and in which Manavantar (era). You who know all the mysteries of Dharma! O Brahmin! Please tell me these events which destroy all sins and grant happiness to those who hear it.

Vyasji said - Listen O King! I will tell you all about the Manavantars and the eras in which Bhagwan Shri Hari took incarnations. During the era of Chakshush, the sixth Manu, the Lord took the "Dharmavatar". He was born in the house of Dharm, as his sons Nar and Narayan. In the manavantar of Vaivasvat (one of the sons of the Sun), during the second Chaturyug (a manavantar has four yugas), He came as the son of Atri. That was the Dattatreya incarnation. Atri's wife Anasuya had asked for a boon that the Trinity – Brahma,Vishnu and Shankar should become her sons. To fulfil this, He incarnated in their houses. Anasuya occupies the highest place as a virtuous and faithful wife, because on her request the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar, agreed to become her sons. Lord Vishni Himself took the form of Dattatreya. Brahmaji came as the Chandrama; and Shankar came as Durvasa. In this way the three Gods gave Anusuya the holy privilege of becoming their mother.

To fulfil the prayer of the Devas, in the fourth Chaturyug, Bhagwan Vishnu came as Narasimha avatar. In a most pleasing way he combined the lower body of a man with the upper part of a lion. The reason for that incarnation

was the destrucstion of Hiranyakashipu. The form of Narasimha was so wonderful that even the Gods were amazed.

In Tretayuga (the silver age of Hindu mythology), to discipline Bali and put down his ego, the Lord sanctified the earth in His incarnation of Vaman. He took birth in the house of Muni Kashyap. King Bali was performing a yagya. Bhagwan Shri Hari arrived there in the form of Vaman, and by subterfuge took away Bali's kingdom. He then gave Bali permission to live in Pataal.

In the third yuga of the nineteenth Chaturyug, Bhagwan Shri Hari incarnated as Parshuram. He was born as the son of sage Jamadagni. He was very powerful, and defeated the Kshatriyas many times. He was a chaste, truthful man who had conquered all worldly desires and sense pleasures. He established the authority of sage Kashyap over the earth.

O King! In the Tretayuga (silver age) the Ram-avatar took place. The Lord took birth in the clan of Raghu. He gave King Dashrat the holy honour of being His father.

The Lord's previous incarnation of the powerful Nar and Narayann, took birth again in ther third age of the twenty-eighth yuga. Nar came as Arjun; and Narayan came as Shri Krishna. The Lord suffered many indignities and difficulties to rid the world of negative forces. He caused a great war to be fought in Kurukshetra.

King! In this way in every yuga, the Lord takes various incarnations. These incarnations are taken in accordance with the directions of Devi Bhagawati, because all the three worlds are under Her power and protection. The entire creation moves at Her will. To please the Primordial Being, Paramatma, She is constantly engaged in the Play of creation. Parabrahma, the God Almighty,

existed before the creation. He is all-pervading. He is indestructible. He is neither supported, nor does He have any form. He is all pervading. His desire, Adi Shakti, manifests in three gunas, and from this emerges the entire creation. Because of time and space, everything appears separate. But actually it is all One. This same Shakti protects Her entire creation and fulfils the desires of all beings. At the end of every Kalp (4320,000,000 mortal years) it is She who causes the final annihilation. She exists in the creation in three modes, which respectively manifest as Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar. They preside over creation, preservation and destruction. It is this Supreme Shakti who directed the King of Kings, Shri Rama, to take birth in the clan of Raghu. To kill negativities and vanquish the Danavas, it is She who sends various avatars. In the same way, in this world, beings are born. Some enjoy happiness, and others suffer tribulations. Everything is governed by the law of Nature. Nothing and no one is free of it.

Janmejay asked – Muni! You have already told me about three apsaras who had invaded the ashram of Nar and Narayan. Narayan was sitting in meditation. The apsaras tried to tempt him. They were filled with amorous intentions. Narayan was so disturbed that he wanted to pronounce a curse on them. But his brother Nar restrained him. The situation was very horrible. The apsaras continued to entice him, because they were instructed to do so by Indra. How did Narayan maintain his balance. And what was his reaction when the apsaras asked him to become their husband. O Revered Muni! I wish to hear this story which grants moksha to those who listen to it. Kindly tell it to me.

Vyasji said – O most Dharmic King! I will tell you some episodes of this story. Listen. When Narayan was about to curse the apsaras, Nar prevented him. Then Narayan agreed, and began to advise and reassure the apsaras. Narayan

was a famous muni and a great ascetic. His anger cooled down instantly, and his face lit up with a smile. In pleasant tones he spoke to the apsaras – O Beautiful ladies. In this life we have both taken a vow that we will not marry. Therefore please excuse us and return to heaven. Divine personalities do not try to break the vows of others. O Fortunate ones! Please be kind and allow us to honour our vow. In my next incarnation I will definitely become your husband. In order to fulfil a prayer of the Devas, I will incarnate on this earth in the third age of the twenty-eighth yuga. Each of you will take different births and become my wives. You will be born in royal households. After this assurance, Narayan asked the apsaras to leave. They went back to heaven and recounted the entire story to Indra. Upon hearing the story, and receiving the beautiful Urvasi, Indra began to praise Narayan.

Indra said – I bow to that Muni who has shown great restraint and the power of tapasya. I praise him, who by the power of his tapasya created Urvashi, and all the apsaras. Then Indra settled down to his kingdom's affairs, and Narayan continued his unbroken tapasya. O King this is a very wonderful story of Nar and Narayan. It is these two who came as Arjun and Shri Krishna to reduce the burden of negative forces from Mother Earth. Then King Janmejay prayed to Shri Vyasji to describe in great detail, the incarnation of Shri Krishna.

CHAPTER 4 Episode 18 – 19

18 – 19 Heavily burdened Mother Earth goes to the Lord. Yogamaya gives assurance.

Vyasji says – O King! The Play of the incarnation of Shri Krishna is very expansive and comprehensive. Listen, and I will tell you. The unique nature of the Devi is the causal of an avatar. No sooner does the embodiment of Sat-chit-anand, Adi Shakti, express a desire; than the formation of an incarnation begins. It happened a long time ago – Prithvi was completely pressed down by the weight of sin and negativities. She was in great distress. Filled with terror she assumed the form of a cow, and with tears rolling down her eyes she reached heaven. Indra saw her and asked – "Vasundhara! What has caused you to become so full of fear. Who is trying to trouble you. Please tell me what disturbs you?" Prithvi replied – "Since you are asking O King of Devas! I will tell you. Kindly listen. The exploits of some horrible kings has caused me unbearable pain. The sinful Jarasandh in Magadh; and Sishupal of Chedidesh have become my lords. The famous Kashiraj, the powerful Rukmi; Kansa; Mahabali; Narakasura; Shalv, King of Soubha; the wicked Keshi; Dhenukasur and Bakasur – they are all devoid of Dharma. They are constantly insulting and fighting with each other. They are arrogant and ambitious, and evil omens of destruction. The weight of their sins is too heavy to bear, and I have no energy left. I know not what to do and where to go. King of Devas! You are aware that once before such a calamity came upon me. The most powerful Shri Hari incarnated as a Boar, and delivered me from my troubles. At that time the

horrible Hiranyaksh, son of Kashyap, had stolen me and immersed me in the deep ocean. Shri Vishnu took the form of a wild boar and killed Hiranyaksh, and brought me out of the water. He also made arrangements for my stability. Otherwise I would have been in Pataal, in deep slumber. O Devesh! I can no longer support these sinful kings. I bow my head at your feet. Please steer me out of this stormy and boundless ocean."

Indra helped Prithvi to reach the abode of Shri Brahma. He in turn, took Her to Bhagwan Vishnu. The heavenly hosts also accompanied them, and when they reached the abode of Shri Vishnu they began to chant praises from the Vedas. They were filled with humility and bhakti.

Brahma said – "Prabho! You have a thousand heads. You are adorned with thousand eyes and feet. You are the eternal God of Gods. You are always enthroned. It is through Your benevolence that we have received the boon of immortality. Your glory is universal. In these three worlds there is no being who is not aware of it. You are the creator, the protector and the destroyer. You are unobstructed, unrestrained and unlimited".

Vyasji says – Upon hearing this Stuti the Lord who has Garuda for a vehicle, was pleased. His heart is extremely holy and pure. He granted a darshan and welcomed all the gods who were there. He also inquired the cause of their visit. Brahmaji bowed and said – "Janardhan! Prithvi is very sad and distressed. As the protector You must help her and remove all her burdens. O Compassionate One! It is almost the end of Dwapar (third of the four ages). May it please You to descend upon the earth, kill all the demonic kings and free Mother Earth from the weight of their aggression.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – In the present situation I am completely subdued and dependent. Not only I, but Brahma, Shankar, Indra, Agni, Yama, Twashta, Surya and Varun are all in bondage. This entire universe is under the control of Yogamaya (illusionary power). This Yogamaya decides at Her own free will, and we just carry out the work like assistants. She has complete sway over all things.

Vyasji says - After saying this, Shri Vishnu began to tell Shri Brahma about that Maya that captivates all and prevents them from perceiving the God Almighty, Parabrahma. Shri Vishnu said "We are so overwhelmed by Maya that we cannot even meditate upon Parabrahma. That almighty being is the embodiment of peace. He is Sat-Chit-Anand. He is eternal. His Shakti is extremely powerful, profound and stupendous. When the creation was about to start, you had a glimpse of this Shakti in the ocean of nectar. At that time, Shankar and I were also getting a glimpse of Her. Then again we were privileged to see Her in Her palace in Manidweep. At that time the Raasmandal (circular dance) was being performed under the Parijat tree. All the gods and celestial beings were there, and this magnificent Shakti was presiding over all. This is not just hearsay. I have seen it personally. Therefore it is important that at this time, all the devas should meditate upon Her. That Adi Shakti Devi is benevolent, compassionate, generous and fulfils all desires. She is inseparable from Parabrahma."

Vyasji says - As advised by Lord Vishnu all the Devas began to meditate upon the eternal, all pervading Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, who is also known as Yogamaya. In a very short while the most auspicious Bhagawati, appeared before them. She was holding noose and goad, and was in the state of Abhaydaan (granting protection to those who worship Her Lotus Feet). Her divine body was of a red hue. Her appearance was magnificent. The devas

were filled with joy and awe, at receiving this wonderful darshan. They began to praise Her.

The Devas said - Just as silken thread comes out of the nabhi of a spider, and sparks fly out from fire, so also the universe manifested from You, O Devi! We Worship You again and again. We reflect on that great illusory power of Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, who gives support and balance to the entire universe. Mother! You are Almighty! You are the ocean of compassion. Those who do not know You, are constantly confronted with the delusion, the deception, the fraud, the artifice, and the mental and physical problems of the world. But those who know You, and meditate with permission upon Your Holy Lotus Feet, can perceive the world as transient, illusory, destructible, and unreal. We meditate upon that Gyanswaroopini Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, Who has given us Nirmal Vidya. May that Mahalakshmi be forever the object of our attention. All the Shaktis are within Her being. We bow our heads at Her Lotus Feet. May She create within us the pure desire for a virtuous and pious life. Divine Mother! Obeisance to You again and again. O Devi, who skilfully removes the afflictions of Mother Earth, praise be to You. O Bhavani! Be pleased to consider us worthy to receive Your benevolence. O Mother whose compassion flows readily to those who ask, O Devi! We are in great need of Your help. This Mother Earth is burdened with the weight of evil, and she is in great distress. Maheshwari! Please kill the Daityas and rescue her. Please also restore auspiciousness to all holy men. O Mother! Please destroy Kansa, Bhowmasur, Kalayvan, Keshi, Jarasandh, Bakasur, Putana, Khar, Shalv and other Daityas, so that Mother Earth can become free of their burden. O Devi with eyes like beautiful lotuses. All the invincible Daityas, have in the past, been vanquished just by coming into Your Divine presence. It is Your Divine Play which destroys the negative forces. O Devishwari who bears the two-day-old-moon on Her forehead. When deprived of Your Shakti, Vishnu,

Shankar and the primary gods cannot move or shake. Even Seshnag, in the absence of Your Shakti, cannot support the Earth.

Indra said - Is it possible for Brahma to create in the absence of Saraswati; or Vishnu to protect without Lakshmi; or Rudra to cause dissolution of the world without Uma. Never! But when Saraswati, Lakshmi and Uma, who are Your Shaktis, give them support and assistance, they are able to execute their duties.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – O Devi! You have achieved the entire creation freely and independently. Without the help of Your Shaktis, the three worlds could never have been created by Brahma, preserved by Vishnu, or annihilated by Rudra. O Pure and Sinless Devi! Verily You reside as energy in everything in this Triloki.

Vyasji says – Pleased with the praises of the Gods, the Devi said – Forget your woes and sorrows and tell Me exactly what you want Me to do. I will fulfil the desire of the gods, no matter how difficult it may seem. O Devas! Tell Me your difficulties as well as the difficulties which are besetting Prithvi.

The Devas said – This Prithvi is no longer able to bear the evil and sin that is being committed upon her. So she came to us for help. The Demon kings are tormenting her. She is trembling and tears are falling from her eyes. Bhuvaneshwari! It is our desire that You help her first. All the Devas and celestial beings desire this. Mother in the past you killed Mahishasura. He was a very powerful Danava. Crores of Danavas came to his aid. But You destroyed all of them. Later You also killed Shumbh Nishumbh; Raktabeeja; Chanda Munda; Dhumralochan; Durmukh and Dussaha. In the same way, O

Most Powerful Devi! Please destroy these unbearable negative forces, and reduce the burden of Mother Earth.

Vyasji says – Hearing the Devas' prayers, the Devi smiled. Her dark eyebrows added beauty to Her countenance. She spoke to them in a solemn voice which reverberated like thunder. Shree Devi said – Devas! I had decided long ago to take a partial avatar and destroy the wicked kings and relieve Prithvi of their burden. All the Danav kings who are terrifying the earth, will be killed by Me. That is a promise, as I have made it My prime responsibility. Jarasandh, together with all the arrogant kings, will be killed. O Fortunate and Auspicious Gods! All of you, together with your Shaktis, must also partially incarnate on the earth. Before I incarnate, the regulator of the heavens, Kashyapji will incarnate with his wife in the clan of Yadu as Vasudev. In the same way, the indestructible Bhagwan Vishnu, in accordance with Bhrigu muni's curse, will do humanity the favour of incarnating as the son of Vasudev. In the same Gokul, I will be born of Yashoda. Through Me all your desires will be fulfilled. Vishnu will take birth in a prison. Then I will make arrangements for Him to be taken to Gokul. The transfer of Sesh from the womb of Devaki, to that of Rohini, will also be accomplished by Me. With the energy of My Shakti, both of them will engage in the destruction of the evil forces. By the time Dwapar (third of the four ages) ends, all the evil kings will be destroyed. It has been already decided. Sakshat Indra will incarnate as Arjun and will destroy the powerful armies of the enemy kings. A part of Dharm will incarnate as Yudhishtr. Vayu will incarnate as Bhimsen; and the Ashwini kumars will incarnate as Nakul and Sahadev. From Vasu will incarnate Bhishma, who will completely destroy the Rakshas-sena (armies of the Demons). Now all devas should return to their abodes, and Prithvi should wait, fearlessly, for all these things to happen. I will certainly remove the burden from Mother Earth. All the Devas are just the efficient cause. The entire responsibility of execution will rest on My Shaktis.

There is no doubt in this. I will descend on the Kurukshetra (battlefield) as I am the Mistress of the science of wars and battles. I will completely annihilate all the Kshatriyas as they are full of evil tendencies. Because they have coveted the possessions of others and made them their own; because they are over ambitious to conquer all; and because of their indulgence into lust and greed; the entire Yadav clan is going in for dissolution. Because of the curse of Brahmins the whole clan will be ruined. To fulfil the curse, Bhagwan will relinquish his body. So now all of you assist Bhagwan Vishnu by incarnating with your wives, and take birth in Mathura and Gokul.

Vyasji says – Parabrahma's Yogamaya vanished from their sight. All the Devas took Prithvi with them, and all returned to their respective abodes. Hearing Yogamaya's sweet assurance, Prithvi got rid of all her fears. She became calm and peaceful, and settled down to wait. Janmejay! Herbs and creepers grew in profusion over the earth. All her subjects became happy. There was progress and prosperity for the Dwijas (twice-born; realized Brahmins). All the Munis were filled with joy and resumed their dharmic rituals and tapasyas. Mother Earth was free at last!

CHAPTER 4 - Episodes 20 – 21

20 – 21 Description of the greatness and majesty of the Devi. Narration of Shri Krishna avatar. Episode of Vasudev – Devaki – Kansa.

Vyaasji says – Janmejay! I will now tell you about the release of Prithvi from the burden of Demon kings, and the destruction of the military forces at Kurukshetra and Prabhas-kshetra (a place of pilgrimage in Western India) by Yogamaya. Hear me. Lord Vishnu of immeasurable power and boundless lustre, took birth in the clan of Yadu, for two reasons. First to fulfil the curse of Bhrigumuni; and secondly, by the Almighty will of Yogamaya. In my understanding, Yogamaya's will was the primary and only cause – the rescue of Prithvi being the motive. So Bhagwan Vishnu in obedience to the Divine will took this incarnation. The consciousness of "my" and "mine" is a strong rope which binds one into slavery. If one can avoid these fetters, and meditate with undivided attention on the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba; within a very short time he can receive the precious gift of Moksha. In view of this, how can there be any one who will not worship Her in meditation? And then there are some who have aspirations and expectations that if they chant the mantra "Bhuvaneshi Ma Pahi (protect)"; even as they utter the first word "Bhuvaneshi", Bhagawati Jagaddamba will grant wealth, power, glory and grandeur of the three worlds. And then, by the time the words "Ma Pahi" are uttered, there being nothing left to give, Bhagawati takes the debt upon Herself and becomes beholden to the devotee. O King! It is of utmost

importance to know that Vidya and Avidya are both aspects of the Devi. It is by the pleasure of Bhagawati, that one either gets Nirmal Vidya and deliverance; or Avidya and bondage.

O King! The living die, and the dead take birth again – this is an absolute fact. This cycle takes place again and again, like the spinning of a wheel. Those who are caught in the web of worldly allurements and spiritual ignorance; can never be free of this cycle, because in the presence of maya one can never be free of its influence. O King! To take birth at an appointed time during creation; and to die at the appointed time during dissolution; is an irreversible law. Brahma and all the gods are also subject to this rule. What ever has become the cause of the way a person has to die; that is the way he will die. Whatever fate has determined, only that will happen. Old Age, Disease and Happiness and Sorrow, - whatever has been destined has to be experienced. There is no one in this universe who can add or deduct anything. The truth is evident when we see the Sun and the Moon. Both are constantly engaged in providing welfare and comfort to all; and even they are troubled by enemies. They can never be free of the troubles. Do you know, O King, that Shani (Saturn), son of Surya, was afflicted with consumption; and Chandrama (Moon) lives forever with a blemish. This proves that the greatest of great beings cannot change the course of destiny. O Blessed One! Yogamaya is extremely powerful. What can I say, and how much can I describe that great power which makes the worlds go round. By the will of Bhagawati, Shri Vishnu takes many incarnations. In every avatar he plays various kinds of Leela. Bhagwan Shri Krishna took human form to fulfil a prayer of the Devas. I will give you a brief account of the actions of this incarnation. In ancient times there was a forest on the banks of the beautiful river Yamuna, called Madhuvan. In this forest there lived a famous and powerful Danava called Ravan, called Lavan Asura. He was the son of Madhu. Because of a boon he

became haughty and arrogant, and began to torment saints and ascetics. Lakshman's younger brother Shatrughn fought a battle with him and killed him; and established the pleasing town of Mathura. The wise Shatrughn had two sons whose eyes were like lotuses. He installed both his sons as rulers of Mathura. In time he died, and gradually the Suryavansh clan came to an end. Then the Yadavs became the rulers of Mathura. All this happened a long time ago. One of the descendants of Yayati was Shoorsen. He became the king of Mathura and the owner of all the wealth of that kingdom. To fulfil the curse of Varuna, sage Kashyap took birth in that holy town as the son of the second Shoorsen. He was known as Vasudev. After his father's death, Vasudev lived his life as a trader. It was in his house that Shri Vishnu took birth. At that time the ruler of the town was King Ugrasen. His eldest son was Kansa. Varuna had also cursed Aditi, so she also took birth to become Kashyap's wife. The privilege of being her father was given to Devak. She was called Devaki. Mahatma Devak got his daughter Devaki married to Vasudev. When the bride was leaving her father's house, a voice was heard from heaven – "Kansa! The eighth son of this Devaki will be extremely powerful and magnificent; and will be the cause of your Death." Hearing this Kansa's amazement knew no bounds. He believed the heavenly voice to be the truth, and was greatly troubled and perplexed. After much contemplation he reached a decision -- If I kill Devaki just now, there will be no possibility of the threat coming true. Death will not be able to come near me. If I do not act in the matter, it is certain that I will die. But Devak is like my father, and Devaki is his daughter. Therefore how can I kill this sacred relation, my sister. This feeling arose in his mind; but then he thought again. "This is my own death. Intelligent men even do despicable acts to save their own lives. If one repents, even the greatest sins are washed away. Knowledgeable men have devised a rule that vile and mean acts can be resorted to, to protect one's body." Having made his decision, Kansa picked up his sword and caught Devaki's hair. He raised the

sword with the intention of killing the newly married Devaki. All the guests were witnessing this horrible scene. There was a great hue and cry that Devaki was going to be killed. Brave warriors came to the support of Vasudev. They were armed with bows and arrows. They ordered Kansa to leave Devaki. In fear he let go of her hair. Then a battle began which was very fierce. The patriarchs of the Yadu clan made every effort to stop the fighting. They shouted at Kansa – "From where did this evil thought come into your head. She is your respected sister; and what you are doing is totally wrong and despicable. And the sin is more objectionable as today is her auspicious marriage day. Murder of a woman is a most heinous crime, and it spreads disgrace and disrepute in the world. It is also the greatest and most dreadful sin. You should not have reacted like this to the voice that you heard. It is possible that some enemy hid somewhere and made this improbable statement. Seeing your relationship with Vasudev, some enemy has used subterfuge to alarm you. You are brave and powerful, and must not let anything cause you fear. Someone is trying to destroy your clan from its very roots. Whatever the cause, it is not right for you to harm your sister on her marriage day. O King! Whatever has to happen will definitely happen. No one can change that."

When Kansa would not heed the advice of his elders, and seemed unshaken from his resolve, Vasudevji began to speak to him. "Kansa, listen to me. I am speaking the truth. Truth gives stability to the three worlds. I assure you that every child that is born to Devaki; I will bring and hand over to you. I solemnly vow that if I fail to bring the child as soon as it is born, may my entire clan fall into hell."

Hearing these powerful words of Vasudev, the citizens began to praise him. "Vasudev is a great soul, a mahatma. He never speaks an untruth. O King!

Leave Devaki alone. This way you will not be guilty of the murder of a pious woman."

Vyasji says – The elders of the Yadav clan were very dharmic souls. Their repeated advice and requests affected Kansa, and finally he gave up his anger. He trusted the promise of Vasudevji. Then with the beating of drums the people began to sing Jai Jaikar. In this way Vasudev appeased Kansa and saved Devaki. He left with his bride and close friends, for his abode.

Vyasji says – Devaki lived with Vasudevji within the maryadas of marriage. After some time she gave birth to a beautiful boy child with graceful limbs. Vasudev was known as a man who always kept his promise. As soon as the child was born, he said to Devaki – "Dear wife. I have promised to surrender the child as soon as it is born. You are aware of this. The situation was so dangerous and precarious that I had to make this promise and save you. You, whose beauty is enhanced by the luxuriant plait of hair, please understand that I have to give this child to your cousin Kansa. Either Kansa is evil; or fate has made the decision. What can anyone do. A person who is not self realized cannot understand the strange but perfect way in which actions mature into reactions. It is an absolute fact that all living things are caught in the web of fate. They all have to experience the consequences of their actions, good or bad. The destiny of all life forms is arranged by Shri Brahma after due consideration."

Devaki said – "My Lord! For cleansing the sins of past lives one can make atonement and reparation. This has been written clearly by learned saints in the Dharma Shastras (scriptures). But tell me, O Sinless One! After atonement can there be permanent release from sin. If your answer is 'No', then the statements of Yagya Valkya (ancient Indian legislator) and other sages have no

value. Not only this; but if one accepts fate and destiny as unalterable, then Ayurveda (science of medicine); Mantra-vidya (science of mantras); and other pursuits become redundant and are of no avail. By industry and effort one gets success. There are many examples and proofs of this. Therefore in the present situation, with great thought and deliberation, we should find a strategy which will ensure the safety of the life of this child."

Vasudev said – O Auspicious One! I am going to speak an absolute truth. Listen carefully. One must certainly make efforts, but always surrender the results to the benevolence of fate. All living things perform their actions in three modes. Ancient seers and sages who have a thorough knowledge of this, have described it in the Vedas and Scriptures. The three kinds of actions or deeds are – which are collected or gathered; fated or destined; and of the present life. Good or bad karmas form the seed of birth of every living thing. All the past karmas produce their fruits, good or bad, and present themselves to us at the proper time. After shedding its body, the soul is dependent upon its karmas. Whether it will merit heaven or hell; whether it will get a divine, healthy body; or a body full of torment and agony, depends on his or her own karmas. Once he lives out his lifetime, he is again in a situation where his karmas become the cause of his next birth. When the soul combines with the gross body, then it is endowed with consciousness and life. That is the moment he is linked with his gathered or accumulated karmas. Then the body enjoys or suffers, as the case may be. That every living being has to experience the fruits put forth by fate, is unavoidable and irreversible. Very sincere penance and atonement can destroy the sins of the present life. If strict, persistent and genuine repentance is done, then even accumulated or gathered sins can be wiped out in proper time. But the fruits or reactions which are brought upon us, have got to be endured and experienced. This is the absolute truth. Therefore after careful deliberations it is certain that this

child of yours has got to be given to Kansa. By doing this I will also be honouring my promise. Lies, which also causes slander, criticism and defaming of others, is altogether forbidden. In this transient and impermanent world, Dharma is the only sustaining force. He who cannot speak the truth should consider this life as wasted, useless and barren. Under the influence of untruth, if a man loses respect and esteem of society in this world, then how can he hope to get happiness and peace in the next. Therefore O Pure One! You give this child so that I can hand him over to Kansa. Devi! If we stand by the truth always we will definitely be blessed in the future. In happiness or in sorrow; whatever the situation; man must always act righteously. By observing this path of dharma and truth, we will ultimately be blessed.

Vyasji says – As per her husband's advice, Devaki very sorrowfully gave her newborn child to Vasudevji. While giving the child, the wise and spiritually strong Devaki, began to tremble with grief. Vasudevji took and child and started his journey to the palace of Kansa. All along the way the people sang his praises.

The people said – "Brothers! Behold this Vasudevji of high morals. Merely on the strength of a promise he is going to give his child into the jaws of death. He is truthful in the highest sense, and he never speaks ill of anyone; he never criticizes; he never condemns. His life is truly meaningful and fruitful. Look at his admirable and marvelous act."

Vyasji says – O King! Every one who saw Vasudevji, could only praise him and bless him. He reached the palace and duly handed the child over to Kansa. That child was not human. It was a celestial being. Seeing Vasudevji so calm and peaceful, even Kansa was astonished. He took the child and laughed loudly. He said – Vasudev! Son of Shoorsen. You are great. You have given

me your child, and proved to me that you are an honest and pious man. But this child is not my messenger of death. The heavenly voice named your eighth child as the cause of my death. It is not my intention to kill this child. Take him back to your house, O wise one! Make sure that you give me your eighth child. Saying this the wicked Kansa returned the child to Vasudevji. Vasudevji was overjoyed, and started his journey back home. Free from anxiety Kansa said to his ministers – "Why should this child be killed unnecessarily. It is the eighth child who is going to be the cause of my death. This was announced by the voice from heaven. So I should not take upon my head the sin of killing this child. All the ministers expressed agreement, and Kansa gave them permission to go to their houses. After everyone left, Narada muni arrived. Kansa got up from his throne, welcomed Naradji, and offered him water to rinse his mouth; and washed his feet. Then, king of the Rakshasas, Kansa, made enquiries of his well being; and then asked him – "Maharaj! What is the purpose of your visit." Naradji replied – "O Fortunate Kansa! I had gone to Mount Sumeru. There Brahma and all the primary gods are sitting, very vigilant and wary. A lot of discussion is going on, that from the womb of Devaki, wife of Vasudevji, the god of gods, Bhagwan Shri Vishnu, will take birth to destroy you. Being a strategian how is it you did not kill Devaki's child."

Kansa said – "I will kill the eighth child of Devaki. The voice from heaven named the eighth child as my destroyer.

Naradji said – "Maharaj! You are really unaware of good and bad behaviour. But you do know how the Devas can spread maya and deceive. Those who desire their own welfare should not underestimate even the weakest of enemies. When added up, each of those children count as "eighth". Knowing all this you have foolishly spared the child."

Saying this Naradji immediately left the place. The foolish Kansa sent for the child again, and he himself dashed it on a stone and killed it.

CHAPTER 4 Episode 22

22 – Story of the past lives of the six sons of Devaki who were killed by Kansa.

Janmejay asked- Dadaji! What horrific sin did this child commit in his previous birth to merit death at the hands of Kansa, immediately after being born. And Naradji who possesses religious wisdom; who is always engaged in the performance of religious acts; and who has a thorough knowledge of the Vedas – how could he indulge into provocation like this. Learned sages have said that he who commits the sin; and he who incites one to commit the sin; are both equally guilty. Knowing this why did Narad muni instigate the villainous Kansa to commit this crime. I am very confused. For what past action did the child suffer this consequence.

Vyasji said – Naradji neither had the inclination nor the tendency to speak an untruth. He is a very pious and holy being. He is always instrumental in accomplishing the desires of the gods. It was for this purpose that he became the instrument to cause the six sons of Devaki to be killed as soon as they were born. They were sextuplet gods called Shatgarbh. They had a curse on them, and their death was inevitable. Therefore they were killed. Rajan! I will also tell you the reason for the curse. Listen. This happened during the era of Svayambhuv Manavantar, the first Manu (primal man) who was born to Brahma. These six munis were the sons of the powerful and ancient sage Mareche and his wife Urna. They were learned in the Shastras. It happened one day that these six youths got amused and laughed at Brahmaji. For this

disrespect, Brahmaji cursed them – "You are not worthy to live here. Go to earth and take birth in the class of Daityas". O King! These sextuplets were born as sons of Kalnemi (maternal uncle of demon Ravana). In the next birth they were born, again all together, as the sons of Hiranyakashipu. But in their memory, the foresight and foreknowledge made them fear the cycle of rebirths. So, in that birth, they prudently and calmly settled into tapasya and meditation. This pleased Brahmadeva, and he appeared before them to grant a boon.

Brahmaji said – "O Blessed Ones! You are my favourite grandsons. Some time in the past I had pronounced a curse on you. But now I am pleased with you. You may ask for any boon you wish."

Vyasji says – Hearing this the six boys were very happy. They made their wishes known to Brahmaji. They said – "Grandfather Brahmaji! If you are pleased, then please grant us this wish – That we cannot be killed by any god, man, flying creature, demi-god or saint". Then Brahmaji said "All these desires of yours will be fulfilled. Now you can go in peace. My words are infallible. Do not doubt them." The six boys were overjoyed, but Hiranyakashipu got jealous. He flew into a rage and said – "Sons! Instead of honouring me you have tried to please Brahma. You are already very powerful, and still for the sake of a boon you sang the praises of Brahma, and ignored me. For this insult, I hereby disown you. You go to Pataal. Upto now you were famous by the name of Shatgarbh, but in Pataal you will be overcome by sleep, and remain in slumber for many years. After that, one after another, you will all take birth from Devaki. Your father Kalnemi will incarnate as Kansa, and by his hands each of you will be killed as soon as you are born."

Vyasji says – Because of this curse of Hiranyakashipu, each of the Shatgarbhs took birth from Devaki. As per the curse all six were killed. The seventh child of Devaki was a partial incarnation of Seshji. By the power of Yogamaya, the unborn child was transferred into the womb of Rohini. The word spread around that Devaki suffered an abortion in the fifth month of pregnancy. This information also reached Kansa, who rejoiced. The eighth child in Devaki's womb was the Lord Himself. The primary cause of this incarnation was fulfilment of the Devas' prayer, and the release of Mother Earth from Her burden.

Janmejay said – O Great Muni! You have told me that Vasudevji was an incarnation of Kashyapji; and in this clan was also born the incarnation of Sesh and Bhagwan Vishnu. Please also tell me the various ways in which all the Devas incarnated to help the Lord.

Vyasji says - I will tell you in brief, the various incarnations of the gods and the demons. Baldevji was the partial incarnation of Seshnag. Vasudevji was the incarnation of Kashyapji; and Devaki was the incarnation of Aditi. After all of them incarnated, then Narayan, son of Dharm, came down on earth as Shri Krishna. His younger brother Nar incarnated as Arjuna. Partial incarnation of Dharm came as Yudhishtr; Vayu came as Bhimsen and the Ashwinikumars came as Nakul and Sahadev. Karn is a partial incarnation of Surya. Vidurji was an incarnation of Dharm. Dronacharya was a partial incarnation of Brihaspati; and Ashwathama was a partial incarnation of Rudra. The wise sages say that Samudra Devata incarnated as Shantanu, and Ganga as his wife. The king of the Gandharvas came as Devak (father of Devaki); Bhishma Pitamaha was a partial incarnation of Vasu; and Raja Viraat was a partial incarnation of Marut (deity of the wind). Arishtnemi's son, who was a swan, incarnated as Dhritarashtra. Kripacharya was the incarnation of a Marudgana, so also was

Kritavarma. Duryodhan was an incarnation of Kali; and Shankuni was an incarnation of Dwapar. Dhrishtadyumna was an incarnation of Agni, and Shikhandi was the incarnation of a Rakshas. Pradyumna was the incarnation of Sanatkumar (one of the four sons of Brahma. Drupad, (father of Draupadi), was an incarnation of Varun. The Goddess Lakshmi Herself incarnated as Draupadi and descended on earth. Draupadi's five sons were partial incarnations of Vishwadev. The devis Siddhi, Dhriti and Mati incarnated as Kunti, Madri and Gandhari. Those who had the great good fortune of becoming the wives of Shri Krishna were divine maidens from heaven. All the devas who lived in heaven and were associated with Indra, came to earth, on his command, as Kings. Shishupal was an incarnation of Hiranyakashipu. The demon Viprachiti came as Jarasandh; and Prahlad came as Shalya. Kalnemi came as Kansa. Hyshira came as Keshi. Balikumar came as Kakudemi Aristasura who was killed by Shri Krishna in Gokul. Anuhrad came as Dhristaketu; Bhagdutt came as Baskal; Lambh came as Pralambasura; and Khar came as Dhenukasura. The two deadly demons Varah and Ishor came as Channur and Mushtik. The son of Diti, who was Arishtasur came as the famous elephant Kuvalyapid. Bali's daughter came as Putana; and her younger brother came as Bakasura. Out of Yama-Rudra-Kama-Krodh came Mahabali Ashwathama.

When Brahma and all the gods has gone to Shri Hari to pray, He had given them two hairs – one white and one black. In order to free Mother Earth; - - from the black hair, came Shri Krishna; and from the white hair came Shri Balaramji. The person who listens to this account of incarnations, gets released from all the bonds of sin; and becomes qualified to enjoy his life in the company of family and friends.

CHAPTER 4 Episodes 23-24

23 – 24 The birth of Shri Krishna in prison; Vasudevji takes Shri Krishna to Nand Bhavan. The killing of newly born innocents. Birth of Pradyumna.

Vyasji says - After heeding the advice of Naradji, Kansa killed six sons of Devaki. The seventh pregnancy got terminated in the fifth month. So when the eighth child was about to be born, Kansa took all the precautions that he could think of. He could not stop thinking, even for a moment, that the child was the one who would be his destroyer. At the same time that Shri Krishna entered the womb of Devaki; Yogamaya Herself entered the womb of Yashodha. In Gokul Rohiniji gave birth to Balramji. For fear of Kansa, this wife of Vasudevji – Rohini – stayed in hiding in Gokul. Later Kansa locked Devaki in prison. He arranged many caretakers to look after her needs. Vasudevji also stayed in the prison with his wife Devaki. He was constantly worried about the birth of this child. As soon as Lord Vishnu took His place in the womb of Devaki, all the gods appeared and sang stutis in the praise of the Lord. The time for the birth drew near. The tenth month fell in the period of the holy Saavan (fifth month of the Hindu year). On the eighth day of the dark lunar fortnight, began the nakshatra Rohini. At that time Kansa became very fretful and disturbed. He spoke to all the Danavas – "You should all be very alert and keep a close watch on Devaki; because this is going to be the eighth child, who is my destroyer. Therefore it is very important to be watchful. Only after killing this child will I be able to sleep peacefully in my palace. All of you arm

yourselves with sword, dagger and bow. Do not get lethargic or fall asleep. Keep a watch on every side.

Vyasji says – After giving these orders, Kansa went to his palace. His body had lost its energy. He was overcome with fear and foreboding. Even in his palace he was restless. Here it became midnight. Devaki spoke to Vasudevji. "Maharaj! The time for delivering has come. What should I do. We are surrounded by fearsome rakshasas. Sometime ago I had a talk with Queen Yashoda. She suggested that I send my baby to her, and she would look after him. No one would know that he was not her son. Later she will return him to me. But Prabho! This is a very frightful situation. What is the right thing to do, so that this child can be exchanged. Swami! Now do not come this side as my modesty makes me shy. Turn the other way and keep speaking to me. There is no other way.

The godly Vasudev immediately moved away. In a little while, there was born to Devaki, a most wonderful and amazing divine child. Devaki was filled with wonder. Her whole body started vibrating with waves of joy. Then this most auspicious and fortunate Devaki said to Vasudevji – "Dear husband! Look upon this child. Prabho! This child is very unfortunate, because as soon as my wicked brother Kansa sees him, he will kill him." Vasudevji picked up the child. As he looked at the beautiful, divine form, his mind sank with fear and foreboding. He thought – Is there anything that can be done, no matter how difficult or dangerous. Just then he heard a heavenly voice – "Vasudev! Take this child immediately and go to Gokul, and leave him there. All the guards have been put into deep sleep. All eight exits are open. There are no chains or locks anywhere. Leave this child in Nand Bhavan, and bring back Yogamaya with you." Hearing this Vasudevji went out and saw that all the gates were open. He took the child and left immediately. No one could see him. When

he reached the River Yamuna he saw that it was in spate. He began to wonder how he could cross such a volume of water. Just then the most holy River Yamuna receded her waters, till it was waist high in all places. This was all the power of Yogamaya. Then Vasudevji crossed the river easily. He reached Gokul while it was still night. All was quiet and peaceful. He arrived at the gates of Nandji's palace. Yashodha had just given birth to the incarnation of Yogamaya. She had come in her complete divine form. She was endowed with the three attributes, and shone with supernatural light. Sarveshwari Bhagawati assumed the role of midwife, and came out carrying the child in Her beautiful Lotus Hands. She handed the baby to Vasudevji, and he in turn placed Devaki's child in the Lotus Hands of Devi Bhagawati. Vasudevji took the child with joy and left the place immediately. He reached the prison, and placed the baby on Devaki's cot. Then he sat down, and in great dread and fear, waited for the morning. Suddenly the child began to cry loudly. This woke up all the guards and caretakers. They were very happy that the child had been born. They immediately went to Kansa and informed him – "O King! Devaki has given birth. You must come immediately!" Kansa reached the prison and found the gates locked. He called to Vasudevji – "Bring Devaki's child to me immediately. This is her eighth child, and He is the incarnation of Shri Hari. He is my destroyer. I must kill him instantly."

Vyasji says – Vasudevji was filled with fear. Water poured out of his eyes. He picked up the baby and gave her to Kansa. He was weeping uncontrollably. Seeing a girl child Kansa was greatly confused. He thought – "The heavenly voice as well as Naradji's statement, have both been proved false. Vasudev has also suffered great difficulties here. It is not possible for him to commit a falsehood. My guards have been most vigilant. There is no doubt about their sincerity. It is possible that the boy child who was supposed to be born here,

has taken birth elsewhere; and the girl child has taken birth here. Fate is very whimsical and unpredictable".

The sinful Kansa was a blot on the clan. He had absolutely no mercy in his heart. He decided to kill the baby. He picked her up by her leg and was about to dash her against a stone. The child slipped out of his grip, and flew towards the sky. On the way, She assumed Her glorious, divine form, and said to Kansa – O Sinful One! What will you gain by killing Me! Your powerful adversary has already been born. No one can destroy Him. He will most certainly kill you". Saying this, the most auspicious Devi could be clearly seen, enthroned in the skies. Kansa's astonishment knew no bounds. He went home, trembling with fear. He called all the Daityas, including Bakasura, Dhenukasura, and Vatsasura. He said – "All of you, go and complete my mission. Kill every boy child as soon as it is born. The child-killer Putana, should go to Gokul. It is her job to kill all newborn boys". After giving this horrible order, Kansa went home. Dark clouds of fear hovered over his head. He was greatly distressed, because he was constantly visualizing Shri Hari as his vanquisher.

Vyasji says - As morning dawned, celebrations began in the palace of Nandji, to bless the newborn. The news spread rapidly, and Kansa also heard it from one of his messengers. He also came to know that Vasudevji's wives were under the protection of Nand in Gokul. From then on, Gokul became the target of his activities. Also, Naradji had clearly mentioned to him that Nand and his associates; as well as their wives; were all gods. Vasudevji and Devaki were also divine beings. Having understood the situation, the evil Kansa was prepared to commit any sin to escape death.

One by one, Putana, Bakasura, Vatsasura, Mahabali, Dhenukasura, and Pralamb, all met their death at the hands of the glorious and lustrous Shri

Krishna. Shri Krishna lifted the Goverdhan mountain. Hearing this, Kansa was convinced that his death at Shri Krishna's hands was imminent and inevitable. Then, when he heard of Keshi's death, he was plunged into despair. He got an idea to invite Shri Krishna and Balaram to the Dhanush Yagya (the great bow ceremony). His mind was always occupied with sinful plans. He sent Lord Krishna's uncle Akruji to bring Shri Krishna and Balaram, so that they would not suspect that he planned to kill them. Akruji brought them to Mathura in his chariot. The two brothers broke the bow as soon as they reached. Also, they killed Rajak the elephant; Kuvalyapeed; Channur and Mushtik. Bhagwan Shri Krishna also killed Shal and Toshal. In a final drama, Shri Krishna caught the locks of Kansa and sent him to sleep forever on the earth. Then He released his parents Vasudevji and Devaki from prison, and ended their sorrows. He installed Ugrasen on the throne. In the same place Vasudevji performed the sacred thread ceremony for the two brothers. Then they went to Sandeepniji to complete their studies. By the age of twelve they acquired all the knowledge, and completed their education. They went and established themselves in Mathura.

Jarasandh, King of Magadha, on hearing of the death of his son-in-law Kansa, collected an army and declared war on Mathura. He attacked Mathura seventeen times; and each time Shri Krishna defeated him. Then Jarasandh instigated Kalayvan, the king of mlecchas (barbarians of low morals), to fight against Shri Krishna. The Yadavs were terrified of the Rakshas Kalayvan. When news of his approach reached, Shri Krishna called all the senior Yadavs, and Balramji, and said to them – "We are constantly in fear of Jarasandh. And now on his request Kalayvan is also coming to torment us. So what should we do in this situation. We should abandon house, possessions and army, and make other arrangements for our safety. Whichever part of the earth we can live in peace and harmony, that should be considered our Fatherland. If the land of

our forefathers does not provide safety and peace, then there is no use getting attached to it. Therefore those who desire a life of happiness and peace, should find such a place near the sea or the mountains. A living place without threat from enemies, is considered most suitable by our learned ancestors. Bhagwan Vishnu has made for Himself, a secure and peaceful abode on the belly of Seshnag in the ocean. Bhagwan Shankar also made a peaceful abode on Kailash. Therefore it is not desirable for us to live here and continue suffering harassment from our enemies. Let us make arrangements to move to Dwaraka. Garuda has informed Me, that at this time, Dwarakapuri is the most suitable place for us. This most pleasing city is situated on the shores of the ocean, and Raivatachal (Mount Girnar) rises majestically nearby.

Vyasji says – After hearing this correct and proper reasoning from Shri Krishna, all the Yadava leaders decided to move, with parents, brothers, relations, supporters, friends and vehicles. Keeping Shri Krishna and Balaramji in the forefront, they all, every single one, left Mathurapuri. All the important citizens brought up the rear. In a few days they reached Dwarakapuri. Bhagwan Shri Krishna got architects to restore and renew all the houses in Dwaraka. All the Yadavs were properly accommodated. Then Shri Krishna and Balaram went back to Mathura immediately. It had become a deserted, silent place. But it became radiant with the presence of these two illustrious and glorious beings. The barbarian king Kalayvan reached Mathura. Hearing this Shri Krishna used His illusory powers, and ran past Kalayvan on foot. At that time the body of Shri Krishnachandra was adorned with yellow silk cloth. His face was lit with smiles. His eyes surpassed the lotus. When Kalayvan saw him running, he also muttered some words and ran behind him. They both reached a cave where Rajrishi Muchukund was asleep. Seeing the rishi, Shri Krishna disappeared after covering him with the pitamber cloth. When Kalayvan reached the place, he saw the yellow cloth and thought the sleeping

form was Shri Krishna. He began to attack him with his feet. The sleeping rishi got disturbed and sat up. His eyes were red with anger. As soon as he looked at Kalayvan, the demon was burnt and reduced to ashes. After this, the Lord Shri Krishna appeared and gave darshan to rishi Muchukund, who bowed in obeisance, and left for the forest. Shri Krishna took Balaram and went back to Dwaraka. He installed Maharaj Ugrasen on the throne, and Himself began to wander at will.

The Swayamvar for the marriage of Rukmini was arranged. It had been decided that she would marry Shishupal. But Bhagwan Shri Krishna seized her and brought her away. He married her. After that he also married Jambvati, Satyabhama, Mitravinda, Kalindi, Lakshmana, Bhadra and Nagnajiti. In this way he had eight wives. Their beauty was incomparable. Rukmini bore him the most beautiful Pradyumna. Shri Krishna performed all the initiation rites for Pradyumna. Pradyumna was kidnapped by Shambar-asura and given to Mayawati to look after. Shri Krishna was very distressed at the abduction of his son. In His moment of grief he took recourse to that Bhagawati Yogamaya, Who in Her divine play had killed Vrittasura and other demons. Then He began to sing stutis to the Devi. The verses of the stuti were most beautiful, and full of substance and significance.

Bhagwan Shri Krishna said – Mother! It is an ancient incident. I had taken birth in Badarikashram as the son of Dharm. I had implicit faith and bhakti You. I impressed and pleased You with my tapasya. I always offered flowers during puja. O Mother! Can it be that You have forgotten that. It is very shocking that from the birthing quarters My child has been snatched away. Or else, someone has played this trick upon me to cure me of vanity and pride. My house is surrounded on all sides by impassable moats. The entire city is impregnable, and my house is in the middle. And deep in the interior of the

house the birthing room has been placed. The doors are always locked. Inspite of all this security the child was stolen away. Neither did I or any of the Yadavs leave the city. The city is well guarded by strong and alert guards. O Mother! Your power and might are known to all. This is the play of Your Maya, which has deceived me. O Devi! Your ways are mysterious and Your nature is concealed from all. I have not succeeded in discovering it, then how can a being with limitations to his understanding ever know You. After stealing the child, where has that person disappeared. None of my guards saw him. O Ambike! This is certainly Your divine play. This is no impossible task for You. Before I was born, You caused a five month foetus from my mother's womb to be transferred into the womb of Rohini to be born as her child. Ambike! By Your three attributes You cause the creation, preservation and destruction. Verily this entire universe is Your creation. You first gave the joy of celebrating the birth of a son, and then You drowned me in the unbearable sorrow of being separated from him. This drama has been enacted solely for Your recreation. You are the Mother of the distressed and afflicted; and also You are their refuge and succour. You alleviate all pain, You mitigate all sorrows; You are compassionate, and merciful. Therefore, if my son is alive, please be benevolent to me and bring him into my presence.

Vyasji says – Nothing was impossible for Bhagwan Shri Krishna himself. Therefore when He prayed and pleaded in this way, Bhagawati Jagaddambika Herself came into his presence. She explained the reason for the incident.

Shree Devi said – Deveshwar! Do not be sad. This is a previous life's curse which has manifested like this. As a result your son has been kidnapped by Shambhar-asura. Therefore it is not right to be so distressed. When your son completes sixteen years of age, he will himself slay Shambhar-asura and come

back to your house. Now that I am pleased; under no circumstances should you ever doubt Me. It is inadvisable and undesirable.

Vyasji says - After saying this, Devi Chandika of unlimited strength and valour, removed Herself from his sight.

CHAPTER - 4 Episode 25

25 - Shri Krishna does tapasya to please Shri Shivji; and receives a boon.

Raja Janmejay said – O Great Muni! Hearing all this narration from your auspicious mouth, I am plunged into confusion. Jagadguru Shri Krishna was all-knowing and all-powerful; and yet His son was stolen from the delivery room. How could this happen. Very strong servants were guarding the house. The whole city was a stronghold surrounded by moats. Then how could Shambhar-asura gain entry and exit. O Son of Satyawati! Please clear all my doubts.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Maya has unprecedented powers. It is Her nature to cause illusion and confusion. She is also known by the name Shambhavi. There is no one on earth who has not come under Her influence. As soon as a person is born, he gets bound by all the human attributes. These attributes have connections to fate and destiny. Devas and Demons alike cannot escape this law when they take a human birth. Hunger, thirst, sleep, fear, lethargy, attachment, sorrow, doubt, happiness, pride, vanity, old age, death, ignorance, inertia, enmity, envy, malice, toil, arrogance; all these and more, are the fruits of destiny. O King! Maya has some effect or the other upon every living being. The Lord had assumed a human body and descended on earth. So He experienced everything that happens to a human being. To think otherwise on this matter is undesirable.

First, out of fear of Kansa, Bhagwan went to Gokul. Then He ran away from Jarasandh and lived in Dwaraka. Then He abducted Rukmini. Inspite of having knowledge of ancient traditions of a Swayamvar, He still engaged in taking her away. And when Pradyumna was stolen by Shambhar-asura, He was grief stricken. Then on hearing an assurance from the Devi, He became joyous again. So by His play He demonstrated grief and joy. On the request of Satyabhama, Bhagwan Shri Krishna went to heaven. He wanted to bring back the Kalpavriksh (tree of Indra's paradise, which yields anything desired). But He was stopped by Indra, and the Lord fought a battle with him. Indra lost. To play the drama of being subservient to the wife, the Lord allowed Himself to snatch away the tree by force. Satyabhamaji was worthy of respect. For the sake of her honour Bhagwan Shri Krishna got Himself imprisoned in the tree. Satyabhamaji gave her husband away as alms. Naradji had come for a donation. Then an equal amount of gold was given to release Shri Krishnachandra. Seeing Pradyumna and other princely sons, Jambvati became petulant. She said to Bhagwan Shri Krishna – "Lord! Please grant me also a worthy son". Shri Krishna decided to do tapasya and went to the mountains, where the foremost Shiv-bhakt Upamanyuji lived. Desiring a son, Shri Krishna acknowledged the saint as His guru, and received from him Shaivi-Diksha (initiation to a text or mantra). He stayed there and performed difficult tapasya. After six months Bhagwan Shankar became pleased. He appeared before Shri Krishna in a mild and gentle manifestation. He wore the two-day old moon as an ornament, and was seated on His bull. Bhagwan Shankar greeted Mahatma Shri Krishna and said – "O You who illuminate the Yadu clan Shri Krishna! I am pleased with your tapasya. Ask for your desired boon and I will grant it to you. My appearing before you signifies the fulfilment of all your prayers. Now nothing can remain unfulfilled."

Vyasji says – Seeing Shri Shiva looking pleased and gratified, Shri Krishna prostrated before Him, full of love and admiration. Then in a loud and musical mode, He began to sing praises of Bhagwan Shankar.

Vyasji says – Shri Krishna was expressing all his love, respects and desires when Bhagwan Shankar began to answer Him – "O Shatrusudhan (destroyer of enemies)! You will have many sons. Your wives (Shaktis) will number sixteen thousand and fifty. Every wife will bear ten sons each. They will all have unlimited power". Then the most pleasing Shri Shankar became silent. Shri Krishna stood with folded hands. Bhagawati Parvati spoke – "O Shri Krishna with the powerful arms! You will be the crowning glory of the human race. You will reside in households of high honour. Janardhan! Your clan will live in contentment and tranquility for a hundred years. Then, because of the curse of a Brahmin, and Gandhari, your clan will decline and disappear. As a result, all your sons will lose their power of reasoning and discretion; and will fight with each other on the battlefield, and will all die. The descendants of the other Yadavs, will also be destroyed. You and your brother Balaram will also return to Your abode. Prabho! All these future happenings are pre-destined. You should never allow it to disturb or distress you."

Vyasji says – After this divine message, Shri Shankar and Uma removed themselves from his sight. Bhagwan Shri Krishna also left for Dwaraka, after paying His respects and taking leave of his guru Upamanyu. Maya is Parabrahma Swaroopini. In the heart of Bhagawati Yogamaya, the seeds of hatred and cruelty never germinate. It is always for the protection of living beings that She is always engaged. If She ever relaxes Her vigilance, the whole creation will become inert and petrified. Therefore it is by the grace and benevolence of Bhagawati Yogamaya that the universe came into existence, and by constantly nourishing the creation with Her energy, She instigates them

into action. Devas and Danavas and all others are deeply influenced by Maya. They are all subject to Her authority and are dependent upon Her. There is only One – Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari – who is independent of Maya. She moves transparently, unstained, serene and free. Therefore O King! One must ever worship and surrender to Bhagawati Maheshwari. In the three worlds there is none greater than Her. To be permitted to keep attention constantly on the Lotus Feet of Parabrahma Swaroopini Devi Bhagawati, is the most fruitful and meaningful existence. May I never take birth in that family, which does not worship Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. "I am a cell in the body of Parabrahma Swaroopini Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, and none other. When I am myself Brahm, how can trials and tribulations overwhelm me!" – with full awareness of this oneness with the Divine, where there is no other, we should meditate on Devi Bhagawati Jagaddambika. Either from the Guru, or from the study of the Vedas, it is important to absorb this Nirmal Vidya. Then bring yourself into single-pointed attention, and meditate continuously upon Parabrahma Swaroopini Bhagawati Jagaddambika. By the power of this worship, one is quickly released from the web of worldly attachments. Otherwise even crores of good deeds cannot give detachment and freedom. Those with Nirmal conscience (pure and immaculate), exponents of the Vedas, and all the rishis have enthroned Sakshat Parabrahma Swaroopini Bhagawati in their hearts, and have broken the bonds of worldly attachments. All the prime gods worship Her, and Her alone. O Sinless King! In the heat of confusion and mental agony, you asked certain questions. I hope I have allayed all your doubts and fears. What else do you wish to know. All what I have just narrated is of utmost importance. It is exceedingly wonderful; very sacred and perpetual; and destroys all sins. This Puran is prepared from the Vedas. All those who are fortunate to hear this, get all their sins destroyed; and go straight to Bhagawati's Nirmal Dham.

End of Chapter 4

CHAPTER 5

1 – 3 Story of Rambh, Karambh; birth of Mahishasura and Raktabeeja; Mahishasura provokes Indra.

Raja Janmejay said - Prabho! You have explained the influence and power of Mahamaya Bhagawati Yogeshwari. Now please tell us accounts of Her deeds. I am eager and impatient to to hear stories of Her valour.

Vyasji says – Rajan listen. I am going to tell you all Her stories in great detail. Anyone who does not tell the glories of Bhagawati to a person who is peaceful and faithful; that person is extremely foolish and stupid.

A long time ago there was a king called Mahishasura. During his reign there was a fierce battle between the Devas and the Danavas. Mahishasura performed a difficult tapasya. When the gods saw this they were perplexed. For ten thousand years, he put his favourite deity in his heart, and meditated upon Him. Then the venerable father of the world, Lokpitamah Brahmaji was pleased. He came there, seated on a swan, and said – Dharmatman. Ask for a boon. I have come here to fulfil your desire.

Mahishasura said – O foremost among gods, most auspicious Brahmaji! I desire immortality. Grant me that I never have the fear of death.

Brahmaji said - That which is born must die; and that which dies must be born again. That is an irreversible law, and is eternally applicable. The cycle of

birth, death and rebirth, goes on continuously and relentlessly. O King of Daityas. At the appointed time, all things must die. Even majestic mountains and vast oceans come to an end. Therefore O King. Excepting the matter of death, you may ask for anything else.

Mahishasura said – Pitamah! Devtas, Danavas and Humans. From these categories, let no man be the cause of my death. Any woman may kill me. Therefore Brahmaji. Ordain that I meet my death only at the hands of a woman. She who is herself weak, can never succeed in killing me.

Brahmaji said – Daitendra! So shall it be. Whenever your death is near, may it be at the hands of a woman. O Fortunate Mahishasura. You will never be killed by a male.

Vyasji says – After granting the boon, Shri Brahmaji returned to his abode. The Daitya Mahishasura also went back home, very happy with his boon.

Raja Janmejay asked – Whose son was Mahishasura. How did he take birth. Being such a good soul, how did he get the form of a buffalo.

Vyasji says – O King! Danu had two sons – Rambh and Karambh. They were both very famous and renowned among the Danavas. Both were childless. They began tapasya for begetting sons. They stood in the waters of the Panchnad (five rivers of Punjab) for many years. Then Karambh submerged himself and performed a most difficult tapasya. Rambh chose an excellent, milk-sap banyan tree and sat with Panchagni (five fires) around him, and went into deep tapasya. Seeing the tapasya of both the brothers, Indra became agitated. He went to Panchnad himself. He assumed the form of a crocodile, entered the water, and caught in his jaws, the leg of Karambh. Karambh drowned to death. When Rambh heard of his brother's death his anger was

uncontrollable. He wanted to cut off his head and offer it to the Panchagni. With this intention he caught his own locks of hair in one hand, and picked up a sword in the other. Just then Agni Devata appeared, and stopped him. He said – Rambh! You are really very foolish. How could you think of such an ignoble and inferior death as suicide. May you prosper and be auspicious. Ask me for any boon, that your heart desires. Do not renounce your body. What will you gain by killing yourself.

Vyasji says - The voice of Agni Devata was very soothing. Rambh dropped his plait and said –" O Deva! If you are pleased, then give me a boon which is very dear to my heart. I want a son who will be victorious over Triloki (the three worlds). I want a son who will destroy the armies of all enemies. He should be invincible, and no Deva, Danava or human should defeat him. He should be able to assume any form he desires He should have boundless energy. Everyone should bow before his feet." Agni Devata said – "Very well. Your wishes will be fulfilled. That is the kind of son you will have. Now abandon your ideas of suicide. O Fortunate Rambh! The first woman that you make your wife, will bear you this son."

Vyasji says – The assurance given by Agni Devata was most delightful. Rambh prostrated at his feet and started his journey home. Rambh was rich and prosperous, and had a flourishing abode. Even demi-gods lived there. But he was a Rakshasa, and beastliness was inbuilt. When he saw a female buffalo, he became full of lust and desire. The she buffalo was young, and also intoxicated with desire. Fate is very mighty and powerful. Rambh impregnated the she buffalo. One day a buffalo bull followed this buffalo, and Rambh stood in front of him, ready to fight The bull buffalo was in season, and therefore blindly ferocious. He attacked Rambh with his fearful horns. The horns were sharp, and the bull repeatedly gored Rambh in the stomach and

chest. He was ripped to pieced and fell to the ground, dead. When the female buffalo saw that her lord was dead, she ran away, full of fear. She went to the Yakshas for protection. The bull ran behind her. The Yakshas saw that she was trembling with fear. Tears were falling from her eyes, and her heart was rising and falling. They also saw the raging buffalo bull advancing. They decided to protect the buffalo, and challenged the bull. A great fight followed. The Yakshas rained arrows on him. One struck him in the heart and he fell to the earth, lifeless. The Yakshas respected Rambh. They arranged for his funeral, and put his body on the pyre. When she saw her husband's body, the she-buffalo decided to perform Sati and get cremated with her husband. The Yakshas tried to prevent her, but she had made up her mind. She climbed on to the pyre and held her beloved close to her heart. From the burning pyre emerged Mahabali Mahishasura. Rambh himself took a new body, and also emerged from the pyre as Raktabeeja. So Mahishasura and Raktabeeja were both produced from Rambh. After that all the important Danavas came and installed Mahishasura as their king. O King! Mahishasura was indestructible, and no Deva, Danava or man could kill him. So, this is the story of the birth of Mahishasura, and the reason for his invincibility.

Vyasji says - In this way, the mighty Mahishasura began to rule over the three worlds. Because of the boon he became extremely arrogant and aggressive. Every living being was under his rule. He conquered every bit of land, up to the oceans and brought it under his control. He was the absolute monarch of the whole world. There were no enemies to challenge him. His army chief was Chikshur. He was very powerful, and also proud and arrogant. His treasurer was Tamra. He had ten thousand soldiers under his command. Asiloma, Udark, Bidal, Bashkal, Trinetra and Kalbandak were very wealthy kings. They also had large armies. From ancient times they ruled the land up to the oceans. Now they accepted the overlordship of Mahishasura, and paid

tax. Those self-respecting kings who were not in favour of surrendering to Mahishasura, went to battle and fell fighting. O King! Even the Brahmins became submissive to Mahishasura. In all Yagyas he was given a share of the sacrifice. Mahishasura began to enjoy the status of unchallenged, single ruler of the whole world. The boon made him conceited, and he decided to conquer heaven. He sent a messenger to Indra to tell him –" Devraj Indra! Leave heaven immediately and go and live wherever you please. If you wish to stay on in heaven, you must become his servant. O husband of Shachi. If you take refuge under Mahishasura, he will surely protect you. It is advisable for you to acknowledge his rulership. If this is not acceptable, then immediately pick up your thunderbolt and prepare for war. But remember that you have been defeated before. I know the extent of your valour and strength. Either fight, or go immediately to a place of your choice." The messenger went to Indra and said exactly what he was instructed to say.

Vyasji says - Hearing this message Indra burst into flames of anger. Then he controlled himself and smiled. He said to the messenger – O foolish one! Take this message back to Mahishasura -- "Do you think I do not know you? You are so overcome with ambition and arrogance that you are uttering these meaningless words. You are stricken with the disease of greed, and I will cure you. And then it will be cut from the roots." Go and tell your master what I have said. Righteous men do not attack messengers. So you can leave safely. But tell him this – "Son of a buffalo. If you are so keen to fight come into my presence. O enemy of the horse. I know your strength. Your form and appearance is heavy, dumb and stupid. You exist by eating grass. I will make a bow out of your horns. There is some strength in your horns and that has made you haughty I will break both your horns and destroy your strength. You are only adept at striking with your horns. You cannot attack a fortress with weapons."

Vyasji says - The messenger left Indra's palace and returned to Mahishasura. After paying obeisance, he delivered the message from Indra. He said - O King! Devraj is independent and powerful. He has a huge army of devas. He considers himself very strong. You do not count for anything with him. I do not know how to change what he said, before I present it to you. It is the duty of a messenger to give the message in both, truthful and agreeable form. If I tell you only that which is agreeable, then it will be a lie, and will put an obstacle in your achieving your desires. A faithful messenger cannot let that happen. On the other hand an enemy will always use objectionable and harsh language. But a messenger cannot articulate those horrible words before his master. O King! Indra has used such obnoxious and repugnant language, that my tongue cannot repeat it."

Mahishasura could guess the truth hidden in the messenger's words. His whole body got heated up with anger. His eyes became red. He called all his ministers and said - "That Devraj wants to fight. Use all your strength and weapons and defeat him. No one should challenge my sovereignty. Even if there are one crore Indras, it means nothing to me. Then what have I to fear from this Indra. Today I will not leave him alive. It is only among the mild and placid that he is considered brave. The feeble and exhausted tapasvis think him to be strong and powerful. He is assisted by apsaras. He uses their charms to put obstacles or break the tapasya of sages and munis. It has become his nature to strike whenever he gets an opportunity. He deceives and is a traitor. This is the same Indra who used guile to kill Namuchi. When the battle started he became afraid and made a treaty of alliance with Namuchi. Then he tricked him and killed him. Shri Vishnu is a great strategist. At will he takes different forms. He is all powerful and has complete knowledge of creating illusion and confusion. Danavas! Even though he incarnated as a boar and killed Hiranyaksh, and later he incarnated as

Narasimha and killed Hiranyakashipu, I cannot acknowledge His overlordship. I do not believe that there is anyone among the Devas who can stand up to me. What can Vishnu or Indra do to me. If I stand on the battlefield, even Shankar will not be able to defeat me. I will defeat Indra and snatch away heaven from him. Varun, Yamraj, Kuber, Agni, Chandrama and Surya will all be vanquished by me. Now all of us Danavas will be entitled to sacrificial offerings, and we can have the right to drink Somras. I will crush the Deva community and live happily with all my Danavas. I have received a boon, and therefore I fear no one. If I am invincible against all males, what harm can poor females do to me. O swift and fleet footed messengers, go to Pataal, go to the mountains, and go to all places and invite all the Danavas to come and join my army. I alone am sufficient to vanquish the Devas, but now it is a matter of dignity and prestige that I should be accompanied by huge armies. With my horns and hooves I can kill all the Devas. Under protection of the boon, I do not have even an iota of fear of the gods. I am indestructible and invincible against gods, demons and humans. So be prepared for victory over the Devas. Then I will indulge in recreation and amusement in Nandanvan (paradise). You will also have the opportunity of inhaling the fragrance of the Parijat flowers. Celestial damsels will entertain you. We will drink the sweet milk of the cow Kamadhenu. You will experience the joy of drinking amrut. The divine musicians, the Gandharvas, will sing and dance for your entertainment. The apsaras Urvasi, Menaka, Rambha, Ghritachi, Tilottama, Pramdvara, Mahasena, Misrakeshi, Madotkata and others are accomplished singers and dancers. They will offer you delicate food and drinks and pamper your attention. Therefore if you all agree to fight the Devas, let us go today. But before leaving, let us perform the necessary ceremonies for success and auspiciousness. Let us invite our guru Shukracharyaji to perform the yagya for our safety and success.

Vyasji says – O King! Mahishasura's mind was always occupied with sinful and wicked plans. After giving instructions, he went into his palace with an evil smile on his face.

Chapter 5

4 – 5 Before meeting Mahishasura, Indra consults the Devas and Guru Brihaspatiji. Indra's visit to the gods – Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar. Battle between Indra, the Devas, and Mahishasura – Bidal – Tamra.

Vyasji says – After the demon messenger left, Indra called Yamraj, Pavandev, Kuber, Varun, and other devas and said – A very famous and powerful demon called Mahishasura is the king of the Daityas. His father was called Rambh. Because of a boon, he has become very aggressive and arrogant. He is also well versed in various arts of illusion. His messenger had come to convey his intentions of attacking us and annexing Devalok. He said –" Indra! Leave heaven and go wherever you wish. Or accept servility to the King of Danavas, Mahishasura. He will look after all your requirements. He is very kind to those who are engaged in serving him. If this is not acceptable to you then you must prepare for war, because as soon as I tell him of your decision, he will lead an assault against you". O Devas! This Mahishasura is an extremely mean and worthless demon. Strong men should never underestimate the weak opponent, especially those who boast of their strength and valour. We should be vigilant and alert. Of course, everything is under the control of destiny. No one can change even a little bit of it. But it is not advisable to make any compromise with him because he is sly and dishonest. Nor can we approach him on friendly terms, because he is evil. All of you are wise. Give this matter your serious consideration. We also cannot make a surprise attack, because

we know nothing about his strength. We should first send a spy who is stealthy and fleet footed. He should also have knowledge of war tactics so that he can assess the enemy's strength and discover his plans. He should be without attachments; have a strong loyalty so that he does not succumb to enticements, and should be honest and faithful. After we get all the information regarding strength of the army, and battle plans; only then should we launch our attack. The spy should find out the exact number of warriors and equipment that they have. Then we can decide whether to attack immediately or increase our own military first. Any action taken in haste, can only lead to disappointment, pain and suffering. The wise man weighs the situation, and acts only if success is guaranteed. To fight the Danavas immediately would be like treating an unknown disease with strong medicine It could have adverse results.

Vyasji says – Accordingly Indra sent a very efficient spy, who went and came back in a very short time. He brought back information that astonished Indra. He immediately sent the Devas to escort their Guru Brihaspati to his palace. After he accepted the seat of honour Indra spoke to him. - O Son of Angira! O Learned One in the science of mantras Please advise us as to what action we should take. Today the king of demons, Mahishasura, is coming with his army of immeasurable might to take heaven away from us. You are well versed in the science of mantras. Please find a way to weaken and destabilise his army, and make his attack ineffective. Just as they have their Guru Shukracharya to help them, you are our only hope to put some confidence and balance into us.

Vyasji says – After hearing Indra, Guru Brihaspati went into a meditative state. Then he said to Indra – "Devraj! Be calm. It is important for you to maintain balance and fortitude. When faced with a crisis one should not lose courage O King! Success and failure, victory and defeat, are all governed by fate. A

wise man is always anchored in his spirit, and never allows anything to disturb his balance. Whatever has to happen, will definitely happen. One should always recognise and accept this law of destiny. Of course, a man should perform his job or vocation faithfully. Even the rishis and munis who have renounced the world, are constantly engaged in the pursuit of moksha. So we should go about our duties, within the codes of conduct and righteous behaviour. And we should surrender the results, because that is under the control of destiny. Sometimes things work out without any exertion. But that should not make a person inert or paralysed. On the other hand, if he tries his best, and still does not succeed, it is not his fault. What is destined only, will happen. No one can thwart fate. O King of Devas! Armies, ministers, mantras, weapons and chariots – these are only instruments. There is no guarantee that their use will give success. Fate decides whether we merit success or failure. Sometimes it appears as if a contemptible man gets all the success and happiness, whereas an honest, hardworking man gets only sorrow and hardship. O Devraj! Every living creature is governed by destiny. So one should never get dejected or depressed when things do not happen the way we want. But we should never shirk our duty. In times of sorrow we should remember that there are greater sorrows than ours in this world; and in times of happiness we should remember that there is an ultimate happiness.

Happiness and sorrow are like enemies. Do not involve your atma into it. When faced with great happiness or sorrow, we must never lose our balance. Then sorrows can never overpower us or push us down into depression. Keeping balance, if you just witness the situation, it not only becomes bearable, but you can also conquer it. For a person who can maintain his equilibrium in every situation, what is happiness and what is sorrow. One must always say - I am Nirgun, and therefore indestructible. I am beyond the 24 attributes. Then what affinity do I have to happiness and sorrow. Devraj!

Understand this well, and develop detachment. This is the solution to all your problems. Attachment is the cause of all sorrows, and detachment gives the greatest freedom and happiness. O husband of Shachi! If one wishes to be happy, one has to be satisfied. There is no other way.

Hunger and thirst have affinity to life; sorrow and attachment, to the mind; and old age and death to the body. I am the embodiment of auspiciousness. I am devoid of these six afflictions. Why should I get involved into them. I am not this body. I am beyond the cycle of formation and deterioration. O Lord Indra! This is the only solution for neutralising the pangs of sorrow. In the matter of destiny, you must use your wisdom. If there is no karma, then there will not be fruits of destiny. This is very clear. O Devraj! Happiness and sorrow are indicative of fruits of good or bad deeds of the past. A wise man sees positivity in every negativity. He experiences joy in every situation. Therefore, go ahead and have discussions with your ministers and advisers, and decide on a course of action. Do not put too much attention on the results. What is destined will happen. There is no doubt in this.

Vyasji says – Hearing the advice of Dev Guru Brihaspati, Lord Indra said – I am going to make preparations for war against Mahishasura. Inactivity will not win a kingdom, or fame, or glory. It is only the lazy and lethargic who take recourse to inactivity. For a sanyasi, knowledge is his decoration; and for a Brahmin, satisfaction. But for those who want glory and supremacy, the act of going to war against enemies, is their decoration. O Muni! It was by my action that Vritasur and Namuchi were killed. In the same way, I am going to kill Mahishasura. I will draw my strength from you, O Guru Brihaspati; and from my most trusted weapon, the Vajra (thunderbolt). Bhagwan Vishnu, and consort of Uma, Shri Shankar will certainly help me. O Guru! It is your nature to bless us and pray for us. I am leaving with my army to fight against

Mahishasura. I fervently request you to chant the auspicious Rakshoghna mantra for our protection against evil forces.

Vyasji says – When Lord Indra said this, Guru Brihaspati laughed and said to Indra - Brihaspati said - - Devraj! I can neither advise you to go to war, nor can I dissuade you; because no one can predict the outcome. Victory or defeat cannot be known beforehand. Whatever the result, you must not take the blame for it. Happiness and sorrow are predestined, and inevitable. Nevertheless, a wise man remains diligent at all times. Success and failure are under the control of fate.

Vyasji says – After hearing these words of wisdom from Guru Brihaspati, Indra went to Brahmaji. After offering pranaam, Indra said - Pitamah! You are the Supreme Lord of all the Devas. At this moment a very wicked demon Mahishasura is advancing towards heaven with a mighty army. All the other demons have joined him. They are all very powerful and ambitious and are well versed in the art of war. O most wise and learned one. I am overcome with fear, and have come to you for refuge. Nothing is hidden from You. Please help me.

Brahmaji said – Let us all go to Kailash. We will make Bhagwan Shankar, and the most powerful Shri Vishnu, the chief planners, and take their advice. We will also consult all the gods, and taking into account the time and place, we will decide on a course of action. Hasty decisions are foolish and can cause failure.

Vyasji says – Devraj obeyed Brahmaji; and making Him the leader, all the devas went to Kailash. They began to sing stutis; and when Bhagwan Maheshwar was pleased, they made Him their chief and all left for Vishnulok. In Vaikunth

they sang stutis and pleased the God of Gods, Bhagwan Shri Hari. Upon their telling him their story, He told them - because of a boon that he has received, Mahishasura has become arrogant and conceited; and his unbounded ambitions have become a cause for concern." He also said "All the gods should launch an invincible attack on Mahishasura and kill him."

Vyasji says - After deciding the strategy, all the gods led by Shri Brahma, Shri Vishnu and Shri Shankar, mounted their respective vahanas, and headed for the battlefield. Shri Brahma sat on a swan, Bhagwan Vishnu on Garuda, Shri Shankar sat on a bull, and Indra mounted his elephant Airawat. Swamy Kartikeya sat on a peacock; and Yamraj on a buffalo. They had hardly started moving, when they were confronted by Mahishasura's army intoxicated with pride and arrogance. The battle started right away, and both sides fought fiercely and with all kinds of weapons. The chief of the demon army, Mahabali Chiksur, shot five deadly arrows at Indra. Indra cut all of them in mid-air. He also used his crescent headed arrow and injured Chiksur in the chest. Chiksur fell unconscious on his elephant. Then Indra attacked the elephant and cut its trunk. It fell down dead. Seeing the fall of Chiksur, the demon army fell into confusion, and ran helter skelter. Mahishasura became furious. He called his strongest warrior Vidaal and said – O brave and strong one! Indra has become proud of his strength. You go and kill him. Also kill Varun and the other devas, and come back to me.

Vyasji says – Vidaal immediately mounted an elephant and went to fight with Indra. When Indra saw him coming, he sent a shower of arrows like venomous snakes on Vidaal. But Vidaal was quick and destroyed all the arrows before they could reach him. They kept shooting at each other and destroying earth others arrows. Then Indra hit the elephant on the trunk with his mace. The trunk got severed from the body, and the elephant whirled around and began

to trample the demon soldiers. The army was again in disarray. Vidaal jumped off the elephant and climbed into a chariot and blocked the Devas' advance. Once again Indra and Vidaal engaged in fierce fighting. Indra found that his anger was overpowering his senses, and making him unsteady and inaccurate. He made Jayanth his leader, and that powerful deva managed to wound Vidaal. He fell in his chariot, and his sarathy (driver) quickly took the chariot out of the battlefield. Seeing this the Devas began to shout victory and beat the drums. This enraged Mahishasura. He sent the vicious demon Tamra to fight the Devas. Tamra was an excellent shooter and he sent so many arrows, that it looked as if the clouds were sending torrents into the ocean. Varun picked up his noose and Yama took his pole, and began to fight with Tamra. The other devas also used their divine weapons and very soon Tamra also fell. The demons began to quake with fear.

Chapter 5 episodes 6-7

6-7 - Battle between Shri Vishnu, Shri Shankar, and Mahishasura. Return of Shri Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar to their abodes. Defeat of the Devas

Vyasji says – After Tamra fell, Mahishasura himself picked up his mace and went to face the devas. He shouted – "Devas! Today I am going to pulverise all of you with my made. You have always been weak. You only know how to consume offerings at sacrifices". He rushed at Indra and hit him on the shoulder with his made. Indra was alert, and broke the made. Mahishasura took a gleaming sword in his hand and rushed towards Indra. A terrible battle ensued, with each using a large battery of weapons. At that time, Shambhrasura made use of an illusion which had the power to destroy the whole world, and which had befooled munis in the past. Mahishasura immediately used the same maya and manifested as one crore Mahishasuras, all of them identical to each other. They were all heavily armed and were attacking the Devas. Seeing this, Indra was filled with fear and confusion. Even Varun, Kuber, Yamraj, Agni, Surya and Chandrama began to panic. They began to run away.

They went far away and remembered the Gods - Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar, who immediately appeared before them. They were seated on their vahanas – Swan, Garuda and the bull Nandi. They all carried their special weapons. Seeing the illusion created by the demons, Shri Vishnu sent His Sudarshan Chakra. It completely dissolved the illusion. All the three controlling deities of

creation, preservation and destruction, were present. Seeing them, Mahishasura picked up a spear and advanced towards them. His chief Chiksur, and other danavas Ugrasya, Ugravirya, Asiloma, Trinetra, Vashkal and Andhak, accompanied him. They all wore armour and carried huge bows. They surrounded the Devas just like jackals around a tender calf. Then all the demons, blind with intoxication, began to shoot arrows at the Devas. The Devas also replied with showers of arrows. Then the danavas began to fight with Shri Brahma, Shri Vishnu and Shri Shankar. After some time, the three Gods returned to their abodes.

Indra stood firm on the battlefield with his Vajra, and Varun held his sword. Yamraj was also there with the pole (dhand). Kuber and Agni joined them with swords in hand. The chief of the planets, Chandrama and Surya bhagwan came together to support Indra. They had all made a firm resolve to destroy Mahishasura. The danava army approached and rained angry arrows at them like striking snakes. In the middle was Mahishasura, in his original form of a ferocious buffalo. A great war, with shouting and shooting broke out between the Devas and the Danavas. The sound of clashing weapons was louder than thunder. Mahabali Mahishasura was fully intoxicated with pride and arrogance. He began tossing the hill tops with his enormous horns. The Devas received injuries from the falling rocks. Mahishasura had the most amazing strength. With his hooves and swishing tail he killed many Devas. Seeing this, all the gandharvas and devas were filled with fear. Even Indra faltered. He turned and ran from the battlefield. Seeing this, Mahishasura declared victory, and went back to his palace.

Mahishasura took possession of Indra's elephant Airawat; the wish-fulfilling cow Kamadhenu; and Ucchai Shrava (the white horse of the Sun that came out during the churning of the ocean. Then he decided to take his army and

acquire heaven. All the Devas had gone into hiding The royal courts of assembly were deserted. As soon as Mahishasura reached there, he declared himself ruler of heaven, and ascended Indra's throne. All the Danavas occupied the seats of the Devas. In this way, after fighting a war for over one hundred years, the ambitious and conceited Mahishasura gained supremacy of heaven. The devas wandered in the mountains, and lived in caves and crevices. After endless sufferings the Devas could not bear any more, and decided to go to the God with four faces, Shri Brahma – as He is responsible for the whole creation. He is of Rajasic temperament. At that moment He was seated on a lotus and constituting the Vedas. Mareech and other prominent munis, who had manifested out of Shri Brahma's body, and who were conversant with the Vedas, and of a calm and tranquil disposition, were also present. Saints, composers, gandharvas, Kinnars, Nagas and other demi-gods were engrossed in singing stutis to the father of creation.

The Devas came into the divine presence and said – O remover of all trials and tribulations. O You who are seated in the lotus! Shri Brahmaji! At this moment, after being defeated by Mahishasura, all the Devas are wandering homeless in the mountains. They are facing great hardships and are living in caves. Even after seeing our sad plight, you are not moved by compassion. This is very strange and perplexing. Even after committing a hundred sins, if a child repents and returns to his unselfish father, will he disown the child and leave it to suffer. Never! But today, when we have been defeated by the daityas and come to you for refuge, you are indifferent., and ignoring our state. Mahishasura is enjoying rulership over heaven and earth. In all the yagyas being performed by Brahmins, he is getting the maximum share. Of all the heavenly trees, the foremost Parijat flowers are used for decorating him. Not only this, but he now owns the most treasured gem from the ocean, Kamadhenu. O God! How much can we tell you. You are omniscient. You

know all his transgressions. We bow our heads at your lotus feet. Please protect us. Please look after our welfare. All the gods are your responsibility. You are the first progenitor, and you are the embodiment of auspiciousness and prosperity. You are the endless source of light. It is your nature to give peace to all. The Devas are suffering agony and torment akin to a burning, blazing forest. If you will not give us safe refuge, then to whom shall we turn for help.

Vyasji says - The Devas prayed to Shri Brahma with bowed heads and folded hands. Their faces were filled with sadness. Seeing their state, Shri Brahmaji spoke in soothing tones.

Brahmaji said – O Devas! What can I do. Mahishasura is haughty and conceited because of a boon. Only a woman can be the cause of his death. He cannot be killed by the male of any species. In the circumstances, there is nothing I can do. We should all go to the holy mount Kailash, and place our problems at the feet of the specialist God, Bhagwan Shri Shankar. We will make him our leader and go to Vaikunth, the abode of Bhagwan Vishnu. There we will ask his advice regarding the plight of the devas. Brahmaji left on His swan, followed by the Devas. Shri Shankar was already aware of their coming, and He came out of His palace to receive Shri Brahmaji. The two great gods met and exchanged salutations and blessings. All the devas prostrated at Shri Shankar's feet. He offered all the Devas seats, and after they sat He went and took his own seat. Then He asked the reason why the Devas had come to Kailash.

Bhagwan Shankar asked Shri Brahmaji – What has caused you to come with all the Devas, including Indra, to Kailash. You may certainly tell me everything.

Brahmaji said – Mahadeva! This Indra and all the other devas are suffering great difficulties due to Mahishasura. For fear of him, they have left heaven and are living in caves in the mountains. The danavas have declared enmity with the devas. At this moment, all sacrificial offerings are being consumed by them. Distraught and dejected, the Devas have come to you for help. Please do whatever you think fit, to help them.

Shri Mahadeva smiled, and said in sweet tones - Brahmaji! It is by your action that this wondrous situation has been created! You granted the boon to Mahishasura. There is nothing more ominous for the Devas. By virtue of this boon, Mahishasura has become invincible and is tormenting the Devas all the time. Does any female exist, who can destroy this demon, so full of ego and arrogance. Neither my wife nor yours, is capable of descending on the battlefield. Even if these most auspicious and fortunate goddesses go to the field, how will they engage in battle. Even Indrani has no knowledge of war tactics. An idea has just come to My mind to go to Bhagwan Vishnu, please Him by singing His praises; and then ask Him, again and again, for help. Because He is the knower of the field, and exceeding in prowess, through His infinite enlightenment he will give us a solution.

Vyasji says - The Devas offered pranaams and gratitude, and arose to leave for Vaikunth. Shri Shankar also accompanied them. Along the way they saw many auspicious and favourable portents, giving indications of success. Giver of favourable news, the auspicious Vayu, spread fragrance all around. Sacred birds flew about, singing divine notes. Akash became cloudless and serene. All quarters became pure. All the elements greeted the devas with a show of good fortune and success.

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Chapter 5 episodes 8-9

8 – 9 On the advice of Shri Vishnu, all the Gods combined their energies – from that manifested a most glorious Devi.

Vyasji says – All the gods reached Vaikunth. It is the most glorious abode of Vishnu Bhagwan, richly designed and ornamented. A divine lake enhances its beauty. The palace is surrounded by sacred trees bearing fragrant flowers – like Champa, Ashok, Kahlar, Parijat, Bakul, Malathi, Til, Mango and Kurbak. Cuckoos are warbling; peacocks are dancing, and bumble bees are humming; and holiness and auspiciousness pervades the atmosphere. Nand, Sunand and other courtiers are eternal devotees of the Lord Vishnu. They are singing stutis. There are many extensive bhavans. They are decorated with gold, and studded with gems. They are so lofty, they almost touch the sky. Lord Vishnu's magnificent palace adjoins this. Gandharvas are singing divine music; and the most pleasing Kinnars are singing preludes, softly and melodiously. Venerable munis, who are conversant with the Vedas, are reciting hymns and invocations, in praise of the Lord. Two guards, Jai and Vijay, are stationed at the entrance. The Devas spoke to them – May it please one of you to go to Bhagwan Vishnu, and inform him that Shri Brahma, Shri Rudra and other gods have arrived with a desire to come into His presence.

Vyasji says – Vijay offered pranaams to all the Gods, and immediately went to Shri Vishnu. He did pranaam, and said – O Suppressor of demons! Foremost of all Gods! Prabho! At this moment all the gods have arrived at Your doorstep. Brahma, Rudra, Indra, Varun, Agni, Yamraj and all other devas are

eager for Your darshan. They are reciting Vedic mantras and singing Your praises.

Vyasji says – Hearing Vijay's words, husband of Rema, Bhagwan Vishnu, went out to receive the gods. They met with great joy and warmth. The gods were very tired after their journey, and were also upset and distressed. One benevolent glance from Shri Vishnu refreshed and revived them. Then the killer of demons (as described in the Vedas), Shri Vishnu, offered pranaams to the gods and sang their praises.

The Devas said – Supreme God of Gods! Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the Universe. O Merciful God! We have come to Your Feet for protection.

Bhagwan Vishnu said - All devas take your seats, and tell me your good tidings. What is the reason all of you have come together. Why are you so concerned. Why is there sadness in your faces. Inspite of the presence of Brahma and Shankar you are all so full of fear. Please tell Me your problem.

The Devas said - The malevolent Mahishasura is causing us a lot of distress. No one can control him. That evil demon is very wicked. After receiving the boon he has become very conceited and aggressive. The demons are now consuming all the offerings made at yagyas. All of us devas have fled heaven, and are wandering in the mountains. Madhusudhan! The boon received from Shri Brahma, has made him invincible and arrogant. Because the situation is impossible, we have come to You for help. O Destroyer of Danavas! Shri Krishna! O protector of the Gods. None of the actions of the demons are hidden from you. Therefore, only You can destroy the demons. The boon that Brahmaji gave him is – " you cannot be killed by any male of any species". He can be killed by a woman, but which woman is capable and strong enough to

enter a battlefield. He was always vile and mean; and after the boon he has become impertinent and uncontrollable. Out of Bhagawati Parvati, Lakshmi, Shachi and Sharada – who is it who can succeed in killing this demon. O You who are the support of the Universe! It is Your nature to be merciful to Your devotees. Please find some way in which this troublesome demon can be destroyed.

Vyasji says – When the Devas finished speaking, Bhagwan Vishnu's face was full of smiles. He said - A long time ago, I also fought with Mahishasura, but he could not be killed. In the present situation, if all the gods contribute their energy and effulgence, then maybe there will manifest a beautiful and lustrous, and capable Devi; who can destroy Mahishasura on the battlefield. Mahishasura can conjure hundreds of different illusions. And now, with the addition of a boon, he has become uncontrollably vicious. It is absolutely certain that the Devi who emerges from our combined energies, will be the one to destroy him. So now, all of you request your Shaktis; and all the Devis also, should pray - " As a fruit of our prayers and collective shaktis, there should emerge a most powerful goddess". Rudra and all the gods should present their weapons, like trishul and others, to this goddess. Then, armed with all the divine weapons, and filled with the combined shaktis, She will enter the battlefield, and forever destroy that mean and evil rakshasa.

Vyasji says – As Bhagwan Vishnu spoke, there radiated from the body of Shri Brahma, a blinding stream of light. Its brilliance was unbearable. It was of red colour, and sparkled like a ruby. All its rays were beautiful. There was liquid coolness and sultry warmth; and rays of light streamed from it.

From the body of Bhagwan Shankar, a tremendous energy took form. It was golden hued, fiery and sharp, and no one could look upon it. For the Daityas it

would be fearsome; but for the Devas it provided gratification and comfort. Its aspect was terrible, as if a mountain steeped in Tamoguna, had thundered in.

After this, the energy of Shri Vishnu began to take form. It was of blue-black colour, and had the effulgence of Sattwa Guna.

From Indra came a supernatural and brilliant light. That energy was now full of the three gunas. Energies of Varun, Kuber, Yamraj and Agni, came and merged with this great form. So also, the energies of all the other gods came and combined, to form a blazing, blinding mass of light and energy, standing there like a second Himachal mountain.

As the Devas were gazing at it, this energy manifested as a most beautiful and adorable female form. All the Devas were filled with wonder and astonishment. That was Bhagawati Mahalaxmi. All the three Gunas, Sattwa, Raja and Tamo were present. This Devi, formed out of the combined energies of all the Gods, was embellished with eighteen arms. She was in three hues – She had a pure and crystal clear face. Her eyes were black. Her lips were crimson. The palms of her hands were red. She was bedecked with divine ornaments and jewels, and these added lustre and splendour to her appearance. She had eighteen arms, but in confrontation with Mahishasura, she would bear thousands of arms.

Janmejay said - O Most fortunate and auspicious Muni Vyasji! You are most knowledgeable. Please describe fully, this most splendid and wondrous Devi who manifested from the combined energies of the Gods. Did all the energies merge, or did each one became a part of the body of the Devi, like eyes, nose, hair. Please describe how each feature was formed. I have an overwhelming desire to also hear from your auspicious vani, (speaking voice), a detailed

description of all the weapons and ornaments that each God offered. Brahman! What you have told me so far, about the Goddess Mahalaxmi, is like amrut (nectar). Even if I hear it again and again, my thirst will not be quenched.

Sootji says – In response to the king's sincere request, Satyawatinandan, Ved Vyasji, started his narration.

Vyasji says - Rajan! You are most fortunate and blessed. O foremost of the Kuru clan! From my limited knowledge, I am going to tell you in detail, a description of the most Divine Form of the Devi that manifested on that day. Shri Brahma, Shri Vishnu, Shri Mahesh, and Shri Indra, have never been able to adequately describe that Devi, so how can I, a mere mortal, do any justice to the Divinity of that Great Goddess. I can never fully know the different aspects, the accurate and exact appearance, and the causes for Her various manifestations. She is beyond description. She is beyond language and vocabulary. All I can say is, that the all pervading, the universal, the Primordial Divine Energy, the Bhagawati, manifested. Verily the truth is that the Devi is eternal and omnipresent. It is only to fulfil the desires of the Devas, that inspite of being constant and perpetual, She assumes many forms on many occasions. The Nirgun and Nirakar, for the sake of fulfilling the prayers of the Gods, takes attributes and forms, and creates a Leela. All the names associated with Her different manifestations, bear significance to the constituent element of that manifested form.

Rajan! I will now humbly try to describe that most pleasing form that manifested from the effulgence – light-energy of all the Gods. From the radiance of Bhagwan Shankar came Her adorable lotus face; white and resplendent, like a thousand suns. The fine, chiselled features were of

unparalleled beauty. Her head was crowned with beautiful blue-black hair from the lustre of Yamaraj. The hair was long and lustrous, and the upper locks were waved and curly. The hair was as rich and dense as a black cloud. From the fiery radiance of Agni, She took Her three eyes, which were long and beautiful, as those of a doe. Her eyes were tri-coloured – the streak of red; the natural white, and the black of the collyrium. From the glow of Sandhya came Her dark and shapely eyebrows, like archways leading to the house of Kamdev. Vayu gave two shapely ears, with the sun and the moon as earrings. The energy of Kuber formed a nose that had the beauty of a newly blossoming champaka flower, which had a nose-ornament that excelled the lustre of a star. Prajapati gave sparkling, radiant teeth which resembled jasmine buds of pure knowledge. From Arun, God of Dawn, was formed Her upper lip; and the lower lip from the glow of Swami Kartik. The dark red colour of Her lips excelled freshly cut coral in their reflective splendour. From the magnificent stream of light, emanating from Shri Vishnu, were formed Her eighteen arms, as soft and cool as a lotus stem. From the lustre of the Vasus, came fingers and toes, whose nails gave out such a radiance, that all the darkness of ignorance is dispelled from those who prostrate at Her Feet. The silver light of the Moon became Her divine breasts; and from the brilliance of Indra, was formed Her abdomen, which has three folds in the form of a belt to support Her waist. From the glory of Varun, was formed Her thighs and knees like a crown shaped from a precious red jewel. From Prithvi came the subtle and hidden parts. Her Form below the waist, is the Shakti Kuta -- the embodiment of the Moola Mantra.

O King! In this way, out of the splendour, glory and effulgence of all the gods, this most splendid and magnificent Devi manifested. The sweetness of Her voice excelled the veena of Saraswati. Her smile was radiant, and She was a treasure house of beauty. Her forehead shone like the crescent moon; and

Her eyes possessed the lustre of the fish that move about in the stream of beauty flowing from Her face. Seeing Her, the Devas who were troubled by Mahishasura lost their fear, and became joyful. Then Shri Vishnu said to the Devas - Now all the Devas, offer to this Devi all types of ornaments, decorations and weapons.

Vyasji says - All the Devas immediately began to present the Devi with their arms and weapons, ornaments and garments. The milky ocean presented two divine garments, as red as the rising sun, which is dyed with an extract from Kusumbha blossoms; and a gem-studded necklace with a locket made of Pearl. Sagar Devata also gave a crown adorned with rows of Kuruvinda gems, which shone like a crore of suns; the sun and moon as ear-ornaments; and sparkling, gem-studded bangles and bracelets. Vishvakarma offered the most exquisitely crafted kadas and armlets made of gold and embedded with precious gems. Tvashta presented the most nirmal, the most pure, gem-studded golden anklets with golden bells which tinkled sweetly …. Because Her Feet defeat lotus flowers in radiance. Tvashta was very large-hearted. He also offered a necklace, and rings for all Her fingers, made of the most precious gemstones. Varun presented a mala of lotus flowers which would never wilt or wither. The garland is known as Vyjayanthi; is most fragrant, and had bumble bees buzzing around it. The Lord of the Himalayas was pleased; and gave as Her vehicle, a majestic lion resplendent with jewels, weapons and rich garments. She was beyond description or comparison, because of Her unparalleled beauty.

Then Shri Vishnu created a Chakra out of His own chakra, and presented it to the Devi. The glittering chakra had thousands of spokes. It was very efficient in cutting off the heads of the rakshasas. Shri Shankar produced a powerful trident from His own Trishul and gave it to the Devi. This dispelled the fears of

the Devas. Varun took out a conch from His conch. It glistened white, and there was a continuous melodious sound coming out of it. He gave this to the Devi. Agni Devata was glowing with joy. He offered to the Devi, a formidable, fiery missile. Pavan gave keen arrows in a quiver, and a handsome Bow, which twanged ominously. Indra gave a flashing thunderbolt; and a huge bell from the neck of his elephant Airawat. Yama, the god of death, took a rod from the same rod that he uses at the time of annihilation of the world. He offered it to the Devi. Shri Brahma offered a pot filled with the holy water of the Ganges. Varun gave a noose. Kaal gave a sword and shield. Vishvakarma ground a razor-sharp axe and offered it to the Devi. Kuber offered a golden goblet filled with honey. Varun offered a fragrant garland of lotuses. Tvashta offered a heavy mace on which tiny bells were attached. It was capable of pulverising the rakshasas. He also gave an impenetrable coat of armour (kavach). Surya offered the brilliance of his rays. When the most auspicious Bhagawati, resplendent with all kinds of ornaments, raiments, and weapons, took Her seat on Her vahana, the golden lion; all the gods were overwhelmed, and started singing stutis in praise of Her.

The Devatas said – We offer everlasting worship to Bhagawati Jagaddamba, who is verily Shiva, Kalyani, Shanti, Pushtih and Rudrani. She is also known as Kalaratri, Indrani, Siddhi, Buddhi, Vriddhi, and Vaishnavi. To that Bhagawati Amba, our humble pranaams. We worship that Bhagawati Parameshwari, Who abides in the earth, but the earth does not know Her. She presides over Prithvi and works out the entire creation. Obeisance to that auspicious, unborn Bhagawati, who exists in Maya, but is untouched by it; and who exists within the causal as its impetus. O Mother! We are constantly being troubled by the enemy. Please protect us. Only a woman can kill that wicked, proud and evil danava. He has the power to assume various frightful forms. O Compassionate Devi! You are our only refuge and hope.

Vyasji says – The Devi was pleased with the worship of the Devas, and a smile radiated from Her beautiful face and eyes. She gave an assurance to the Devas. The Devi said - Devas! Now do not be afraid any longer. Very soon I will kill this evil Mahishasura in battle.

Vyasji says - After saying this, the Devi laughed loudly, and in an awesome manner. She said - What a strange world this is, enmeshed in hallucination and spiritual ignorance. Today all the Devas are in great fear of Mahishasura, and their hearts are heaving. Respectable Devas. Fate is terrible and formidable; and can never be subdued, because it has been given total power over time and action. Both happiness and sorrow come under the command of Fate or Destiny". She laughed with a roaring sound, which put fear into the Danavas. The earth trembled, and the mountains shook. Tidal waves rose like walls in the ocean. Mount Sumeru shifted from its place. Whistling and howling sounds came from all directions. This sound, which put fear into the danavas, was the cause of joy to the Devas. They began to sing - "Devi! Victory to You! Please protect us." Mahishasura who was intoxicated with pride and arrogance in heaven, also heard this awesome sound, and became furious. He commanded the danavas to send a spy to find out the source of that sound, which was splitting the eardrums. He said - "Whoever is making that outrageous noise must be very wicked and arrogant. Whether he is a Deva or a Danava, bring him to me and I will send him into the jaws of death. His days are numbered, and I will hasten his journey to the house of Yama. Let the spy come and tell me where this person is, and I will go and kill him".

Vyasji says - The spies followed the sound, and arrived in the presence of the Devi. They saw that She was indescribably beautiful. She had eighteen arms, and was adorned with ornaments and weapons. She was holding a cup of honey, which She was drinking. The danava spies were filled with awe and

began to shake with fear. They ran back to Mahishasura and reported - O Lord of Danavas! An extremely beautiful woman has appeared. She is in the bloom of youth. This Devi is decorated with dazzling raiments and ornaments. She is neither human nor demon. She has eighteen arms in which She is carrying all description of weapons; and She is seated on a majestic lion. She is constantly sipping honey from a cup. It appears that She is not married. All the Devas have assembled in the sky, and are singing - O Devi! Victory to You! Please protect us, and destroy our enemies." Master, we were not able to find out who She is; from where She has come; whom She is married to; and what is the purpose of Her coming. There is so much light radiating from Her, that we could not bear to look upon Her. She appears dressed for war, and presents a fearful sight.

Mahishasura spoke to his minister - "You are my Prime Minister. Take an army and go to this place. Use gentle words and lavish gifts to impress this Devi, and bring Her to me. If She does not accept, then you may discipline and chastise Her, but do not bruise or injure Her. Bring Her carefully, as I wish to make Her my queen. Just hearing about Her has fascinated me.

Vyasji says – The minister left with elephants, horses, chariots and soldiers. He found he could not approach Her. From far off he began to address Her in sweet tones - O Fortunate One! My master is unbeatable and invincible. Even the gods cannot cause his death, much less human beings. He makes gentle enquiries about who You are, where You have come from, and what is Your desire. O beautiful-eyed One! My Lord has been given a boon by Brahmaji, and he is very proud of it. All the danavas accept his overlordship. He is powerful and can change his form at will. His name is Mahishasura. When he heard of Your glorious beauty he decided to come here himself. But I appeal

to You to accompany me to his palace. Please tell me what is Your pleasure, and we will act accordingly.

CHAPTER 5 episodes 10 – 11

10-11 Devi speaks to the minister; minister carries message to Mahishasura. He sends Tamra.

Vyasji says - Rajan! The form that the Devi had taken was grand and supreme. After the minister spoke, She smiled and spoke in a voice like thunder.

The Devi said - "Minister! From My present form you should understand that I am the Mother of the Gods. My name is Mahalaxmi. I have manifested for the destruction of all the danavas. The Devas had prayed to Me to kill Mahishasura. He has been tormenting them. Even now they are not getting their rightful share of the yagyas. That is why I have come here today. I am in the process of destroying him. I am not alone. I have an extensive army. O guiltless One! You have shown respect to Me, and spoken to Me in gentle and welcoming tones I am pleased with you. Otherwise, My glance is equal to the final dissolution of the universe. Under its effect your life will end. Now listen to Me carefully. Go to that sinful demon Mahishasura, and convey this message of mine –

"If you value your life, go immediately to Pataal. If you do not go, then I will finish your wicked life on the battlefield. Your body will be torn to shreds by My arrows. You will have to go to Yamraj's house. Take advantage of my mercy and leave heaven immediately. Otherwise, after you are killed, the Devas will re-enter heaven. It is better for you to give up this earth, from

ocean to ocean, and to go Pataal; before you become the target for My arrows. If you desire war, then come with all your strength. I am impatient to send you to Yama. O foolish One. In every yuga, I have killed countless demons and danavas. In the same way you will become the victim of all my weapons. You have become full of arrogance after receiving the boon from Shri Brahma. Being aware that no male can kill you, you have tortured the great gods. Therefore it is imperative that Brahma's boon should be actualised. And, that is the reason I have assumed this formidable, female form, and come to end your wicked and sinful life. If you wish to live, then leave heaven and go to Pataal where serpents rule.

Vyasji says - The minister replied – Devi! You are speaking like an ambitious and arrogant lady. How can you compare yourself with that valiant and brave Mahishasura. Such a war is improper. You are on the threshold of youth. All your limbs are soft and tender. Mahishasura's body is strong and tough. Also he owns thousands of elephants, horses and chariots, and countless soldiers. He will crush you like an elephant crushes malathi flowers. Our master is the greatest enemy of the devas, but he has high regard for you. That is why I approached you with gifts and gentle speech. Otherwise, for the pride and disrespect you are showing, I should have killed you with my arrows. When my master heard that your beauty pales everything in this world to insignificance, he became fascinated. O You with beautiful eyes! You will reign over his kingdom and his heart. He will be your servant. Give up this fatal anger, and create feelings of affection. I prostrate at your feet and entreat you to become his queen. You will preside over the three worlds, and all happiness will be yours.

Devi said - O Minister! According to the maryadas of the shastras, and from wisdom, I am going to tell you the essence of My Words. Listen carefully.

I have understood that you are the Prime Minister of Mahishasura. From your language it is evident that you also possess animal intelligence. If you are the minister, then what wisdom can one expect from your master. Both of you are the same. Brahma has matched you well. Foolish One! You have said – "You have womanly qualities". Think again and look. Do I not have manly qualities as well. From My natural disposition, I have chosen to assume a female form. Your master opted for death by a woman's hand, and therefore I have manifested as a woman. This choice of his proves that he is a great fool, and completely ignorant. He is totally devoid of the qualities of bravery and courage. Dying at the hands of a woman may be acceptable to a coward, but for a valiant warrior it is the biggest disgrace and dishonour. This is the despicable death your lord and master has asked for. It is to fulfil this boon that I have taken this female form, and come to this place. All that you have said, contradicts and opposes the Holy Writ. How can it frighten Me? When fate turns unfavourable, even a blade of grass assumes the overpowering strength and keenness of a sword. For someone whose journey into the jaws of death has already begun, what use can be served by amassing armies, weapons; and building fortresses. On the other hand, when fate is favourable, even a sharp sword becomes as soft and harmless as cotton. The moment a soul gets connection to a body, that very moment his joys, sorrows, and death, are written. Whatever fate decides, about the kind of death a person will die, that is the way he will die. This is irreversible and inevitable. There should be no doubt about this. This rule even governs the gods, including Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. Then what about the others. If a mortal begins to think - I can never die - then he is a fool of the highest order. His intelligence is dead. Therefore, you go back to your lord, and give him My message. Then you may act according to his orders. If you value your lives, give heaven back to Indra; let the gods have their share of the yagyas; and all of you go to Rasataal (the sixth lowest world according to the Puranas – Hell). It is possible

that in his foolish arrogance, Mahishasura will not agree to this. Then of course, you can all fight with Me. You may be rejoicing in the fact that all the great gods were defeated by you. But this belief is baseless. Because, as destined, Brahmaji had given such a boon - that they would face defeat.

Vyasji says - Hearing Bhagawati Jagaddambika's words, the minister began to ponder within - Now what shall I do. Should I start fighting now, or return to my master. He is agitated with fanciful thoughts of marrying this Devi. How can I go back empty handed. But it would be wise to go and tell him everything, and convince him to come here himself. It is not advisable for me to enter into battle with this Devi. Because, whether I die, or I kill Her, my master's purpose will not be served. - So, the minister decided to go back to Mahishasura, carrying the Devi's message.

The minister said - O King! The Devi who is seated on the lion, is truly very beautiful. She has eighteen hands, and in each She carries a weapon. She presents an awesome and majestic sight. I told Her in very gentle tones to accept you as Her lord, and that She would reign over the three worlds as queen. At first She appeared perplexed. Then She laughed very loudly and said - "This Mahishasura who has taken birth from a buffalo, is lower than an animal. For the benevolence of the gods, I will sacrifice him to the Devi. O foolish one! In this whole world is there one idiotic woman who will wish to make a buffalo her husband? Then how can a wise and intelligent woman like me, even entertain such a thought. Only a she-buffalo with horns should marry a buffalo like him. I cannot bellow like a buffalo and accept him as a husband. But, I will meet him on the battlefield. This Mahishasura who is troubling the gods will meet his death at My hands. If you wish to live, run away to Pataal." O King! She has spoken harsh and severe words to me. I did

not wish to spoil your plans, so I did not fight with Her. Without your orders I could not take any decision -- whether to fight, or to run away.

Vyasji says - Mahishasura immediately summoned his elder ministers and said - Ministers! Please let me have your views in this matter. Could this be the same maya that trapped Shambharasura. You are wise and can find solutions. Whom should we appease with praises and gifts so that we get support.

The ministers said - O King! It is necessary to always speak what is true, as well as pleasing. But many times, the truth is not pleasing, even though it is benevolent. It is like an unpleasant medicine, which is ultimately benevolent, because it relieves illness. It is very rare to find someone who speaks the absolute truth. In the present situation, what can one say. It is impossible to know beforehand which action will succeed and which will fail.

Mahishasura said - Let each one speak their mind. Then I will take the decision. It is wise to consider the views of all present.

Vyasji says - Hearing this, Mahabali Virupaksh spoke, hoping to impress the king.

Virupaksh said - O King! This is an ordinary woman. In ego she is saying things to frighten us. It is the practise of women to exaggerate, so that no one will defeat them. But the man who recognises this untruth and false courage, will not fear her. It is shameful for a man to be in fear of a woman. Of course it is reproachable for a man to kill a woman who is forlorn and pitiable. I will go alone and kill this devi. So have no fear. I will go armed with weapons, and conquer this proud and arrogant woman. I will bind her with serpentine ropes and bring her to you.

Vyasji says – Demon Durdarsh supported Virupaksh. He said - Rajan! Virupaksh is right Please also hear me. It seems this devi is smitten by the arrow of Kamdev. Women usually behave like this and try to control their master. All her threats are actually overtures. A man who is well versed in the art of love can recognise these symptoms. When she says she will pierce you with arrows, it actually means glances. A woman's weapon is her glance. So if you go there you will fall prey to her charms. Allow me to go with gifts, and I will subdue her and bring her to you as your slave.

Vyasji says - Hearing these two danavas, a third one, Tamra, said - Rajan! Please give me also a hearing. There is a lot of truth and substance in what I am going to say. This devi appears to be very intelligent. She has not come here under the influence of Kamdev's arrows. All that she has spoken should not be misconstrued as coy signals. She has come alone and unattended. This is amazing. She is adorned with eighteen arms. No one in the three worlds has ever seen a devi with eighteen arms. In every arm she is carrying a weapon of destruction. To me it seems to be the play of fate. Some unfavourable event is about to happen. I also had an ominous dream last night. From this I fear that Yama is setting up camp here. It was after midnight that I saw in my dream, a woman dressed in a black saree, wailing and lamenting. This message of death should be considered seriously. Events have already started taking shape This devi has appeared, and is calling you to battle Rajan! She is neither a human, nor a Gandharvi, nor an Asuri. She has been created by the maya of the gods. It is her quality to charm and deceive. In the circumstances it is not advisable to be cowardly and refuse to fight. We must go to war with her. Whatever has to happen will definitely happen. We cannot know whether the fruit of fate will be success or failure. A prudent man should maintain his balance and remain confident. Rajan! Life and death

is totally under the control of destiny. There is no one in these three worlds who can defeat it.

Mahishasura said - Tamra! Make preparations and go. Defeat that devi and bring her to me. If she resists, do not kill her. Try some other means to get her under your control. Observe her and find out what is the real purpose of her visit.

Vyasji says - Tamra's head had just become the seat for death. He took his army and left. On the way he saw many omens of death, and his mind was filled with fear. Then he saw the Devi. She was enthroned on the lion, and the devas were singing stutis. Tamra assumed a humble stance, and went before the Devi and said - My lord Mahishasura, who bears beautiful horns on his head, is very impressed with Your beauty and Your qualities. He is also the overlord of the Devas. Do not lose this opportunity. Accept him as your lord, and he will lay at Your feet, all the happiness of the three worlds. Why should You burden these delicate arms with weapons. You should be garlanding them with flowers. When Your glances are so powerful, why do You need arrows. War is the cause of all sorrows in this world. Why should one expose the body to be pierced with weapons. Therefore Devi! Form an alliance with my lord. Even the devas and danavas respect and fear him. He will elevate you to the position of his queen and shower all kinds of favours on You. Your children will rule the three worlds. So you can ensure happiness, not only in Your youth, but also in your old age.

CHAPTER 5 EPISODES 12 – 13

12 – 13 Tamra runs back. Mahishasura sends Vashkal and Durmukh; who are killed.

Vyasji says – Hearing Tamra's words, the Devi smiled. She replied to him in thunderous tones.

The Devi said – Tamra! Your stupid master is now embracing death. Kamdev has succeeded in putting his arrows into him. Go and tell him that I am not like the buffalo who gave him birth - who eats grass and gets fat; who has a long tail, big belly, and horns on the head. I have no desire to even make Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh-Indra-Varun-Kuber and Agni as My husband. What quality can ever make Me accept an animal as a husband. I am not a woman who chooses her husband. My husband is eternal, and forever present. He is the doer; the witness; the non-doer; desireless; and His form is attributeless; unselfish; eternal; unsupported; and has no basis, as He is the base of everything; all knowing; all powerful; entire; and auspicious. He is the embodiment of peace and forgiveness. He is omniscient, and without any illusion such as mistaking the unreal for real. Can I leave such a perfect husband for Mahishasura. You better be careful how you fight I will make you a vehicle for Yama. Or I will give you a burden of transporting water to the people of the three worlds. O mean and low one. If you value your life, better take all the danavas and go to Pataal. Otherwise you cannot escape death on the battlefield. It is only when two people have equal qualities that they can live happily in this world. Otherwise, if a foolish person has ambitions of a disproportional alliance, he will have to suffer sorrows. Your head is filled with

stones. So you are asking me to accept your lord. Can you not see Who I am, and who that horned animal is. Either you go away, or fight. You may do as you wish. I will certainly kill you.

Vyasji says - Saying this the Devi made dangerous sounds. It was such a loud sound, that the earth trembled, the mountains shook, and the wives of the demons went into labour. Tamra was terrified and ran back to Mahishasura The whole daitya kingdom became fearful, the sound was so deafening Even the golden lion began to roar. This Bhairav-naad (sound of doom) caused every nerve to bristle with fear.

Seeing the return of Tamra, Mahishasura got dazed. He discussed with his ministers - should we hide in the fortress; should we fight; or should we run away. In matters of state, a king always consults his ministers. If the advice of the ministers is not taken, the king and kingdom go into destruction. Therefore you should now give your advice for the benefit of the country. Why has this Devi come here, alone and unsupported; and why is She constantly calling us to battle. No doubt it is impossible to know beforehand the outcome of a war. Those who favour action say there is no such thing as fate and destiny, because no one has ever seen it. Only cowards take refuge in leaving everything to fate. So ponder over these two lines of thought, and give me your decision.

Vyasji says - The demon Vidalaksh said – Lord! We must again find out under whose orders this Devi has come, and from where. Whom She is married to. You can only be killed by a woman. The devas are aware of this. It is they who have combined their energies into this Devi and sent Her here. All of them are hiding in the skies in anticipation of watching a war. When the occasion arises, they will all come to Her aid. From Vishnu onwards, they will make Her the

chief, and kill all of us. And then She will kill you. Maharaj! This is my understanding of the situation. I cannot foresee the result of the war. My advice is that we should not fight. I cannot say more than this. You are of course our master We will die for you. It is our duty. But the most amazing and puzzling thing is, that despite being alone and unsupported, She is calling for war.

Durmukh said - King! I am convinced that we will be victorious. I will destroy this maya filled Devi that the devas have created. Do not fear. As for the ministers' advice, I have this to say. There are three kinds of ministers. Those who are Sattwic always put the master's interest first, and never oppose his orders. They are faithful and obedient. Then there are the Rajasic ministers, who are always weighing situations and expressing diverse views. They only do what they want, even if it jeopardises the master. Sometimes they even form alliance with the enemy, and divulge secret information. They are ambitious and sly, and give harmful advice to their master. The Tamasic ministers are even lower, and baser. They are always steeped in sinful acts. Trust me and have no fear. I will go and face this Devi.

Vyasji says - Vashkal and Durmukh left on their quest. They were full of pride and self confidence. When they reached they saw the Devi, sitting on a lion. They spoke in a loud voice - Devi! Our king has vanquished the gods. He is the lord of the three worlds. He will come to meet you in the form of a handsome man, well dressed and well decorated. Other women are dying out of desire for him. If you marry him you will be most fortunate.

Shree Devi said - O wicked creatures! Do you think I am some ordinary female ensnared in the chains of lust and fascination, and that I will marry Mahishasura? Women who belong to respectable lineage, who are virtuous

and chaste, will look for the same qualities in a husband. In fact he should be superior to her in appearance, intelligence, character and nature. This Mahishasura is always in the form of an animal; and even among animals, his breed is considered inferior. Then which woman will accept him as a husband. You Vashkal, and you Durmukh! Go back immediately to that lord of yours who keeps wallowing in dust like an elephant. Go and tell him -- "You go to Pataal, or else come and fight with Me. It is only a war which will restore Indra's confidence. This is the truth. I will go away only after killing you. I cannot leave before that. O Intolerable Fool! Ponder over My words, and do whatever you decide. You four-footed animal! Before My victory there is no place on earth, no cave in the mountains, and nowhere in the sky, that you can hide."

Vyasji says - When the Devi said this, the two Danavas, Vashkal and Durmukh, became furious and red-eyed with arrogance. They began shooting arrows at the Devi. The Devi had to fulfil the devas' prayers. She sent back a hail of arrows. Vashkal faced the Devi first, and a terrible fight started, with arrows, swords and spears. The Devi used Her crescent arrow, and broke his bow into pieces. He came jumping with a mace. The Devi also used a mace, and dropped him to the ground. He rose again, and charged The Devi became angry, and with Her trishul, She wounded him mortally in the chest. Vashkal fell down dead!

Durmukh appeared on the scene. He wore armour and was in a chariot. Devi sounded the conch, and twanged Her bowstring. There ensued a fierce fight. Rivers of blood flowed and with it, the heads of warriors, looked like the gourds which Yama's messengers use when they learn swimming. The battlefield presented a horrific sight. Bodies were strewn all over, and scavenging birds and animals were closing in. The smell of death was in the

air. Seeing all this, Durmukh lost his wits. He again suggested to the Devi that She should drink wine, surrender the war, and accept the proposal of Mahishasura.

Devi Bhagawati said - Death is dancing on your head. You are blinded by fate. Enjoy all your meaningless talk. I will directly send you to the house of Yama, as I have just sent Vashkal. Then I will make preparations to kill Mahishasura. Durmukh had come to meet his death. He began to fight again. The Devi used five arrows and shot his chariot to splinters He picked up his mace and ran towards the Devi. He hit the lion on the head. The lion stood firm. The Devi took Her sword and cut Durmukh's head off from his body. The Devas began to shout Jai-Jai-kars, and then bowed their heads and sang stutis. They showered flowers from the heavens. The rishis, gandharvas, kinnaras and other saints rejoiced with the Devas.

CHAPTER 5 episodes 14-15

14-15 Death of Chiksur, Tamraksh, and Vidalaksh.

Vyasji says - Mahishasura could not believe when he heard that Durmukh and Vashkal had been killed. He said - "What has happened! My two bravest and strongest warriors have been killed by a woman. This proves that all beings are dependent on destiny. Only destiny has the power to mete out happiness and sorrow in proportion to good and bad deeds of the past. Now again, all of you, consider the matter and give me your decision as to what action has to be taken."

Vyasji says – When Mahishasura finished speaking, his army chief Chiksurakhya said - What is so difficult about killing a woman. I will go and finish her off. Saying this, he mounted his chariot and left with an army. He made Tamra his bodyguard. He arrived with a lot of noise and dust. The Devi, the most auspicious Bhagawati Jagaddamba, had already sounded the conch, the bell, and the twang of the bowstring. These sounds created fear in the hearts of the asura army. They turned to run away, when Chiksurakhya bellowed at them -- What is so fearful about a mere woman. I will send Her to Yampuri shortly. He picked up his bow and spoke to the Devi . - O You with large and beautiful eyes! You may cause fear to ordinary beings with your roaring sounds, but you do not scare me. It is a sin to kill a woman, and it earns reproach and dishonour. So the idea of killing you is fading from my mind. For women coy glances and amorous gestures are enough to win a war. You have lost your senses. That is why you are calling for war, instead of love. War is ugly. Swords flash, maces smash, and gleaming arrows cut bodies to

shreds. Contrary poets glorify death on the battlefield and claim that it merits a place in heaven. Do not believe it. I would advise you to leave all this and go wherever you wish; or else become the queen of King Mahishasura.

Vyasji says - The Devi interrupted him, and said - "O Foolish One! You are trying to speak like a wise pandit. You neither know the science of ethics, nor do you know the science of logic. You have not studied under patriarchs and elders, and you have no wisdom of your own. You have only served foolish people and have become foolish yourself. When you do not know Rajdharm (duties of a sovereign), why are you indulging in useless talk. Mahishasura will definitely be killed by Me on the battlefield, and there will be a mire of blood and sand. The pillar of righteousness will be established. After that I will be satisfied, and I will leave. This wicked demon has become arrogant and is aggressing the Devas. It is My foremost duty to kill him. You be warned, and fight carefully.

Vyasji says - the foolish demon began to shoot arrows at the Devi. The arrows that the Devi shot, were like venomous serpents, all causing painful punctures in the skin. Then She hit him with a mace, and he fainted, falling like a rock into his chariot. Seeing this Tamra came to face the Devi. She laughed loudly and said - Come! Come! I am making arrangements to send all of you to Yampuri. You have become weak and your life span is also at an end. What purpose is served by sending you. What arrangements is Mahishasura making at home for extending his life. Even if I kill you My work is not complete, because that wicked demon who is terrorising the devas still lives. Therefore it is better for you to go back and send Mahishasura. He can see for himself the situation. Tamra swelled with anger. He also started shooting arrows at the Devi. She rained sharp arrows on him. In the meantime Chiksurakhya came out of his swoon and he also joined the fight. Tamra had a heavy pole made of

iron. He hit the lion with it and began to laugh. This enraged the Devi. She picked up Her gleaming sword and knocked his head off. Chiksurakhya picked up a sword and rushed at the Devi. The Devi released five quick arrows. The first one broke his sword. The second severed his arm, and the other three cut off his head.

In this way these two evil and invincible Danavas were killed by the Devi. The Devas rejoiced and showered the Devi with fragrant flowers. The devas, the rishis, munis, gandharvas, and all other divine beings, began to sing the Jai-Jai-kaar of the Devi.

Mahishasura was shocked and dazed with the news of the killing of Chiksurakhya and Tamraksh. He sent his best warriors Asiloma and Vidalaksh. They had never been defeated in battle. When they saw the Devi they were struck by Her form. She was seated on a fearsome lion. She had eighteen arms and weapons of all description.

Asiloma said - Devi! Tell me the truth. For what purpose have you come, and why are you killing these innocent daityas. I am willing to make a treaty with you. I will give you all the gold, gems and precious metals that you want. Then you may go. Why do you wish to fight. You are so delicate, that even flowers, if thrown at you, might injure you. I am amazed at how you are bearing the burden of all these weapons. The law of this world is to embrace happiness and renounce sorrow. Even happiness is of two kinds. Spiritual happiness is eternal, and the happiness of worldly pleasures is short lived. If you are aware of the basic principles of life, you will know that one should avoid war. This youth is very transient. So while you are still young and beautiful you should enjoy the pleasures of life. You must not indulge into actions which cause pain

to others. The Daityas have not harmed you in any way. So why do you wish to kill them.

The Devi said - O You with powerful arms! Your first question is why I have come here. I will answer this; and then tell you why I am killing the Danavas. Daitya! I roam the entire creation, and am always present, everywhere. I watch, as a witness, all the deeds, good and bad, being performed by every living being. I have no desires. I have no greed. And I bear no malice to anyone.

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CHAPTER 5 Episodes 16-17

16-17 Mahishasura goes before Devi. Quotes the story of Mandodri

Vyasji says - Hearing the account of the soldiers, Mahishasura flew into a rage. Bring me that chariot of mine, to which one thousand donkeys can be harnessed; which is decorated with flags and banners; which is equipped with weapons, and which has strong axles and wheels. His charioteer returned with the best vehicle which was not only full equipped, but plated in silver. Mahishasura assumed human form. He thought - I am a buffalo and I have horns, and my appearance is fearful. The Devi will not like me. To impress a female one must look attractive and smart. Therefore I will make myself handsome, and she will certainly be charmed. Also, it is in my own interest that I should do this. So he dressed himself in brilliant robes, and adorned himself with rich jewels, and armlets. He sat in the chariot, holding bow and arrows. He resembled a second Kamdev (god of love). Swollen with pride and arrogance, he arrived in the presence of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. His appearance was such that any woman would be drawn to him.

When the Devi saw that Daityaraj Mahishasura had arrived, accompanied by many brave warriors, She began to sound the conch (shankh dhwani). This is the sound which causes wonderment to all who hear it. But Mahishasura continued to approach the Devi, and laughingly said - It is the nature of this world to constantly change. Devi, whoever lives in it, whether man or woman, is always searching for comfort and happiness. But only alliance or connection can give happiness. Remaining separate or detached does not give any

happiness. Alliances are of various kinds. I will tell you. Listen. Some places are so conducive that connections get formed. In other situations the alliance gets formed naturally. From my wisdom I will tell you about the different kinds of relationships of love. The highest love is that which parents have for their children. The second is love between brothers and sisters. The love which gives the maximum happiness is considered the foremost. Learned men have said that a boat carries many people. Even though they are diverse in their natures, they stay together out of necessity. Any happiness they get from this togetherness is short lived, and is classified as the least. The requirement for mutual happiness in an alliance, is equality in intelligence and prowess, beauty and form, temperament, attributes and family background. If you make an allowance with me, then you can be assured of the highest joy and happiness. O Pleasing One! According to my desires I can change innumerable forms. Indra and all the gods have been defeated by me. Whatever riches and heavenly jewels I have in my palace, can all be yours. You can also distribute them as you please. O Beautiful Devi! Accept my offer and become my queen. I am willing to accept your servitude (dasta). I will agree to your wish and stop tormenting the Devas. I will respect whatever desires you have, to make you happy. O Devi who speaks in sweet tones! You have large, beautiful eyes. Your every wish is my command. You have infatuated me with your beauty. I have become restless and impatient and have come before you. The arrows of Kamdev have wounded me grievously. Please help me. It is the foremost dharma to alleviate the sorrows of those who come to you for refuge. Your dark eyebrows are enhancing your beauty. O Devi with the slim waist. It is I who am your servant. I am willing to put myself at your service. For the rest of my life I will speak the truth and never break my promise. O Beautiful One! Have mercy on me. From the day of my birth till today, I have never been so desperate and forlorn. Even in encounters with Brahma and other powerful gods I was never crushed. It is only before you

that I am accepting your authority. Brahma and all the gods are aware of my superiority and prowess on the battlefield. The same I, am here before you, ready to be your servant. Please turn your attention on me.

Vyasji says - Mahishasura was rambling on in this meaningless way. Adorned with the most pleasing and beautiful form, Bhagawati Chandika's face lit up with a most divine smile. She laughed lightly, and began to speak.

The Devi said - Except Param Purush Paramatma (The God Almighty), no one is acceptable to Me. It is only He that I desire. Creation of the entire universe is My primary concern. That Almighty God is the Supreme Spirit. His attention is always on Me, because I am His Pure Desire. My form is auspicious. Because of His proximity, the ever present Chaitanya flows constantly from My Lotus Feet. Whoever comes in contact with Chaitanya can be likened to inert iron which comes into contact with a magnet and gets magnetised. Worldly pleasures hold no attractions for Me. O Foolish One! Your mind is very base and stupid. That is why you are desirous of the pleasures of relationship with women. Indeed! A woman is said to be the most tenacious and inflexible chain to bind a man. He who is bound by iron chains can cut loose; but for those who are trapped in a woman's chains, find it impossible to escape. Why are you craving for the female bondage. If you wish for happiness keep peace in your heart. Peace and balance is the only way to happiness. Forming an attachment with a woman is full of difficulties. Knowing this why are you making foolish suggestions. Leave your enmity with the devas and roam free in the world. Pataal is a better place for you to live. You can even fight a war if you so wish. There is no shortage of Shakti in Me. O Danava! It is the prayer of the Devas which has brought Me here to kill you. As the fruits of your verbal praise and offer of friendship to Me, I am telling you this truth. While you are still alive and well, leave this place and go away. By walking seven

steps together, friendship develops. Therefore I grant you your life. O Warrior! If you are desirous of death, then you can gladly fight. You will die at My hands - there is no doubt in this.

Vyasji says - After Bhagawati Jagaddamba spoke, a totally infatuated Mahishasura began to speak sweet words in a very gentle voice. O Beautiful Woman, of most pleasing form! I am afraid to attack you because you are a woman. You are so beautiful and delicate. Anyone who beholds you will be filled with admiration. This form of yours causes Vishnu, Shankar, Brahma and all others to be steeped in bliss and worship. Then O Lotus-eyed One! Is it fitting for me to enter into battle with you? Therefore, if it pleases you, become my consort and pay homage and devotion to me; or return safely to the place from where you have come. I will not use weapons against you because you have declared friendship with me. I have spoken for your benevolence. Therefore it is for your own good if you leave and go away. Killing a beautiful woman will not give me any glory. There is no penance that can be done to atone for the killing of a woman, child, or realised being (Brahmin). Therefore I am thinking of taking you home with me. If I try to use force it will be of no use, because it will cause a hindrance in giving the happiness of a union. You have lustrous hair! This is the reason I am speaking to you in humble, gentle and prayerful tones. To always be in the company of one's beloved, is the greatest happiness for man. So also it is for a woman. One can experience happiness only in togetherness. Not be being separated. You are a beautiful woman. The ornaments that adorn you enhance your beauty. From where has this shrewdness come, which makes you refuse and spurn my offer to become my queen. Who has advised you to remain detached from these pleasures. O Sweet-voiced Devi! Some adversary has betrayed you and that is why you are disillusioned. Leave your obstinacy and accept this most gracious offer. It is absolutely certain that our alliance will

give us all the happiness and pleasures of the world. It is only by being together, that Vishnu-Lakshmi; Brahma-Savithri; Shankar-Parvati; and Indra-Shachi complement and embellish each other. Is there any woman who can stay separate from her husband and enjoy lifelong happiness? From where did you get example and advice, which makes you refuse my proposal to be your husband. I wonder where Kamdev has gone, otherwise he could have influenced you with his five arrows. Later you will regret and rue this decision. You will suffer the same fate as Mandodari. She received an offer from a very handsome, strong and brave king, but she refused. And then when her heart and mind became filled with desire for marriage, she had to become the wife of a fool.

Vyasji says - Bhagawati Jagaddamba asked Mahishasura - "Who was this Mandodari? And who was the king she refused. What was the name of the foolish and fraudulent king whom she finally married. Tell me this story in detail.

Mahishasura said - There was a country on earth called Singhal. It had dense forests, and every corner was full of riches and food grains. Chandrasen ruled as king. He was very dharmic, just and peaceful, and looked after all the requirements of his subjects. He was always in search of Pure Knowledge. He had made a study of all the scriptures. He was an accomplished warrior. He had a dutiful and pious queen called Gunvati. She bore a beautiful daughter, and the king and all the subjects rejoiced. He held a big celebration for the naming ceremony. They called the girl Mandodari. She grew more beautiful every day, like the waxing moon. When she reached maturity, the king began to look for a suitable husband for her. At that time there was a very illustrious king named Sudhanva, who ruled in Madradesh (lying between the rivers Ravi and Jhelum). He had a son who was famous by the name of Kambugreev. The

Brahmins told king Chandrasen, that this handsome and brave Kambugreev was the most compatible match for Mandodari. He had all the qualities desirable in a king, and he is also well versed in the art of governance. The king went to his dear wife Gunwati and said - " I have found a most suitable groom for our daughter. His name is Kambugreev. What is your view in the matter." The queen agreed with her husband, and went to speak to her daughter Mandodari. "Your father has chosen a husband for you. His name is Kambugreev. Do you agree to this marriage?" Mandodari said – "I will not accept this match. I have no desire to marry. I will take a vow to remain a virgin all my life. Mother! I want freedom of movement. I want to spend all my time in tapasya. This ocean of worldly pleasures and attachments is the cause of pain and difficulties. Wise and learned men have said that freedom from worldly attachments is the main requirement for achieving moksha. I have no interest in marriage and husband. During the marriage ceremony one has to make a vow in the presence of Agni, that – 'O husband! In every way I am surrendered to you.' Then, in the in-law's house one has to be subservient to mother-in-law and brother-in-law, and others.

CHAPTER 5 episodes 18-19

18-19 Devi kills Mahishasura. Devas sing stutis.

Mahishasura kept talking - Mandodari had a younger sister. Her name was Indumati. When she reached marriageable age, her father King Chandrasen, held a swayamvar. Kings from far and wide came to attend. Princess Indumati placed the garland on a powerful looking king. He was very handsome and also had all royal qualities. At that moment Mandodari felt desire growing within her. She became restless. Her eye fell on a Shudra King (a fourth caste among the hindus). He was a wicked man, but his appearance was very smart. As was her fate, she became attracted to him. She sent a message to her father to perform her marriage also, as she had selected a husband. The king was very happy, and Mandodari was married to King Charudeshna. A big dowry was also given. The new bridegroom was extremely happy, and went back to Madradesh with Mandodari. For many days Mandodari spent happy times with King Charudeshna. But he was a man of evil purpose, and bad conduct, and Mandodari discovered this. She was filled with repentance and disgust. She remembered that during her own swayamvar she had seen this same king and felt repulsion. But under the influence of desire, she chose the same man. 'I have been deceived. Now what can I do except feel sad. This Charudeshna is shameless, cruel and full of guile. How can I feel any love for him. My life is accursed and meaningless. Up till now I was free from the sorrows of worldly attachments. That which I should never have done has happened. And these are the fruits which I have to accept. If I give up my life it will be an unforgivable suicide. If I go immediately to my father's house, I will be an object of ridicule to my friends. Therefore I must accept my fate,

and continue to live here. Time is a powerful healer. I will gradually be able to renounce all desires'.

Mahishasura continued speaking - The unfortunate Mandodari stayed on in her wicked husband's house. Every moment was filled with sorrow and repentance. Worldly pleasures were as good as gone. Therefore, O Beautiful and Auspicious One! By insulting and spurning a king like me, do you also wish to languish in the house of a mean and cruel husband? Accept my good advice. It is benevolent for a woman to marry me. If you refuse, you will also face unbearable sorrows. There is no doubt about this.

Devi said - O Silly and Foolish One! You better run away to Pataal, or face Me in battle. After killing you I will destroy all the Asuras and leave completely happy and satisfied. Whenever saints and holy persons are faced with difficulties, I incarnate Myself for the protection. Daitya! Understand this! I am eternally formless, and I am unborn. But, for the sake of My devotees, I take birth and form. Mahishasura! My words are infallible. Take notice. In answer to the prayers of the Devas I have manifested, purely to destroy you. As soon as I kill you, I will disappear. Therefore, you either fight, or go to Pataal, which is the abode of Asuras. I am now going to kill you. This is the truth.

Vyasji says - Hearing the words spoken by Bhagawati Jagaddambika, Mahishasura picked up his bow and entered the battlefield. He fitted sharp arrows, and pulled the bow string up to his ear. Then he let fly a barrage of arrows. The Devi cut every arrow that he shot. A fierce battle started between Mahishasura and Devi Jagaddamba. The Devas and Danavas watched, and each prayed for victory. Suddenly Durdhar jumped in, and tried to distract the Devi by shooting arrows at Her. The tips of the arrows had been

dipped in poison. This infuriated Devi Bhagawati. She aimed luminous flashing arrows at Durdhar and killed him. His lifeless body fell to the earth like a mountain. Seeing the fall of Durdhar, Trinetra came in, and aimed seven arrows at the Devi. Before the arrows could reach, Bhagawati Jagaddamba cut them in mid-air with Her sharp arrows. With Her Trishul, Devi cut Trinetra to shreds. The next to come was Andhak. He was armed with an iron mace. He struck the Devi's vahana, the lion, on the head. Andhak was a strong fighter, but the lion tore him with his claws and began to eat his flesh. Mahishasura was astonished and stunned to see the destruction of so many of his brave warriors. He made the Devi the target of his arrows. Before the arrows touched Her, the Devi cut all his arrows to pieces; and then used Her mace and injured him on the chest. To the Devas, Mahishasura was like a thorn in the flesh. When he was hit with the mace he almost lost consciousness; but he overcame the shock and pain, and rushed to attack. He banged his mace on the head of the lion. This enraged the lion and he reared up to claw him. Mahishasura immediately took the form of a lion and rushed at the lion. When the Devi saw that Mahishasura had changed his form into that of a lion, She became furious. The Devi had a collection of most lethal arrows, some of which were like venomous serpents. She sent a rain of arrows on him. He immediately changed himself into a mountainous elephant, mad and intoxicated in rut. Then he turned into a man and picked up the peak of a mountain and hurled it at the Devi Chandika. Devi Jagaddamba pulverised the mountain top as it approached, and laughed in derision. He once more turned into an elephant. The Devi's lion leaped up and sat on his head and began tearing him with his claws. Mahishasura changed into a fabulous deer having eight legs and myriad horns (sharrabh) and attacked the lion. Devi picked up Her sword and struck him on the head. He also managed to bruise the Devi. Finally he took his original form of a ferocious buffalo with strong, powerful horns. He began to butt the Devi with his horns and swishing tail. He roared

with laughter; and using his tail as a sling, he began to shoot stones at the Devi. Full of pride and arrogance he said - Devi, beware! You of beautiful form and youthful energy, today I am certainly going to kill you. You have lost your senses. That is why you are challenging me. Because of this illusion, all your efforts are getting wasted, and your energy is becoming depleted. After killing you, I will kill all those crafty devas who used a woman to fight for their cause.

Devi said – O proud and foolish one! Don't be too ambitious. Just wait and watch. I will kill you and remove all fear from the hearts of the devas.

Vyasji says – In that instant, Bhagawati Chandika picked up the trishul and charged Mahishasura. This caused great joy among the devas. They began to sing stutis to the Devi, and rained gentle flowers on Her. They chanted songs of victory and beat drums. From the skies the battle was being watched by rishis, gandharvas, nagas, kinnars (a class of demi-gods having the head of a horse), and charans (divine bards). Mahishasura knew all the strategies of guile and fraud. He was assuming innumerable illusory forms and causing injury to the Devi Jagaddamba. Then Devi Chandika, whose eyes had turned red with anger, hit him in the chest with Her trishul. He fell to the ground. It appeared as if his life had ebbed. But all of a sudden he stood up and continued his attack, kicking and flailing. Each time he kicked, he roared with thunderous laughter. The Devas began to be fearful. Devi Bhagawati then took Her most trusted weapon – the chakra with one thousand spokes and teeth. Mahishasura was in front of Her. In a loud and awesome voice, She said - O Drunk and intoxicated Fool! Look at this Chakra. It will sever your head from your body. You have only an instant to live. Prepare to go to Yamlok (abode of Yama, God of Death). Thus saying, the Devi Bhagawati Chandika released the Chakra. It flew straight at Mahishasura and cut off his

head. The blood gushed out from his neck like a waterfall from a mountain. His headless body reeled and fell to the earth. Cries of victory resounded in the heavens. The Devi's vahana was extremely strong and powerful. He began to voraciously devour the demons who were running away from the battlefield. After the death of the wicked Mahishasura, the remaining danavas were paralysed with fear. They headed straight for Pataal. Then the Devas, rishis, munis, saints and other men began to live in peace. Bhagawati Chandika disappeared and began to dwell in a holy place. It is the nature of Bhagawati to bestow happiness on the gods. In gratitude, all the Devas reached that place, to sing Her praises (Devi Aradhana).

The Devas said - O Devi! It is only by Your Shakti that Brahma is able to perform his duty of creation; Vishnu of preservation; and at the time of dissolution, Shankar perform destruction. At any time if You withdraw Your Shakti, they will be rendered ineffectual. Therefore, the creation, preservation and destruction is entirely dependent on You. Kirti (honour), Mati (intellect), Smriti (memory), Gati (pace), Karuna (compassion), Daya (mercy), Shraddha (faith), Dhriti (stability), Vasudha (earth), Kamala (wealth), Ajapa (silent utterance), Pushti (nourishment), Kala (technique), Vijaya (victory), Girija (ganges), Jaya (triumph), Tushti (satisfaction), Prama (perception), Buddhi (wisdom), Uma (brilliance), Rama (charm), Vidya (knowledge), Kshama (forgiveness), Kanti (splendour) and Medha (comprehension) --- all these names belong to You. This is known in all the three worlds. O Jagaddambe! You give protection to the whole world. Is there anyone who can be separated from Your energy, and still hope to be effective. O Bhagawati! Verily, You are the support of the Universe. Otherwise how can Kacchap (tortoise) and Seshnag get the Shakti to support the earth. Mother! The earth is not separate from You. If it is separate, how can it maintain its orbit, unsupported, in the Cosmos. Providing nourishment to all living things, is also entirely done

by You. The seven material causes, and the sixteen causes of change or alteration in nature; (Prakriti and Vikrati), are a part of You, and by being connected, the entire living world exists. Therefore it is You, who gives life. Without discrimination You sustain the Gods and others in equal measure. O Mother! In a garden many trees are planted for enjoyment and amusement. Many do not bear fruits or flowers, and are only fit for cutting down. But a good gardener will never like to cut down trees which he himself has planted. That is why You do not discriminate between Devas and Daityas, and are always ready to do anything for their benevolence. You are brimming with compassion. Those enemies who covet the celestial maidens, are destroyed by You in battle, only on the prayers of those maidens. The most profound and remarkable thing is, that the powerful demons could have been destroyed merely by Your Will; but You deemed to take an incarnation to accomplish it. It is nothing but Your divine play, entirely at Your will and pleasure. O Divine Mother! Knowledge – which is the giver of happiness; and non-knowledge – which is the giver of sorrow; are both Your forms. It is Your nature to alleviate the sufferings which are a part of being born a mortal. Those superior beings who are desirous of moksha, constantly engage themselves in Your worship. Those foolish ones who are engrossed in worldly attractions, never experience this joy and bliss. Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar and all the gods, are continuously absorbed in the worship of Your Holy Lotus Feet. The foolish and most unfortunate man, who does not even feel the desire to worship You, will forever keep falling into the ocen of worldly attachments and attractions. O Devi Chandika! It is from the dust of Your Lotus Feet that Brahma started the creation of the universe; that Vishnu started his job of preservation; and Shankar accomplishes his act of destruction and dissolution. The person who does not worship You as the Primordial Shakti, is most unfortunate and wretched. O Devi! Verily You are the power of speech of both, the Devas and the Danavas. If You did not abide in their mouths, they would be bereft of the

power of speech. Even after being equipped with the organs of speech, anyone who remains separated from You, will not be able to speak. Bhagawati! It is most amazing that even demons become objects of compassion for You. On the battlefield, the fortunate ones who are killed by Your weapons, become entitled to enter heaven. Otherwise, as a punishment for their evil deeds, they would permanently languish in hell and face trials and tribulations. Your attributes are boundless, and beyond description. Even now, now one has been able to fully comprehend You. You are beyond the mind, as mind is Your creation.

In Satyayuga, there is a predominance of Sattwaguna. Therefore there is no faith or support for unholy texts, which impart impure knowledge. But, in Kalyug, vain and self-conceited authors and poets try to push You into oblivion; ignore Your existence; and compose stutis and verses in praise of those lesser gods, whom You Yourself have created! You who grant moksha as a reward, are beyond knowledge; and You give the experience of yoga. The Sattwic munis, who continuously meditate upon You with a fixed and clean attention, do not have to undergo the unpleasant and undesirable sojourn in a womb, waiting for a birth. Those devotees of Yours, who are drenched in meditation upon Your Holy Lotus Feet, are the most blessed and auspicious in this world. You are sakshat Chitta Shakti. This same Chitta Shakti exists in Paramatma. And that is how the Supreme Being manifests in name and form to accomplish the grand work of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. This is known to all. Apart from Paramatma there is no being who can be separated from Your energy and still succeed in any action whatsoever. Jagaddambe! Nothing can come from an attention which does not have You as its sole object, because it is inert. Even if the senses are endowed with attributes and good destiny; still if they are outside Your Chitta-Shakti (divine attention); they can never succeed in obtaining the fruits. O Divine Mother!

When Yagyas are performed by saints and holy men, and oblations are offered to the sacred fire, the Devas get their entitled share. But during the offering of oblations, if "Swaha" is not chanted with full attention on You, they can never get their share. It is not possible. It is clear beyond doubt, that the sustenance of the universe is entirely under Your command. In the beginning it was You who created the entire universe. Vishnu, Rudra and other gods who protect the various regions; themselves get protection from You. And at the time of dissolution everything gets destroyed, but You alone continue to exist. Your primordial nature pervades and penetrates the universe. The gods have not been able to fathom this nature of Yours, so how can we ordinary mortals understand You O Mother. This demon Mahishasura was merciless and cruel. You killed him and protected the devas. O Giver of birth to the Universe! How can we of limited knowledge ever hope to know You, when even the Vedas have failed to describe You fully and accurately. O Ambike! O You of renowned power and majesty! You have done the highest favour to the world by killing this evil demon and greatest enemy. He was a constant thorn which caused pain and distress to everyone. Your victory will be celebrated by the whole universe. Please be merciful to us and keep us always in Your protection.

Vyasji says – Pleased with all the praises, the Devi spoke in sweet, gentle tones- Respectful devas. If there is any other matter that is troubling you, let Me know. Whenever you are faced with any insurmountable calamity, bring Me to mind. I will immediately come to your aid.

The devas said – Devi! This Mahishasura was our most dangerous enemy. Now that You have destroyed him, all our fears are over. Jagaddambe! Deign to grant us firm and unswerving bhakti. And, as fruits of this bhakti, we desire that the whole universe recognises You, and continuously worships Your

Divine Lotus Feet. Only Mother tolerates thousands of transgressions. Knowing this, why doesn't mankind worship You, O Most Divine Mother. In this tree of life, there is only Hum and Twam (me, and Thou). There is not a third who will forgive trespasses. If not from You, O Parameshwari! From whom and by whose grace can man expect to receive forgiveness and auspiciousness Those gods and men, who have been born with exceptionally good destinies; but do not worship You and sing Your praises, should be considered most contemptible, despicable and unfortunate. With our whole mind, with our whole body, and in one voice, we say this truth, again and again. Devi! In happiness and in sorrow, You are our only refuge. With all Your weapons and powers, O Mother, protect us. Your Lotus Feet is our ultimate haven and resting place.

Vyasji says - As the Devas were singing the praises of the Divine Mother, She disappeared from their sight. The Devas prostrated in obeisance.

Chapter 5 Episode 20

20 - Vyasji tells Janmejay about Devi's return to Manidweep.

Janmejay asked - Muni! The awesome majesty of Bhagawati Jagddamba commands the highest worship, and grants the greatest peace. I have just discovered this, O twice born One! Even after savouring the ambrosial stream of you sweet narration, I am still thirsting for more. I consider myself very blessed and fortunate, because have very limited punyas, and for people like me, it is very difficult to get an opportunity like this. The story of the Devi is most holy and auspicious, and bestows the protection of Bhagawati Jagaddamba on all who hear it. This is the strongest and safest boat for crossing the ocean of illusion. Ancient and learned scholars of the vedas, advise all men who are caught in the web of duty, wealth and sense pleasures, to particularly experience and taste this nectar of Divine knowledge. To take a human birth in the holy land of Bharat is the greatest good fortune. But after getting this auspicious birth, if men do not join the collective worship of Bhagawati, then they are living a wasted and meaningless existence – impoverished, sick and barren. They become servile to other masters. Like slaves they carry the burdens of others. And day and night they are tormented by selfish and material problems. They never get satisfaction. The suffering of the blind deaf; dumb; lame and leprosy stricken; should serve as a grim reminder that these did not engage themselves in the constant worship of Devi Jagaddamba, Mother of the Unverse. And when one sees men of regal bearing; of dignified and majestic disposition; with high level of tolerance and forgiving nature; who are held in high esteem by friends and relations; who are endowed with wealth and who are completely satisfied; then we must

know without doubt that these have unceasingly worshipped the Mother – Devi Jagadamba. O Vyasji! Son of Satyawati. Please do me the great favour of telling me more about the Devi. Mahishasura was a wicked demon. On the fervent prayers of the Devas, Mahalaxmi manifested and killed him. Then in thanksgiving all the gods sang Her praises Then She disappeared. Where did She go? You just said, "She went away". But, did She go to heaven, or did She go to the mortal world. Where is Her abode? Did She relinquish Her divine form, or did She go and preside over Vaikunth. Or did She go and add glory and lustre to Mount Sumeru? Please tell me everything.

Vyasji says – Rajan! I had told you, before this, that Manidweep is a most pleasing, agreeable, elegant and beauteous dwelling place. That is the place for the Devi's sport and amusement. It is said that that place is very dear to the Devi. This is that place, where to gain entry, Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar had to become females. When they left, they again became males, and then started their respective responsibilities. That most pleasing and beautiful island, is situated in the middle of the Ocean of Nectar. Bhagawati Jagaddamba assumes various forms in Her constant Play in that abode. After accepting the praises and worship of the Devas, that is where the Devi went. She is the supreme creator of illusion and delusion. She is ancient. She is eternal. In that most holy place, ceaseless and uninterrupted praises are sung, in concert.

The Protectress of the Universe had left. Seeing this, the Devas selected a strong and powerful king from the Sun Dynasty and made him king of the world. His name was Shatrughan, and he was dignified and endowed with all kingly qualities. He ascended the throne which had forcibly been occupied by Mahishasura. He stayed in Ayodhya and ruled the world. After installing him,

Indra and all the gods mounted their vehicles and left for their respective abodes.

A golden reign of dharma was established. The people lived in peace and happiness. The skies gave rain when necessary. Crops were plentiful. Trees were laden with fruits and fragrant flowers. The seasons were pleasant and comfortable. Cows gave abundant milk. Rivers flowed gently and provided clean and pure water; and never overflowed in flood. Birds added beauty to the forests. Brahmins had genuine knowledge of the Vedas and performed their sacred duties. Kshatriyas lived within their maryadas and dharmas. They did charitable works and studied the scriptures. They never neglected their duty of protecting the kingdom. The kings resided over justice. There were no vices like avarice, desire, greed. Everyone lived in collective harmony. There was a society which disbursed wealth. The farms were filled with cows.

O King! In that kingdom which comprised the whole world; Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras – were all devotees of the Devi. In all places one could see temple flagpoles and Yagya mandaps (canopies). Brahmins and Kshatriyas constantly performed yagyas all over the world, and this filled the atmosphere with auspiciousness. Women were gentle, amiable, faithful to their spouses; and truthful and sweet in their speech. Sons respected their fathers, and were dharmic in their lives. There were no incidents of anti-social behaviour, or impious and adharmic acts. There were no lectures, meetings, or discourses, other than on the Vedas and Scriptures. There were never any disputes or controversies. Everyone was satisfied, comfortable, and of high ideals. It was an era of peace and happiness. No one died prematurely or accidentally. There was always a loving relationship between friends. No calamities or disasters ever befell anyone. No floods. No famine. People never indulged in rioting. They were free from epidemics, plague and pestilence. No

one got sick. There was no jealousy or hatred between anyone. Men and women lived happily and harmoniously. They lived like the gods in heaven. Robbers, renegades, disbelievers, heretics, frauds, imposters and hypocrites were non-existent. No one was miserly. No one was wicked and licentious. No scandal-mongers and no gossips. They were all dharmatmas. Brahmins received public support. Everyone was engaged in work; sattwic in temperament and disposition; and knowledgeable in the Vedas.

Brahmins were not inclined to accept alms. Everyone was generous, temperate, and sober. Living righteously within the dharmas, yagyas were performed with sattwic ingredients and grains. Oblations were prepared and offered in the havans. Animals were never sacrificed at havans and yagyas. Brahmins engaged themselves in the threefold occupation of charity, teaching the scriptures, and performing havans and yagyas, and enjoyed sattwic livelihood. Brahmins of Rajasic temperament were also conversant in the Vedas. They functioned as Purohits (family priests) to the Kshatriyas. Their six occupations were – performing and getting performed, yagyas; giving charity and taking charity; and studying and teaching of the Vedas. As commanded by the king, there were jobs for every one. Some spent their time in study.

All the obstacles and obstructions that were caused by Mahishasura, were removed by his death. Everyone was at peace, and could resume their study of the Vedas and the Scriptures. The Kshatriyas continued their job of protection, and the Vaishyas carried on their trading. Some traders were agriculturists; some were cow traders; others were bankers. Everyone went about their business honestly and fearlessly. Pujas and worship of the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Chandika was performed continuously, in every part of the world.

Chapter 5 episodes 21-22

21-22 Shumbh-Nishumbh receive a boon from Brahma; they defeat the Devas. The Devas appeal to Devi for help.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Listen. I will tell you a famous story of the Devi. This story gives happiness to all living beings, and also destroys all sins. Shumbh and Nishumbh were two very powerful demons. They were brothers. They could not be destroyed by anyone, and they had mighty armies. Their main occupation was to harass the Devas. They were very proud and arrogant. The entire Danava community supported them. They fought battle with the Devi and were killed. For the benevolence of the Devas the Devi came with Her attendants and destroyed both these demons. It was during this battle that the powerful demons Chanda and Munda; the fierce Raktabeeja and the dreadful Dhoomralochan were also killed. By destroying them, the Devi freed the Devas from fear. After being venerated and adored by the Devas, the Devi went to the holy mountains – the Himalayas.

King Janmejay asked – Who were these ancient Danavas. And how did they become so powerful and invincible. Who supported them, and how did they meet their death at the hands of a woman. Whom did they impress with their tapasya and who granted them boons. Please tell me all this in detail.

Vyasji says – King! Listen to this story which is connected with the Devi. It is very stupendous and profound. Just by listening to it sins are washed away. This most auspicious and holy story grants virtuous life, success in all endeavours, fulfilment of pure desires, and liberation or salvation. This story is ancient. Shumbh and Nishumbh were two famous Danavas who came to earth

from Pataal. They were brothers and had a fearsome appearance. They had reached the age of maturity. They decided to perform rigid austerities. They went to the sacred place, Pushkar (near Ajmer), and began their tapasya. They renounced food and water. Their tapasya lasted for ten thousand years. In the end, the Creator of the Universe, Shri Brahmadev, came before them, seated on a swan. He said "O most fortunate ones! Arise! I am pleased with your tapasya. Ask whatever you desire. I am prepared to grant it."

Vyasji says – Hearing Brahmaji's pleasing voice, their meditation broke, and they became alert. They performed a Pradakshina (perambulation) around Brahma, and then prostrated before Him. Then with great humility they spoke to Him in sweet voices – O God of Gods! Ocean of Compassion! Brahma! You give protection to your devotees. O Glorious One! If you are pleased with us grant us immortality. There is no other fear that we have but of death. Because we are terrified we have come to you for help. You are the foremost among gods; you are the creator of the universe, and you are the storehouse of compassion. O Universal God! We are at your mercy. Please release us from this fear of birth and death.

Brahmaji said – What an impossible boon you are asking for! In these three worlds there is no one who can grant you such a boon. It can never be given. It is ordained that what is born must die. And what dies, is reborn. The Almighty has established this maryada as a permanent law. All living things are mortal – there can be no doubt about this. Therefore ask for any other boon. I will fulfil that.

Vyasji says – Hearing this Shumbh and Nishumbh fell into deep thought. Then they humbly said - O Most Benevolent One! Grant that we should not die by the hand of any male god-man-animal-bird. This is our desire. Of course the

female of any species does not possess enough strength to kill us. We have not even an iota of fear from any female in the three worlds. Brahmaji! Both of us brothers, desire only that no male, of any species, should cause our death. We do not fear females, because by nature they are weaker.

Vyasji says – Brahmaji immediately granted the boon and returned to his abode. The two demons also returned to their home. When they reached, they called Shukracharya, installed him as their Guru and Purohit (family priest) and performed Puja to him. Then, choosing an auspicious date and time, Muni Shukracharya gave them a silver singhasan (throne). Being the elder brother Shumbh ascended the throne. All the Danavas paid tribute to their leader. Chand and Mund, two brave and powerful Danava brothers, came with large armies to support Shumbh. They had many elephants, horses and chariots in their army. Dhumralochan was another arrogant and proud demon. When he heard that Shumbh had been installed as leader of the Danavas, he came with his army to show allegiance. In the same way, another demon called Raktabeeja also came. By virtue of a boon he had become extremely powerful. He had two Akshauhini armies. (Akshauhini - an army is considered complete when it consists of 109,350 foot soldiers; 65,610 horses; 21,870 chariots, and 21,870 elephants). Raktabeeja had two such complete armies. The reason for his great power was, that when wounded by any weapon, every drop of blood that fell from his body, as soon as it touched the earth, became an identical demon as Raktabeeja. Every new demon thus produced, would be fully armed with weapons and armour. All the demons that were produced from drops of his blood, were identical in appearance, and ready to plunge into battle immediately. For this reason Raktabeeja was considered unconquerable and invincible on the battlefield. No one could ever kill him. Besides these famous Danavas, a host of other demons also came to swear allegiance to Shumbh. All of them owned Chaturang armies – (army

consisting of four divisions, horses, elephants, chariots and infantry). At that time it was impossible to calculate the numerical strength of the military of Shumbh and Nishumbh. Shumbh had established his overlordship over the whole world.

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CHAPTER 5 episode 23

23 – The manifestation of Kaushiki; the forming of Kalika. Shumbh sends Sugreev to the Devi.

Vyasji says – The Devas were very disturbed by the enemies. When they prayed to the Devi, She created from within Herself a new form. When Jagaddamba took form from Bhagawati Parvati, the whole world called Her Kaushiki. After Bhagawati Kaushiki came out from the body of Parvati, She became weak and the colour of Parvati became black. She came to be known as Kaalika. She was as black as ink, and presented a fearsome form. It was Her nature to fulfil all the desires of Her bhaktas. She became famous by the name of Kaalratri. Bhagawati Jagaddamba also had another pleasing form. She was decorated with divine ornaments. She was full of elegance, grace and loveliness. Bhagawati Jagaddamba smiled and said to the Devas: "Go back fearlessly and take your places. I will destroy the enemy. For this I will descend on the battlefield. To remove your fears and make you happy again, I will kill Shumbh, Nishumbh, and all the daityas who are harassing you".

The Devi sat on Her vehicle, the lion, and went towards the place where the demons lived. She invited Kaali to accompany Her. When She reached, She stopped near a spot where the wind was blowing strongly, and She created a Divine Music which enchanted the whole world. Even the birds and the animals stopped to listen. The Devas in the heavens were captivated with the sweet notes. Shumbh had two attendants, Chand and Mund. They were roaming all over, free and unrestrained. They passed that way and saw that Bhagawati Jagaddamba, in Her Divine and regal form, was singing. She had

given a place before Her, to Kaalika. They were astonished at this sight. Rajan! They immediately went to Shumbh. They said - Raja Shumbh! A woman has just come from the Himalayas, who is so beautiful that she can enchant even Kamadev. A lion is her vehicle. It is difficult to find someone like her even in heaven or gandharvalok. She is singing in such soft, sweet, and melodious notes, that the whole world has stopped to listen. Maharaj! You should find out whose daughter she is, and why she has come here; and then give her a place in your kingdom. She is worthy of you, and good fortune is dripping from her eyes. O King! You are already entitled to all the devas' possessions. Then why are you hesitating to appropriate this devi. You have already taken possession of Indra's powerful elephant Airawat; his Parijat tree; and his horse Ucchai Shrava. You also own Brahma's airborne celestial car. You forcibly took away the Nine Gems from Kuber. You snatched away the shining white umbrella from Varun. Your brother Nishumbh also clashed with Varun, and Varun lost. Since then his Noose is in the possession of Nishumbh. Out of fear, Samudra gave you a garland of lotuses which never wither, and various precious gems. You have even conquered the Shakti of death, and the pole of Yamraj. There is no end to your successful exploits. The cow Kamadhenu, which came out of the churning of the ocean, now stands in your yard. Menaka and all apsaras are in your service. You have laid claim to everything. Why do you hesitate to claim this Devi. She will enhance all the gems and ornaments that you have taken from the Devas. There is no greater beauty in all the three worlds. Danavraj! Go and bring her, and make her your queen.

Vyasji says – Chand and Mund spoke in voices which were dripping honey. Shumbh was pleased. He turned to Sugreev and said – Sugreev! You are very intelligent. Go and speak to the devi in such a manner that she will be impressed and come here with you. Those who are knowledgeable in the art

of enticement, recommend that a messenger should go with sweet words and rich gifts to impress a woman.

Vyasji says – Listening to the clever words of Shumbh, Sugreev immediately left. When he reached, he saw the Devi seated on a lion. He offered pranaams and spoke in sweet tones.

Sugreev said – O Virtuous One! Shumbh is a very brave and powerful man. He is also very handsome. He is the enemy of the Devas. He is the sovereign lord of the three worlds. This noble soul has sent me here because he has heard the description of your beauty, and he is enchanted. His message is - "O lustrous and beautiful one! I have defeated all the devas. I am the supreme king of all the three worlds. All offerings made at yagyas are my property. I have appropriated all the valuable wealth and riches of heaven. O Beautiful One! Gods, demons and mortals are all under my jurisdiction and follow behind me. All your attributes have reached my heart via my ears. I am now your servant, and will obey all your wishes. You who have eyes like peacock feathers, I entreat you to accept me as your husband. Then you can be queen of the three worlds. I will serve you as long as I live. I am immortal. No god, demon or human can kill me. You will be suhagan (an auspicious married lady) for ever." This is the message from my lord. Ponder over it and give me your sweet reply, so that I can convey it to King Shumbh.

Shree Devi smiled, and began to speak. - "I know Nishumbh, and the powerful Shumbh. Shumbh has defeated all the gods, and killed all the enemies. He is full of qualities. He has been given the opportunity of enjoying all the wealth of the world. He is very charitable, brave, generous, and as handsome as Kamdev himself. He possesses thirty-two good qualities. Neither gods nor men can vanquish him. I have heard all this about him. And that is why I have

come from the Himalayas to find a suitable husband. I have looked at all the devas, the humans and the gandharvas, and rakshasas. All of them tremble at the name of Shumbh. O Fortunate Messenger! Go to Shumbh, and in a private audience with him, give him this message from Me. - "Rajan! You are the bravest among the brave; and the handsomestamong the handsome. You are generous; brave; full of good qualities; learned; victorious over all; born of a high lineage; noble; skilful; free and all powerful. I have heard of all your glories. I am looking for a suitable bridegroom. But there is one condition. When I was young I made a vow. I became very proud of my strength and made a decision that I would only marry that person who would defeat me on the battlefield. My friends laughed and wondered at this strange condition. Therefore Rajan! If you wish to marry Me, you have to fulfil this condition of defeating Me on the battlefield. Either you or your brother may come. But you will have to defeat Me first."

CHAPTER 5 Episodes 24-25

24-25 - Dialogue between Devi and Dhumralochan. Death of Dhumralochan

Vyasji says – Hearing the Devi, Sugreev was astonished beyond bounds. "Like a typical woman, you are speaking on impulse. Do you not know that Shumbh defeated Indra and all the gods; and also all the powerful daityas. How can you wish to fight with him. There is no one in the three worlds who can win a battle with him. You will not even last a moment. One should consider one's own strength and that of the opponent. Because he is enchanted, he is begging. It would be wise for you to accept him. Give up your false pride and marry either Shumbh or Nishumbh. If you do not agree to go to him, he will send armies of strong daityas. They will forcibly take you to him. You are most respectable, and what I am advising, is for your benevolence."

The Devi said – "O Fortunate Messenger! You are very clever and honest. I am aware that Shumbh and Nishumbh are mighty and powerful. But how can I disregard the vow I have taken. Therefore, you go to Nishumbh and the stronger Shumbh, and tell them that without a battle it is impossible for Me to marry anyone, no matter how beautiful he may be. For that reason, even though I am frail, I have asked for war. If you have any Shakti in you, you may fight with Me. But if you are afraid of My Trishul, then better run away to Pataal. If you value your life, then leave heaven and earth; and go to Pataal quickly. O messenger! Go and tell your master all this, and then let him decide what he wishes to do. It is the duty of a messenger to deliver a

message faithfully and without any prejudice on either side. Now go without further delay."

Vyasji says – The words spoken by Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, were prudent, benevolent, powerful, and brilliant. Sugreev was amazed. After giving it a lot of thought, he went to Shumbh, fell at his feet, and spoke humbly and gently.

Sugreev said - Rajendra! The dharma of a loyal subject is to speak that which is the truth, and also which is pleasing. This is causing me concern in my heart; because the truth is not always pleasing. A king can be angry with his messenger if the truth does not please him. I have just returned after meeting the devi. I cannot tell whether she is frail, or strong. I could not judge. But she wants war. Her message is very strong and sharp. Please be kind and listen. She has said – "When I was a young girl, I told My friends that I would only marry the person who would defeat Me in battle and destroy My ego. Rajendra! This vow should not be broken. Therefore you must act accordingly. Therefore, you who observe dharma, you must fight a battle with Me and win, and then only marry me!" Maharaj! This is the message. She is absolutely determined to fight. She is seated on a lion, and she carries all manner of weapons. Now only you can decide what you wish to do.

Vyasji says – After hearing the message, Shumbh turned to his brother Nishumbh and asked – "Brother! You are very wise. What do you think we should do. Should I go there myself, or will you take an army and go?"

Nishumbh said – "O Valiant One! At present, neither you, nor I, should go to the battlefield. Send Dhumralochan, and he will defeat her and bring her to you. Then you can marry her."

Vyasji says – Agreeing with this, Shumbh turned to Dhumralochan and ordered him to go. Shumbh said - "Dhumralochan! It is your duty to go and humble that proud devi, and bring her to me. If any devas, danavas or humans come to her aid, just push them into the jaws of death. But see that no harm or injury is inflicted on the devi. Bring her safe and untouched."

Vyasji says - Dhumralochan offered pranaam to his master, and left with a large army. His army consisted of 60,000 rakshasas. When he reached he saw the beautiful Devi, with doe eyes, sitting in a beautiful forest. He approached Her respectfully and began to speak. He said – "O Most Auspicious and Fortunate Devi! Shumbh is very impressed with your beauty and qualities. He is well versed in politics, and that is why he has sent me as a messenger. He does not want to jeopardise this delicate situation. So he did not come himself. The previous messenger conveyed some incorrect message, and this has created dark clouds of concern. I have come with a large army. You are intelligent. Shumbh is so powerful that he has gained victory over the three worlds. Do not throw away the opportunity of becoming his queen. There is no need to battle with him. You can win by your charms. Kaalika can bear witness to this.

Vyasji says – Dhumralochan finished speaking and waited. Then Bhagawati Kaalika laughed and said – "O Lowly Fool! You speak like an imbecile. You are entertaining false ideas and speaking foolishly. Shumbh has sent you to fight, so get ready and fight. The Devi has become angry. She will demolish Shumbh, Nishumbh and all other daityas who come before Her. Then She will leave. How dare you compare that horrible Shumbh to this most lovely, most lustrous, and most divine Devi, Who enchants the three worlds. It is more unfit and preposterous than marriage between a lion and a jackal; an elephant and a donkey; or the sacred cow Surabhi with an ordinary bull. Go instantly to

Shumbh and Nishumbh and convey My message, that either they come to the battlefield, or run away to Pataal.

Vyaasji says – O King! Dhumralochan became furious and said to Devi Kaalika – "I will kill you and this proud lion, and leave your bodies on the battlefield. Then I will take this devi to my master. There is no doubt in this".

Devi Kaalika said – "O Fool! Why are you talking useless things. People who are warriors do not speak like this. Use your weapons and fight. It is time for you to go to Yama's house."

Vyasji says – Dhumralochan immediately picked up his bow and began to shoot arrows. Indra and all the gods were singing loudly – Victory to the Devi! Now a fierce battle began between Dhumralochan and Devi Kaalika. Many weapons were used, including arrows, spears, swords, maces and iron poles. Dhumralochan had donkeys harnessed to his chariot. First of all, Devi Kaalika killed the donkeys with Her arrows, and then splintered the chariot. Dhumralochan got into another chariot and began to shoot innumerable arrows at the Devi. He was so angry that heat radiated from his whole body. Then Devi Kaalika sent a rain of arrows that dropped a large number of danavas on the field. The chariots, the donkeys and the chariot drivers were scattered all over the field. To pacify the devas, Bhagawati Kaalika began to sound the conch. Having lost his chariots, Dhumralochan rushed at the Devi with a heavy spear. Bhagawati Jagaddamba gave such a loud, rebuking roar (Hunkaar) that Dhumralochan caught fire and was burnt to ashes. Seeing this the danava army began to panic. They turned and ran away from the battlefield which presented a most fearsome sight. Dead bodies of danavas, elephants, horses and donkeys, were strewn all over, and scavenger animals and birds were fighting over them. Bhagawati Jagaddamba moved some

distance away, and began to blow the conch. The devas dropped petals from the skies and sang songs of victory. Shumbh heard the conch in his palace, and came out. He saw the remnants of his danava army, limping back in a pitiable state They were wounded; some had lost their limbs, and all were wailing in fear and pain. Then he shouted – "Where is Dhumralochan? Why are all of you in this condition. Did you not bring the devi!"

The soldiers said – "The entire army is either dead or wounded. Dhumralochan has also been killed. All this has been done by Kaalika, and this deafening sound of the conch is coming from Ambika. The amazing thing is that Jagaddamba is all alone. She does not have a single soldier. But at any time the devas may come to her aid. Maharaj! Please discuss this with your ministers before taking any action.

Vyasji says – The proud Shumbh, who had crushed many armies, was very disturbed. He took his brother aside and said – "Brother! Kaalika has killed Dhumralochan and sent most of my army into the jaws of death. Now she is sounding the conch. This proves that even intelligent persons cannot foretell the swing of fate. Fate is so powerful and unpredictable that it can make a blade of grass work like a spear, and weaken the most powerful man. At present fate is unfavourable to us. That is why Ambika has come here. What is your advice. Should we run away to safety, or go to battle. Even though you are younger, at a time like this, I consider you wiser and older."

Nishumbh said – "We should neither run away, nor hide in our fortress. We should face this devi in battle. I have very powerful danavas in my army. I will go and defeat the devi and kill her. But in case fate decides otherwise, and I am killed; you should not hesitate to go to battle.

Shumbh said – “You wait. First let me send the warriors Chand and Mund. It is not fitting to send an elephant to kill a rabbit. Then he ordered Chand and Mund to take an army and go. Their primary task would be to kill the devi. Consider yourself lucky to engage in battle with Kaalika and defeat her. If you are not able to capture Ambika and bring her to me, kill her also.

CHAPTER 5 episodes 26-27

26-27 - Death of Chand-Mund. Conversation between Devi and Raktabeej.

Vyasji says - The two danavas, Chand and Mund, were very powerful and brave. When they saw the Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, they spoke peacefully. – "O Devi! It is possible that you do not know that Shumbh has defeated the devas, and Nishumbh has been victorious over Indra. O Beautiful One! You are all alone. Only your lion is here to serve as a vehicle. How can you challenge these two great warriors The Devas will only cause your destruction by their selfish prayers. Because you have eighteen hands, do not be so confident. Shumbh is a very accomplished fighter. He is the one who cut the trunk of Airawat. So heed my advice and accept Shumbh. Wise people renounce danger from a distance.

Vyasji says – The Devi spoke in a voice like thunder. – "O Cunning and Wily Demon! Go Away. Why are you speaking such deceptive words. Why should I ignore Vishnu and Shankar and look to your master for a husband. The whole world recognises Me as Supreme. I have seen innumerable Shumbas and Nishumbhas, and I have killed countless danavas and daityas. At this moment Destiny is present to send all danavas and daityas to their destruction. Shumbh and Nishumbh are treacherous. You better observe the highest dharma of the warriors and try to find a place in heaven. After you die, I will kill your brother, and Shumbh and Nishumbh; as well as Raktabeej. After that I will go back to My abode. You either go, or stay and fight. Do not speak the language of cowards".

Vyasji says – The two danavas, Chand and Mund, began to pull their bowstrings with loud twanging sounds. The Devi sounded Her conch, which could be heard in all the ten directions. The lion also began to roar loudly. These sounds were very comforting to the devas, munis, yakshas, gandharvas, kinnaras, and other celestial beings. Chand and Mund used various kinds of weapons and kept shooting sharp arrows at the Devi. This angered the Devi, and in Her wrath, She resembled a rainfilled cloud. Her eyes grew large like the banana flower; and Her eyebrows slanted. She was dressed in tiger skin, and covered with the skin of an elephant. She wore a garland of skulls. She carried the spear of Shiva, and a noose, and She looked as terrible as the night of annihilation. She had an enormous face, and She kept putting Her tongue out. She had powerful legs with which She was killing the demons. She began to pick up danavas and put them into Her vast mouth, and crushed them with Her teeth. She even put whole elephants into Her mouth, and horses and chariots. Seeing this devastation, Chand and Mund were shocked. Chand had a chakra which shone like the sun, and which compared with Sudarshan Chakra. He sent the chakra spinning towards the Devi. She shot an arrow at it, which shattered the chakra into small pieces. She also shot an arrow at Chand, which caused him to fall down in a swoon. Mund came rushing at the fall of his brother. The Devi Kaalika used the arrow with a crescent head. It injured Mund, and the injury was so unbearable, that he lay down on the ground. In the meantime Chand revived from his swoon, picked up a mace, and charged. The Devi threw Her noose and snared him. Seeing his brother trapped in the noose, Mund also charged. The Devi caught him also in Her noose. Then dragging them like snared rabbits, Devi Kaalika went before Bhagawati Jagaddambika. She said – “O Dear One! I present You these animals to be sacrificed at the yagya of war”. Bhagawati Jagaddambika smiled and said – “O Warlike Devi! You are wise and intelligent. It is Your purpose to immediately fulfil the prayers of the Devas.”

Vyasji says – Devi Kaalika said – “War Yagyas are very well known. In this the sword acts like a pillar. I will use the sword to kill the sacrifice, so that it is not counted as murder.” Saying this, She took Her sword and cut off the heads of Chand and Mund. Then She began to drink their blood. Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba was pleased, and said – “Kaalike! You have fulfilled the prayers of the Devas. I grant You a boon. Because You killed Chand and Mund, You will hereafter be known as Chaamunda.”

Vyasji says – After Chand and Mund had been killed, the remaining danavas ran to Shumbh. They were badly injured and bleeding, and many had lost limbs. They said – “Maharaj! Save us! Kali has killed Chand and Mund, and is ready to consume all of us. Elephants, horses and soldiers have all been cut down, and the battlefield is like a river of blood. All the chariots are in pieces, and the wheels are spinning like tops. Maharaj! In order to preserve your lineage you must move to Pataal. Otherwise Kaalika will kill all of us. Even the lion is standing there, and swallowing all the danavas.

Maharaj! The merciless devi is bent upon destroying the entire danava race. Even if you do get Her, what good will come of it for us. For Her sake you have already sent most of your warriors into the jaws of death. Maharaj! Victory and defeat is entirely ruled by Fate. The wise man does not take on difficulties for short spans of pleasure. O Lord of the World! See the play of Fate. One woman has been successful in decimating entire danava armies. No doubt you defeated the gods, but now you have no army, and the devi is provoking you to fight.

It happened a long time ago, you had done a difficult tapasya near the sacred area of Pushkar and the Creator Brahmaji was pleased He offered you any boon, and you said - I should not die by any god, daitya, man, snake, yaksh or

kinnar. No male of any species should kill me. Lord, this is why this special woman has come, to kill you. Recognise this, and desist from meeting Her in battle. This devi is Mahamaya (goddess of illusion and delusion). She is Param Prakriti (the primordial, material cause of the universe) and causing dissolution is also Her prime objective. She is supreme, reigns over all, and is also the Mother of the Gods. She contains all the three gunas; but in Her present state She is in Tamasic form. She is unconquerable; invincible; indestructible; eternal; all knowing and omnipresent. She is also known as the Mother of the Vedas; Gayathri and Sandhya. She grants protection to Her devotees. Her form as Gauri gives great joy to the gods and makes them fearless. Please do not challenge Her. It is only if you surrender to Her that you can be saved. The danavas, who are still alive, are young, and need you to keep them from dying.

Vyasji says – He who crushed all the gods could not accept this, and began to speak with false bravery.

Shumbh said – Foolish ones! Not only your body, but your brains have also been shot full of holes. Because you love your life you ran away from the battlefield. You may go to Pataal. I have no fear of Fate, because the gods also are subservient to Fate. Then what is there to fear. What has to happen will happen. According to the workings of fate, actions also take place. For fear of death a wise person does not give up his dharma. As is destined, one gets happiness and sorrow; life and death. Even Indra and all the gods cannot escape this. In the same way, I am also governed by fate. Whether I win or lose, I do not care. Therefore I will not run away in the hope of living hundreds of years more. I will certainly fight. Whatever has to happen, let it happen. Without taking action one cannot achieve his desires. If a woman sits in front of the grinding stone with wheat, but does not grind, how will she get flour. When one does not succeed, the main cause is lack of necessary action. One

must also take into consideration the place, time, own strength, and strength of the enemy.

Vyasji says - Shumbh made up his mind, and sent for Raktabeej.

Shumbh said – "O powerful Raktabeej. You go to the battlefield and use all your might in the fight".

Raktabeej said – "Maharaj! Do not have any fears. I will kill that devi. What do I fear a little maiden brought by the devas. I will humble her and bring her to you as a slave."

Vyasji says – O Foremost of the Kuru clan! Raktabeej mounted his chariot and left with a large army. He marched towards the Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, Who was enthroned on a mountain. When She saw him, She sounded Her Conch. The sound sent ripples of fear through the Danava army. Raktabeej drew near the Devi and spoke gently.

Raktabeej said – "O little girl! Do you take me for a coward that you are frightening me with the deafening sound of your conch. O delicate one! Do you think I am Dhumralochana? My name is Raktabeej. I have come to fight. Take guard. I have no fear of you. Today you can see my prowess in battle. You have served respectfully the wise old patriarchs. You must have also heard the shastras regarding science of ethics and politics. If you also have knowledge of poetry and literature, then listen to me. There are nine kinds of pleasures. Out of this, the two foremost ones are the sentiment of love, and the state of peace and tranquillity. The first, which is Sringar-ras is the most popular. By the virtue of that, Vishnu abides with Lakshmi; Brahma with Saraswati; Shankar with Parvati; and Indra with Shachi. By the same sentiments a creeper entwines a tree; a deer roams with a doe; and a pigeon

flies with a female pigeon. From this flows peace and tranquillity. It is impossible to conquer lust, anger, greed and attachment. Therefore, O Auspicious One, you should choose a partner for life. Either Shumbh or Nishumbh will prove worthy. They have established their supremacy over the gods.

CHAPTER 5 episodes 28-29

28-29 - Manifestation of the Shaktis of the Devas. The great battle; and death of Raktabeej.

Vyasji says - Then the Devi spoke in thunderous tones. The Devi said – "O Foolish One! I have already given very sound and benevolent advice to the messenger who came before. Why are you wasting time in useless talk. If there is any person equal to Me in majesty, form, strength and wealth, then he can become My husband. Go and tell this to Shumbh or Nishumbh, and let them come and fight, or go away to Pataal.

Vyasji says – Raktabeej became angry and began to shoot arrows at the lion. Before they could touch the lion, the Devi broke the arrows in mid-air. Then She aimed and shot many arrows at Raktabeej. He swooned and fell in his chariot. Seeing this, all the soldiers set up a loud wailing. This sound reached Shumbh.

Shumbh said – "All the residents of Kamboj (ancient part of Afghanistan) get ready to join the battle. Also those who are under the leadership of Kaalkeya should march first.

Vyasji says – On receiving these orders, the entire army left for the battlefield. The Devi was already there. Seeing the approach of the army the Devi sounded the bell. The tolling of the bell was so loud that it caused fear in the hearts of the danavas. The Devi also blew the conch, and pulled the bowstrings with loud twanging sounds. The lion added his terrifying roars and

altogether a most fearful warning of impending doom filled with air. The danavas began to hurl arrows and spears at the Devi. A gruesome war began.

The Shaktis of Brahma and all the gods descended on the battlefield. They looked exactly like the gods whose Shaktis they were, and they had the identical ornaments, weapons and vahanas (vehicles) as the gods. Brahmi came, seated on a swan, and holding the rosary and kamandalu in Her hands. Vaishnavi arrived on a condor, and carried Shankh, Chakra, Gada (mace) and Padma (lotus) in Her hands. She wore a Pitambar (yellow) dress. Maheshwari came riding on a bull, with the Trishul in Her hand, and the crescent moon ornamenting Her forehead. A serpent served as a bracelet. The vehicle of Kaumari, Shakti of Kartikeya, was a peacock, and She held a sword in Her hand. Aindri, Shakti of Indra, came on the elephant Airawat. Goddess Varahi, Shakti of the Boar incarnation of Shri Hari, came on a corpse. Narasimha's Shakti was Narasinhi; and the fearful Shakti of Yama came on a buffalo, holding an iron pole. The Shaktis of Varun and Kuber were also present. Seeing all the goddesses, the devas were very pleased. Then Shri Shankar appeared among the Shaktis and said – "Kill all these daityas and fulfil the prayers of the Devas. Kill Shumbh, Nishumbh, and all the danavas who still live. May peace return to the three worlds; may the Brahmins continue their yagyas; may the gods receive the offerings; may peace reign supreme; may it rain according to seasons; and may fruits and flowers proliferate."

Vyasji says – Bhagwan Shankar was saying this, when a most astonishing Shakti emanated from the form of Bhagawati Chandika. She made a sound as if hundreds of vultures were fighting. The fearful looking goddess had a smile on Her face. She said to Bhagwan Shankar – "Deveshwar! You go to the king of Danavas. You who defeated Kamdev and turned him to ashes. The Danavas Shumbh and Nishumbh have become arrogant. Go as My messenger and tell

them - 'Leave heaven and go away. Let the devas live happily in heaven. Let Indra occupy his throne. Let the Devas enjoy the sacrificial offerings, and if you wish to live, go away to Pataal. Otherwise, come to the battlefield. Let My Shaktis devour you'."

Vyasji says – Bhagwan Shankar immediately left to meet Danavraj Shumbh. He was sitting in his assembly. Shankarji said – "I am Mahadev! the annihilator of the three worlds. For your benevolence I have come as the ambassador of Bhagawati Jagaddambika. The Devi has sent this message. - 'You leave heaven and earth, and go away immediately. Go to Pataal where the strongest of strong danavas, Bali, lives. If you prefer death, then come and fight with Me. I will kill all of you in battle. There is no doubt in this.' It is for your benevolence that Shree Devi has said this."

Vyasji says - This message of Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba was as sweet as nectar and full of benevolence. Bhagwan Shankar, bearer of the trident, gave the message, and left. The Daityas could not bear this message. They immediately started for battle. When they saw the Devi Jagaddamba, they began to shoot innumerable arrows at Her. Kaalika, with Her trishul, mace and sword, began to cut down the danavas like so much grass. Bhagawati Brahmani roamed the battlefield sprinkling water from Her kamandalu and killing them instantly. Devi Maheshwari, seated on the bull, began killing with Her trishul. The chakra and mace of Vaishnavi also killed the danavas. The thunderbolt of Aindri laid flat a host of daityas Her elephant Airawat also joined the battle by using his trunk and heavy legs. Shakti of Varaha, Devi Varahi, used Her snout and tusks to tear apart the daityas. Narasinhi used Her claws to rip the bodies of the daityas, and then consumed them. Just by the loud laughter of Shivduti, the daityas were swooning and falling, and were being swallowed by Goddess Kaalika and Goddess Chamunda. Kaumari was

seated on Her peacock in the middle of the battlefield and was shooting arrows. Varuni had Her noose, and was snaring and killing the daityas. There was great confusion, wailing and retreating among the danava army. Above this din, was the victory song of the Devas, and flowers rained down from the heavens. Raktabeej saw and heard all this, and became furious. His eyes turned red. His bow string made strange noises, and he came and stood before the Devi.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Every drop of blood that fell from Raktabeej and touched the ground, would become an identical danava. Bhagwan Shankar had given him this astounding boon – that from his drops of blood innumerable, powerful danavas would be produced. Arrogant with this knowledge, he stepped into the battlefield. Kaalika was also present beside the Devi. The demon saw Vaishnavi seated on Garuda. Her beautiful eyes were like lotus petals. He attacked Her with a sword. She stopped him with Her mace, and wounded him with Her chakra. His blood began to gush like the waterfall of red earth mixed with water, from the mountain tops. Wherever his blood touched the earth, thousands of danavas arose, all identical in form and strength. Goddess Aindri sent Her thunderbolt, which again injured him, and caused his blood to flow. Brahmani began to beat him with Her staff; Maheshwari struck him with Her trishul; Narasinhi clawed him, causing deep cuts; Varahi used Her snout, and Kaumari used Her spear. All the Goddesses attacked him from all sides with their weapons. His blood began to flow like a river, and thousands and thousands of Raktabeejas filled the battlefield. The gods who were witnessing this, became weak with fear. There were countless demons, and only a few Goddesses with Bhagawati Jagaddamba. If Shumbh and Nishumbh joined now, the situation would become alarming.

Vyasji says – At this moment, Bhagawati Jagaddamba said to Kaali - "Chamundi! Open wide Your mouth and drink all the blood that flows out of Raktabeej when I attack him. You must be very careful that not a drop falls to the earth. If You do this, there will be no more new danavas to fight. By this means we can kill all of them. Let this be Your only duty. Consume every daitya, and do not let a single drop of blood touch the ground. We will finish the job, give heaven back to Indra, and leave in peace.

Vyasji says – Bhagawati Jagaddamba began to attack Raktabeej with sword and iron rod, and Chandika Devi began to consume his blood. In this way every Raktabeej was killed and consumed by Devi Chandika. The original Raktabeej was mortally injured with the sharp blade of the Devi's sword. Devi Chandika swallowed him entirely, not allowing a single drop of blood to fall. The remaining danavas ran to Shumbh and fearfully recounted how Devi Ambika cut down Raktabeej, and how Devi Chandika drank every drop of his blood. The other danavas were killed by the goddesses, and by the lion. They said – Maharaj! This devi cannot be defeated by any god, daitya, danava, asura, gandharva, yaksh, pannag or rakshasa. With Indrani a whole host of goddesses also fought. They all have vahanas and wonderful weapons. They have wiped out the entire army. One Devi was powerful enough. But with all these other devis also fighting, we did not stand a chance. Even the lion of the Devi killed and consumed a large number of danavas. Maharaj! The time has come for all of us to run away to Pataal. There is no use fighting with this Devi. She is sakshat Devi Maya, who has come to fulfil the prayers of the devas.

Vyasji says – This made Shumbh extremely angry.

Shumbh said – "All of you are cowards. If you wish you can run away to Pataal, or become slaves of the Devi. I am going to fight with Her. How can I run

away for fear of a woman. I will kill all the devis, and then rule the three worlds. Raktabeej and all the other powerful danavas died because of me. So how can I run away to save my life. Nishumbh! I am going with my army, and will bring that devi here. If I do not succeed, then I will not return. You also come there, and push her into the jaws of death".

Nishumbh said – "Brother! I will go immediately. I will kill Kaalika and bring Ambika here to you. Do not be so concerned about a weak little woman. My power and might have humbled the whole world. While I am here, there is no need for you to go to the battlefield."

Vyasji says - Nishumbh put on his armour, got into a huge chariot and left. He performed the necessary rituals and left for battle.

CHAPTER 5 episodes 30-31

30-31 - Death of Shumbh Nishumbh

Vyasji says - Nishumbh went and faced the Devi with the full knowledge that if he did not win, he would most certainly die. Shumbh, who was well versed in the art of war, came as a standby, and remained in his chariot. All the gods were watching from the skies, hidden by the clouds. Nishumbh started by shooting arrows at the Devi. Bhagawati Chandika picked up Her bow and laughed loudly. Then She spoke to Kali – "Just look at these foolish brothers. Both have come here to embrace death. Even after seeing the death of Raktabeej they think they can be victorious. Desire has infinite strength. That is why the lame, weak, low born, having no allegiance, and stupid mortals, cannot escape the influence of these desires. It is desire and expectations that have bound these two danavas and brought them to battle. Now their death, at My hands, is inevitable. Their span of life is over. Fate has brought them here. I will kill them in the presence of all the devas, today.

Vyasji says – Devi Kaalika picked up Her bow and covered Nishumbh with Her arrows. He responded with a volley of sharp arrows; and the war began. The lion shook his mane, and picked up danavas like an elephant picks up sugarcane. When Nishumbh saw the lion devouring all his soldiers, he picked up his special bow and rushed. Shumbh saw this and joined the battle. He ran past Kaalika to catch Devi Ambika. When he reached, he saw Her standing majestically. She was decorated with beautiful ornaments, and in Her anger, Her eyes had become red. Seeing this fierce and terrifying form of the Devi, all sentiments of marriage and victory receded from his mind. Accepting the

possibility of death, he stood still with his bow in his hand. The Devi laughed, and spoke in a loud voice, which could be heard by all - "O Foolish One! If you wish to live, drop all your weapons and go to Pataal, or to the ocean. If not, then come to the battlefield and die by My arrows. Then you will go to heaven and live peacefully. It is not advisable to show false bravery. I am offering you Abhaydaan (protection if you come to My Lotus Feet). You can all leave in peace.

Vyasji says – Nishumbh reacted by rushing forward with a sharp sword and crescent shield. He brought the sword down on the lion. Then he turned on the Devi and tried to injure Her. She stopped him with Her mace, and hit him on the shoulder. Even though he was hit, he started throwing darts at Devi Chandika. The Devi sounded Her alarming bell, and warned Nishumbh of Her intentions to kill him, by drinking often from Her cup of honey. A great battle started. All the scavenging birds like vultures and crows; and carnivorous animals like dogs and jackals, were circling the battlefield impatiently. Already, bodies of elephants, horses and soldiers were strewn around. Seeing this Nishumbh trembled with fury. He picked up his mace and rushed at the Devi. Bhagawati Jagaddamba stopped him with a loud voice. "O Fool! I am wielding My sword to cut off your head. Then you can go to Yama".

Vyasji says – Devi Bhagawati Chandika, with one sweep of Her sword removed his head from his body. Still his headless body began to dance with mace in hand. The Devi then cut off his hands and legs. He fell to the ground like a mountain. The danava army was in disarray. They ran to Shumbh who had gone back to his palace. When he saw them he asked – "Where is Nishumbh? How did all of you get injured like this!" They spoke very gently to their king. - Rajan! Your brother Nishumbh has given up his life and is lying on the battlefield. All his soldiers have also been killed by that Devi. O King! No one

can match that Devi; and it is inadvisable to fight with Her. Without a doubt, this Devi has especially come to destroy all the daityas and fulfil the prayers of the Devas. She is a Mahadevi, and even the Devas cannot know Her fully. It seems as if the night of dissolution has come. The gods are singing Her stutis. It is clear that She has come, only to help the devas. If you wish to be safe, we must all go away from here. O Rajan! Destiny makes even the strongest and most powerful persons into weaklings, when the appointed time comes. Therefore, let us wait out this bad time. At the present moment, Fate is favourable to the Devas, and unfavourable to us. But it is not permanent. Sometimes it causes birth, and at other times it causes death. During one period it gives bounty, and during another it causes distress. You have the example before you. Very recently Indra and all the gods gave their share of offerings to you because Fate was favourable to you. But now this same Fate has changed everything upside down. Now it is for you to decide what must be done. If we choose life, then later Fate may grant us happiness.

Vyasji says – Hearing these words from his soldiers who had run away from the battlefield Daityaraj Shumbh became angry and said - "O Fools! Why are these vile words falling from your mouth. Life is no more valuable for me. After sending my own brother and other warriors to their death, how can I run away. Good and bad times are entirely in the hands of destiny. It is a fact that this silent Fate cannot be interfered with, or neutralised. So why should I worry. Whatever has to happen, will ultimately happen. When the invincible Nishumbh and Raktabeej could be killed by a mere woman, why should I become a coward and run away to save my life. The Creator Brahma is complete and self-supporting. But when both halves of Brahma's life come to an end, he also relinquishes his body. One day of Brahma contains thousand chaturyugas (four ages of the world – Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kali). During this period, fourteen Indras come and reign, and go back to heaven. Foolish

Ones! Fate cannot be shifted even one step. So why should I worry myself about it. The sun, the moon, the earth, and the mountains, all die without a doubt. It is fixed that those that are born must die; and those that die are born again. This body is transitory. But we should preserve its renown and fame. Get my chariot ready immediately. I will go to battle, and let fate decide whether I win or die.

Shumbh immediately got into his chariot and rode towards the Himalayas, where the Devi was enthroned. He was followed by his army, consisting of (chaturangi) – four divisions – elephants, horses, chariots and infantry. When he reached the holy mountain, he beheld the Devi. Seated on the lion, Tribhuvanmohini Bhagawati Jagaddamba, was in the form of a beautiful woman. She was decorated with lavish ornaments. All the gods, yakshas, gandharvas and kinnars, were in the skies, singing Her stutis, and dropping fragrant flowers on Her. Fascinating sounds of conch and bell, filled the air, and the sweet smell of parijat flowers pervaded the atmosphere. Shumbh was struck by Her delicacy and gravity - Two qualities which rarely co-exist. The slender softness of Her form showed Her to be in the prime of youth, but the signs of desire or appetite were totally missing. This most amazing state was manifesting before his eyes. He began to wonder - Can this be Devi Ambika by whose hand the entire danava army has been destroyed. What should I do to get Her under my control. I do not even have any effective mantra that I can use, because She is verily Sarvamantramayi (source of all mantras). Nor can I leave now, and go to Pataal. If She cannot be won by sweet words, gifts and promises, then I will have to fight. But death at the hands of a woman brings dishonour and discredit. Wise men have said that the most desirable death is on the battlefield against a foe of similar strength and prowess. But Fate has brought before me such a woman who is more powerful than thousands of warriors, and who has come primarily to finish my race.

Vyasji says – Thinking all these things, Shumbh maintained his courage to fight. He addressed the Goddess – "Devi! Start the fight. Actually all this effort on your part is useless. You are not using your intelligence. It is not a pleasant sight to see a woman fight. A woman should use her eyes as arrows, and arms as bows. Even a wise man succumbs to these charms. You should be applying sandal paste to your body. Desire should be your chariot, and sweet words your drumbeat. Bashful modesty is your robe. Holding weapons in your hands is a mockery. Your feet are for taking small dancing steps, not for running with a mace. You have advisers like Kaalika and Chamunda. Occasionally Chandika also advises you. The wrathful Shiva is always in attendance. The most ferocious of all animals, the lion, is your conveyance. Instead of playing the veena, you are sounding the conch and bell. All these are contrary to your form and appearance. Devi, if you wish to fight, then assume the proper appearance – big broad lips, long tongue, sharp long nails, broad face, smoky complexion, big long limbs, fearsome frown, and eyes like a cat. Only then will I fight with you. In your present form of beauty, which compares with the wife of Cupid, I cannot lift my hand on you."

Vyasji says – Janmejay! Shumbh was under the effect of Kamdev, and was babbling senselessly. Bhagawati Jagaddamba smiled and spoke.

Devi said – "O Fool! Wounded by Kama's arrows why are you prattling uselessly? Silly one! You can fight with Kaalika and Chamunda. I am here only to watch. These two Devis are sufficient to defeat you. I do not wish to fight with you".

Then Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba spoke sweetly to Kaalika - "Kalike! You fight with this demon who wishes to fight with an ugly and hard featured opponent; and kill him."

Vyasji says – Kaalika is verily Kaalroopini (embodiment of Time). When destruction time arrives, She makes Her appearance. On receiving instructions from Devi Jagaddamba, She immediately picked up Her mace and began to fight. A great battle ensued Devi Kaalika used Her mace and broke Shumbh's golden chariot to pieces. Chandika killed the donkeys and the driver of the chariot. A furious Shumbh picked up his heaviest mace and began to fight on foot. He smiled as he hit Devi Kaalika on the chest. She stopped the mace, and picked up Her sword. She cut off his left hand, and still Shumbh rushed towards Devi Kaalika with a mace. Devi Kaalika laughed loudly, and cut off his right hand also. He began to fight by kicking with his legs. Devi cut off his legs as well. Then, with one stroke She severed his head from his body. Finally he fell down, lifeless. Indra and all the gods rejoiced and sang stutis to Devi Kaalika and Devi Chandika. A pleasant breeze blew. There was brilliant light from all directions Havans blazed with high flames. Those danavas who were still alive, did pranaam to Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba; laid down their arms, and left for Pataal.

I have told you in detail, this most favourite story of the Devi. It covers the destruction of all the danavas and the preservation of the gods. Men who live on earth should listen to, or read this great narration, if they want their desires to be fulfilled. By the grace of Bhagawati, those who are childless, beget children; and those who have no wealth, become wealthy. The sick get relief from their illnesses. Those who read this sacred scripture have no fear, and finally get their moksha.

Chapter 5 Episodes 32-33

32-33 Raja Surath, and Vaishya Samadhi's stay at Muni Sumedha's Ashram.

Janmejay asked – Muni! You have told me the most wonderful story of the grandeur and magnitude of Devi Jagaddamba. O kind and compassionate one. Now please tell us who was the first to propitiate the Devi and please Her, and receive Her benevolence. Brahman! O Auspicious and Fortunate One! Please also teach us the procedures and protocols for worship of the Devi; Pujas and Homas.

Sootji says – Vyasji was pleased with this question and began to tell Raja Janmejay the majesty, the venerable-ness, and the importance of worship of Devi Bhagawati Mahamaya.

Vyasji says – In ancient times, during the Svarochish Manvantar (fourteenth part of a day of Brahma); there was a king named Surath. He was very large hearted and generous. He was always concerned about the welfare of his subjects. He was honest, truthful, performed his religious duties faithfully, respected the brahmins, honoured his guru, and loved his wife. He had no enmity with anyone. He was an accomplished warrior, and was always protective towards his subjects. Some mlecchas came down from the mountains and challenged him. These men of low birth and character, came with their strong armies, consisting of elephants, horses, chariots, and foot soldiers. Even though the barbarians were not so well versed in war tactics as King Surath, by the hand of fate, he lost the battle. Sadly he returned to his fortress. It was very strong and safe. But when he reached, he found that the enemy had subdued all his ministers. He began to think whether it would be

better to hide in the fort and wait for the enemy to leave; or fight. There was no use discussing with the ministers as they had already gone over to the enemy camp. In fact he feared that they would betray him and hand him over to the enemy. These dim witted ministers could easily be bribed. For the sake of wealth a greedy man will betray his father, brother, friend, relation, guru and even a brahmin. My unprincipled ministers have gone over to the enemy camp. I can never trust them again.

Greatly saddened, king Surath got on to his horse and rode out of his kingdom. He had no attendant with him. He found himself in a dense forest. He remembered that at a distance of three yojans there was the holy ashram of the famous tapasvi Muni Sumedha. He went there. The beautiful ashram was situated on the banks of a river. It was surrounded by trees, and birds flew freely, without fear of being shot. The sweet notes of the koel mingled with the chanting of the students. Hundreds of deer roamed. The gardens were filled with fruit and flowering plants. All living things were enveloped in the fragrant smoke of havans; and the constant sound of the reading of the Vedas made the place more beautiful than heaven. The king felt the peace; and without hesitation decided to rest there. He tied his horse to a tree and went inside the ashram. Sitting on a deerskin, under a Sal tree, he saw Muni Sumedha. He was instructing his students in Vedanta. Constant tapasya had made his body lean. There were no signs of ego, anger, or any other emotions on his face. He was a truthful man who honoured his promises and spent most of his time in atmagyan (meditation on the Self). The king felt the greatest respect for the muni, and prostrated himself before him and offered sashtang pranaam (with the whole body touching the earth). His eyes filled with tears. The muni accepted his salutation, and pronounced “May you prosper!”. Then he accorded him the rituals of welcome – water to wash the feet. Water to rinse the mouth. Water to drink. And seasonal fruits. Then he enquired his

name, the place from which he had come, and the reason why he looked so perturbed. “Tell me the purpose of your visit. Even if your desire is impracticable, I will try to help you”.

The King said – I am Surath, and I am a king. I have just been defeated by the enemy. Therefore I have left my wife, palace, and kingdom, and come alone for refuge. Now whatever you adise, I will obey. There is no one else on this earth to help me, but you. O Great Muni! It is your nature to protect those who come to your feet. Please help me.

Muni Sumedha said – Maharaj! Please stay here, and have no fear. Tapasya is so powerful that even the strongest enemy will not be able to come here. Violence is forbidden here. You must now live like an ascetic. You will live on thin rice, fruits and tubers.

Vyasji says – The Muni’s words pacified the king. He lived a very frugal and holy live in the ashram. One day he suddenly became depressed. He thought of his palace, and his family. “These mlecchas who have low desires, have snatched away my kingdom. They must certainly be troubling my subjects. My elephants and horses must be starving with inadequate food and water, and cruel treatment. All my subjects whom I nurtured, must now be ill treated by the enemy. All the wealth of my kingdom must now be going to the gambling dens and liquor shops.

King Surath was sitting under a tree and sinking into sadness and despair, when a trader arrived there. He sat beside the king. The king asked him – Who are you, and what has brought you alone into the forest. Any why do you look so sad. Tell me. When two people walk seven steps together, they form a friendship.

The Vaishya said – Friend. I was born in the trading community. My name is Samadhi. I was very wealthy. I am also dharmic. I never tell lies. I do not covet anyone's property. Still my wife and my son are very greedy. They have branded me a miser and pushed me out of the house. Having been disowned by my own kith and kin, I have renounced, with great difficulty, all my possessions and come to this forest. O honourable One! Who are you. You appear to be very blessed. Tell me about yourself.

The King said – I am Surath, and I am a king. Barbarians have plundered my kingdom, and my ministers have betrayed me. Deprived of everything, I have come here to live. Now that you have come, I am lucky to have a friend. We can both live here and pass the rest of our lives.

The Vaishya said – My family must be helpless without me. They must be facing great difficulties in my absence. They must be very sad and worried about my disappearance. I am constantly anxious as to whether my wife and son are happy or not. O King! When will I ever see my son, my wife, my home and mty friends and relations again. All these household worries are assailing me and I cannot be at peace.

King Surath said – Those vile and wicked sons of yours pushed you out of the house. What happiness can you get in seeing them again. Family and friends who cause pain and grief, are considered foremost enemies. Come into balance, calm your mind, and live here in peace.

Vaishya said - Rajan! I cannot detach myself from these family ties even though they have ill treated me.

The King said – I was also worried about my kingdom and my subjects. But the muni is so peaceful and self satisfied. Let us go to him and ask him a remedy that will cure our sorrow.

Vyasji says – The king and the vaishya went to Sumedha muni who was sitting on a mat under a tree. The king humbly bowed his head. They he said before the muni and began to speak.

Raja Surath said – O Muni! I just met this vaishya in the forest. His wife and sons have chased him out of his house. This separation is causing him great sorrow. I am also in the same state. I have lost my kingdom and my mind cannot rest in peace. I keep thinking that my elephants and horses must be starving and my subjects must be getting ill treated. All the wealth of the kingdom must be getting wasted in gambling and drinking. Because of these worries I do not sleep at night. I know that this entire universe is an illusion, and inspite of this my mind is ensnared and cannot settle down. Who am I. What is a horse. What is an elephant. Who is a son, and who is a friend. Why am I worried about them. This is a delusion and yet I cannot free my mind from these worldly allurements. What is the reason? Swami! You know everything. Please tell us the reason why we are trapped in this ocean of illusion.

Vyasji says – Rajan! When king Surath pleaded thus, Muni Sumedha began to impart the knowledge which removes worldly attachments and sorrows.

The Rishi said – Rajan! Listen carefully. I am going to tell you what causes attachment and spiritual ignorance. It is Mahamaya who puts all beings into the trap of illusions, of mistaking the unreal for the real. This is known by all. All things are under the influence of maya – gods, mortals, demi gods, nagas,

rakshasas, gandharvas, the trees, the plants, the animals and the birds. It is by this influence that they get entrapped and attached to the world. In the human race, you have taken birth in a kshatriya clan, which is of rajoguni temperament. Even wise and learned men fall into this disillusionment.

Vyasji says – The rishi went on to describe the Shakti, the importance and attributes of Bhagawati Mahamaya.

King Surath said – Bhagwan! Please be gracious and tell us the description of Bhagawati Mahamaya, as well as Her power and majesty. Also kindly tell us the circumstances that cause Her to manifest, and where She abides. Describe that place to us.

Sumedha Rishi said – Rajan! This Bhagawati Mahamaya is eternal and uncreated. She is constant, ceaseless, and immutable. She is unborn. She is the causal of all causes. She is the Supreme Spirit who abides in all living things. If She withdraws from consciousness, then the being becomes as lifeless, because in all living things She is the Attention (Chitta Shakti). She appears and disappears, only to fulfil the prayers of the gods. When devas and mortals worship Her and sing Her praises, then to remove their sorrows and difficulties, She manifests at Her own accord, and with Her different Shaktis She fights the evil forces. O King! Unlike the other gods and creatures, She is beyond the control of Destiny or Fate. This is the absolute truth. She is free and self contained. Kaal dare not come, even near Her. This whole creation is only the known quantity – one visible aspect of Her splendour and majesty. Brahma and all the gods are non-doers. They are only witnesses. After creating, for Her own will and pleasure, She then establishes Brahma and all the gods in their respective functions. They are spectators to Her glorious actions. And then follows the great dissolution. Here again – the doer and the

enjoyer is Bhagawati Jagaddamba. It is through Her grace that Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar received their Shaktis in the form of Savithri, Lakshmi and Girija. Even though they have been given the status of Gods, Brahma Vishnu and Shankar, constantly perform Puja and meditation at the Holy Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba, to please Her. Creation, Preservation and Dissolution is entirely under the will and control of Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

Rajan! With my very limited knowledge, I have tried to describe the grandeur and majesty of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. It is impossible, and also egoistical, to try and fathom the depths of this All Mighty, All Pervading, and All Powerful Devi Jagaddamba.

Chapter 5 Episodes 34-35

34-35 Rishi Sumedha states prayers and protocols of Puja. Tapasya of Surath. Samadhi and gifts from the Devi.

Raja Surath said – Bhagwan! Now please instruct us on the correct procedures and protocols to be observed when worshipping this Almighty Devi Jagaddamba. Please also teach us the rituals and mantras for pujas and homas.

Rishi Sumedha said – Rajan! Listen. I will tell you the best and highest way of worship. By this, all one's pure desires are fulfilled. One who performs puja diligently and honestly, gets happiness, knowledge and becomes entitled to moksha. First of all, one should have a bath and wear clean clothes. This is cleansing of the body.

Then one should sit in meditation, and request permission to start preparations. Attention should be brought inside and anchored at Atma. A place which has been previously swept and covered with a paste of cowdung, should have a proper aasan installed – a small mat for sitting should be spread. Then sit on the aasan and sip water three times. According to your means, puja samagri should be kept near you. Then balance yourself, remove attention from the body so that even the rhythm of breathing reduces by itself. Sprinkle vibrated water on all the ingredients and vessels. Then surrender yourself totally. In a copper vessel mix white sandal paste and other auspicious perfumes, and inscribe a six cornered figure. Outside that inscribe an eight cornered figure. Out of the nine matrukas (letters which make mantras), write eight beeja aksharas (seed letters) in each corner, and in the centre the ninth seed akshara. In the absence of this figure, an image of Devi

Bhagawati can be placed. Then the appropriate mantras can be chanted to praise the Devi and please Her. Care should be taken to keep the attention firm, fixed and unswerving. A ten part havan should be performed, offering the oblations to the sacred fire. Food should be served to ten brahmins. Every day, three holy chapters should be read. Only then can the puja be completed. Austerities and discipline should be observed for all the nine days. Those who desire auspiciousness and pure knowledge, should perform this during the bright lunar fortnight of Ashwin and Chaitra months (7th and 1st month of the hindu calendar). The havan should be done carefully, using kheer. In the kheer should be mixed ghee and honey. Also the sacred bilwapatra is used for havans. Til seeds mixed with jaggery are also used. The eighth, ninth and fourteenth day of a lunar month are days when special pujas should be offered to Devi Bhagawati. Food should be offered to brahmins This grants wealth to those who have money problems; children to the childless; obedience from children to parents; relief from illnesses; and lost kingdoms are restored. By the grace of Mahamaya, one gets strength to overcome enemies. Students who detach themselves from sense and worldly pleasures; and worship the Devi, Bhagawati Jagaddamba perform well in their academic pursuits. There is no doubt in this. Any man or woman, who faithfully and diligently performs this worship during the bright fortnight of Ashwin, gets fulfilment of all desires. For this puja, a circular area should be prepared, and a kalash placed in the centre. On the cover of the kalash the eight cornered figure should be inscribed. All around the kalash (Jou) barley should be sown. A canopy should be erected over the kalash and decorated with garlands. The house should have deepams and dhoop burning at all times. Puja should be performed three times – morning, noon and evening. Puja to Devi Chandika should be lavish. Must not be miserly. Plenty of incense, lamps, offerings, fruits, dry fruits, flowers, music, singing bhajans and chanting should be present. It should be a celebration. Little girls should be honored with new clothes,

ornaments, sandal paste, fragrant oil and special food. After this havan should be performed. Then offer food to brahmins. After a navratra fast, food should only be taken on the tenth day. A king should distribute wealth on this day.

The man; or married woman; or widow, who performs this puja with devotion, receives happiness in this life and after death; gets a place in heaven. In the next life they are born as devotees of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. They are born in highly spiritual families. This Navratra puja is considered foremost among pujas. Rajan! This is the puja you must perform to Devi Chandika. All your enemies will be defeated, and you will be reinstated as king. You will have a healthy body. Sorrows will not come near your palace. You will be reunited with your wife and sons.

Most respected Vaishya! You also worship in the same way, the Devi Bhagawati Mahamaya. She is the protector of the universe, and it is Her nature to fulfil our prayers. Creation and destruction, is also carried out by Her will. By Her grace, when you go home you will bet the respect of your family and friends. And after enjoying the fruits of this world, you will find a place in the loka of the Devi. Those who do not recognise and worship the most Divine and Powerful Devi, go to hell. Rajan! After suffering various ailments, they lead a life of sorrows in this world. Their enemies overpower them. They are separated from wife and children. They are tormented by greed and ambition. Their intelligence fails them.

Those who worship by using bilva leaves, oleander, lotus and champa flowers; please Bhagawati Jagaddamba, and receive joy in their lives. They become auspicious for themselves, and for others. Divine qualities are awakened in them.

Vyasji says – Samadhi Vaishya and Raja Surath were very sad and dejected. After hearing Muni Sumedha, they bowed their heads. They were filled with humility. Their eyes were shining with gladness, and bhakti flowered in their hearts. They said – Bhagwan! Please accept our namaskar. Your auspicious voice has purified us and made us holy. Our forlorn and dejected minds have found peace. We feel as purified as king Bhagirath when the waters of the holy Ganga fell on him. The holy men of this earth are always engaged in removing the spiritual ignorance of others. They are not superficial, nor do they expect anything in return. They spontaneously guide and advise others. O blessed one! It is our previous birth's punyas that brought us to your holy ashram. It has the quality to give peace and solace. They are many selfish men who pose as gurus. But to come into contact with a guru like you, is a rare gift. We were sinking in the ocean of worldly attachments, and you became our saviour. We will obey all your advice and start sincere meditation and detachment. After we succeed we will come to pay our respects again. We desire to receive from you the Navaakshar mantra (mantra of nine letters) of the Devi. After that we will immediately start preparations for the navratra fast, pujas, and havans.

Vyasji says – Muni Sumedha was pleased. He gave them the seed mantra for meditation, as well as the Navaakshar mantra. This established the relation of Guru-Sishya. Both prostrated before their Guru and left. They found an uninhabited place on the banks of a holy river, and prepared an aasan for meditation. Then they steadied their attention and settled down for tapasya. One month passed, and there was born within them, an unlimited love and devotion, and worship for the Lotus Feet of Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba. They reached a state of Nirvikalpa (doubtless awareness).

Sumedha Muni was a great soul. Surath and Samadhi used to go often to his ashram to bow their heads before him. They would then return to their aasans and settle down again. They had no other interest or occupation. They spent all their time in prayer and meditation. One year passed. All this time they lived on fruits from the forest. Now they stopped this and lived only on dry leaves. They passed one more year, and by this time they had gained mastery over their bodily requirements and senses. They were constantly in deep meditation.

One night Devi Bhagawati Jagaddambika appeared in their dream and gave them a darshan. She was dressed in red garments; and jewels and ornaments added to Her splendour. This glimpse of the Devi filled them with awe, wonder and devotion. They continued their tapasya, and even gave up drinking any water. The third year passed. By now there was only one great desire in the hearts of Raja Surath and Samadhi – they wanted a sakshat darshan (visible manifestation) of the Devi. They reached a conclusion that only by perceiving Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba with ones own eyes, could a person get eternal peace and joy. If we do not get a darshan, we will give up our lives. The Devi became prasanna (pleased) and gave them a Sakshat Darshan!!

They had reached the deepest gloom; and because of their great desire, their attention was scattered.

The Devi said – Rajan! Whatever boon you desire, ask Me for it. I am pleased with your tapasya. I know now that you are My devotee. Then the Devi spoke to Vaishya Samadhi - O auspicious One, I am pleased. What is your desire. Tell Me. I am anxious to grant it.

Vyasji says – Raja Surath felt his entire being fill with vibrations. He said – Most worshipful Devi! Please destroy my enemies and restore my kingdom to me. Then the Devi said – Rajan! You must now go home. The power of your enemies has come to an end. Now they will face defeat and run away. Your ministers who betrayed you, will fall at your feet asking to be forgiven. O Fortunate One! Return to your kingdom and rule in peace. After you have ruled for ten thousand years you will cast off this body. Then you will be born in the Surya dynasty and attain Brahma.

Vyasji says – The saintly Vaishya folded his hands and bowed his head. He said O most merciful Devi! I have no use for house, son, or wife. They are all bondages and transient like dreams. Divine Mother! Please give me that Pure Knowledge, (Nirmal Vidya), that gives a permanent release from all bondages. This world is a hollow and worthless illusion. Foolish and greedy people get lost in its temptations. That is why the spiritually wise people detach themselves from this world.

Vyasji says – Samadhi Vaishya expressed this desire before Bhagawati Mahamaya. This pleased the Devi, and She said – Vaishya! You will most certainly be blessed with Nirmal Vidya.

After giving these boons, the Devi removed Herself from their sight. King Surath turned to Muni Sumedhaji and offered pranaams. Then he mounted his horse and got ready to leave. Just then his ministers and subjects arrived and bowed before him. They said - O King! Your enemies were so wicked and evil that they were all killed in battle. Please come and rule the kingdom again. Hearing this, the king took leave of Muni Sumedhaji and left with his ministers. He was reunited with his son and wife, and all his friends and relatives.

Vaishya Samadhi became a wise and spiritually elevated man. He renounced the world and roamed all the holy places of pilgrimage and worship, singing the praises and narrating incidents about Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

Rajan! I have completed this beautiful episode in the narration of the stories of Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Raja Surath and Vaishya Samadhi got the fruits of their tapasya. Whoever listens to this narration with devotion and complete attention, receives all the joys in the world – pure knowledge, moksha, and happiness. There is no doubt in this. This narration, which pleases the spirit and the mind is full of dharma.

Sootji says – Satyawatinandan Vyasji was full of knowledge, and its importance and significance. Upon Raja Janmejay's request, he brought to light this Divya Sanhita (collection of hymns of the Devi). Vyasji was very compassionate. His narration covered that aspect of the Veda, which tells of the destruction of Shumbh. Munis! This is a sip of the essence and nectar of the Devi Puran.

End of Chapter 5

CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6 Episodes 1-2

1-2 Story of Vrittasur. Indra kills Vishvarup.

All the rishis said – O most auspicious and fortunate Sootjee! Your narration of the compilation of scriptures by Ved Vyasji are as sweet as nectar. But our thirst is not satiated. We want to listen again and again, because just by listening, all our sins get washed away. There is a story about a powerful asura called Vrittasur. His father was Tvashta. Why did Lord Indra kill him? He was born in a Brahmin clan. What was the reason for his death. Did Indra have to pay for killing a brahmin. Also; you mentioned before, that Shree Devi killed Vrittasura. Is there some mystery in this?

Sootji says –Munis. I will tell you the incident connected with Vrittasura. Listen. It also tells of the untold miseries that Indra had to suffer for killing a brahmin. In ancient times, King Janmejay had asked Satyawatinandan Vyasji this same question. Whatever he told them, I will repeat to you carefully.

Janmejay asked – Muni! Indra killed Vrittasura This is an old story. Then how did the Devi kill that Daitya. What caused this manifestation of the Devi. Muni! How could the same daitya be killed twice. I wish to hear about this. Please tell me the greatness and glory of Bhagawati Jagaddamba in this incident.

Vyasji says – King! You are blessed, and you are fortunate, because every day your thirst increases for hearing of the splendour and majesty of the Devi.

When the one who hears, listens with single pointed attention, then the narrator gets pleased and speaks clearly and accurately. In ancient times there was a war between Vrittasur and Indra. Indra considered Vrittasur an enemy and killed him. For this he had to suffer a lot of sorrows and tribulations. Indra trapped him by guile and killed him. But this should not puzzle or surprise us. The embodiment of Dharma, Shri Vishnu Himself, spreads maya over the negative forces and destroys them. Bhagawati Mahamaya can cause even the intelligence of munis to become blunt and useless. It is by the command of Bhagawati Mahamaya, that Shri Hari has taken various incarnations, starting with Matsya (Fish) avatar. This is the way of all the yugas. This body, wealth, house, friends, sons and wife – are all mine – all living things fall into this trap of maya and perform good or bad deeds, for no one can be free from the influence of Mahamaya. No one can neutralise this maya. It is by the effect of this maya that the great gods resorted to guile to kill Vrittasur. I will tell you the cause of the conflict between Vrittasur and Indra.

Tvashta was a deity who was permanently fixed at the feet of Prajapati. This great Tapasvi was considered senior among the gods. All heavenly arrangements were in his hands. He was very accomplished; and honoured the brahmins. Due to some misunderstanding with Indra, they both became hostile to each other. Tvashta produced a son who had three heads. He was known as Vishvaroop. His appearance was very alluring because of his three attractive faces. Each face was independent of the other. From one face he could recite the Vedas; with the second he drank honey; and the third face surveyed all the ten directions. He was disillusioned with worldly comforts and pleasures; and took to a life of tapasya. His mind was anchored in dharma. In the summer season he would sit in the middle of five fires (panchagni) in the sun. In the monsoon season he would sit under a tree in the rain. And in

autumn and winter, he would sit in a lake and meditate. He never ate anything. His senses were totally under his control. He was free from all attachments. Thus the prudent and intelligent Vishvaroop performed severe tapasya. But in his mind there was a dark blemish.

Seeing Vishvaroop in this state of tapasya, Indra became agitated. His fear was that Vishvaroop had intentions of unseating him. By this time Vishvaroop's auras began to glow. He also acquired great powers. Indra could not find peace, because he was afraid that his very existence was in jeopardy. Wise men have warned that one should not disregard the growing strength of the opponent. He decided to cause an interruption of Vishvaroop's tapasya. Kamdev is the enemy of tapasvis. This is the best means of breaking the tapasya of Vishvaroop. Indra who could never tolerate the growing shakti of his enemies, sent his apsaras to disturb the tapasvi. Urvashi, Menaka, Rambha, Ghritachi, Tilottama and other beautiful celestial maidens were sent, with the express purpose of breaking Vishvaroop's meditation and austerities The maidens left after assuring Indra that they would use every enchantment that they knew, to disturb him; tempt him; and ensnare him.

Vyasji says – The apsaras reached the place where Trishira muni (the three headed one) was sitting. They played heavenly music and began to sing and dance. But Vishvaroop was undisturbed, and continued his meditation. His senses were in perfect control, and he sat as one deaf and dumb. The apsaras continued their efforts for many days. At last they went back to Indra. They were tired, sorry, and afraid to face him. Lord! We tried in every possible way to disturb and attract the three-headed muni; but he is so anchored in his meditation, that he did not stir. Lord! You will now have to try some other means. This tapasvi is deep, and has conquered all his senses. He must be

some great soul. He shines like a bright light. We were fortunate to escape being cursed by him.

Indra became very spiteful, and began to look for ways to kill Vishvaroop. This malicious idea had formed in Indra's brain for some time. He totally disregarded the shame, dishonour and wages of sin, that would follow such a heinous act.

Vyasji says – Devraj Indra had become so avaricious and attached, that his mind was filled with despicable plans. He mounted his elephant Airawat, and went himself to meet Trishira muni. He saw him sitting on his asan, deep in meditation. He was glowing with the brightness of fire and sun. Indra began to despair. How will I ever succeed in killing this muni He is certainly a great soul, and he has become lustrous and radiant from meditation. But how can I ignore the fact that he covets my throne. Justifying his action in this way, Indra, the commander of the Devganas, directed his great weapon, the Vajra-astra (thunderbolt) on the meditating muni. Vishvaroop fell to the ground, dead. It was a most astounding sight. It seemed as if lightning had struck a mountain, and the top had come hurtling down. Indra was full of glee. But the other tapasvis who witnessed this, set up a roar of lamentation and distress. "Indra is a great sinner! He has killed a tapasvi and committed an unforgivable crime! He has become cruel and despicable! That is why he has mercilessly murdered a meditating tapasvi! There is no doubt that he will receive the fruit of this action and pay heavily!"

After killing Trishira, Indra went towards his palace. This muni was a great soul and a storehouse of religious austerities. Even in death his body was radiant with inner light. He looked alive, and this puzzled Indra. He became worried. Would the muni come to life again. Just then he saw a person called Taksha,

standing nearby. Indra said to him – Taksha! Please cut off this dead muni's head from his body. He looks alive. Please do something that will ensure he does not live.

Taksha said reproachfully – This muni has very strong and wide shoulders. My axe will not do the job. And also, I cannot participate in this despicable act of yours! You have done a very low and cowardly act. All good people condemn such behaviour. To disrespect the body of a dead man is a sin, and I am afraid of sin. This muni is already dead. What will you achieve by cutting off his head. Lord Indra! Are you not afraid to commit such a profane deed?

Indra said – He is so strong that I am afraid he will revive and come to life again.

Taksha said – You have already committed such a heartless murder. Have you no fear. This is called Brahmhatya, and is a great sin!

Indra said – I will do repentance and penance for this, later. It is acceptable to kill an enemy by deceit.

Taksha said – You have been overcome by greed and attachment. That is why you are committing sinful acts. Tell me. Why should I join you in this sin?

Indra said – I make a promise that from this day onwards, you shall be entitled to a share of all yagyas and pujas. People will offer sacrifice to you at Yagyas. This is your compensation. Now you help me by cutting off this muni's head.

Vyasji says – The Taksha got tempted. Greed is the root cause of sin. He picked up his axe and cut off the heads of Trishira from his body. As soon as the three heads touched the earth, thousands of birds were born. From his

three faces flew out blackbirds, pigeons, partridges and other varieties of birds. Pigeons came from the mouth which recited the Vedas. Shiny and colourful partridges came out of the face which drank somras and watched the ten directions. And tiny blackbirds came out of the mouth that drank honey. In this way, from the three heads of Trishira, these birds were seen for the first time on earth. Indra was very impressed with this happening. He went back to heaven, and Taksha also went home. He was very happy that he was now entitled to a share from all yagyas and pujas. Indra was relieved that his enemy was dead; and began to believe that his action was justified. He had no fear of the repercussions from killing a brahmin.

When Tvashta heard that his pious and dharmic son had been cruelly killed by someone, he was furious. He made a vow – "My son was a most holy soul. I will punish the one who killed him. To avenge the death of Trishira, I will create another son. Let the gods be witness to the power of my tapasya. And let the guilty one wait for the fruits of his action." Saying this, Tvashta performed a havan, reciting mantras from the Atharva Veda. He was distraught with anger. The havan continued for eight nights. The flames were tall and bright. Then, from the fire emerged a figure who was as bright and shining as the fire itself. This son was strong and powerful, and his radiance glowed on all sides. He stood before Tvashta, who acknowledged him and said – Son of mine! And enemy of Indra! Let my tapasya fill you with strength and valour. Hearing this, the son, born from the havan-kund, grew as tall as the sky His body looked like a huge mountain. He said – Father! Why are you so agitated. Tell me my name, and also what you wish me to do. Of what use is a son if in his presence, his father still suffers. I will, this moment, drink up the sea. I will pulverize all the mountains. By my radiance I will stall the rising sun. Today itself I will kill all the gods, including Indra and Yamraj. If there is anyone else, I will destroy them. I will demolish the earth and throw it in the ocean.

Hearing these propitious words from his son, Tvashta was pleased. Son! You are going to save me from a multitude of difficulties. Therefore you will be known in the world as Vrittra. O fortunate One! You had an elder brother, Trishira, who was a great tapasvi. He had three magnificent heads. He was well versed in the Vedas. He performed tapasyas which were rare in the three worlds. And today, while he was in meditation, Indra cut off his heads He was innocent, and still this horrible thing happened to him. Therefore you have now to kill Indra, who is a murderer of a brahmin; who is low and mean; who is without shame; who has no wisdom; and who is deceitful. The sorrowing Tvashta began to arrange different kinds of weapons for Vrittasur. He also gave him a beautiful, strong, and well equipped chariot; and gave him permission to go to battle.

Chapter 6. Episode 3

3 Vrittasur defeats Indra

Vyasji says – Priests purified the chariot and weapons of Vrittasur, according to Vedic rituals; and Vrittasur left with the sole purpose of killing Indra. Those danavas who had been defeated by the gods, also joined Vrittasur. Indra's spies saw the approach of the danava army, and they ran to Indra and reported Vrittasura's approach and his intentions.

The messenger said – O Lord! Vrittasur is your sworn enemy. Tvashta created this powerful asura, and he is now speeding towards us in his chariot, and followed by a large danava army. Tvashta was grief stricken when you killed his son Trishira. He performed a havan and used mantras to create this powerful daitya to kill you. His appearance is so huge, that he looks like the Mandarachal or Sumeru mountain. Please make arrangements for your safety. At this moment even the devas came running, full of fear.

The devas said – Lord! Many portents of evil are being seen in heaven. From the sounds of the birds it is apparent that some great misery is to befall us. Crows, vultures, hawks and kites are alighting on our houses. They are like messengers of Yama, wailing and screeching. Even the small birds are agitated. Elephants and horses, and cows are shedding tears. In the nights female goblins and rakshasis can be heard moaning and wailing. Without any wind flagstaffs are breaking and falling down. Evil omens are being seen in the sky, in pataal and in the mortal world. Foxes and Jackals howl at night and come into our backyards. Everyone is fearful and anxious.

Vyasji says – Indra became concerned. He requested Brihaspatiji to come to the palace, and he asked for advice.

Indra asked – Brahman! It is disturbing that so many ill omens are manifesting all over. O Fortunate One! You know everything. You have all the power to remove these obstacles. You are wise, you possess all knowledge of the shastras; and you are the guru of the gods. You also know all the necessary rituals. Please do something that will defuse the situation, and prevent me from suffering any trials and tribulations.

Brihaspatiji said – Indra! What can I do? A most heinous crime has been committed by your hands. Why did you kill an innocent tapasvi and earn the bitter fruit of fate. One has to bear the consequences of one's actions, good or bad. This is an unalterable fact. Therefore those who wish for happiness, should always be careful of their actions. Actions that cause distress and pain to others, should be avoided. Happiness can never come to the person who causes pain or emotional upsetting to others. Indra! You came under the influence of greed and attachment, and committed brahmahatya (murder of a brahmin). Now the fruit of that action is coming before you. Even if all the gods combine, they cannot kill Vrittasur. He is coming here; armed with divine weapons. He is bent upon destroying the whole world. No one can stop him.

Rajan! When Brihaspatiji said this, there was a great tumult. The Yakshas, Gandharvas, Kinnars and munis all left their homes and began to run away. Indra was very troubled to see this, and ordered his ministers to organise an army. He said – Call all the Vasus, the Rudras, the Ashwinikumars and Adityas. Tell Pusha, Bhag (Vedic gods); Kuber, Varun, Yama and others to come here with all their weapons, because the enemy has attacked. Then Indra mounted his elephant Airawat, and set out. All the gods pledged allegiance and got into their vahanas. Vrittasur and his danava army had reached the northern side of Manas Parbat. When Indra and all the devas reached, the war began. It lasted for one hundred years. The first to be defeated was Varun. Then the

Vayugans, Yama, Agni and Indra ran away from the battlefield. Seeing this Vrittasur went back to his father Tvashta. He said – Father! I have accomplished the job. Indra and all the devas have been defeated by me. They began to run away just like elephants and deers run from a lion. I have brought back Indra's favourite elephant. Father, I pray you. Accept this elephant Airawat as a gift! Father, since it is a sin to kill those who are overcome with fear, I spared their lives. Father! What other instructions do you have for me. All the devas are really tired and afraid in their hearts. Even Indra left Airawat and ran away to heaven.

Vyasji says – Tvashta was very pleased. He said – Son! Today I consider myself a true father. My life has found its meaning. You have made it holy. My mind is at peace. Son! Now I am going to tell you something for your benevolence. Listen carefully. It is very important and necessary to meditate. It is not advisable to trust anyone implicitly. Your enemy Indra is very cunning and deceitful. He knows various kinds of tricks. Tapasya grants Lakshmi. It also gives a good kingdom. Tapasya gives wisdom and strength; and victory in war. Therefore, take to tapasya and please Shri Brahma, so that you can ask for a boon. Once you get this boon, you should destroy Indra's very existence. Shankarji is very generous. Meditate and perform strict tapasya and please Him. He grants all desires. From Shri Brahmaji you can get the boon of immortality. Get all these boons, and then destroy Indra.

Vyasji says – Vrittasur listened carefully to his father's advice, and left to look for a suitable place to start his tapasya. He reached the Gandhamadan mountain, where the holy Ganga flows. He bathed in the river; spread a mat of woven kusha grass, and sat down. He had renounced food and water. He balanced himself; collected his attention to single-point, and meditated on Shri Brahmaji. When Indra saw this, he became worried. He sent all kinds of

temptations and attractions to disturb his tapasya. But Vrittasur was firmly anchored, and nothing disturbed his tapasya.

Chapter 6 Episodes 4-5

4-5 Vrittasur receives a boon, and defeats the devas. Plan for the killing of Vrittasur.

Vyasji says – Those who had been sent to disturb the tapasya of Vrittasur, went back disappointed. On completion of one hundred years, the Creator, Brahmaji, appeared to him, seated on a swan. He said – "Tvashtanandan, Peace be to you. There is no need for you to continue your tapasya. Ask for a boon. I have come to grant your desire. You have become very lean from your austerities. Ask for whatever your heart desires.

Vyasji says – Brahmaji is the sole creator. His words were sweet like honey. Vrittasur concluded his tapasya and stood before Brahmaji. He was so happy his eyes filled with tears. He prostrated before Brahmaji. Then he spoke in humble tones. – Prabhu! By this fortunate and holy darshan I have got the status of a dev. But O God! There is a desire which has been within me for a long time. I will state it; because nothing is hidden from you. Lord! This is my wish – that I should not die by any weapons of any sort. May I grow from strength to strength, so that none of the gods can defeat me.

Vyasji says – Brahmaji said – Holy One! Arise and go. Your desire will be fulfilled. Your death will not be caused by anything dry or wet; by any weapon or sharp object. This is My word. Brahmaji went back to his abode. Vrittasur was overjoyed with his boon. He went back hom and told his father Tvashta about it. Tvashta was very pleased, and told Vrittasur to go ahead and kill Indra because he had killed his son Trishira. After killing Indra, it was important to get possession of the kingdom of heaven. Son, you must avenge the deep sorrow that was caused to me by Trishira's death. It is the duty of a son to

obey the father while he is alive. After his death, food should be served to Brahmins, and then offerings should be made to ancestors at Gaya. By these three actions a son discharges his filial duties. Therefore son, it is you who have to remove this great sorrow from my mind, because I am not able to detach my attention from Trishira. My son was gentle, peaceful, truthful, and a scholar of the Vedas. That innocent son of mine was killed by that evil minded Indra.

Vyasji says – In obedience to his father, the now invincible Vrittasur mounted his chariot and left his father's bhavan. Drums were beaten to warn of impending war. The sounds of the conch filled the air. Observing the protocols of war, the daitya Vrittasur advanced towards Indra's bhavan. He announced – I will kill Indra, and take possession of heaven. His proclamation, together with the warning sounds, filled the people of Amravati with fear. When Indra heard this, he made hasty preparations for war. He formed a strategic military array (grirdhavyhu) and took his place in the middle. Vritasur arrived, and a terrible war broke out between the devas and the danavas. They knew each other's style, and kept aiming special weapons at each other. Vrittasur finally reached the inner circle and caught Indra. He removed his weapons and armour, and put him into his mouth. He was very pleased and satisfied. When the devas saw that Indra was inside the mouth of Vrittasur, they began to cry out – Indra is dead! Indra is dead! But when they saw that he was still inside the danava's mouth, they ran to Brihaspathiji. After offering pranaams they said – O Twiceborn One! You are our revered Guru. Tell us what we should do now. We were guarding Indra, but still Vrittasur managed to catch him and put him in his mouth. There is nothing we can do now. Please try to find a way to save Indra.

Brihaspathiji said – Devas! What can be done. Vrittasur is invincible. Indra is in his mouth, but he is still alive.

Vyasji says – All the devas were full of fear. They began to discuss among themselves to try and find a solution. With the help of Brihaspatiji they caused Vrittasur to yawn. Vrittasur's mouth opened, and remained open for a short time. Indra collected himself and came out of his mouth. From that moment onwards, was born the act of yawning. Seeing that Indra had come out of Vrittasur's mouth, the Devas laughed. The war continued. It lasted for ten thousand years. Vrittasur grew in strength, but Indra became weak, and was finally defeated. Indra and all the devas ran away, and Vrittasur established himself in heaven. He began to enjoy the gardens of heaven. He made Airawat his conveyance. All the vahanas of the devas, including Indra's horse Ucchai-Shrava, were at his service. The cow Kamadhenu; the Parijat flowers; the Apsaras, and all the precious gems, all belonged to Vrittasur now. All the devas had gone into the mountains and started living in caves and crevices, facing many difficulties. They were also not getting any share of the yagyas.

Bharat! Indra and the devas went to Kailash. Bhagwan Shankar was in residence. They bowed before Him and said – God of Gods! Mahadev! Ocean of Compassion, Maheshwar! We have been defeated by Vrittasur. We are filled with fear. Please save us. He has driven us from our homes. Please tell us what we should do. There is no limit to our hardships. His boon has made him indestructible. Lord! You please kill him for us.

Bhagwan Shiv said – Keeping Brahmaji as the leader, let us all go to Shri Hari and ask him for help. He will be able to tell us how to destroy Vrittasur, because Janardhan Bhagwan Vasudev is self contained; the knower of intrigue

and strategy; powerful; all knowing; and the ocean of compassion. Without surrendering at his lotus feet, nothing can be accomplished.

Vyasji says – All the Gods, with Shri Brahma, Shri Shankar, and Indra, went to the abode of Bhagwan Shri Vishnu. He is compassionate, and it is he who gives refuge and protection to those devotees who seek his help. They began to sing praises from the Purush-sookta (hymns from the Rg Veda. Then Ramapati Shri Hari appeared before them. He gave them the proper welcome and then took his seat. He said – Respected devas! You are all deities who govern different regions of the creation. Why have you brought Brahma and Shankarji here with you. What is the reason for your visit.

Vyasji says – The devas were silent. They kept standing with folded hands.

But nothing can be hidden from Bhagwan Vishnu. Seeing their plight, and feeling love and compassion for them, Bhagwan Vishnu said – Devas! Why are you silent. Tell me. Good or bad, I will try to find a way.

The devas said – Lord! In the Triloki (Three worlds) what can remain hidden from you! You are all-knowing, and you know what is troubling us.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – O Foremost of Gods, do not fear. I know a universal solution to all problems. I will tell you, because it will help you and also ensure your happiness. You should use all the methods that will be for your benevolence; like power, intelligence, advantage, or guile. Our wise ancestors have said that there are four methods which can be used towards friends and foes, which includes gifts and humble, pleasing words. This daitya has performed tapasya to please Brahma, and he has received a boon from him. By virtue of this boon he has become unconquerable. There is no living thing or person who can kill him, and that is how he has captured heaven. It is only

by divine strategy that he can be killed. He will have to be allured and enticed, into a trap. Therefore Gandharvas! You go to his place, and try some allurements. I will certainly help Indra. I will enter into Indra's weapon, the thunderbolt. Now we must wait. Once the right time comes, he will die. There is no other solution. Gandharvas! You go to Vrittasur, and praise him and soften him, and establish a friendship between him and Indra. This job is not impossible. I Myself took the form of a dwarf in Vaman avatar, and humbled Bali. I also assumed the form of Mohini, and received the daityas

For your own benevolence, you must pray to the generous and auspicious Bhagawati Yogamaya. Go to Her Lotus Feet, and with great devotion and humility sing Her praises. Then She will definitely help you. We worship that Bhagawati, who is the Mother of all creation. She is the Supreme Goddess. By Her grace all desires are fulfilled. It is very difficult and rare for the wicked to have a darshan of Her. By worshipping Her, Indra can manage to kill him alone. Because Vrittasur will be under Her spell. In such a situation, the demon can be killed very easily. She keeps concealed, the causals of all causes within Her, and She resides within every atom and molecule. But nothing is possible unless Param Pujya Bhagawati Jagaddamba is pleased. Therefore all devas, listen. Go and start your worship with great humility and devotion.

In ancient times, even I had to fight the terrible demons Madhu and Kaitabh. After fighting for five thousand years, they were killed. They got snared in the web of Maya. Devas! You also perform stutis to the Devi. She will certainly help you.

In this way Bhagwan Shri Vishnu advised the devas. The devas went to Mount Sumeru and climbed to the peak. Parijat flowers added to the beauty to the scenery, and spread fragrance all around. The devas sat in that sacred place

and began their chanting, tapasya and meditation. They praised the Mother of all creation, Who is always engaged in the creation and dissolution, and whose nature it is to grant refuge and help.

The Devas said – O Devi! Be pleased and protect us. We are in great distress because of Vrittasura. He has defeated us in war. You are our only salvation. You have always given protection and help to us. You are the Almighty Mother of the universe. Please help us. You are all knowing. The protection of the three lokas is entirely in Your hands. Devi! You are the ocean of compassion. A son may go astray, but if he is in difficulty, the mother always comes to his aid. This rule has been made by You, O Devi! We have not committed any mistake, but we have come to You for refuge. O Compassionate Mother! Why are You not helping us.

O Giver of life to all! Long ago there was a demon who terrorized all the worlds. He was of the form of a buffalo. You had mercy on us and killed him. Please do the same to Vrittasura. Like Mahishasura there were two other powerful demons, Shumbh and Nishumbh. You had mercy on us and killed them, along with a host of other demons. In the same way please release us from the fear of Vrittasura. Mother, we are in great fear of this demon. Only You can save us.

Jagaddambike! Please tell us how we can please You. Every fruit and flower that we use for Your puja, is created by You. You reside in all the mantras and rituals. We can only bow our heads at your Holy Lotus Feet. Those men are truly blessed and fortunate, who can keep their steady and undivided attention on Your Lotus Feet. Because, caught in the web of worldly pleasures, those who desire liberation, must use the only boat for crossing the ocean of illusion – which is, meditation on Your Holy Lotus Feet. We are also indebted

to those Brahmins, learned in the Vedas, who constantly perform yagyas and worship You. To please and satisfy the gods, the "Swaha" is uttered; and to satisfy the ancestors "Swadha" is uttered at Yagyas and Homas. You reside in all beings as intellect, luster and peace. You are the magnificence and glory of the creation. You fill Your devotees with Your Shakti and Your Love.

Vyasji says – Rajan! The Devi responded by appearing before them in Her most beautiful form. She was decorated with ornaments. She was holding noose and goad; and was in the pose of Abhay Mudra, with four arms. Tiny bells tinkled from Her anklets, and She was draped in silk. Her voice was sweet like the cuckoo's call. Crescent moon of the first quarter formed the jewel in Her crown. Her face was full of smiles. Her three eyes completed the beauty of Her divine face. She was covered in Parijat flowers. She wore red garments. Red sandal paste anointed Her body. Divine Mother, Ocean of Mercy, was smiling. She is both manifest and unmanifest. The Vedas are constantly trying to fathom Her magnitude and description beyond limit. Her very appearance grants Sat-Chit-Anand. The devas beheld the Mother and experienced this joy. Then Bhagawati Jagaddamba said – Tell me what difficulties you are now facing.

The devas said – Devi! Please put an enchantment on Vrittasura, so that he begins to trust us. Then please enable all our weapons with the shakti to kill him.

Vyasji says – Bhagawati Jagaddamba said – Tathasthu! (It shall be so), and removed Herself from their sight. The devas returned to their abodes, happy and satisfied.

Chapter 6 Episodes 6-7

6-7 Death of Vrittasur. Indra goes into hiding. Nahush covets Indra's wife Shachi.

Vyasji says – After receiving the boon the devas went into the house of Vrittasur. The daitya was shining with luster, and looked powerful enough to conquer the three worlds and consume the devas. But they went near him and began to speak gentle words. For their own benevolence they resorted to sweet words. They used artifice and guile and befriended Vrittasur.

Vrittasur said – I can accept your friendship on the condition that you do not kill me using dry or wet weapons; you do not use stone or thunderbolt; and you do not kill me by day or by night. Otherwise there is no question of friendship.

Vyasji says – They agreed to his demands. Indra came personally to make the agreement. After that they were often seen together, enjoying Nandanvan; or walking in the Gandhamadan mountains. And some days they would walk on the beach. Vrittasur enjoyed this friendship. But Indra was constantly looking for a way to kill Vrittasur.

One day Tvashta, who was watching this growing friendship, called his son and said – O Fortunate One! I am going to tell you something which is for your benevolence. Hear me. You should never trust a person who has already committed a crime. Indra is your enemy of recent time. He is very avaricious, and is always suspicious of others. He is always planning harm to others. It is his nature to exploit weaknesses; and to use deceit and intrigue. Son, do not

trust him. He has already killed once. There is nothing to prevent him from doing so again.

Vyasji says – Even though his father gave him this advice, death was already dancing on Vrittasura's head; and he did not pay heed to his father's warning. One day Indra saw Vrittasur near the ocean. It was dusk, and Indra recalled what the mahatmas have said about dusk. It is a dangerous time – when it can neither be called day, nor night. So he decided that the time and place were right. No one was around, and Vrittasur was alone. But his only fear was that the demon was undefeatable. Just then he saw a big mass of foam floating in the sea. He thought, this is neither dry, nor is it wet. Also it could not be considered a weapon. He picked up the foam and concentrated all his attention on Param Shakti Bhagawati. In an instant She appeared and energized the foam. Shri Vishnu had already entered the thunderbolt. The thunderbolt was covered with foam, and Indra threw it at Vrittasur. Vrittasur fell like a broken mountain, and his body lay lifeless on the earth.

Indra was very happy. He assembled all the devas, and began to sing the praises of Bhagawati Jagaddamba, by whose grace he was able to kill the enemy. He had an image of the Devi, made in rubies, and installed it in his palace. Three times a day the Devi was worshipped with flowers. From then on, "Shree Devi" was made the Deity of the devas. Indra also worshipped Bhagwan Vishnu. Vrittasur was an object of great fear for the devas, and after his death they were greatly relieved. Divine cool breeze enveloped the heavens. Gandharvas, Yakshas, rakshasas and kinnars began to celebrate. In this way, by the intervention of Devi Parashakti, Indra succeeded in killing Vrittasur. The Devi had also previously dulled the daitya's brain. So it became known that it was the Devi who killed Vrittasur, using Indra as Her instrument.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Vrittasur was dead. But Indra was full of fear of the consequences, so he went away to Amravati. The munis who heard this criticized Indra. They said – To kill this enemy we have used cunning and guile. We cannot be called munis. We have broken trust. That greed and attachment is most despicable, which gives birth to sin and evil deeds. The one who advises sinners, and the one who supports sinners, are also responsible for the sin. Thus the munis also returned to their ashrams, but there was sadness on their faces.

Bharat! When Tvashta heard that his son had been killed by Indra, he began to weep. His chest heaved with great sobs. Then he went to the place where the body of Vrittasur lay. He performed the last rites. Then he took a bath and offered sesame seeds to the dead. After that he made preparations to recite mantras and pronounce a curse upon Indra. He said – In the same manner that Indra deceived my son with sweet words and offers of friendship, and then killed him; so also will Indra suffer. This is Brahmarekha (destiny allotted by Providence), and no one can alter it. Tvashta then went to Mount Sumeru and settled down there to perform severe austerities.

Raja Janmejay asked – Grandfather! Tell me what happened to Indra after Vrittasura's death. Did he always suffer, or did he enjoy some happiness. Please tell me the story.

Vyasji says – O Fortunate One! All living things have to pay for their actions. This rule governs alike – gods, demons and humans. It is irrevocable. Whether a person is weak or strong, in proportion to his actions, he has to reap the results. It is a general practice in this world that when fortune is kind to someone, he has many friends and supporters. But, in difficult times, everyone abandons him. When misfortune strikes, even mother, father,

brothers, wife, servants, friends and sons – all of them desert. The doer of the deed has to pay. This is a fact. After the killing of Vrittasur every one returned to their places. Indra had lost his luster and had become weak. "Indra is the killer of a brahmin!". Saying this, all the devas began to condemn him. "How can a person who has entered a bond of trust and friendship stoop to kill that same friend?" This question was asked by all, in the assemblies of devas and gandharvas. Indra also heard these defamatory remarks.

When one loses the respect of others, then his very life is an insult. People on the road laugh at such a person. Indradyumna was a sage from a royal lineage. He committed no sin, but when he lost his reputation he was thrown out of heaven. Then what of Indra who definitely had committed a sin. King Yayati was expelled from heaven for a very small mistake. Then there was another king who had to spend eighteen yugas as a crane. Even though he was endowed with supernatural powers, Indra was never at peace. He did not sit long in the assemblies, and sometimes even fainted. Seeing this condition, his wife Indrani asked him - Lord! Your enemy has been killed. Then why are you still so disturbed. Why are you having difficulty in breathing like an ordinary mortal. There does no seem to be any other powerful enemy who is threatening you.

Indra said – The killing of a Brahmin is filling me with fear and despair. I cannot find peace anywhere. I do not enjoy my garden, nor do I find satisfaction in drinking nectar of the gods or devprasad from the yagyas. I do not wish to watch the dancing or singing of the apsaras. I have also lost interest in the cow Kamadhenu, or the Kalpavriksh. My conscience is burning me up.

Vyasji says - After speaking thus to his wife, Indra left his palace and went to Manasarovar. His heart was heaving with fear, and his energy was seeping

away, making him weak. He went and hid in the stalk of a lotus. He had no concern about his responsibilities. His sinful act had blunted his intelligence. He just hid in the water to wait out time, like a snake which hides for its life. He had no friend or supporter. His senses were in agitation and anguish. After Indra left, the devas were in great confusion and depression. All kinds of omens and ill portents began to be seen. In the whole world there was not a single person who had conquered his passions, or subdued his desires. The clouds stopped giving rain. The flow of rivers was interrupted. Lakes dried up. There was disorder and lawlessness in the absence of a king. So all the munis and devas held a meeting and installed Nahush on Indra's throne. Nahush was a great soul, but as soon as he was made king of the devas, he became ambitious. The sudden acquisition of so much luxury, wealth and position, made him lazy. It happened that he heard the description of Shachi's beauty and accomplishments. He became covetous, and wanted to possess her. He asked the rishis – Why doesn't Indrani come to see me. Devas! You are the ones who made me Indra. Therefore you must send Shachi to serve me. You all owe obedience to me because now I am your Indra. I am the ruler of all. And therefore Shachi should come to serve me in my palace. Hearing this the devas and munis became fearful. They went to Indrani and bowed respectfully and said - Indraniji! This sinful Nahush has intentions of owning you. He has ordered us to send you to his palace. He is our lord as we have installed him as Indra. We are bound to obey him. Indrani was filled with fear, and her face became pale. She said to Brihaspati – Brahman! I have come to you for refuge. Save me from Nahush.

Brihaspatiji said – Devi! Do not fear that sinfully inclined Nahush. I will never break the maryadas of our tradition by asking you to go to him. One who does not give protection to one who seeks it; will have to suffer torture and anguish till the end of the yuga. O Delicate One! Trust me. I will never abandon you.

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Chapter 6 Episodes 8 - 9

8 – 9 On the advice of Brihaspati, Indrani invokes the Devi. The Munis curse Nahush.

Vyasji says – Rajan! When Nahush heard that Indrani was under the protection of Brihaspati he became displeased. He said to the Devas – Now it is almost certain that Brihaspati will die at my hands. The reason is, that he is keeping Indrani safe in his house. Nahush was burning with anger and desire, and his face looked evil. The devas and rishis spoke the gentle words of advice from the Vedas. They said – Rajendra! Get rid of your anger. Your intellect is getting adulterated with malice and lust. The dharma shastras condemn anyone who casts adulterous eyes on the wife of another. Shachi is pure and holy. If you fall in your spirituality, then all your subjects will come to ruin. At present you are the ruler of the three worlds. You are a righteous king. It is the duty of a king to lead a pure and dharmic life. Rajendra! When there is equal and reciprocal love between husband and wife, then only there can be happiness. Therefore you must abandon all desires to possess another person's wife. Take to royal and noble behavior, because you occupy a superior and dignified position. Rajan! If a person commits sinful acts, his wealth and fortune decrease; whereas if he performs good deeds and lives a dharmic life, his fortune increases. You should take recourse to sattwic wisdom.

Nahush said – Devas! If Shachi comes to me, you will be rewarded, and of course Shachi will have all the comforts and happiness. And if this is not done,

then my dissatisfaction and agitation will go out of control. This is the truth. Either by coaxing or by force, you must bring Shachi to me.

Nahush was intoxicated with lust and desire. This terrified the devas and munis. They said – It shall be as you wish. We will bring Shachi to you. Then they went to the ashram of Brihaspatiji and told him the sad story.

Vyasji says – Brihaspatiji listened to the Devas, and said – The most chaste and pious Shachi came to me for protection. I will never send her out. But there is one possible solution. Shachi should go just once to Nahush and say – "I will certainly serve you; but first I must ascertain whether my husband Indra is alive or dead. It is possible that he is still alive. In such a situation how can I consider another man as my husband. Therefore it is absolutely essential for me to return, so that I can search for him." She should trick him into complacence, and then do exactly as I tell her, to find Indra and bring him back.

Accordingly all the devas and munis accompanied Shachi, and went to Nahush. His happiness knew no bounds. He laughed loudly and said – O Dear One with the beautiful doe eyes! I am now in the seat of Indra. The devas have given me this honour. All the worlds are under my command. Now you also come into my service. Indrani trembled with fear. Then she calmed herself and spoke – "O King who now occupies Indra's seat, I have one request. Please wait till I find out if my husband is still alive or not. I still do not know whether he is dead, or has just gone somewhere." Nahush was pleased to hear this. He said – "Very good. It shall be so". Then he gave her permission to leave. She went back to the Devas and said – "You are so diligent and industrious. Please find Indra and bring him back to me." After consultation, all of them went to the Supreme Lord Bhagwan Vishnu and began to sing stutis. They said

– “You are the lord of the entire universe. It is your nature to help those who come to you”. Then they told him about Indra - “Out of fear of the consequences of Brahma-hatya, he has gone into hiding somewhere. We are in trouble, and only you can help. Please save us, and also release Indra from the sin of Brahma-hatya.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – Devas! To atone for the sin of killing a Brahmin, Indra must perform the Ashwamedh Yagya (horse sacrifice). When all his sins are washed away, he can again become lord of heaven. Then there will be nothing more to fear. This Ashwamedha sacrifice is an unfailing means of pleasing Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Then She destroys all sins including Brahma-hatya. Indrani should also worship Bhagawati Jagaddamba unceasingly. She is compassionate and all powerful. Her devotees always enjoy happiness and joy. There is no doubt in this. Devas! By his own misdeeds Nahush will meet his end. After the yagya, Indra will be purified and become a holy soul again. He will have his kingdom and wealth restored to him.

After hearing the holy words of Bhagwan Vishnu, the devas made Brihaspatiji their leader and went to the place where Indra was hiding. They told him what Shri Vishnu had said, and made arrangements for the great and holy Ashwamedha Yagya. After completion of the yagya, Bhagwan Shri Hari appeared. Under His directions, the brahmahatya was divided and thrown on the trees, rivers, mountains and women. In this way Indra was cleansed of his sin. But even then, Indra continued to stay in the water till his bad time was over. He used the stalk of a lotus as his abode. No living thing could see him. Indrani was still not free from sorrow. She said to Brihaspatiji – Maharaj! Even though the Ashwamedha Yagya has been completed, my Lord Indra has not come home. How will I ever see him again. Please tell me a way.

Brihaspatiji said – Devi! Now you must engage yourself in the worship of the most auspicious, and most generous, Bhagawati Jagaddamba. It is only by Her grace that your husband will be restored to you. By your prayers, Bhagawati Jagaddamba will deprive Nahush of shakti. He will lose the seat of heaven.

Rajan! Indrani learned all the mantras and puja procedures and protocols from Brihaspatiji. She began a humble and deeply devoted aradhana to Devi Bhuvaneshwari. She became a tapasvini and renounced all comforts and food. Her attention was anchored on her puja, and on the Lotus Feet of the Devi. After many days, the Devi got prasanna (pleased), and honoured Indrani with a darshan. She was of extremely beautiful form, and the light of one crore suns were shining from Her. She was seated on a swan. There was the cool luster of a crore of moons also emitting from Her. There were also brilliant flashes from a crore of lightnings. The four Vedas were in attendance. Her four arms held noose, goad and Abhay Mudra (stance of protection). A necklace of purest pearls adorned Her, and reached right up to Her Lotus Feet. She had three eyes, and Her face had a divine smile. Only She has the authority and the right to be called Janani (giver of birth) of all beings – from Brahma to an insignificant worm. She is the ocean of nectar. It is this Parameshwari who controls and directs endless and countless universes (brahmaands). She is the receptacle of the essences of auspiciousness and good qualities, which is available to those who desire it. It was that Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, the mistress of the universe, omniscient, unchanging, imperishable, eternal, immovable, who manifested. She spoke to Indrani in deep and serious tones –

The Devi said – O Beautiful One who is dear to Indra! Ask what you desire. I am pleased with your single minded devotion and carefully performed worship. I have come here only to grant your wish. I am not easily accessible, nor easily attainable. It is only after the accumulation of virtues and merits of

(koti janmo) infinite duration of ten million births; that one becomes worthy of My darshan.

Indrani stood before the manifested Parameshwari, with bowed head and folded hands. She said – O Mother! I desire to be reunited with my husband. I also wish to lose all fear of Nahush, and to get back my lost position.

The Devi said – You take my messenger and go to Manasarovar where there is installed an image of Me. It is known as Visvakama (One who looks after the Universe). There you will meet Indra. He is full of fear, and is suffering sorrow and anguish. You who have big, beautiful eyes! Have no more fear. I will put Nahush into illusion and confusion. Very soon he will lose the throne of heaven. I will fulfil all your desires.

Vyasji says – Indrani took the messenger of the Devi and went to Manasarovar. She saw the image of the Devi. Indra was hiding there. Indrani's desire to meet her husband was fulfilled and she was very happy.

Vyasji says – When Indra saw his wife he was surprised. He asked her – Dear One! How did you come here. How did you know my hiding place. No living being was aware that I was hiding here.

Shachi said – Prabho! It was by the grace of Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba that I found you. The devas and munis had installed Rajrishi Nahush in your place. That sinful rishi is asking me to accept him as my husband, because he is now Indra. What shall I do.

Indra said – Auspicious One! In the same way that I am waiting for the passage of time, you also strengthen your mind, and wait.

Vyasji says – Rajan! This did not help to calm Indrani's fears. She said – How can I stay without you. That Nahush is full of arrogance and is intoxicated with desire. If I am alone, he will trouble me.

Indra said - I will tell you a way by which you can be safe. He is evil. If he tries to win you by force, you take a promise from him and then deceive him. You go to him when he is alone, and say – Lord of all the worlds. You must come to receive me in such a conveyance, that is drawn by rishis. I will be pleased to accompany you, because I have made this resolution to travel in a conveyance carried by rishis. He is so blinded by desire that he will order the rishis to carry the palanquin. It is certain that he will incur the wrath of the tapasvis, and they will curse him. Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba will help you. She never fails Her devotees. Even when the situation seems difficult and painful, one must understand that in it is hidden our benevolence. Therefore, meditate and worship Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari who presides over Maniparvat. Perform the pujas as directed by Brihaspatiji.

Shachi obeyed her husband, and directly went to Nahush and said – O King who rules in place of Indra! All my wishes have been fulfilled by you But O Deva! You are so powerful and brave. There is one wish that is still hidden in my heart. If you grant this also, I will happily come and live in your palace." Nahush said – O You who shine with the luster of the moon! Just tell me your wish and I will immediately carry it out. Even if it is something unattainable, or impossible, I will fulfil it.

Shachi said – How can I tell you. I don't know if I can confide in you and trust you. You must make a firm promise which is binding on you. Only then will I tell you. If you do what I ask, I will serve you all my life." Nahush said – I will certainly honour your wish. There is no doubt in this. If I disregard or

disrespect your wish, may I lose all the punyas that I have accumulated as fruits of various yagyas.

Shachi said – Elephants, horses and chariots are the vehicles of Indra. Vishnu has Garuda; Yamraj rides the buffalo; Shankar uses Vrishab (the bull), and Brahma has a swan for a conveyance. Kartikeya has a peacock, and Ganesha climbs a mouse. I desire that your conveyance should be unusual and special. It should be that which was so far unobtainable by Vishnu, Rudra, Asuras and Rakshasas. Maharaj! I desire that your conveyance be carried by all those noble and eminent munis, who are steadfast in their tapasyas. They should all be harnessed. This is my wish. Because in my eyes, you are more superior than all the gods, and this will add to your splendor.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Nahush laughed with satisfaction. The reason being, that Mahamaya had degraded his brain.

Nahush applauded Indrani – O Beautiful One! I agree with you. I also like the idea of such a conveyance. I will do exactly as you have said. Those who are less valiant and powerful, were not able to command the munis. But I am above them. I will certainly come to you on such a vahana. In all the three worlds I am the most competent and capable. Once I achieve this distinction, I will be more respected and honoured by all the devas and munis.

Vyasji says – Rajan! After making all these declarations, Nahush permitted Shachi to go back to Brihaspatiji's ashram. Then he summoned all the munis and informed them of his decision.

Nahush said – O Wise Ones! I am now in the position of Indra, Lord of the three worlds. I have all the shaktis. At this moment, I want all of you to perform a duty towards me. I have Indra's throne, but Indrani has not yet

come to me When I asked her the reason, she reluctantly told me – King of Devas! You must come to fetch me in a vehicle drawn by munis and tapasvis". Most respected Munis! This is a difficult task. But you are all compassionate and will help me to fulfil this wish, because I am impatient for Shachi to come to my palace. You are my only hope. So please be kind enough to help me.

Rajan! Of all the munis, Agastyaji was the most famous. Being compassionate, and also because of pre-destined fate, he agreed to the base request of Nahush. When Nahush heard that the munis had agreed to his request, his happiness knew no bounds. He ordered a fancy palanquin, and sat in it. Then he asked the holy munis to lift it, and then shouted – Come on! Come on! He was so full of desire and impatience that he lost control of his senses. He goaded muni Agastyaji with his foot. Husband of Lopamudra, Agastyaji, was the foremost of tapasvis. He had devoured the rakshasa Vatapi. Once, he consumed the waters of the seas. The foolish Nahush disrespected such a great muni by even lashing him with a whip. He kept urging the munis to hurry and go faster. Then of course, Agastyaji got angry and pronounced a curse – You low and vile creature! Go to the forest and become a frightful and venomous serpent. You will have to suffer great hardships in that sarpa yoni (one of the classes of animate beings) for many thousands of years. You will be deprived of your energy and you will loiter in the forest. In the lineage of Dharma, will be born a great and noble soul called Yudhishtr. You will meet him. When you hear from him the answers to questions, you will get released from this curse.

Vyasji says – Nahush was stunned by the curse, and began to sing stutis to Muni Agastyaji. Instantaneously his form changed into that of a serpent, and he fell from heaven. Brihaspatiji wasted no time. He went to Manasarovar and narrated the incident to Indra. Indra was very happy and relieved to hear

this. All the devas and munis also reached Manasarovar. They gave him comfort and assurance, and made arrangements to take him to heaven. Indra was brought back with dignity and respect, and coronated once again. He was reunited with Shachi, and began to rule the three worlds.

Vyasji says – Rajan! In this way Indra had to suffer great hardships. By the grace of Bhagawati Jagaddamba he regained his kingdom. This is a very profound story. According to one's actions, the fruits come before him; because a being has to experience the effects of this deeds, whether good or bad. This is an irrevocable law – it can never be erased or altered.

Chapter 6 Episodes 10-13

10 – 13 Three kinds of karmas; Yug-Dharm (duties suitable for a particular age); sacred places of pilgrimage; cleansing of attention; and cause of dispute between Vasisht and Vishvamitra.

Raja Janmejay asked – Brahmin! You have told me the strange story of Indra. You have also told me of the help given by Bhagawati Jagaddamba. But I am curious to know as to why, after getting the throne of heaven, Indra got caught in this vortex of intolerable suffering and distress. After performing one hundred Ashwamedha sacrifices he merited the throne of heaven. All the gods accepted his rulership. How did he fall from his position. Kindly tell me the cause of this.

Sootjee says – Shaunakji and all respected rishis! When king Janmejay asked this question, Satyawatinandan Vyasji was pleased, and gave a detailed answer.

Vyasji says – Rajendra! I will tell you the most amazing cause for this. Listen. Learned men have classified the results of actions as --- those accumulated from the past; those merited from the present; and those provided by destiny or fate. The fruits of actions of thousands of past births are called Sanchit. Actions are again divided into Sattwic, Rajas and Tamas. Rajan! The accumulated good and bad actions of many previous births appear in the present life as virtue or villainy. And the doer has got to experience it. All

beings are governed by this law. In every birth the living being accumulates these karmas. The actions that are presently performed are called present karmas. The living which takes on a body, commits actions according to the good or bad tendencies or inclination. Once the body is assumed, the process of actions starts, instigated or caused by fate. Those should be considered as karmas or fate, which disappear as soon as the fruit is experienced. Beings have compulsorily to experience or fulfil the fruits of fate. There is no doubt in this. Rajendra! It is an absolute fact, that all the actions of previous births, whether good or bad, produce their reactions or fruit in the present birth. And it is inevitable that one has to experience it. Maharaj! Man, gods, yakshas, rakshasas, gandharvas and kinnars – all are bound by this law. Karma is the main causal in assuming a body. Once the karmas are paid for, the life ends. One should not doubt this. Rajan! Indra and all the devas, the danavas, yakshas and gandharvas, are all subservient to this law. All the happiness and sorrows that one has to face are the results or fruits of actions of previous births. So it is clear that the collection of karmas of all previous births come one by one, as fruits which have to be borne in this lifetime. This rule is also for the gods, and it was due to this destiny that Indra had to suffer so many hardships.

Rajan! Nar and Narayan have taken birth in the house of Dharam as his sons. They are the partial incarnations of Bhagwan Narayan. They again manifested as Shri Krishna and Arjun. The munis have made a thorough study of this Puranic story. Their view is, that if anyone is endowed with exceptional shakti, he should be considered the partial incarnation of some deva. All those who are very strong; very fortunate; very wealthy; very wise, and very generous, are all considered partial incarnations of the devas. Rajan! This same consideration has been made in the case of the Pandavas. It is only for the fulfillment of fate that one has to assume a material body. As soon as the

body is acquired, the person can never avoid the motions of happiness and sorrow. No living being is free from this. The ever- watchful fate exerts its authority and discipline. The ever subservient beings are in its sway of birth and rebirth. By the law of this fate, the Pandavas were caused to live in the forest. Then they were exerts its authority and discipline. The ever subservient beings are in its sway of birth and rebirth. By the law of this fate, the Pandavas were caused to live in the forest. Then they were caused to live in a house. After this, they were caused to perform the foremost Rajasuya Yagya (a sacrifice which only a universal monarch is entitled to perform). Then again they had to go to the forest and suffer great hardship. Rajan! The movement of fate is unstoppable.

Vyasji says – Rajan! In accordance with Time, each yuga has its own characteristic type of people. No one should think differently, because the dharma of that yuga is the prime causal. All those who were absorbed in dharma, have taken birth in Satya Yuga (Golden Age). Those who interest in dharma and wealth, took birth in Treta Yuga (The Silver Age). Those interested in dharma-wealth-desires have already taken their birth in Dwapar. And those, whose only interest is in wealth and bodily desires, have taken birth now, in Kaliyuga, (the Iron Age). Rajendra, the dharma of a yuga cannot be changed again and again. Righteousness and unrighteousness, dharma and adharma of a yuga, is arranged by fate.

Raja Janmejay asked – Most Fortunate One! Where are all the dharmic punya atmas of Satya Yuga residing now? Most respected grandfather! Please also tell me where those saints of Treta and Dwapar Yugas are residing. And what about those wicked, shameless, steeped in sin, who scorn and detract the Vedas; who have now taken birth in Kaliyuga. Where will they go in Satya

Yuga. Please tell me all this very simply and clearly, as I have always desired to know.

Vyasji says – Rajan! All the Satya Yugi people who are born on this earth, perform their holy works and always go to Devlok. All categories of men – Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra, do pious works, live a dharmic life, and obtain a place in heaven. Truthfulness, mercy, generosity, faithful to one man or woman; bear no malice or hatred, and treat all men as equal – these are the qualities of the dharma of Satya Yuga. Any being who observes this way of life, becomes entitled to a place in heaven. Even those in the lowest strata, like dhobis, can attain heaven if they live a righteous life. Rajan! This system also applies to those born in Treta and Dwapar Yugas. It is in Kaliyuga that mostly sinners take their birth. For them, hell is their residence. They continue to stay in hell until such time as a new Yuga starts. Then again they take a human birth and come on this earth. Rajan! When the age of Kali is completed, then Satya Yuga starts; and at that time the holy realized souls take their birth and enhance the glory of the earth. In the same way, when Dwapar ended and Kali started, all the sinners stealthily move from hell to earth. Kali is the embodiment of a period abounding in sinfulness. Therefore the population of that yuga is of the same low quality. Sometimes, by chance, contrary arrangements are made for the beings. So, many souls who should be born in Kaliyug, get a birth in Dwapar. Similarly, Satya Yugi and Treta Yugi souls become polluted or defiled, and have compulsorily to take birth in Kaliyug and suffer for their former actions and misdeeds. Many Kaliyugi souls get birth in Dwapar.

Janmejay asked – Most Auspicious One! Which Yuga embodies which dharma. Please tell me in detail.

Vyasji says – O King! Listen. I will explain by giving you an example. Even a sadhu or saint's attention can come under the influence of a Yuga and become defiled. Just like what happened to your father. Even though he lived a dharmic and righteous life and was a great soul – he came under the influence of Kali. His mind became irrational and he committed an indignity and insult on a Brahmin. Otherwise, how else could a man of high birth in the lineage of Yayati, drape a dead snake on the neck of a meditating tapasvi? Rajan! This was the effect of the Yuga. It is a fact that in Satya Yuga Brahmins were scholars of the Vedas. Through them was performed a continuous and unceasing worship of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. They were filled with ardour and intense longing for a darshan of Devi Bhagawati. They used to spend all their time in meditation upon Gayatri; on pranayam (process of restraining breath); and chanting of sacred mantras. Their primary chanting was of the pure and holy maya beej. Their greatest desire was the establishment of Shakti temples in every town and village. Almost every person observed truth, compassion and purity in their interaction with each other, and in the execution of their duties. They were all fit to be called Brahmins, as they had full knowledge of Brahma. The main job of the Kshatriyas of Satya Yuga, was the sustenance and maintenance of their subjects. The Vaishyas carried out their trading, farming and agriculture. During the auspicious Satya Yuga, the sole interest of the Shudras was to be of service to others. In that foremost of Yugas, all persons belonging to all stratas of society, worshipped Bhagawati Shakti Jagaddamba.

This state of dharma existed also in the Treta Yuga; but it began to decline and decrease. The state that prevailed in Satya Yuga became much less in Dwapar Yuga. All those who were considered demons and rakshasas in the ancient yugas, began to be considered as Brahmins in Kaliyuga. Because the priestly class of the present times indulge in sanctimonious hypocrisy and blasphemy;

it has become the nature of Kaliyugi Brahmins to cheat, to tell lies, and to make a mockery of vedic tenets and rites. They never read the Vedas. They serve the low minded shudras. Pious frauds and deceivers are considered shrewd and smart. Brahmins are ambitious. They indulge into false propaganda, they support false gurus, they condemn the Vedas and indulge into debates and arguments. As Kaliyuga advances, there is a steady decline of Dharma and truth. Gradually the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, get influenced, and become adharmic. All persons start committing sin and telling lies without any fear or hesitation.

Rajan! The Kalyugi Brahmins who have the mentality of Shudras, are only interested in collecting donations and payments for services rendered. When Kaliyug is well into its middle period, liberty and willful independence will grow among the women. Women will become immoral, wayward, greedy, despotic and filled with worldly desires and attachments. These base and despicable women will behave in lewd and indelicate manner, and speak snobbishly and shamelessly. They will have to suffer never ending woes and tribulations. These Kaliyugi women will deceive their husbands on one side, and give big lectures on dharma, on the other. These are the signs for identifying the wicked and unprincipled women of Kaliyuga. Rajan! If food and drink are pure and unadulterated, then the attention can remain pure. If the attention is pure and clean, dharma will automatically bloom and evolve. When there is pollution in morality and virtuous conduct; then dharma also gets adulterated. And when dharma gets adulterated, it is inevitable that the contamination enters all classes of people. Rajan! People of Kaliyuga are bereft and deficient in every dharma that exists. All living things in Kaliyuga have this misfortune that they are minus dharma. This is the characteristic of Kaliyuga. Rajan! Those who commit sin, continuously under the influence of Kaliyug, can never atone by ordinary penance.

Janmejay asked – Bhagwan! You are knowledgeable about all dharmas. You have made a deep study of all the scriptures. What will be the fate of these people of Kaliyuga, stricken with the disease of adharma. Also, if there is any possible way of cleansing these sins, please be kind and tell me.

Vyasji says – Maharaj! There is one, and only one, way. For washing away even the greatest sin, one must meditate on the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Rajan! The holy name of Devi Bhagawati is so powerful in pulverizing sin, that there are not enough sins yet committed. So, there should be no dejection. Even in play, if one spontaneously utters the holy name of Bhagawati Jagaddamba, the benefits that accrue are unknown, even to Rudra and other Gods. Rajan! Meditation on the holy name of Shree Devi, is the only way to atone for ones sins. Therefore, in fear of the influence of Kali, a person should retire to a holy place, and there cleanse the attention and place it, steadily and singly, on the Holy Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. It is important to detach the mind from all living and non-living things. He who worships with devotion and humility, the Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, all his sins are destroyed. Rajan! I have told you this secret of all the scriptures. You better consider all these things, and settle down to worship the Holy Lotus Feet of Devi Bhagawati. The renowned, unutterable and unpronounceable Gayatri Mantra is verily the name of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Almost all persons chant this mantra, but because of the illusion of maya, no one understands its supreme magnitude. Those who chant it, like any ordinary mantra, do not get their realization. Brahmins give this mantra a special place in their hearts while chanting; but not having the awareness of its grandeur and sublime majesty, they too have not got realization. This is the play of Mahamaya.

Rajan! I have told you everything in connection with yugas and their dharmas. Now what else would you like to know.

Raja Janmejay said – Munivar! Please tell me about all those holy places of pilgrimage on this earth; the sacred spots; and the holy rivers where the gods and men should go. Also, which holy places grant boons to those who bathe and distribute alms; and finally the protocols and rituals when embarking on a pilgrimage.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Listen! I will describe those holy places, where there are grand temples dedicated to the Devi. Among rivers, the holiest is the River Ganga. There are other holy rivers which are comparable. Such as Yamuna, Saraswati, Narmada, Gandaki, Sindhu, Gomati, Tamasa, Kaveri, Chandrabhaga, Punya, Netravati, Charmanvati, Sarayu, Tapi and Sabarmati. These are as large as the Ganga. Besides these, there are hundreds of smaller rivers. Among rivers, those that reach the ocean are considered the holiest. Those which do not reach the ocean, are considered the lesser ones. From among those that reach the ocean, those rivers that are always flowing full, are the holiest. During the months of Sawan and Bhadon (monsoon), all the rivers are likened to a woman in course - because all the rainwater which gets polluted in the villages, flows into the rivers.

Pushkar (a sacred place near Ajmer); Kurukshetra and Dharmaranya are most holy places of pilgrimage. Other important places of pilgrimage are Prabhas, Prayag; Naimisharanya (ancient forest); and Arbudaranya. Shrishail, Gandhamadan and Sumeru – these are holy mountains. Out of innumerable holy lakes, Manasarovar is the holiest. Bindusar and Acchodsar are also considered holy. The sanctity of these lakes is increased by the ashrams of many munis who spend their time meditating on the atma. Badarikashram is

the most sacred. This is known to all. This is where Nar and Narayan performed difficult tapasyas. Two other famous ashrams are Vamanashram and Shatyupashram. Ashrams are named after the munis who did tapasya there. Rajan! Like this there are innumerable holy places on the earth. And in most of these places, there are temples in honour of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. There are some places where, if you worship according to the proper rules, all sins get washed away. I will tell you about them a little later.

Rajan! Charity, fasting, yagya and tapasya – these are all holy and pious acts. I will tell you about these also. The success of a pilgrimage, tapasya, or charity, is dependent upon the purity of the wealth or materials used; the attention and accuracy of the performance; and the cleanliness of body and mind. Fruits do not come by casual means. Rajan! Dravyashuddhi (purity of wealth and ingredients); and Kriyashuddhi (cleanliness and accuracy in performance); are not so difficult. But Mana-shuddhi (purity of mind), is nearly impossible for most people. This is because the attention is very restless and fickle, and is caught in the web of worldly attractions. The attention keeps getting caught in impure desires; ill temper; bad thoughts; evil disposition; misunderstandings, criticisms and disagreements; then how can it ever be clean and pure. Desire, anger, greed and lust, and Ego – all these put obstacles and pollution into tapasya – renunciation and pilgrimage. One should maintain a lifestyle whereby living things are not harmed, physically or emotionally. Always speak the truth; never steal; keep the mind pure, and keep the senses under control. Rajan! If a person observes all these dharmas, he can obtain all the benefits from a pilgrimage. While embarking on a sacred pilgrimage, if one forsakes the prescribed ceremonies due to the evil habits of an evil society, then the whole purpose of the pilgrimage is defeated. No punyas accrue. Rather, the omissions get accumulated as sins. Rajan! There is no doubt that a pilgrimage washes away the sins related to destiny, and cleanses one. But it does not

have the shakti or capacity to wash a polluted and poisoned mind and attention. The undertaking to cleanse the chitta (attention, mind), is considered more holy than a pilgrimage to the Ganga. If one is fortunate to accomplish chitta-shuddhi, then a complete cleansing of body, mind and soul, takes place. But Rajan! For this chitta-shuddhi, the satsang (collectivity of realized souls) is absolutely essential. It is next to impossible to achieve chitta shuddhi only through reading of the Vedas and shastras; by abstinence or renunciation; by tapasya, yagya and charity. Vasishtji was the son of Brahmaji. He had made a thorough study of the Vedas and Vidyas. He lived on the banks of the holy river Ganga. Inspite of all this, there entered into his mind hatred and malice towards Vishwamitra. They became hostile towards each other and cursed each other. This gave rise to a great battle between them.

Vyasji says – Both the munis were engaged in fighting. Seeing this the creator, Lord Brahmaji appeared before them. Extremely compassionate and kind, the other devas also accompanied Brahmaji. He pacified them and advised them to stop fighting. In compassion he also washed away the mutual curses that the munis had pronounced on each other. Then all the devas returned to their abodes. The munis, Vasisht and Vishvamitra also returned to their ashrams. After the advice of Brahmaji, the two munis became friends again.

Rajan! This is the way in which the two munis fought and suffered great pain and hardship. Narendra! Who is there in this triloki, who has been able to conquer his ego and live in peace and joy. This proves that even superior beings find it very difficult to attain Chitta-shuddhi. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to use all possible means to achieve purity of attention. Otherwise, pilgrimage, truth speaking; charity, or dharma-related rituals – none of them can prove effective.

Shraddha (faith) has also been divided into three categories - Sattwic, Rajasi and Tamasi. Those who are engaged in dharm and karm, certainly have shraddha in their hearts. The Sattwic shraddha is very rare to find in most beings. If the Rajasi shraddha is maintained by strict adherence to performance and ingredients, then half the fruits of Sattwic Shraddha, may be obtained. Rajan! Those persons whose mind is entangled in desires and anger, and who practice Tamasi Shraddha; nothing can be achieved by them. They do not even get recognition or praise. Therefore one should use the means of satsang and attending readings of the Vedas, to purify their mind and attention before visiting sacred places of pilgrimage. Then they should stay there, and perform continuous worship and meditation on Bhagawati Jagaddamba. One must always be wary of the influence of Kali, and keep attention on the holy names of the Devi.

One should sing praises of the play of the Devi; and wash Her Holy Lotus Feet with pure attention. One who faithfully does this, can never be influenced by Kali. This is a resource that can easily liberate, even the greatest of sinners from worldly snares and attachments.

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Chapter 6 Episodes 14-15

14-15 How Vasishtji got the name Maitravaruni; and the story of how Nimi came to stay in the eyelid.

Nevertheless She yields to the devotee. There is no doubt in this. Therefore it is of prime importance to worship Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba. This washes away all sins. But of course, if the bhakti is contaminated with malice, hatred, deceit or hypocrisy, it has an adverse effect and causes destruction.

There was a king called Nimi, who was born in the clan of Ishvaku. He was very handsome, virtuous, pious, and loved by his subjects. He never spoke an untruth. He was very generous. He performed many yagyas. That wise king Nimi was counted as the twelfth son of Ishvaku. He was always concerned about the well being of his subjects. He settled down in a place called Jayantpur, which was close to the ashram of Gautam muni. He was kind and generous towards all Brahmins. Once he got a desire to perform a Rajasi Yagya which would last for many days and require a lot of charity and distribution of wealth. Nimi took permission from his father Ishvaku, and according to the directions of the mahatmas, he ordered that all the samagri (ingredients for yagya) should be collected. He sent invitations to Bhrigu, Angira, Vamdev, Gautam, Vasisht, Pulastya, Richik, Pulaha and Kratu, and all other vedic scholars and tapasvis who were competent to perform yagyas. As soon as all arrangements were complete, Nimi performed puja to his guru Vasishtji, and humbly said – "O Muni! I desire to hold a yagya. Be pleased to accept the role of chief priest. O Wise One! You are my Guru. The success of this yagya is

entirely in your hands. I have collected all the prescribed ingredients, and have had them purified. I have a desire that this yagya should go on, uninterrupted, for five years. In this Yagya, the supreme Bhagawati Jagaddamba should be worshipped. The main purpose of this yagya, is to please the Devi."

Vashishtji said – Before you, Indra has already invited me to perform a yagya for him. He is performing the Parashakti Yagya. He has taken a vow to perform this yagya for five hundred years. Therefore Rajan! Keep these ingredients safely. As soon as the yagya of Indra is completed, I will immediately return to you. Till that time, look after the ingredients carefully.

King Nimi said – Brahman! I have already invited a lot of munis to attend this yagya. All arrangements have also been completed. How can I keep them safe for such a long time. Gurudev! You are the principal priest of the Ishvaku clan. There is no part of the Vedas that is unknown to you. O Twice-born One! Why are you abandoning me and going to another. This does not do you any honour. But the king's request was of no avail. Vasishtji left to attend the yagya of Indra. This made the king very sad. He requested Muni Gautam to preside as chief priest. They went to a river close to the Himalayas, and held the yagya there. King Nimi distributed immense wealth to the Brahmins. He gave big gifts of money and cows to the officiating priests. Everyone was very pleased.

Here, on completion of Indra's yagya, after five hundred years, Vasishtji came to see Raja Nimi's yagya. At that time the king was asleep. His sleep was so deep, that his attendants hesitated to wake him. And so, he did not come out to receive his guru. Vasisht felt that the king had knowingly insulted him by ignoring him. He became furious. The failure of the king to receive him with

proper formalities, became the cause of his anger. He pronounced a curse on Nimi – You bypassed your guru and appointed someone else as chief priest for your yagya. Even though I advised you to wait for me, you went ahead and performed the yagya. Therefore, from today you become Videha (bodiless soul) This body of yours will be destroyed. Become bodiless!

Vyasji says – When the servants heard this, they immediately woke the king and informed him of Guru Vasisht's anger. The king bore no ill-will, and immediately came out to meet his guru. He began to speak in gentle tones – O Gurudev! You have the complete knowledge of the dharmas. I am not at fault. I am your host. Despite my repeated requests you cast me aside, and for the sake of payment, you went elsewhere. You did not feel any shame or regret. O Holy One! Brahmins should always be satisfied. You are of this statute. You are verily the son of Brahmadev. You have full knowledge of the Vedas and Scriptures. The dharma of a Brahmin is very intricate and profound, and it is difficult to observe. It is because of a deficiency in your understanding, that you are unnecessarily cursing me in anger. A wise and knowledgeable man must renounce anger, because it is more wretched than a chandaal. It is anger that has caused you to curse me unjustly. Therefore, I also, pronounce a curse – that this anger-filled body of yours should perish. In this way, both Guru Vasisht and King Nimi came under a curse. Both became distressed. Vasishtji ran to his father Brahmaji, and informed him, and prayed to him.

Vasishtji said – Father! King Nimi has cursed me that my body will be destroyed. This will cause me pain. Please tell me what I should do. When I assume another body, who will my father be? Please tell me. I desire that the next body I take, should possess the same qualities and knowledge as my

present one. Maharaj! You are all powerful. Please give me a body that will please me.

Brahma said to his human son – Muni! You enter into the energy of Mitravarun, and wait there. When the time comes, you will appear. You will be unborn. There is no doubt in this. Whatever body you assume, it will be as dharmic and wise as you are now. You will get the respect of all, and will be a learned soul.

Vasisht was very pleased with the assurance of Shri Brahma, and after paying obeisance, and performing parikrama around Brahmaji, he left for the ashram of Varun. Both the munis, Mitra and Varun, who always lived in the same ashram, were present. Vasisht renounced his material body. His subtle body entered the bodies of Mitra and Varun.

Rajan! It happened once, that the beautiful apsara Urvashi, together with her friends, came to the ashram of Mitra Varun. The sight of her disturbed the attention of Mitra Varun. They said – O Beautiful One! Who are you? If you are a dev-kanya, marry us and live in this ashram and experience joy and happiness. She stayed on in the ashram for some time. The munis got greatly charmed by her. Their seed fell into an earthen pot, and out of it emerged two adorable muni-kumars. One child was called Agasthya, and the other was called Vasisht.

Both these boys grew up to be foremost rishis and great tapasvis. Agasthya had great faith in tapasya. At a young age he left for the forest. The second rishi Vasisht was engaged as a purohit by Ikshvaku, for the spiritual ascent of his clan. Raja Ikshvaku made all arrangements for the comfort and stay of

Vasisht. Rajan! I have already told you the story. To fulfil the curse, Vasisht had to take birth in the clan of Mitra Varun in the way I have just told you.

Raja Janmejay said – Mune! You have told me how Vasisht got a body. Now please tell me about Raja Nimi.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Vasisht got a body, but Nimi did not. When Vasisht cursed him, the king was in the midst of the yagya, for which he had been initiated and consecrated (Deekshit). All the Brahmins whom he had invited as Ritvij (sacrificial priests) began to consult each other with concern --- This dharmatma king is consecrated for the yagya. It is still not complete, and the curse of the muni in the middle of it all, is burning him up. What should we do in this frightful situation." The Brahmins invoked various mantras and maintained life in the body of Raja Nimi. He kept breathing. The formless, changeless atma, remained in the body. The Brahmins kept offering flower garlands and sandal paste, and maintained the sacred atma.

When the yagya ended, Indra and all the gods arrived. The Brahmins welcomed them with stutis. This pleased the gods. Then, most respectfully the Brahmins told the gods about the situation. The gods said – O King who is most virtuous! We are pleased. Ask whatever boon you desire. You can get a very high birth, and you can ask for either a divine body, or human; just like your purohit Vasisht opted for a human body. The soul of Nimi became pleased and spoke -- O Great and auspicious Devatas! I do not like this cycle of births and deaths; and taking on different kinds of bodies. I would like to be that which gives sight to all living things. Please grant that I abide in the eyes of all living things.

The Gods said – For this boon you must pray to the most auspicious and all pervading Bhagawati Jagaddamba. She is pleased with your yagya. It is only by Her Grace that you will get your desire fulfilled." Raja Nimi began his worship of the Devi, by singing songs of praise in emotional voice and great humility. This pleased the Devi, and She gave him a Sakshat darshan. Her form was so brilliant and luminous, that it gave the light of one crore suns shining together. All Her limbs were delicate and youthful. This exquisite and unprecedented darshan made everyone totally enamoured and engrossed. Everyone felt intensely fulfilled. Rajan! Seeing the Devi pleased, Nimi asked for his boon -- "Mother! Please give me Nirmal Gyan (Pure Knowledge) by which I can get freedom (mukti), and please make it possible for me to abide in the eyes of all." Bhagawati Jagaddamba was already pleased with Nimi. She spoke – Rajan! You will definitely acquire Nirmal Vidya. Your destiny is not yet complete. Therefore you will have to exist in the eyes of all movable living things. By your presence, living things will have the shakti to blink their eyelids. Consequently humans, animals and birds will be known as living things that can drop their eyelids. Gods will be an exception – they will be non-blinking." After granting the boon, the Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba removed Herself from sight. After that the munis conferred with each other, and decided to push a churning stick into the king's dead body. They churned, hoping some child would emerge. They began to chant mantras. Simultaneously the havan was in progress. After churning for some time, a most beautiful boy child, complete with all the qualities, was produced. He looked exactly like King Nimi. As he was produced by manthan (churning), he got the name Mithi; and because he emerged out of the body of his father, he became famous by the name of Janaka. As Nimi was kept alive without his corporeal body (Videha); all the kings of his clan were also given the title "Videha". This is how Janaka was born out of the body of Nimi. Raja Janaka established his kingdom on the banks of the River Ganga. It was most

pleasing, and became famous by the name Mithila. All the kings of his clan were given the title "Janaka". Rajan! This is the great story of Nimi. Because of a curse, he had to live without a body.

Raja Janmejay said – Bhagwan! Nimi had cursed Vasishtji, and you have just told me the reason. But Vasisht was a Brahmin, and a purohit appointed by the king himself. Then why did the king curse him? He should have acknowledged him as a Brahmin, and a guru, and forgiven him. Being a jewel in the clan of Ikshwaku, and being aware of the codes of royal dharma, why did the king curse Vasisht who was occupying the position of a guru and Brahmin.

Vyasji says – For one who has no control over his mind and senses; forgiveness is a very difficult and rare quality. To find a forgiving person in this world is almost impossible, and particularly one who also has the power and authority to reproach or punish. The character and disposition of a Muni should be that he should have no fondness or attachment to anyone; and should do tapasya. He should conquer sleep, hunger and thirst, and engage himself in the practice of Yoga. Lust, anger, greed and ahamkar – these powerful enemies of spiritual ascent, are always lurking in the human being; and he never recognizes or understands them. Munis, sons of Brahmaji, and many great tapasvis were not untouched by these three gunas. Then what can one say of mortals. Mahatma Kapolji, was a great exponent of Sankhya Shastra, and he was always engaged in yogabhyaas. But even he could not escape the workings of destiny, and he became instrumental in Saggar's sons getting burnt to ashes. Therefore Rajan! When Ahamkar was the causal of the Triloki coming into existence; how can a human being be free or immune to his gunas.

Bhagwan Shankar is acknowledged as the regulator and manager of the gunas of all living beings. It is by His will, that in living things, sometimes Sattwaguna

is predominant; sometimes Rajas; and at other times Tamoguna is predominant. There are also times, when all the gunas exist in balance. Prabhu Paramatma is Nirgun (beyond the gunas); Nirlep (untouched by karmas and dualism); Avinashi (indestructible); Aprameya (limitless and eternal). The eyes cannot fully encompass a vision of the Lord. Similar in all respects, is the One Who presides along with Him - Parama Shakti! She, Who is the creatrix of all movable and immovable universes, is beyond the effects of the three gunas. She is beyond the comprehension of mortals of limited brain. Parabrahma and Parashakti – there is not even an iota of difference between them. They have eternally been one and the same. This knowledge, is itself sufficient, to grant release from all sins, and never fails. The Vedanth (one of the six systems of Hindu philosophy) announces this, loud and clear. In this creation, pervaded by Trigunatmika, whoever discovers this secret, is assured of mukti.

Knowledge is also of two kinds. That which is acquired through words, spoken or written – is considered foremost. If one studies, and reflects on the Vedas and Shastras, this knowledge can be obtained. But the intelligence can cause different kinds of interpretation and understanding of it. Rajan! The other source is “Anubhav” which is very rare and precious, and which is very rare and precious, and which is experienced on the central nervous system. When one has the privilege of living in close proximity to one who has already realized this knowledge, then gradually it is felt. Bharat! Just theoretical exposure is not sufficient. The experience is called Divine Knowledge.

Knowledge gathered from reading or listening, does not have the capacity to remove the darkness and spiritual ignorance from our consciousness. For example, just by talking about a lamp, the darkness does not get dispelled. Karm (action) is that, to which the doer does not get attached. And knowledge is pure, only if it is the means of mukti. If actions are done, any other way, the

only result is fatigue and stress. And knowledge only equips one with technique and mastery. There is no benefit of transformation. The prime fruits of pure knowledge are a moral and virtuous life, benevolence to all, freedom from anger, forgiving nature, tolerance and satisfaction. Rajan! Mere knowledge, without tapasya and practice of yoga, cannot help one to overcome the six enemies. The seat of anger, lust, greed, etc. is said to be in the attention. When the mind is under control, it cannot get perverted or deformed. Rajan! This is the reason why Raja Nimi could not forgive Muni Vasisht. Nimi had not achieved the state of Maharaj Yayati, who forgave Shukracharya, and did not curse him.

It happened a long time ago. Shukracharya cursed Maharaj Yayati – "You will be immediately struck with old age". The king said nothing, and accepted the old age. Some kings are of peaceful and tolerant nature, and some are cruel and hot tempered. Rajan! All do not have the same temperament. Therefore who can be blamed. Long ago a lot of Brahmins of the lineage of Bhrigu were purohits for the Hyhai clan. These Kshatriyas became angry for some reason, and out of greed for wealth, they destroyed all the Brahmins. They did not stop to think that brahmhatya (killing of Brahmins) is a great sin.

Chapter 6 Episodes 16-17

16-17 Killing of Bhriguvanshi Brahmins by Hyhai Kshatriyas. By the grace of the Devi, a powerful boy child is born to a Brahmin lady.

Raja Janmejay asked – Pitamah! How did such a wicked idea take birth in the minds of the kshatriyas. How can respectable people show anger for no reason. I am sure there must have been some cause for this, otherwise why would brave warriors kill innocent Brahmins. Please tell me what the reason was.

Sootjee says – Satyawatinandan Vyasji was very pleased with Raja Janmejay.

Vyasji said – Rajan! I know the details of this amazing incident. I will tell you. Listen carefully. There was a king in the Hyhai clan called Karthvirya. This dharmic and powerful king had thousand hands, and people called him Sahastra-arjun. He had taken Deeksha (initiation as a disciple) from Dattatreyaji. He was said to be an avatar of Bhagwan Vishnu. He worshipped Bhagawati Jagaddamba. He patronized the Brahmins of the clan of Bhrigu, and he spent a lot of time in almsgiving and charity. He performed many yagyas and gave away his possessions to the Brahmins. The Brahmins in his kingdom became very wealthy, and began to own horses, gold and jewels. Rajan! Sahastra-arjun ruled on earth for a very long time. When he died, the Kshatriyas realized that they had no wealth at all.

Once the Kshatriyas were in dire need of money. They went to the Brahmins of the Bhrigu clan to request for wealth in a humble manner. But the Brahmins refused, saying they had no wealth whatsoever. Fearing the Kshatriyas, many of them had buried their wealth, and some hid their wealth with other Brahmins. Greed had robbed the Brahmins of their generosity, and even though the kshatriyas were in distress, they would not help. The desperate and poverty stricken kshatriyas went to the ashram of the Bhriguvanshi Brahmins. They discovered that the Brahmins had left. So they began to dig up the premises. They found the buried wealth; and began to dig the other ashrams also. They were now overcome with greed, and they did not spare any Brahmin in the kingdom. Finally the Brahmins surrendered to the kshatriyas.

Even after the surrender, the enraged kshatriyas continued to beat the Brahmins and shoot arrows at them. All the Bhriguvanshi Brahmins ran away and hid in the hills. But the kshatriyas vowed to kill every Bhriguvanshi Brahmin. They did not show mercy even to pregnant women, and the air was filled with wailing and weeping. Tapasvis and munis who witnessed this, spoke to the kshatriyas – Do not vent your anger on these Brahmins. It is very wrong and despicable, that you are attacking even the women. When evil becomes violent and out of limits, then the fruits come before you in this life itself. So, if you want to prosper, you must stop this cruel behavior.

The proud and angry kshatriyas replied – You are hermits and tapasvis. You will not understand. Our ancestor was a very pious and virtuous man. These Brahmins deceived him and cheated him out of all his wealth. When we requested them to help us, they refused, even though they had all our wealth. It is the dharma of Brahmins not to be greedy and accumulate wealth; to give charity, and to give food to the needy. Wealth has three movements – charity,

enjoyment and destruction. Dharmic men use their wealth for doing works of charity and for comforts. But a sinful man soon gets parted from his money. The miser, who neither does charity with his wealth, nor uses it for pleasure but hoards it; he suffers great distress. They deserve to be punished, and that is why we are here. So you who are maha-atmas, please do not be angry with us.

Vyasji says – Now the kshatriyas were overcome with greed, and they continued to attack the Brahmins and take away their wealth. This greed which resides in the consciousness of man, is a great enemy. It is known as the root of all evil. Under its influence man loses all his dharmas, and can even kill his mother, father, brothers and friends. He will not hesitate to kill guru, friend, wife or sister. Kaam, krodh and ahamkar (Lust, anger and pride) – are three enemies. But greed is a greater enemy, and under its influence the Hyhaivanshi warriors killed all the Bhargav Brahmins.

Janmejay asked – Muni! How did the Bhargav widows survive all this tragedy. And, what happened next.

Vyasji says – All the women, full of fear and overcome with sorrow, escaped to the Himalayas. On the banks of a river, they installed a Gauri, made out of earth, and began to worship Her by fasting and prayer. They were certain that they would die very soon. At that time, the Devi appeared in their dream, and said – One of you will give birth to a boy child. He is a part of Me, and will help you". Saying this, the Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba removed Herself from their sight. Very soon one of the Brahmin ladies became with child. In order to save the child she fled the Himalayas, but the kshatriyas saw her. They said to each other – We should catch this brahmini quickly and kill her. She is running away as she is with child." They chased after her and stood in front of her,

brandishing their swords. She began to weep. The child in her womb heard his mother crying. There was no one to protect her. She was without any support. Out of fear her tears were just rolling down. It was as if a pregnant deer was in the clutches of a lion. Witnessing all this, the child inside was filled with anger. He wrenched himself out of her loins, and stood there like a shining sun. His dazzling splendor blinded the kshatriyas. They began groping their way in the mountains and caves. They were puzzled at the turn of events. They realized that this was the power of a chaste and virtuous woman, who is faithful to her husband. Those who caused her extreme sorrow were immediately punished. They realized their mistake and fell at her feet. They offered pranaams, and also prayed for their sight to be restored. They said – O auspicious One! O Mother! Be pleased to accept us as your servants. We were overcome with greed and committed these sinful acts. That is why, as soon as you looked at us, we got the fruit of our evil deeds and lost our eyesight. Now like those born blind, we cannot even see your face. You are possessed of extraordinary spiritual powers. How can we challenge you. O praiseworthy one! We take refuge in you. Being blind is worse than death. Please give us back our sight; and accept us as your servants. Then we of spiteful and impious nature will humble down and return to our places; and we will never again commit such despicable acts. From today we will protect and support all Bhargav Brahmins. In spiritual ignorance we committed these sins. Please forgive us. There will be no more enmity between kshatriyas and Bhargav Brahmins. This is our solemn promise.

Vyasji says – Rajan! The brahmani was surprised beyond all bounds at hearing the kshatriyas' words. Seeing the blind warriors standing with folded hands, the brahmani who had a forgiving disposition, said – Kshatriyas! I was not the one who caused you to lose your sight. I am not even angry with you. I am telling you the real reason. Listen carefully. This child who was born just now,

out of my loins, is the one whose anger you have incurred. He became wrathful because he came to know that all my friends and relations; and even unborn children, have become the fodder of death by your hands. This clan of Bhrigu were innocent, dharmic tapasvis. When you started killing all of them, at that time this child came into my womb. I have been carrying him for hundreds of years. He has full knowledge of all branches of the Vedas. Having come for the spiritual ascent of the Bhrigu clan, this child acquired all the Pure Knowledge before his birth. To avenge the killings of his forefathers, he has come on this earth. This child has come from the grace of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. His brilliance and effulgence has caused you to become blind. Therefore you must pray to him to restore your sight. If he accepts your prayer I am sure he will restore your sight."

Vyasji says – Rajan! The child presided in the form of a great muni. The Kshatriyas humbly prostrated before him and prayed. The muni-kumar was pleased and said – O Kings! Have faith in me and return to your homes. Listen! Whatever fate has destined that will definitely happen. Wise men should not mourn and grieve. All the rishis and munis should continue in peace, as before. And all the kshatriyas should renounce their anger and hatred, and go back home in peace and joy.

All the kshatriyas of the Hyhaivansh clan obeyed the wise child, and went back to their homes. They regained their sight. The brahmani took the divine boy back to her ashram and took good care of him.

Rajan! This is the complete story of the destruction of the Bhargav Brahmins. Overcome by greed, the kshatriyas committed a great sin.

Janmejay said – O Respected Satyawatinandan Vyasji! Please tell me how the clan came to be known as Hyhai. Was there a king of that name, or did they get the name because of some act committed by them.

CHAPTER 6 episodes 18-19

18-19 Bhagwan Shankar grants a boon to Shree Lakshmi. Shri Vishnu in the horse-form, and Shree Lakshmi in the form of a female horse, create a son. Then Shree Lakshmi assumes Her original form.

Vyasji said – I will now tell you the history of the Hyhai clan. Listen carefully. Once the master of Leela, Bhagwan Vishnu, cursed Lakshmi to become a horse. God always has a reason for His plans, and only He knows it. Shree Lakshmi was greatly distressed, but in obedience, She offered pranaams to Bhagwan Vishnu, took His permission, and left for Martya-lok (the mortal world). She went to the same spot where the wife of Surya had performed severe penance; and in Her new horse-form, Bhagawati Lakshmi began to live there. The name of the place was Suparnaksh; and on its northern side was the sangam (confluence) of the rivers Yamuna and Tamasa. It had a most beautiful and pleasing forest. The goddess, who fulfils all desires and who wears the moon as a decorating ornament in Her hair – sat in deep meditation upon Trishuldhari Bhagwan Shri Shankar. She meditated upon the Lord with five faces and ten arms; and who has Bhagawati Gauri as His Ardhangani (half body). The Lord whose white body glows like camphor; who has a blue throat and three eyes; the Lord who wears a tiger skin and who covers with a mantle of elephant hide; who wears a garland of heads, and whose sacred thread is a snake – It was this Lord, Bhagwan Shankar, on whom Her attention was anchored in meditation. She achieved complete asceticism and detachment. She continued Her tapasya for one thousand heavenly years. This greatly pleased the three-eyed Lord Bhagwan Shankar, and He arrived, seated on the

bull Nandi, to give His Divine Darshan. Accompanying him was Shree Parvati. They came and stood before Vishnupriya Mahamaya Lakshmiji, who, in the form of a female horse, was sitting in meditation. Bhagwan Shankar said – "Kalyani Jagaddambe! Tell me the reason why you are doing this tapasya; - Because your husband is the one who fulfils all desires, and He is the controller and preserver of the whole creation. Devi! Shri Hari is the swamy of the universe. Then why have you preferred to worship Me! It is the eternal dharma of women to honour their husbands. No matter what kind of husband he is, a woman must be faithful to her principle of Grihalakshmi. And, Narayan is most worthy of honour and worship. Sindhuje! (Goddess of Wealth) Why, instead of worshipping Shri Hari, You are pleased to worship Me.

Shree Lakshmiji said – Ashutosh! Maheshan! Devesh! Ocean of Mercy! My husband has pronounced a curse upon Me. Please deliver Me from the curse. Shambho! He has also told me the secret for neutralizing the curse. He said after I bear a son I will be freed of the curse and can return to Vaikunth. Bhagwan! In obedience I have come to this Tapovan to do tapasya, and I chose You as My presiding deity. Devdev! At this time I am separated from my husband, and He presides over Vaikunth. How is it possible for Me to produce a child. Devesh! Shankar! If it pleases You, grant me a boon. There is absolutely no difference between You and Shri Hari. This mystery became clear to Me, even while I was still in Vaikunth. He is You. And You are He. You both are one and the same. That is why I am worshipping You. And I am not committing any irregularity.

Bhagwan Shiv said – Devi! How did You discover the mystery that Shri Hari and I are the same. You must tell Me the truth. Devatas, munis, and men learned in the Vedas; all get caught in the web of reasoning and argumentation, and have not been able to comprehend this oneness. Many of

My devotees disrespect and dishonor Shri Hari; and many of His devotees do the same to Me. This slander and blasphemy will be the most in Kaliyuga. This oneness of Shri Hari and Me, is a great secret and a great mystery, which is hidden from all, and very difficult to understand. They how did You come to know.

Vyasjis says – Seeing Bhagwan Shankar very pleased, Shree Lakshmi also became happy and began to tell Him how She got the knowledge.

Shree Lakshmi said – Devdevesh! It happened once that Bhagwan Vishnu was sitting alone in padmasan pose, and in deep meditation. Seeing Him thus, I was surprised and amazed. After some time He came out of meditation and His face was glowing with joy. Most humbly and respectfully I asked Him – "Prabho! You are the Lord and Master of all the devatas, and ruler of the universe. When Brahma and all the gods, and all the danavas combined their strength and churned the ocean, and when I emerged from that churning, I thought I must choose a husband, and I looked around. You appeared to be the foremost and supreme among all the gods, so I chose You to be My husband. Then O Sarvesh! Whom are you meditating upon. I am overwhelmed with awe and wonder. Please explain this mystery to Me.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – Priya! I will describe the one in my heart, upon whom I am meditating. Parvati-pati Bhagwan Shankar is the most supreme. It is His nature to get pleased with very little effort. There is no limit to His powers. It happens that sometimes He, the vanquisher of Tripurasura, meditates upon Me; and sometimes I meditate upon Him. I am His life force, and He is Mine. Both our attentions are intertwined, and there is not even an iota of difference between the two. O You with large, beautiful eyes! (Vishal Lochane!) Anyone

who maligns and disrespects Him, even if he is a devotee of Mine, he will most certainly go to hell. This is the absolute truth.

Vyasji says – Hearing Shree Lakshmi speak, the great Lord Shiva, was pleased, and said – Have courage! I am pleased with Your tapasya. You will definitely meet your husband. There is no doubt in this. Under My instigation He will assume the form of a horse and come to this place. I will give encouragement to Madhusudan to assume the Ashwa-roop and come here to You. You will certainly bear His child, who will be like Him in every way. The whole world will bow before this child. After the birth of Your son, You and your husband will regain Your original forms and go back to Vaikunth. Your son will become famous by the name of Ekveer. His progeny will be the Hyhai Kshatriya clan. O Beautiful One! You must worship the One who always reigns in the heart – Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba."

Vyasji says – After giving this boon, and assurance to Shree Lakshmi, Gauripati Bhagwan Shankar, together with Parvati, removed Himself from sight. Shree Lakshmi stayed there and meditated upon the most beautiful and pleasing Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. She also sang stutis to Shri Hari and awaited His arrival in Ashwa-roop.

Vyasji says – After giving the boon, Bhagwan Shankar immediately returned to Kailash. He then sent His most capable messenger Chitraroop to Vaikunt to accomplish the job for Shree Lakshmi.

Bhagwan Shiva said – Chitraroop! Carry my message to Shri Hari. Impress upon Him the need to remove the distress of Lakshmi."

Chitraroop left for Vaikunth immediately. Vaikunth is a most beautiful dham. It is occupied by Vaishnavs. Its beauty is enhanced by divine trees and serene

lakes. Swans, cranes, peacocks, parrots and koels can be seen roaming freely. Peacocks dance in the glades. Celestial singers and dancers perform divine music. The Parijat fills the air with fragrance, and all around could be seen Bakul, Ashoka, Til and Champa trees swaying in the breeze. Birds were warbling sweetly. When he reached the Bhavan of Bhagwan Vishnu, he saw the two door keepers Jai and Vijay. He greeted them and said – Dwarpals! Please inform Shri Hari that a messenger has arrived from Bhagwan Shankar. Jai went into the presence of Bhagwan Vishnu and with bowed head and folded hands said – Devdev! Ramakant! Karunakar Keshav! A messenger from Bhagwan Shiv is waiting outside. Garud-dhwaj! Give me Your command. Should I bring him in, or ask him to leave. I did not ask the purpose of his visit. His name is Chitraroop." Bhagwan Vishnu is all knowing. He knew why the messenger had come. He asked Jai to bring him in.

Chitraroop was exactly as his name implied. He was very handsome and capable. As soon as he entered the divine presence, he did sashtang pranaam. Then he stood with bowed shoulders and folded hands. Meekness and humbleness poured out from him. Bhagwan Vishnu smiled and said – O sinless and guiltless One! I trust all is well with Dev-adi-dev Bhagwan Shankar and his family. For what purpose has He sent you. Is it something concerning Himself, or is it for help for some devatas.

The messenger said – Garud-dhwaj! There is nothing in this whole creation which is hidden from You. Past, Present and Future are known to You. Still, I will tell you the message, exactly as given to me by Bhagwan Shankar. He has said – "Vibho! Your Bharya (wife) Lakshmi Devi is doing tapasya at the sangam of the Yamuna and Tamasa rivers. She who fulfils the desires of all Her bhaktas, is at present in the form of a female horse in that place. She is the one upon whom devatas, humans, yakshas and kings meditate. There is no

being on earth who can be happy without Her grace. Pundarikaaksh Hare! (who has eyes like lotus petals!) What happiness are you experiencing by separation from Her. O Jagatpatay! Even men who are weak and poor, somehow protect and support their wives. Then Vibho! Why have you abandoned Her. Jagatguru! If a lady suffers sorrows and travails in her life, her husband is held responsible, and his life is open to contempt and shame. Even enemies condemn such behavior. You are far away from your wife, and seeing the depression and sadness of both of you, your selfish enemies will gloat and laugh day and night. Devesh! Lakshmi is possessed of all virtues. She is very beautiful and gentle. It is most fitting that Her place is here with You, and that both of you should enjoy each other. Please go and give Her assurance and security, and bring Her back. In this world nothing can continue to exist in the absence of Lakshmi. Please assume the ashwa form and go to Ramadevi. After She bears a child, You may bring Her back to Vaikunth."

Vyasji says – Janmejay! After hearing the message of Shiva from Chitraroop, Bhagwan Vishnu said – Alright! So it shall be." Then He asked Chitraroop to return to Bhagwan Shankar. Then Bhagwan Vishnu assumed the form of a splendid horse, and left Vaikunth. He reached the place where Shree Lakshmi was doing tapasya after assuming the form of a female horse. Shree Lakshmi saw Him and immediately understood that Her benevolent Lord Vishnu had also taken the ashwa form for Her sake. Her eyes filled with tears. The sangam of Yamuna and Tamasa rivers is considered sacred. She met Her Lord there. In due course, Shree Lakshmi gave birth to a boy child who was full of grace and virtue. Then Bhagwan Vishnu smiled and said – Now You can renounce this ashwa form and take on Your original form. We will both manifest our Divine Forms, and return to Vaikunth. Sulochane! This child will remain here.

Then assuming their Divine Forms, Bhagwan Shri Vishnu and Bhagawati Lakshmi took their seats in a beautiful conveyance. The devatas began to sing praises of their glory (yasho gaan). When they were about to leave, Shree Lakshmi said – "Nath! Let us take this child with us. I cannot abandon him. He is as dear to Me as You are. Madhusudan! We must take him with us to Vaikunth".

Shri Hari said – Priye! It is improper for You to express attachment. This child can live here very well, because I have already made arrangements for his care. I will tell You the significance of this renunciation of Your child. Listen! On earth there is a king called Turvasu belonging to the Yayati clan. His father wished him to become famous with the name Harivarma. Right now, this king Harivarma is doing severe tapasya for the boon of a son. His tapasya has just completed a hundred years. It is for that king, that I have created this child. We will go to the king and direct him to come here. Priye! We will have to give this child as a boon to Raja Harivarma. He will take good care of him.

Vyasji says – Thus, giving assurance to his beloved, that the child would be well provided for, Bhagwan Vishnu took Bhagawati Lakshmi back to Vaikunth.

Chapter 6 episodes 20-21

20-21 Story of Lakshmiputra Ekveer.

Janmejay said – Munivar Vyasji! I am amazed how a child of the divine could be given away soon after birth, and left alone in the forest. How is it that wild animals like tiger, lion and other predators, did not carry him away. Please tell me.

Vyasji says – As soon as Bhagwan Lakshmi-Narayan left, a demi-god called Champak came to that place. With him was his beautiful wife Madanalsa. They saw the divine child lying on the earth. He was alone and unattended. He looked like the child of a devata. Champak got down from his vahana, and picked up the child. He felt a great joy, like a poor man feels when he gets unexpected wealth. He gave the child to his wife, and she too felt the same joy. She kissed the child and held him close, and from that moment she considered him as her own. She smiled happily and asked her husband - "Kant! Whose child can this be. Who left him alone in this forest. Whatever it is, I am convinced Bhagwan Shankar has given me this child.

Champak said – "Indra is all-knowing. I will go and ask him whether this child is a devata or a gandharva. Only with his permission will I make this child my own. It is not proper to do anything without his permission. So Champak went with his wife and the child, to Amaravati. He went into the presence of Indra and offered pranaams. Then he kept the child near Indra, and respectfully asked – "Deveshwar! The sangam of the Yamuna and Tamasa rivers is most holy. It is there that I found this child, who is as lustrous as Kamdev. Shachipatey! Whose child is this. Why has he been abandoned. If you permit,

can I make him my own. My wife also has begun to love this baby. It is written in the dharma shastras that even an unnatural child can be adopted as one's own.

Indra said – O Auspicious One! This is the child of Ashwaroop-dhari Bhagwan Vishnu. His mother is sakshat Bhagawati Lakshmi. This great tapasvi child is called Hyhai, and They desire to give this child to Raja Turvasu of the Yayati clan. Turvasu is a dharmic king. Shri Hari is on His way to tell Turvasu to go to the holy sangam. Before the king reaches, you must go there and place the child back where you found him. It will not be good to delay. Because, if the king does not find him, he will be greatly disappointed. This child will become famous by the name of Ekveer.

Vyasji says – Champak immediately left, and put the child back where he had found him. Then he got into his vimaan and went back home.

At that time, Bhagwan Narayan, together with Lakshmi, appeared before the meditating king Harivarma. When the king saw Bhagwan Vishnu alighting from His vahana he was overjoyed. Like a falling pole, he prostrated before the Lord. Seeing His bhakta in sashtaang pranaam, Bhagwan Vishnu said – Vats! Arise! Then Raja Harivarma began to sing stutis in loud and clear tones - "Deveshwar! Lord of all the lokas. Most Benevolent One! Jagatguru! Ramesh!... Getting a darshan of You is a most rare and precious honour. Even great yogis have not achieved this favour. Your darshan is only possible to those whose desires and longings have been renounced, and who are completely detached from all things perceived by the senses. Bhagwan! O Eternal Being! God of Gods! I was sitting in expectation, and therefore strictly I am not worthy of this darshan."

Bhagwan Vishnu spoke in pleasing, sweet tones – “Rajan! I am very pleased with your tapasya. I am giving your desired boon. Accept it”. The king placed his head before the Lotus Feet of the Lord and said – Murare! I did tapasya for the boon of a son. May it please You to give me a son, full of Your qualities”. Hearing this prayer, Dev-adi-dev Bhagwan Shri Vishnu spoke thus – “Yayati-nandan! You go immediately to the sangam-teerth of the rivers Yamuna and Tamasa. I have kept there, a son, exactly as per your desires. Rajan! This son is produced from My seed, and He has boundless and limitless powers. Lakshmi Herself is his Mother. He has been created for you. Accept him”.

The speech of the Lord was extremely sweet and pleasing. Waves of joy overwhelmed the king. After giving him the boon, Bhagwan Shri Vishnu took Bhagawati Lakshmi and returned to Vaikunth. As soon as the Lord left, Yayatinandan Harivarma climbed his chariot and sped towards the place where the divine child lay. He had already heard the description of the child from Bhagwan Shri Hari. He saw a most beautiful and dazzling baby lying on Mother Earth. He was already holding his foot in one hand and sucking the toe. He was as beautiful as Kamdev. This child, born of Lakshmi, was a part of Bhagwan Narayan. He had his limitless powers. Harivarma’s eyes filled with tears of joy. His heart swelled with love, and he bent down and picked up the child. He breathed in the fragrance of the child’s head. He held him in his lap, and tears of happiness rolled down. The king said to the child – Son! By the grace and benevolence of your father, Bhagwan Vishnu, and your mother Shree Lakshmi, I have received you. Out of fear of hell, I did severe penance to get a son like you. When a hundred years of tapasya were completed, Bhagwan Vishnu and Bhagawati produced you, and gave you to me. Blessed is that mother who will enjoy looking after you. Son! You are the boat which will take humanity across the ocean of illusion. Bhagwan Narayan is your master.

Then the king took the child and left for his kingdom. The news had already reached, and his minister and subjects came to welcome him. They brought with them purohits and prescribed offerings; bards, musicians and singers; so that they could have a proper reception for the king. When he arrived, Harivarma was very pleased. He spoke to all, and his glance met every person who was present. When he entered the city with his son, they showered Kheel (parched rice) and flowers on him. Then he entered his majestic palace, and gave the child to his queen. She was a virtuous lady. She asked the king how he got this most beautiful baby. "Please tell me who gave this child to you. I cannot contain my joy". Then, with great emotion and joy the king said – "Priye! Bhagwan Shri Lakshminarayan gave this child to me. O Beautiful-eyed One! The mother of this child is sakshat Bhagawati Lakshmi. He is an ansh (part) of Bhagwan Vishnu". The queen became immersed in joy. The king held a big celebration in honour of the child. He gave away many gifts and alms. There was music and singing. He named the child Ekveer. Now that he had a son, Raja Harivarma was freed from Pitra-rin (one of the three debts on a man from which he is freed when he begets a son). He spent the rest of his days in peace.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Then the king performed the necessary initiation ceremonies for the boy, and both he and the queen engaged themselves in looking after the child. The boy began to grow fast. In the sixth month the anna-prashan (the ceremony of feeding, for the first time, rice cooked in milk) was done. In the third year the mundan-sanskar (shaving of the head of the child) was performed. On every occasion the Brahmins were honoured in the proper way. They were given gifts of wealth and milch cows. Alms were also distributed to the subjects. In the eleventh year, the ceremony of the sacred thread was performed, and the boy was given lessons in archery. When the king saw that the prince had become competent in Dhanurved, and had

become conversant with Raj-dharma (duties of a sovereign); he decided to hold Rajya-abhishekh – to anoint and place the crown of accession on the head of the prince. All arrangements began, and the prescribed samagri was collected. Brahmins, learned in the Vedas and scriptures, were invited, and the ceremony began. The king Harivarma himself performed the abhishek by pouring the waters of rivers and oceans over the head of Prince Ekveer. After giving gifts of wealth to the Brahmins, the prince was enthroned. In this way Ekveer was consecrated and coronated as King. Then the king and queen retired into the forest.

They had conquered all their senses and desires. They built their ashram on the summit of Mynakparvat. They lived on wild fruits and leaves, and spent their time in meditation on Bhagwan Shankar. At the destined time, the king renounced his earthly body, and found a place in heaven. When Hyhai (Ekveer) heard of his father's death, he performed all the prescribed rites and ceremonies for the deceased Then he began to rule the kingdom. He was a very virtuous and dharmic king He was respected and loved by his ministers.

It happened once that the king, accompanied by the sons of his ministers, went on their horses to the banks of the holy river Ganga. He saw beautiful trees bearing flowers and fruits. The pleasant sounds of chirping birds and droning bumble bees filled the air. There were also many ashrams of various munis. The sound of chanting, and the smoke from the havans, filled the air. Little baby deer were romping about. The rice fields swayed with ripe grain. Milkmaids were guarding the fields. There were many lakes filled with newly bloomed lotuses, and a green forest presented a pleasing scene. He could identify Ashoka, Champa, Jackfruit, Bakul, Til, Neem, flowering Parijat, Sal, Palmyra, and evergreen Tamal trees. Then he saw a most fragrant lotus which had just bloomed.

Raja Ekveer noticed that on the south side of the water, a maiden was sitting and weeping. Her eyes were like lotuses, and she had a golden complexion. Her hair was long and lustrous. Her neck was narrow like a conch. Her lips were like red berries. Her waist was slim. Her nose was straight and noble. She was altogether very beautiful. She was away from her attendants, and her weeping sounded like the cry of an osprey. Raja Ekveer asked her – O Beautiful One! Who are you. Who is your father. Are you a gandharva maiden, or a dev-kanya. What has caused you to weep. O Maiden! How is it you are alone. Who brought and left you here. Where is your husband, or your father. Now you please tell me the reason for your distress. I am ready to help you. In my kingdom no one is allowed to be sad. There is no fear of robbers or rakshasas. I am the king of this region. During my reign no mischief or attack can be committed. Even a lion or tiger cannot terrorise anyone. Why are you weeping so helplessly. Tell me what is the cause of your sorrow. It is my prime effort to remove all distress and sorrows of my people. I am very faithful to this vow of protecting my subjects. O You with Beautiful Large Eyes! Tell me your troubles and I will get rid of them.

Comforted by the assurance of the king, the maiden spoke in a sweet voice. She said – Rajendra! Listen and I will tell you the reason for my weeping. Rajan! Unless there is pain and sorrow, why will a living being cry. O Valiant One! I will tell you the reason. There is another kingdom besides yours, which is ruled by a dharmic king called Raibhya. He had no children. His queen Rukma-rekha is very beautiful, faithful, and full of all virtues. She was sad, and one day she said to the king – Swami! My life is of no use. It is empty and meaningless. Without a child a woman is incomplete."

Getting this instigation from her, the king held a Putreshti Yagya for the boon of a child. He invited learned Brahmins, collected all the required samagri, and

commenced the havan. Desiring a son, the king distributed gifts and alms. Pure ghee was offered to the agni, and Agnidev burned bright and brilliant. A very lovely girl child emerged from the Yagya-agni. She was full of all good qualities. The presiding Brahmin took her to the king and said – "Rajan! Take this child. She has been produced from the havan. She is possessed of all virtues, and is like a necklace of precious gemstones. She will become famous in the world by the name of Ekavalli. She is equal to a son, and she will make you proud and happy. She is a gift from Bhagwan Vishnu." The king took the girl from the Brahmin and lovingly handed her to queen Rukmarekha. He said – O Fortunate One! Accept this child as your daughter. She is very pleasing to behold, and her large eyes are like lotuses." The queen took the child and she was as happy as if a son was born. All auspicious rites and ceremonies were performed. At the end of the yagya the king gave generous gifts to the Brahmins, who left satisfied. The king was very happy. They watched her grow with great love and devotion. The palace celebrated as if a son was born. For the king and queen there was no difference between a son and a daughter.

O King! I am the daughter of the minister of that king. Ekavalli and I are of the same age. The king kept me as a companion for the princess. We were great friends. We were inseparable, and went everywhere together. Wherever Ekavalli saw a fragrant lotus, she would run there. No other place made her happy.

It happened once that on the banks of the Ganga, but far inside, some lotuses bloomed. The princess, accompanied by her attendants and myself, reached that spot. I told Maharaj Raibhya that wherever there are lotuses, Ekavalli goes. And now she has gone deep into the forest. The king forbade her from going too far away. He ordered many pools to be dug in the palace grounds, and filled them with lotuses. But still her fondness for fragrant lotuses made

her go out of the palace grounds. On the command of the king, armed guards started accompanying Ekavalli wherever she went. Her attendants and I also accompanied her. She continued her trips to the banks of the Ganga.

CHAPTER 6 episodes 22-23

22-23 Story of Princess Ekavali; Kalketu abducts Ekvali. Ekvir kills Kalketu and marries Ekavalli.

Yashovati said – It happened once that the beautiful Ekavalli went out with her friends. Her bodyguards were also with her. They were armed and fully alert. I was also there. She went to pick a lotus. Suddenly a huge danava came there. His name was Kalketu. He was accompanied by many rakshasas. They were all armed. Kalketu spied the beautiful Ekavalli. She and I ran from there and reached the place where our soldiers were standing. Kalketu picked up a huge mace and frightened the bodyguards away. He caught Ekavalli and she began to tremble and cry. I said – You leave her alone. Take me instead. But he took her and went away. When the guards tried to stop him, there was a great fight. Kalketu killed all the guards and took the princess away. She was weeping loudly. I followed so that she would see me and be comforted. And so it happened. She saw me and stopped crying. Gradually I went close to her and we spoke to each other. Kalketu displayed some kindness and spoke to me. He said – Your beautiful friend is afraid. Tell her on my behalf that my country is like heaven. You are in my care, and I have become your servant. Then why are you weeping so sadly. Please stop crying." Then he made me also sit in the same chariot and took us to his kingdom. He had a large army. He was very pleased and smiled. He made arrangements for Ekavalli and me to stay in a spacious bhavan, and kept guards all around. The next day Kalketu came and said to me - Please tell your friend not to be afraid. If she marries me she can rule very happily. I will be her servant. I replied sternly – Rajan! I cannot speak these inauspicious words to Ekavalli. It is better if you speak to her yourself. He went to her and said – O Beautiful One! What mantra have

you used to bewitch me. I am your servant. Please accept me as your husband.

Ekavalli said – The Prince Hyhai is a most auspicious person, and my father has promised me to him in marriage. I have already accepted him in my mind as my husband. Therefore I cannot abandon the dharma of a maiden and accept another as a husband. This ancient and dharmic tradition is also known to you, that whomever a father chooses for his daughter, that is the person she must marry. A maiden is always dependent. She is not free to act on her own.

Even after Ekavalli's reply, the danava did not change his intentions. He was totally fascinated. Both of us were now his prisoners. The kingdom of Kalketu was in a mountainous chasm of Pataal, and the surroundings were very difficult. His fort was surrounded by high walls, and guarded constantly. Ekavalli is in that fort, and somehow I have managed to come here. And that is why I am crying loudly.

Ekveer asked – I am amazed at how you managed to come out of that place. I want to know the details. You say that Ekavalli's father has promised her in marriage to a prince named Hyhai. This also surprises me, because my name is Hyhai; and there is no other prince by this name. Please remove all my doubts. Then I will kill this demon and rescue the princess. Have you informed her father King Raibhya. It would be very sad if he was not aware that his daughter has been abducted. And why has he not come to free her. He is not ill or weak. Tell me quickly, because, now I have made up my mind to rescue the princess. What is the way to reach his country.

Yashowati said – Rajan! From a young age I have always wanted to know the beeja mantra of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. A realized Brahmin taught me this

mantra. While I was in the fort of Kalketu, I started chanting this mantra and meditating on the Devi. I had full faith that Bhagawati Chandika would free me from bondage. She is compassionate and generous to Her bhaktas. She who is self supporting and almighty, creates – sustains – and devours the universe. She is formless and unsupported. Everything is of Her Form and She is all-encompassing. I meditated on that almighty Devi, Who is the supreme creator, and Who is compassionate, Who wears red clothes, and from whose eyes radiates a red glow. I kept this form before me and chanted the beeja mantra; and meditated for a whole month. Then Devi Bhagawati Chandika became pleased with me, and gave me a darshan in my dream. She spoke to me in sweet tones - Why are you sleeping. Get up and go to the bank of the sacred river Ganga. The great king Hyhai is about to reach that place. His name is Ekveer. Muni Dattatreya has initiated him into My beeja mantra. He is always absorbed in My holy name. I am never separated from his attention. He performs My puja constantly and consistently. He beholds Me in everything that he sees. He does not know anything besides My worship. He is the one who will overcome your difficulties. Bhagawati Lakshmi is his mother. He will come to the river bank and become your savior. He will kill Kalketu and release Edavalli. After that, you must arrange for their marriage according to the highest traditions."

This is what the Devi said to me before She disappeared. My sleep broke. I went to Ekavalli and told her everything. She became very happy. She requested me to go immediately and fulfil the directions given by the Devi. The words spoken by the Devi are infallible. By Her grace, both of us will get our freedom." I left immediately, and no one stopped me. In Her compassion, the Devi caused me to know the way, and gave me the Shakti to move fast and fearlessly. O Prince! I have told you everythihg. Now you must tell me who you are, and what is the name of your father.

Vyasji says – Rajan! King Ekveer was the son of Bhagawati Lakshmi. He heard Yashowati, and his face bloomed like a lotus.

Raja Ekveer said – I will tell you all about myself. I am Hyhai. My name is Ekveer. Shree Lakshmi is my mother. You have given such a beautiful description of Ekavalli that I am perplexed and impatient. But then you say she told Kalketu that she is betrothed to me. This has removed my doubts. Now I have become her servant. Tell me. What should I do now. I have no idea of Kalketu's country. You have to give me the directions, so that I can go to her immediately. I will kill Kalketu, rescue the princess, and restore her to her father. Aftet that King Raibhya can arrange to get us married in the proper way. With your help I can realize my dearest wish. Show me the way.

Vyasji says – Yashowati was very pleased and began to tell him the way. "Rajendra! Bhagawati Jagaddamba's beeja mantra grants success and fulfillment. You must take initiation of this mantra. Then make arrangements to accompany me. You must bring a big army with you, because there will definitely be a battle. Ekveer immediately went and took Deeksha of the Beeja Mantra. Shri Dattatreya is the crown jewel of all gurus. By a divine coincidence he reached that spot. He was the preceptor of the Mahamantra of Devi Yogeshwari. This mantra of the Devi is like a tilak (forehead ornamentation) of the Triloki. This mantra granted Raja Ekveer the complete knowledge and the necessary strength to fulfil his quest. The kingdom of Kalketu was so carefully guarded, it was as if snakes were guarding it. When Ekveer and Yashowati reached with the great army, the guards ran trembling, to Kalketu. At that time he was sitting with Ekavalli and trying to coax her. The guards recognized that their master was overcome with desire. They said – Rajan! The girl who is a friend of the princess, has come with a prince and a large army. Maharaj! We cannot say whether he is Jayanth, son of Indra; or

Kartikeya, son of Shankar. The army is very large, and a battle seems imminent. Either we must fight, or you give up the princess. Maharaj! Make preparations, and give us the command to sound the war drums.

Vyasji says – Kalketu was so shocked, he nearly fainted with anger. Then he ordered his soldiers to go and engage in battle. Then he spoke gently to Ekavalli. Tell me who it is, who has come with an army. Is it your father, or someone else. Tell me the identity of this person who has come. If it is your father, I will not fight with him. Rather I will welcome him with gifts of clothes, jewels and horses. When he reaches my palace, he will be received with the proper rituals. If it is someone else, I will kill him with my sharp arrows. It is clear that it is the manipulation of Kaal which has brought him here to face his death. Therefore Princess! Consider me as sakshaat Kaal. Who is this foolish person who has come to certain death by challenging me?

Ekavalli said – O King! I do not know who is approaching at such great speed. Up to now no one is even aware that I am in your bondage. This person is neither my father, nor my brother. It must be some other brave warrior. On whose request he has come here, I do not know.

Kalketu said – My messengers tell me that this is all arranged by your friend Yashowati. She is the one who is accompanying the warrior.

Vyasji says – A second messenger arrived, and fearfully exclaimed – Maharaj! How can you sit here when the enemy has reached our gates. Take the army out immediately. Kalketu got into his chariot and went out. Ekveer reached on his horse, and a battle started. It was as if Indra and Vrittasur were in combat. Finally Ekveer used his mace, and killed Kalketu. All the danavas ran away and hid themselves. Yashowati ran to Ekavalli and said – Come and see!

By the hand of Ekveer the horrible danava Kalketu has been killed. He is a very brave prince. Because he is tired he is resting at the entrance. He desires to see you because he has heard of your good qualities and your beauty. Please go and meet him. When I met him on the banks of the Holy Ganga, I told him all about you.

Ekavalli was very pleased with all that her friend said, and she wanted to go and meet Ekveer. But she was still a maiden, and she felt bashful modesty. I am a maiden. How can I look upon a man's face. So she took Yashowati into the palanquin with her, and set out for the gate. Her face was filled with fear, and she was dressed in the same saree which she had worn when she was abducted. Ekveer approached her and said – Allow me to see you. My eyes have been impatient to have your darshan. Seeing that her friend was becoming more and more shy, Yashowati said to Ekveer – O Prince! Her father has decided to give her to you. She will ultimately belong to you. This is a fact. So be patient, and take her back to her father's house. It is only he who can arrange for your marriage and give her to you.

Ekveer was a dharmatma. He obeyed Yashowati and took Ekavalli to her father, along with his army. King Raibhya personally came out of his palace to meet Ekveer and gave him the appropriate welcome. The father was overjoyed to see his daughter again after so many days. Yashowati told him all the details. The king invited Ekveer to his palace. An auspicious date was fixed, and all arrangements began for the marriage. The king honoured Ekveer with the appropriate dowry, and performed the marriage of Ekveer and Ekavalli. Then Ekavalli left the palace. Yashowati also went with her. Ekveer and Ekavalli had a son who became famous as Kritvirya, and he had a son who is known as Karthvirya.

Chapter 6 episodes 24-27

24-27 Conversation between Narad and Vyasji; Narad and Muni Parbat curse each other.

Raja Janmemay said – Bhagwan! The sweet tones of your voice are like drops of honey. I have been listening to your stories, but I am not satisfied. The story of the Hyhai clan is amazing and surprising. What is perplexing me the most is, how do such great gods fall into delusion and spiritual ignorance. Brahman! You are full of wisdom and knowledge. Please free me from this disillusion.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Listen. I myself got a clarification of this doubt a long time ago, from Naradji. I will tell it to you exactly as he told me.

The human son of Shri Brahmaji is Narada. He was a great tapasvi, all knowing; embodiment of peace; who could go to any place; who loved the world; and who was very learned. Once long ago, Naradji was walking on earth, playing the veena in swar and tal. He was also chanting the nectar-like Gayatri mantra. In this mood he reached my ashram, which was in Samyapras, a holy place on the banks of the Saraswati. Many munis have settled there to perform tapasya. I received Naradji with the proper offerings of water for washing feet, water for rinsing the mouth, and an aasan to be seated. When I saw that he was free from fatigue, and his mind was at peace, I put to him the same question that you have just asked me. I said – O Great Muni! In this illusionary world what is happiness? Wherever I look, I do not see even the tiniest bit of happiness. After that, Vyasji narrated previous incidents and chronicles, including the story of the Kauravas and Pandavas. Then he said to

Naradji – My mind is always agitated and restless, swinging to and fro; and not able to remain steady and calm. You are wise. Please remove my doubts.

Then Naradji, who knows everything, smiled. He began to tell me the reason for man's disillusionment.

Naradji said – Parashar-nandan Vyasji! Why do you ask. You are conversant with all the purans. It is an absolute fact that no one who lives in this world, can remain untouched by illusions and delusions. Even great gods, and wise sages and saints, have been caught in its web, and are wandering about in the world, steeped in confusion. I will tell you how I myself fell into this illusion. Be kind and listen. I had to undergo many sufferings, and all for the sake of winning a woman.

It happened like this. Once Parvatmuni and I came down from heaven to earth, to explore Bharat. We visited all the holy places of pilgrimage, and got an opportunity of seeing the ashrams of many famous munis. When we left heaven we promised each other that we would say whatever came into our minds; whether the thought was pure or impure. We would not hide anything from each other. Whether the matter concerned women, We would not hide anything from each other. Whether the matter concerned women, wealth or food – all had to be told to each other. We were enjoying our tour of earth. The summer season ended and monsoon season started. We reached the beautiful kingdom of King Sanjay. The king received us very respectfully, and with all the honours due to a guest. We stayed in his palace for four months. The rainy season is very difficult, and wise people stay in one place during these four months. The other eight months, one can enjoy by travelling from place to place. The king looked after all our requirements. Raja Sanjay had a very beautiful daughter. Her name was Damyanti. As ordered by her father,

she was in charge of looking after us. She was very caring and hard working. She never neglected us in any way. We were always provided with food, water, puja articles, aasan and other comforts.

We lived there happily. Being engrossed in the regular study of the Vedas was our inborn nature. I used to play the veena and sing the Sam veda in a high voice. The chanting had the quality to please the ears. The princess became fascinated with my singing. She began to feel excessive love towards me, and it kept growing every day. I also began to respond and reciprocate her love. Gradually there was a discrimination in the way things were provided for me and the way they were provided for Parvatmuni. Even her glances were more loving towards me than him. This caused a thought in Parvatmuni's mind as to why this was happening. He was greatly surprised. When we were alone he asked me – Narad! What is happening. Tell me clearly. The love that the princess bears towards you is not there towards me. It is causing suspicions in me. It seems certain that the princess wishes to make you her husband. And from the signs I can see that you also feel love for her. Your eyes and your speech indicate this. Muni! Tell me the truth. Remember the promise we made to each other.

Naradji says – When he persisted with his question, I replied shyly – Parvat! This princess with large, beautiful eyes, wishes to make me her husband. I also have the same feelings towards her." Hearing this, Parvatmuni became very angry. He said – Narad! You are a disgrace. After making a promise you deceived me. O destroyer of friendship and trust! I curse you – May your face turn into that of a monkey."

Parvatmuni was a mahatma. As soon as he pronounced the curse, I became monkey-faced. By relationship, the muni was the son of my sister. But in

anger I also could not forgive him. I also cursed him – May you hereby lose your entitlement to heaven." "O Parvat! You have a faulty wisdom. For such a small mistake you have cursed me. Now you also breathe the air of this mortal world!" Parvatimuni became very sad and left. My face continued to resemble a monkey. The princess was very learned. She always enjoyed listening to my veena. But when she saw my face, dark clouds of displeasure descended on her.

Vyasji asked – Brahman! What happened next. How did you get released from the curse and begin to look normal again. Please be kind to tell me in detail. And also, where, when and how did you great souls meet again. Please tell me.

Naradji said – O Fortunate One! What can I say. lThe process of Maya is an amazing one. After Parvatmuni left in anger, I spent very difficult days. Even though the princess continued to look after me, still I was miserable and humiliated. I could not overcome my sorrow, and kept wondering why such a misfortune had befallen me. The princess was maturing into a maiden. Her father called his ministers and said – My daughter has reached marriageable age. Find a suitable boy for her. He should be a very well accomplished prince. He should be handsome, brave, generous, full of good qualities, and belong to a good clan. As soon as you find such a prince, I will arrange for the marriage. The ministers said – Maharaj! Many such princes are available on this earth. You select one, and honour him with gifts of elephants, horses and chariots.

Naradji says – When Damyanti heard about this, she sent a message to her father through her maid.

The maid said – Maharaj! Your daughter has asked me to tell you these things which are for her benevolence. Her message is – I have chosen the wise and intelligent Narada to be my husband. His sweet voice and melodious veena have won my heart. Now I cannot look at another man. So please arrange my marriage with this great muni. I will not marry anyone else. I am completely submerged in the ocean of divine music, -- an ocean where there are no crocodiles, alligators or fishes.

Naradji says – when the king heard this message, he turned to his beautiful queen Kaikeyi and said – O Loved One! You have heard everything. Our daughter has chosen that monkey-faced Narada to be her husband. This is a most foolish decision. How can I give my daughter to that muni. lWhat match can there be between that monkey-faced muni, who is a beggar, and my beautiful daughter who has been brought up in wealth and comfort. This alliance is not possible. You must go and advise her of her duties as a daughter, and the maryadas of our family; and bring her back to reality."

Queen Kaikeyi went to her daughter and said – There is no comparison between you a princess of great beauty, and that muni who has a monkey face, and who is a pauper. You are delicate and sensitive, and he is always covered in ashes. Then how could you get attracted to this pauper. How can we agree to such a marriage. Your husband should be a handsome prince. Do not be stubborn. Anyone who sees a delicate malathi creeper growing on a babool tree full of thorns, will feel sad. Also, no one gives betel leaves to a camel to eat. Anyone who sees us giving you in marriage to this mendicant, will scold us. One must not even be seen speaking with that monkey-faced man."

Naradji says – Damyanti had made a firm decision to marry me. After her mother finished speaking, she said – When this muni has already renounced the pleasures and attachments of this world, and he has no knowledge of the affairs and conditions prevailing outside, then what purpose or interest does he have in good looks, wealth and kingdom. Those deer in the forest, are more blessed and fortunate, who listen to the divine music of his veena, and are prepared to give up their lives. Those human beings who cannot appreciate this divine music, are a disgrace and insult to their elevated birth. Mother! The knowledge that Naradji has of the seven swaras, no other being has, except Shri Shiva. Mother! When one lives with a fool, the only thing to look forward to, is death. What is the use of having good appearance and great wealth, if one is spiritually ignorant. Better to keep away from such a person. I consider alliance with a proud and foolish king, inferior to an alliance with a wise and knowledgeable beggar. The reason is, that his knowledge of the spirit gives so much joy and satisfaction. It is impossible even, to find a weak person who knows all the eight variations in music, including sound, scale and modulations. The person who is accomplished in all this, compares with Ganga and Saraswati, who lead you to Kailash. He who knows the intricacies of music; even if he is human, should be recognized as divine. Those who are ignorant of divine music, including Indra, can be likened to animals. Those in whom delight and joy is not awakened by divine music, are also equal to animals, excepting the deer. Actually, I admire the poisonous serpents who, even though they have no ears, sway to music. If those endowed with the faculty of hearing, do not experience joy upon hearing divine music, then they are cursed. Even a child becomes happy when it hears melodious music. Has father not recognized these infinite and matchless qualities in Narad? In the entire three worlds, there is no one who can sing the Sam Veda like Narad. Therefore, I have taken all matters into consideration before deciding that I will marry, only Narad. This most famous Muni did not

have a monkey face before. It is because of a curse that this has happened; and all due to me. So how can I do anything else. Kinnars have faces like horses, but even then everyone loves them. The reason being that they are well- versed in the Sam Veda. So beauty is not the main requirement. Mother! Please tell my father that I have firmly decided to marry this munivar. So, to please give up his objection, and perform this marriage with his blessings.

Naradji says – The queen conveyed her daughter's message to the king. She also advised the king to find an auspicious day and perform the marriage of princess Damyanti with Narad muni. The king agreed. All arrangements were made, and the marriage was performed with all rituals, between Damyanti and Narada. O Great tapasvi Vyasji. After our marriage I continued to live there. My monkey face caused me great distress. Each time Damyanti came to serve me my sorrow would increase. But that princess, whose face was as beautiful as a full-blown lotus, never at any time, shrank from me in disgust. My face did not cause her any repulsion or uneasiness. Many days passed in this way. One day, most unexpectedly, Parvatmuni came there. After visiting many holy places, he decided to come and see me. I received him with all honour and respect. One day, he was sitting on his aasan, when he saw Damyanti and me together. He felt very sad because my state was pitiable. Because of my monkey face I was just passing the time, inspite of my marriage. Seeing me, his uncle, in such a sad situation, the compassionate muni Parvat said – Munivar Narad! I got into a temper and put a curse on you. But now I am going to neutralize it. By virtue of all my punyas, may you get a beautiful face. Seeing the princess, my heart is filled with compassion.

Naradji says – My heart also filled with humility and gratitude. I also reversed my curse. I said – Munivar Parvat! You are the most worthy son of my sister. I

freely and happily release you from the curse. That is, you can now go to heaven.

Gradually my face changed, and became very handsome. The princess became extremely happy. She ran to her mother and said – Mother! Your most respected son-in-law has become handsome. Parvatmuni has released him from the curse. The queen went and gave the good news to the king. He came to meet me, and was very pleased. He gave me many gifts and also honoured Parvatmuni with gifts. This all happened to me in this lifetime. It is most certainly the play of Mahamaya. This universe, created out of the attritubes of Maya is illusory. Those who live in it, and get attached or entangled, can never be happy in the present or in the future. Anger, lust, greed, jealousy, attachment, ego and arrogance, are very powerful. Who has been able to conquer them. Mune! Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas – these three attributes are the causals for the type of body a soul takes. Vyasji! It happened once, that I was walking in the forest with Bhagwan Vishnu. We were talking lightly and jocularly. Suddenly I became a woman, deceived by the maya of the Lord. I married a king and bore many sons.

Vyasji asked – Mune! How did this happen to you, who are so learned and knowledgeable! I am completely amazed. Please tell me. How did you turn into a man again. Also tell me which king you married, and bore children. Please tell me the details of this story which has bewitched the world.

Chapter Episodes 28-29

28-29 How Narad became a woman; married; had sons; and then by the grace of Devi Bhagawati , restored to manhood.

Naradji says – I am telling you this holy story. Listen carefully. It is a fact that even the most proficient and learned yogis have not been able to unravel the mysteries. All things living and non-living, and the entire universe from Brahma downwards, are all under the rule of maya. Because it is invincible and uncomprehensible. It happened once that I had a desire to have a darshan of the Almighty Bhagwan Vishnu. So I went to Vaikunth. On my way I was playing divine music of perfect tune and taal (rhythm). I chanted the Sam Ved and other divine seven swaras. I reached Shwetdeep (abode of Shri Vishnu) and had a darshan of the Lord. He was holding the Chakra and Mace in His hands. The jewel Kaustubhamini adorned his chest. He was of the colour of a water-filled cloud, and had four hands. His dress was of yellow silk (pitamber). He wore a crown and armlets. At that time He was in the company of the most pleasing Shree Lakshmi. She who is the embodiment of all good qualities, was fully adorned with rich garments and precious ornaments. When She saw me, She moved away. After She left, I approached the garlanded Lord and asked – O Lord who vanquishes the enemies of the gods; who has a lotus on His Nabhi; please tell me why Bhagawati Lakshmiji left and went away. O Lord of the Universe! I am neither evil, nor cunning and deceitful. I am a tapasvi. My desires and senses are all under my control. I have even conquered anger. Maya has no effect on me. Every word I spoke was full of pride.

Smiling, Bhagwan Vishnu said – Narad! It is against the laws of good conduct for a woman to be seen communicating with her husband in front of another

man. O learned One! Those who have achieved power over the wind, those who are masters of philosophy, those who perform austerities without food and water, and those who have conquered their senses; for those yogis also, Maya is unconquerable and invincible. O You who have all knowledge of divine music! This assertion that you have made - that you cannot be affected by Maya, should not be said in front of anyone else. When a great muni like Sanak (one of the four sons of Brahma) could not overcome maya, then what can be said of any devas or munis? How can those who assume the bodies of gods, humans and animals, challenge and overcome the unborn, eternal Maya. Those who are learned in the Vedas, those who are exponents of yoga; those who possess the gunas – Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas; can never overcome Maya. Desire is also Maya. She does not have form, shape or size. She stays hidden and invisible, and exerts control over the wise, the foolish, and ordinary living beings. Sometimes it enters the attention of highly spiritual beings and creates desires. Then it is impossible to identify and recognize the influence of Maya.

Naradji says – After saying this, Bhagwan Vishnu became silent. My mind became troubled. Then I asked that eternal Lord of the universe - Please tell me O Ramapatey! What is the form of Maya. What is the appearance. How many shaktis does She have. Where does She live, and who supports Her. Please be kind to tell me all this. O You who are the support of the universe! I have a fervent desire to see and know this Maya. Please show Her to me, and help me understand Her.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – She who has the shakti to support the entire universe, that Maya is Trigunatmika (possessing the three qualities of sattwa, rajas and tamo) is Sarvagya (omniscient), Sarvasammata (unanimous – without plurality); Ajeya (inconquerable), and Anekrupa (myriad forms). The universe is Her form, and She pervades the entire creation. Narad! I will show you that

Maya, who has remained unconquered even by the most invincible. After that you should have no more gloom or dejection in your heart.

After saying this, the lord of lords, Bhagwan Vishnu, remembered Garuda. Immediately Garuda arrived. Lord Vishnu took His seat on Garuda, and honoured me by making me sit behind Him. Fleet as the wind, and with increasing speed, Garuda took us out of Vaikunth. Garuda knew every inclination of the Lord, and went wherever the Lord desired to go. In this way we saw many huge forests; holy lakes; rivers; towns; villages; mountains; pleasing ashrams of the munis; cow-sheds; beautiful wells with steps to go down to the water; big and small ponds filled with lovely lotuses; and herds of antelope and wild boar. Enjoying these sights, we reached Kaanyakubj (modern Kanauj). There we saw a holy lake. Lotuses added to its beauty. Swans, cranes and geese were swimming, and the scene was most pleasing. Blown, budded, and unfolded lotuses filled the lake. The water was holy and pure. And above all this, was the buzzing of swarms of bumble-bees. Seeing all this Bhagwan Shri Hari said to me – Listen to the sound of the cranes on this bottomless lake. And every corner is filled with lotuses. It is filled with Nirmal jal (pure water). After taking a bath in it Shri Hari caught hold of my forefinger (Vishuddhi). He kept describing the beauty of the lake, and slowly took me to its banks. There were shady trees, and we rested for a while. Then Shri Hari said – Mune! First of all you have a bath. The water of this lake is as pure as a sadhu's attention. Also, the speciality is that the pollen of the lotuses has made the water fragrant.

Saying this the Lord took my veena and my deer-skin. The idea of a bath appealed to me. I went to the lake, washed my hands and feet, tied my top-knot, rinsed my mouth, and then taking kusha grass in my hand, I began to bathe in those sacred waters. Bhagwan Shri Hari sat before me. The moment I

entered the water I was changed into a beautiful maiden. In an instant Shri Hari took my veena and deerskin and left for His abode. Fully dressed, and ornamented like a woman, I stayed there. I had no memory of my past at all. I did not even remember the Lord of the universe Bhagwan Vishnu. All my wisdom vanished and I became completely ignorant. When I came out of the water, I was an attractive, beautiful maiden. I kept looking all over, and wondered what would happen next. Suddenly there came before me, a king, accompanied by an army of elephants, horses, chariots and soldiers. His name was Taldhwaj. He was young and was dressed in rich clothes and ornaments. It was as if Kamdev himself had assumed a body and come there. I was dressed in shining garments and jewels and ornaments. I was beautiful and my face was like the moon. Raja Taldhwaj was most surprised when he saw me. He asked – Kalyani! Who are you. Which of the gods is your father. Are you a human, a gandharva or a serpent maiden. Who has the good fortune to have been your father. You who have beauty of form and youth; why are you roaming alone in this place. O One with Beautiful Eyes! Are you married, or are you a maiden. You who can charm even Kamdev, tell me all about yourself. If you are still a maiden, please do me the honour of marrying me. I assure you, you will be very happy and well cared for.

Naradji says – When the king finished speaking, I went into deep thought. Then I said – O King. I really do not know whose daughter I am. I do not know who my mother and father are. I do not know what to do, where to go, and how to find happiness. I have no protection of anyone. These problems are always troubling me. Fate is very powerful and controls all beings. None of my efforts have been successful. You are a dharmic person. Whatever you decide, so may it be. I surrender to you. I have no other protector. I have neither father or mother; nor brothers or friends. Also, I have no place to live.

Hearing this, the king looked at me for some time. Then he said to his attendants – Go and fetch a high quality palanquin and get bearers from the Sudra clan who are competent - (a class of people who draw water from wells; and carry palanquins). The palanquin should have silk drapes. This beautiful maiden will sit in it. It should have soft cushions and pillows, and a curtain made of pearls. The palanquin should be roomy and comfortable, and be covered with gold plate.

The capable attendants made all necessary arrangements; and a beautiful palanquin arrived for me. To please the king, I entered the palanquin. He was very happy, and all of us left for his palace. He consulted his guru and ministers, and on an auspicious date we were married with all the proper rituals and ceremonies. He loved me dearly and called me Sowbhagya Sundari (auspicious beauty). He spent all his time with me, and gradually neglected his kingly duties of state. He did not see the passage of time. We were involved in each other, and enjoyed the pleasures of his gardens, wells, ponds, and upper rooms of his palace. The king had become completely enamoured and obsessed with me. This excessive indulgence into pleasure and passion had overpowered and destroyed my wisdom and discretion. My previous body was that of a man, and I had been brought up in the traditions of a muni – none of this memory came into my mind. Day and night my only thoughts were – this is my husband. I am his wife. He loves me above all his other wives. I am the reigning queen of his life. I am a chaste and faithful wife, and I am obedient to all my husband's desires; and my life is very fruitful and prosperous. My whole life began to revolve around this life of love and pleasure. All the ancient knowledge of the spirit, the Brahma gyan, the Nirmal Vidya; the dharma-shastras; had all vanished.

O most respected Muni! In this frivolous way, twelve years passed like twelve seconds. When I became pregnant the king was overjoyed. He performed all the necessary ceremonies. He was very attentive, and always wanted to know my preferences for food. But out of shyness, I could never tell him. In the tenth month, on a day which was most auspicious with the best planetary configurations, a son was born. The whole palace celebrated the event. After the purification the king came to see his son, and there was no limit to his happiness.

Param Tapasvi Vyasji! This is how I came to be the wife of King Taldhwaj. A second son was born, and with the advice of the Brahmins, the elder son was named Veer Varma; and the younger son Sudhanva. We had, altogether, twelve sons. With total attachment and maternal involvement, I spent all my time caring for the children. As the princes grew up, the king performed their marriages. Soon there was a big family of sons, daughters-in-law, and their children. My involvement and attachments were growing stronger day by day. Sometimes the pleasures of wealth and family would surface; and sometimes illness of children and grandchildren would drown me with concern and sorrow. Sometimes there would be conflict among the sons and daughters-in-law, and that would fill me with worry and tension. Happiness and sorrows which come out of attachments are unavoidable, and to no purpose. Inspite of this, I was always in a state of agitation. All my previous divine knowledge and wisdom had deserted me. In this new female form, I was totally enmeshed in household problems and activities. And always, the ego was predominant, to give self importance, and the feeling of being the doer. I was always conscious that – these are my sons; and these are my daughters-in-law; and this entire family is mine. These children are so well-dressed and have such luxuries. Among all women, I am indeed the most fortunate. It never entered my mind that I am Narada, and that the Maya of God (illusion) has deprived me of my

wisdom and intelligence. Being under the influence of Maya, I was firm in my belief that I was a chaste and faithful wife, a queen of the highest level, and mother of many sons. And that I had fulfilled the purpose of my life.

O Most Honoured Vyasji! It happened that a king of another country declared enmity with King Taldhwaj, and landed in our kingdom. He had come with intentions to fight, and had brought a large army, including elephants and chariots. He surrounded the palace. My sons and grandsons went out to fight. A terrible war followed. Cruel fate caused all my sons and grandsons to be killed in battle. I wept inconsolably, and tears poured out of my eyes in a continuous stream. I went to the battlefield. And when I saw the bodies of all the children, there was no limit to my sorrow and grief. I kept weeping and calling - O Sons! Where have you gone. Why did this king slay all of you. Fate is so cruel and merciless. No one can stall fate. While I was wailing, Bhagwan Vishnu appeared in the guise of an aged Brahmin. He looked very holy and his garments were pleasing. He bestowed upon me the honour of appearing before me. I was weeping and He said to me –

O You with the sweet voice like the cuckoo! Why are you weeping. This is nothing but an illusion. In the worldly attachments of husband and children, and household, these situations do arise. Put your attention on your spirit, and see. Think! – Who are you. Whose children are these; and who are they. O you with beautiful eyes! Get up. Stop crying; and steady yourself. As per protocols, go and take your bath and make the customary Tilanjali (offerings to the dead, consisting of sesame seeds and water). According to the scriptures and holy books one has to bathe in holy waters before performing the last rites for dead relatives. This cannot be done in the house.

Naradji says – The old Brahmin, who was actually Bhagwan Vishnu, advised me, and accordingly I took the king and many of our attendants and left. The Brahmin led the way. Shri Vishnu, as the Brahmin, led me to a holy spot where there was a sacred lake. Then Shri Vishnu said – Gajagamini! (a lady who has the graceful gait of an elephant). It is time to perform the ritual. Take your bath in these sacred waters and give up all your grief and sorrows. In all your previous lives, crores of children, husbands, fathers, brothers and sons-in-law have died. For which ones are you grieving. This is all the illusion of the mind. It is as transient as dreams. This unnecessary attachment and useless sorrow only cause disturbance to beings.

Naradji says – After hearing all this advice, I got ready to enter the water. As soon as I got into the water, my form changed into that of a man. Bhagwan Shri Vishnu was sitting on the bank with my veena. O twice-born Mune! I had the good fortune of a darshan of the Lord of the universe, Bhagwan Shri Vishnu. Then all that I had forgotten, came back to my mind. I was Narada, and I was sitting at the Lotus Feet of Lord Vishnu. By the power of Maya, I had been turned into a woman. I was thinking all this, when Bhagwan Hari spoke. He said – Narad! Come here. Why are you standing in the water so long." I realized that a moment ago I was an extremely beautiful woman, and now I was a man. I was completely astounded.

CHAPTER 6 Episodes 30-31

30-31 Bhagwan Shri Vishnu describes the importance and power of Mahamaya. Vyasji illustrates to Janmejay the majesty and grandeur of Devi Bhagawati.

Naradji says – Seeing me as a Brahmin, King Taldhwaj was astounded. He wondered – Where has my wife gone, and from where did Naradji come. He began to wail for his wife who had suddenly left him. He kept saying – O You with eyes like lotus petals! Where have you gone. What shall I do. I cannot live without you. My life, my household and my kingdom have no meaning without you. I have no wish to live. What happened. Did some fishes or tortoises kill you and eat you. It is my misfortune that Varun caused your death. I am grateful for the love you gave my sons and grandsons. You are still attached to them. It is not right for you to leave me like this. I am completely bereft. All my sons have been killed, and now you have gone. The creator Brahma is very severe and merciless that he causes us to die at different times. Our elders have made a very favorable rule for women that when the husband dies they can immolate themselves on the funeral pyre. King Taldhwaj kept weeping and wailing, till Bhagwan Shri Hari gave him comfort and assurance.

Shri Bhagwan said – Rajendra! Why are you weeping. Where has your beloved wife gone. Could it be that you have never had the occasion to listen to the sacred scriptures; or to be in the company of holy and learned men? Who was that woman. Who are you. What is union and what is separation. A human being's connection or relationship with this fast flowing worldly ocean, is just the same as a traveller has with the boat. Nothing can be achieved by

weeping. Meetings and separations are all under the control or destiny or fate. Rajan! You met this beautiful maiden and have had occasion to marry her. You met her near a beautiful lake. At that time she was alone. She had no mother or father. That meeting happened by chance; and the separation has also happened by chance. Rajendra! Do not be sad. No one can stop the events of Kaal. Now according to circumstances, go home and continue your life. Look after your kingdom and your subjects. Crying will not bring her back. Do not fall into this trap of grief and sorrow. Try to find some means of attaining yoga. Just as opportunities come for enjoyment and pleasure, so also they go away. Therefore in this unreal world, it is not proper to indulge in sorrow and sadness. Neither happiness nor sorrow is a permanent state. Like a pendulum there is a constant swing of happiness and sorrow. Rajan! Purify your attention, and go and rule your kingdom. Or else, renounce all your family and friends and make arrangements to live in the forest. This rare and difficult to attain human body is transitory. When you are fortunate to get a human body, you should make all efforts to become the Spirit (Atma Kalyan). Hunger and other sensual appetites can be fulfilled even in the animal class. The intelligence and capacity for knowledge makes human beings a superior class. In other classes they are not bestowed with this. Therefore, give up this grief over a woman, and go back home. This is the Mahamaya of Jagaddamba, Who is the cause of illusion and delusion to the entire creation.

Naradji says – After hearing the words of Lakshmipati Bhagwan Vishnu, King Taldhwaj offered pranaams, and got ready for his ritual bath. Then he went back to his kingdom. Now, deep inside his conscience there arose a desire to renounce all worldly pleasures and retire into the forest. He handed his kingdom to his grandsons, and left for the forest. He meditated and did tapasya, and obtained Tattwa-gyan (Nirmal Vidya).

After King Taldhwaj left, I was privileged to have a darshan of the sweet, smiling face of Lord of the Universe, Bhagwan Vishnu. I said to Him most respectfully – Lord! You played a trick on me. But now I have understood the limitless power of Maya. After acquiring the body of a woman, all the events that took place are coming before me. O Lord Hare! You are the god of all gods and the Great Being! Please tell me one thing. When I entered the water of the holy lake, why did I lose my memory, my wisdom, my Divine Knowledge? After getting the woman's form I accepted King Taldhwaj as my husband, just like Shachi accepted Lord Indra. Then how did my memory and wisdom leave my body. This question constantly haunts me. All my wisdom, all my knowledge, disappeared completely. Please tell me the cause of this. Having a woman's body I experienced different kinds of pleasures. I kept drinking wine and eating prohibited foods without any hesitation. Never did I once remember that I was Narad. All the things that happened then, from beginning to end, are all coming back to memory.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – O Great Soul! This is all the play of Mahamaya. She is the one who causes different states and conditions. Like the different states of wakefulness, sleep, deep slumber (Sushupt), and other four states; so also the state of being in different bodies. It is natural and should not cause puzzlement. A sleeping person does not perceive, hear or speak. And yet the same person when awake, has all these faculties. During sleep there is a disconnection of attention (or, it is un-abled). One has all kinds of dreams. Sometimes he sees – an elephant is chasing me. I am unable to run. What shall I do. There is no safe place for me. Sometimes he sees – My grandfather has come on a visit. We sit and talk and have food together. When we wake up we realize that these experiences of happiness and sorrow were just dreams. He even recalls them and describes them to his friends. Just as a sleeping man does not realize that what is happening is a dream, so also man

cannot understand the unreality, the illusion, the majesty of Mahamaya. Narad! Even Shankar and Brahma were not successful in fathoming the mystery of the nature of Mahamaya. Then how can any being with limited brain hope to understand, the extent of Her powers. Out of Her three attributes – Sattwa, Raja, Tamo – She has created this entire universe. In the absence of these gunas, the creation cannot exist, even for a moment. In me, Sattwa guna is predominant. Rajo and Tamo gunas are subordinate. If I did not have all the three gunas within Me, I could never govern the universe. In the same way, your father Brahma, has Rajo guna predominant. Tamo and Sattwa also exist within him. If these two gunas are absent, he cannot achieve anything. Similarly Shiva has Tamoguna as predominant. Rajo and Sattwa reside as subordinate. There is no being in whom all three gunas are not present. Just recently, you have experienced the influence of Mahamaya. You had many experiences, good and bad. Then why are you asking Me to tell you about Mahamaya.

Vyasji says – Maharaj Janmejay! Whatever description about Yogamaya I got from Naradji I will tell you. Listen carefully. Naradji is all knowing and all wise. After he told me about all his experiences as a woman, I asked him – Naradji! Please tell me what the lord of the universe, Bhagwan Vishnu told you, and where did He go with you.

Naradji said – After our meeting near the most beautiful lake, the Lord mounted His vahana Garuda, and decided to go to Vaikunth. Then He said to me – Narad you may now go wherever you please, or you can come to My abode. You are absolutely free to choose where you want to go." I took permission from Him, and went to Brahmalok. The Lord also sat on Garuda and left for Vaikunth. Then all kinds of thoughts – happy and sad, which were connected with my recent experiences, began to crowd my mind. I went into

the bhavan of my father Shri Brahma. I bowed at his feet and offered pranaams, and then sat before him. O Muni! Seeing me greatly disturbed, my father asked me the reason.

Brahmaji said – O Fortunate One! Where have you been. Son! Why do you look so perturbed. I notice that your attention is not steady. Has somebody deceived you? Did you witness some extraordinary or astonishing spectacle. Son! I can see that you are extremely sad. Your wit and wisdom seem blunt and slow. What is the reason.

Naradji said – When my father questioned me in this way, I took my seat and related to him all the incidents that took place by the influence of Mahamaya. I said – Father! I fell into the trap created by that most powerful Bhagwan Vishnu. For many years I lived the life of a woman. I had to suffer the grief of losing my sons and grandsons. Then He, Himself, with His sweet voice, opened my mind to wisdom and knowledge. On His advice, I entered the holy lake and was restored to my original male form as Narada. Brahman! Please tell me why my mind became so attached and enmeshed in worldly pleasures. As soon as my form changed into that of a female; I do not know where all my wisdom and knowledge vanished. This power of Maya is beyond my understanding. Because this Maya is concealed; destroys wisdom; defies discretion; and is ample testimony that She is the originator of the play. All the possible auspicious and inauspicious situations came before me; I experienced them all; and realized this truth, completely and thoroughly. Most respected Father! Is there any way of conquering this Maya. Please tell me.

Brahmaji said – The entire creation of Devatas, mahatmas, munis, tapasvis, the learned, the yogis observing severe penances and living only on air – no one, has been able to gain mastery over Maya. Even I have not been able to

comprehend this most powerful and limitless Maya. This Mahamaya who creates, nourishes and destroys, is beyond knowledge and understanding. Time, actions, nature or temperament, work with Her in cooperation, as causals or inducements. Do not distress yourself over this infinite power of Mahamaya. Also you should not wonder, or be surprised. Because every one of us is under Her control.

Naradji says – Vyasji! Hearing this from my father, my worries and concern disappeared. They I offered pranaams and left. I visited holy places and reached here. O Foremost among Kauravas! You also renounce all the grief and sorrows that you feel after the destruction of the Kauravas. Put your attention on the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba, and spend your time in meditation. Accept the fact that we will have to suffer the consequences of our actions, good or bad. And pass your days in peace and joy of meditation.

Vyasji says – Rajan! After giving me this valuable advice, Naradji left. I contemplated over what he told me; and settled down on the banks of the holy river Saraswati. It happened to be a most sacred and auspicious time. I started to compose Srimad Devi Bhagwat. Rajan! This most supreme Puran removes all doubts and uncertainties; is full of narrations and stories; and has the Vedas deeply woven in all its purity. Rajan! It is not desirable to have, even an iota of doubt in this. Just like a juggler or magician holds a puppet and makes it perform according to his commands; so also this Maya makes the whole universe dance according to Her tune. From Brahma to all life forms which are endowed with five senses; all devas, demons and humans, act according to their mind and attention. And the three gunas or attributes – Sattwa, Rajo and Tamo – are the causals. An action is the result of a causal. This is an absolute fact. The gunas, which are the creation of Maya, are of different natures and temperaments. They are basically of three kinds –

serene, active, and slow. Being always dependent on these gunas, how can a person remain constant in the absence of it? Just as there cannot be cloth without yarn, so also there cannot be a living thing without the gunas. This is the absolute truth.

Narendra! Devas, humans and animals – if any of these bodies are devoid of gunas - they cannot exist; in the same way that a pot cannot come into existence without clay. It is due to this connection that Brahma and all the gods sometimes experience happiness, sometimes sorrow, and sometimes pain. In the same way the fourteen manus of the solar race and the lunar race (surya-vanshi and chandravanshi) also came under the sway of the gunas and ruled. Therefore Rajan! What about the ordinary mortals. Gods, demons, humans, and all other living things, are subject to Maya. No one should have any doubt whatsoever about this. It is under the influence of Maya, that a being commits an action. Maya exists and the essential element of the universe, and is intermixed in everything. It works ceaselessly, giving impulses or instigation to all living things. This Maya has been accepted by Bhagawati Parameshwari, and abides with Her at all times. For this reason the Goddess, who is of the form of Sat-Chit-Anand is also called Mayeshwari. One should constantly chant Her holy names, and meditate on Her, and perform pujas to Her. In Her compassion and benevolence, She removes the influence of Maya. – She bestows as a gift, Her own perception and knowledge, and defeats (deprives) Maya. Therefore She is also called Bhuvaneshi. In all the three worlds, there is no one as beautiful as Her. Rajan! By Her blessings and permission, if one can keep one's attention, constantly and unswervingly on the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Parameshwari; then what influence can the ever-present Maya have on us. Therefore, if you wish to be away from the machinations of Maya, you have to fix your attention totally and permanently, on the Lotus Feet of Satchitanand Swarupini, Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Any

other worship, any where, is of no value. Just as darkness cannot dispel darkness; but the light of the sun, moon, lightning or fire, succeeds in dispelling it; so also Mayeshwari Jagaddamba, with Her radiance, can dispel Maya. This is the absolute truth. In order to prevent getting surrounded or covered by mayic gunas, we should worship with full attention and devotion, Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

Rajendra! Whatever you desired to know about the destruction of Vrittasur, and other connected events; I have told you in great detail. Now what else do you wish to know. O Auspicious One! I have narrated to you, the entire first half of the most holy, the most sacred Puran, The Srimad Devi Bhagwat! The magnificence and glory of the Devi, have been described with great reverence and respect. These detailed descriptions of Bhagawati, should not be narrated to any and every one. Only those who are devotees; calm and peaceful; who love and respect other devotees of the Devi; pupils of a Satguru; your eldest son; one who worships the Guru --- to those fortunate people, you can narrate this supreme Puran. It contains the essence of all the Purans; is equal to all the Vedas; and full of testimonial authority. The person who reads or listens to this narration with single minded devotion and attention; he gets filled with Nirmal Vidya – The Pure Divine Knowledge.

End of Chapter 6

CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7 Episode 1

1 – King Janmejay asks Vyasji about the Creation.

Sootjee says – O Great Tapasvis! After hearing this divine narration, son of Parikshit, dharmatma King Janmejay asked Ved Vyasji –

Janmejay said – Swami! I desire to know about the kings of the Solar and Lunar races. You are all knowing. Tell me this episode that grants release from all sins. I have heard that the kings of both races, were great devotees of Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

Vyasji says – O King! Listen carefully. I am going to tell you all the stories connected with the kings of the Suryavansh, Chandravansh, and all other races.

From the Nabhi-kamal of Shri Vishnu, manifested the four-faced Brahmaji. He went into severe penance and renunciation, and meditated upon that Mahadevi, who grants darshan when She is pleased. Bhagawati granted a boon to the father of the universe Shri Brahma. Only then was he able to perform the work of creation. But he could not succeed in creating human beings. He had many thoughts and plans, but executing and materializing them, seemed beyond his powers. Then he had seven sons (Manas putras – sons born out of wish)- Marichi, Angira, Atri, Vasisht, Pulaha, Kratu and Pulastya. They became famous by these names. From the wrath of Brahma was manifested Rudra. From his lap manifested Narada. From his thumb

Daksh-Prajapati. In the same way, many sons, including Sanak, were born out of Brahma's wish. From the left thumb manifested the wife of Daksh, who was most beautiful in face and form. Rajan! In the Puranas she is known as Veerini. She is also called Asikni. The divine sage Narada manifested from the belly of Asikni on Brahma's wish.

Raja Janmejay said – Brahman! I am confused. You have just said that by uniting with Daksh, Veerini was the mother of the great tapasvi Naradji. How can this be. All the learned ones say that Naradji was born out of the wish of Brahma. Then how could wife of Daksh, Veerini, be the mother of Naradji. Please explain this to me. Mune! Also tell me why, and on whose curse, Naradji renounced his first body and took a rebirth.

Vyasji says – Brahmaji himself commanded Daksh Prajapati to start the process of creating progeny, so that there would be a large number of descendants. So Daksh Prajapati and his wife Veerini, produced five thousand handsome sons. All of them were filled with unyielding zeal and enthusiasm to continue the production of offspring and descendants. Under the instigation of the unconquerable Kaal, Devrishi Narad laughingly said to them - Without knowing the dimensions, the length and breadth of this earth, how have you become engaged in populating it. If you do this you will be scorned and ridiculed. There is no doubt in this. Therefore, you must find out the size of the earth before you undertake this project. Only then will you be successful. Otherwise all your efforts will be in vain.

Vyasji says – As per fate, the sons of Daksh accepted the advice of Naradji. They said to each other – Munivar is absolutely right. After measuring the earth we should create the people. They reached an agreement; and all of them left to measure the earth. Some went north, some south, some went

east and some went west. When Daksh Prajapati saw all his sons going away, he became angry. But he was firm in his resolve. So he again created many sons to perform the creation of the descendants. Again Narada advised these sons, and they also left to measure the earth. This time Daksh Prajapati was furious. He cursed. Daksh said – Narad! You have destroyed all my sons. May you also be destroyed. As a punishment you will have to occupy a womb. For this reason Narada gave up his body, and was born from the womb of Veerini.

After this Daksh Prajapati and Veerini produced sixty daughters. Prajapati Daksh had full knowledge of dharmas. Out of these sixty daughters, he gave ten daughters to Dharm; twenty-seven to Chandrama, two to Bhrigu, and four to Arishtnemi. Two daughters were married to Angira. Then there were two left. These also he gave to Angira. All the gods and danavas are the children and grandchildren of these sixty daughters. All were valiant, strong and brave. They were constantly quarreling. They were heroic. But under the influence of Maya, they were always in illusion and delusion.

CHAPTER 7 Episodes 2-3

2-3 Start of the Suryavanshi clan. Story of Sukanya and Maharishi Chyavan.

Janmejay said – O Fortunate One! Please tell me in detail, the story of the kings of the Surya dynasty.

Vyasji says – Bharat! I will tell it to you exactly as I heard it from the foremost of rishis, Naradji himself. Listen carefully. Once Shriman Naradji on his travels reached the banks of the holy Saraswati river. I had my ashram there. When I saw him I offered pranaams to his feet. I spread a mat for him to sit, and I performed the welcoming rituals. After the prescribed puja, I asked him – Muni! I greatly respect and honour you. By your visit my ashram has become holy and purified. Mune! Nothing is unknown to you. Please tell me all that you know about the renowned and distinguished kings who ruled in the clan of the seventh Manu.

Naradji says - Satyawatinandan Vyasji! I will tell you the most glorious genealogy of the kings. This story, which is most pleasing to the ears, is filled with dharma and knowledge. It is well known from the Puranas that Brahmaji manifested from the Nabhi lotus of Shri Vishnu. The Swayambhu (self existent, self begotten) Brahmaji was all knowing and possessed of all shakti. Before he undertook the creation of the universe, the vishvatma Shri Brahma first meditated on that most supreme, vital principle, Bhagawati Jagaddamba, and

went into tapasya for ten thousand years. It was after this that he produced, only by wishing, human sons of the highest character and quality.

The first to manifest was Marichi. From Marichi came the famous Kashyapji. Daksh Prajapati had thirteen daughters, all of whom became the wives of Kashyapji. They produced all the devatas, demons, yakshas, sarpagun (serpents), animals, reptiles and birds. For this reason they are called Kashyapi Srishti (creation of Kashyap).

The foremost of devatas was Surya. He is also called Vivaswan. His son was Vyvaswat Manu, who was given the responsibility to govern and control the world. From Vaivaswat Manu was born the famous Ikshvaku, who enhanced and enlarged the Surya clan. He had nine more brothers. I am going to tell you their names. Pay careful attention. Naabhag, Dhrisht, Sharyati, Narishyanth, Praanshu, Nrig, Disht, Karush and Prishadra – these were known as Manuputras. The first Manuputra to be born was Ikshvaku. So he is called the eldest. He had one hundred sons. Out of these, the foremost atmagyani (knower of the spirit) was Vikukshi. These nine sons of Manu (Manuputras) were full of bravery and valour. Besides Manu, I will tell you about the growth of their clans, in brief.

Naabhag had an illustrious son Dharsht. Even though he was a Kshatriya, he became a Brahmin. All ambitions and thoughts of war receded from his mind. He began to perform all rites and ceremonies of Brahmins. To Sharyati was born Anarth, who is well known. Also there was born to him a most beautiful daughter Sukanya. King Sharyati got this daughter married to a blind muni Chyavan. Later, by her devotion and good qualities, Chyavanmuni regained his sight. The Ashwini Kumars, sons of Surya, gave him eyes.

Raja Janmejay said – Brahman! The part that you have just narrated, that Raja Sharyati gave his beautiful-eyed daughter Sukanya in marriage to a blind muni, is causing a lot of distress. If the girl was ugly, lacking in qualities, and totally devoid of pleasant nature, it would be understandable. But, this girl was beautiful, sweet natured, endowed with good qualities – Then what made him do a cruel thing like this. Please tell me the reason.

Sootjee says – Hearing these words of Parikshit-nandan Janmejay, Vyasji said – Vaivaswat Manu had a son called Shriman Raja Sharyati. He had four thousand wives. All those princesses were extremely beautiful and possessed of auspicious qualities. Among them was a supremely beautiful maiden Sukanya. She was the beloved of her father and all her mothers. Close to their kingdom was a lake, which compared in beauty and serenity, with Manasarovar. There were steps leading down to the water. The lake was full of pure, holy water. Swans and red geese enhanced its beauty. Cranes and waterfowl nested in trees nearby. Five kinds of lotus bloomed in the lake, and bumble bees droned lazily. It was surrounded by beautiful trees, bearing fragrant flowers, and of special nature - Banyan, Peepul, Kadamb, Sal, Tamaal, Deodhar, Nutmeg and Ashok. Also, fruit-bearing trees like Banana, Lime, Pomegranate, Date, Jackfruit, Supari, Coconut, Kewda, Kachnaar; and flowering plants like Juhi and Malati. All these added to the beauty of the place. There were also trees of Jamun, Mango, Tamarind, Bel, Karaj, Koriya, Palash, Neem and Khair (Catechu). The sounds of Koel and Peacock filled the air with pleasant tunes.

Very close to that lake, in the middle of a grove, lived Chyavan Muni. He was a great tapasvi, whose attention was pure and peaceful. Believing the place to be deserted and secluded, he had begun his tapasya there. He had arranged the aasan and sat down in deep meditation. In addition he had taken the vow of silence. He was in full control of all his faculties and his life force. He had

even renounced food and water. He sat with his total and unswerving attention fixed on Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Termites had built anthills over him, and creepers grew and covered him completely. He had been sitting for such a long time, that he became a part of the anthill.

Rajan! One day Raja Sharyati came to that place. The water of the lake was crystal clear and pure. Lotuses had bloomed in great numbers. With the frivolity of youth, Sukanya went with her attendants to pick flowers and wander in the forest. Moving from grove to grove, she reached close to the place where Chyavan Muni was sitting. He was not visible as he was completely covered with earth and creepers. She saw something glowing through two holes in the anthill. She was filled with curiosity and wanted to remove the covering and see that was inside. So she picked up a pointed stick and began to chip away the walls of the anthill. As the holes became bigger she came into the view of Chyavan Muni. Without food and water his body had become very frail. Seeing the maiden he said – "O Beautiful One! Go further away from here. I am a tapasvi. Do not disturb the earth of this anthill". But she did not hear his voice. She continued to dig and poke, and broke both the eyes of the muni. By the instigation of fate, in a playful way, this horrible incident occurred. This injury caused Chyavan Muni unbearable pain. That very instant the bodily excretions of all the ministers and soldiers came to a halt. This malady struck the king as well. Also, all the horses, elephants and camels were in pain and discomfort. The king was perplexed, and wondered what the reason was. King Sharyati was very despondent, and when he reached home, he called all his attendants and soldiers, and made enquiries. He said – Something is wrong. Some great misdeed has been committed by someone. On the western bank of this lake, the great muni Chyavan is sitting in meditation and severe penance. He is more lustrous than fire. It is possible that someone has disturbed him. That is why we are

afflicted by this terrible disease. There is no doubt about this. Bhrigunandan Chyavanji has great and venerable sons like Vriddh and Vasisht. In my understanding, I feel someone has disrespected or dishonoured him in some way. Whether it was committed knowingly or unknowingly, the fruit of the action will have to be borne.

Vyasji says – Raja Sharyati had become exceedingly anxious. After making all enquiries, he also consulted his council of ministers. When the princess Sukanya saw this gloom over the palace, and the pain and discomfort being suffered by all, she realized that her digging of the anthill could possibly be the cause. So she went to her father and said – "O Respected Father! I was playing in that forest. I saw an anthill, covered with creepers. Through holes I could see a bright glow inside. Maharaj! I became inquisitive and pushed a pointed stick into the holes. I noticed that the stick was wet when it came out. And from inside, a very feeble sound of "aah! aah!" could be heard. Father! I became astounded. And now I am afraid because I must have hurt him somewhere with the stick." King Sharyati at once understood that this was the cause of all the inauspicious signs. The great Chyavan Muni had been disturbed and disrespected. He immediately went to the anthill. He saw Chyavan Muni in great pain and distress. His body was covered with earth from the anthill. He slowly removed the dust; and prostrated before the Muni in sashtaang pranaam. He sang stutis and then with folded hands prayed to him – O Most Auspicious One! My daughter was playing here, and it is by her hand that this most unfortunate mistake has been committed. She did it in complete ignorance. Brahman! She is an innocent child. Please forgive her. It is the nature of munis to forgive. This is what I have heard. So I beg you to forgive her for this great misdeed.

Vyasji says – Raja Sharyati stood there very humbly and very repentant.

Chyavan Muni said – Rajan! I never, never get angry. Even though your daughter has damaged my eyes and caused me pain, I did not pronounce a curse on her. O Great King! I am blameless and innocent. My eyes are hurting a great deal. I know that this unfortunate incident has caused you a lot of distress. It has to be. After committing a grievous injury to a Devi bhakt, who can be happy? Even if he has a protector like Shiva, then also it is impossible for him to be happy. Rajan! What am I to do. I have lost my eyes. I am overcome by old age. Now who will look after a blind, old man.

Raja Sharyati said – Munivar. I will put innumerable attendants on duty, to look after you. Please forgive. Because tapasvis do not have anger.

Chyavanji said – Rajan! How can I, a blind tapasvi, stay alone and meditate. Your servants cannot sit and talk to me on subjects that are dear to my heart. If you want me to forgive, you must accept what I say. You must leave your lotus-eyed daughter in my service. Maharaj! I am pleased with her. I will stay with her and perform my tapasya, and she will look after me. Rajendra! If you do this, both you and I can live happily. When I am happy, all your subjects and animals can also live comfortably and peacefully. There is no doubt in this. If you do this, you will not be guilty. The reason is that I am an ascetic.

Vyasji says – Janmejay! Hearing the words of Chyavan Muni, King Sharyati was filled with misgivings. He could neither say yes, nor no, to the muni. He thought – this muni is old, blind and ugly. How can I give my divinely beautiful daughter to him, and be happy. Is there any foolish and selfish father who would sacrifice his beautiful daughter for his own happiness and well being. How will my daughter pass her life with this blind old man. Therefore, I will suffer all the hardships, but I will not give my daughter to him. Having made this decision he returned home, very sad and dejected. He called his ministers

and asked their opinion also - should he give his daughter, or suffer the consequences.

The ministers said – O King! This is a very difficult problem. It is not possible to give the princess to this unfortunate man.

Vyasji says – Seeing the agitation and sorrow on the faces of the king and the ministers, Princess Sukanya guessed the problem. She went to her father, and smilingly said – Dear Father! Why are you so worried and upset. I have understood that you are concerned about me. Most Respected Father! I will go to the distressed Muni and give him my assurance that I will surrender myself and try to please him by my care and attention.

King Sharyati's heart melted with compassion. At the same time his face showed that he was pleased with his daughter. In front of the ministers he asked her – You are so young and delicate. How will you stay in the forest and look after this blind muni. He is very old, and also extremely short tempered. You are as beautiful as Rati (wife of cupid). How can I give you to him as a wife. It is not proper to give you to a man who is old and frail. It is the duty of a father to find a match for his daughter who is suitable in every way, taking into consideration family, wealth, health, and appearance. It is not right to get her married to a man who is far below her in status and wealth. Your delicate beauty can never compare with that old forest dweller. How can I agree to such a mismatched marriage. I cannot imagine what kind of life you will have with a man who lives in a house made of leaves, in the middle of a forest. My soldiers, ministers and I would rather accept death, than give you in marriage to this blind, old, tapasvi. Whatever has to happen, will happen. I will face it with courage. You keep your peace. I will never give you to a blind man.

Whatever happens by fate or fortune, it does not matter. Daughter, I do not agree to this marriage."

Sukanya began to plead with him lovingly. She said – Dear Father! Do not worry about me. Just give me to this muni. By this all living things in your kingdom will live in peace and happiness. What can give me greater joy. I will be satisfied to live with this great muni, and minister to all his requirements with attention and devotion. I am well aware of Sati Dharm, and I will be a chaste and virtuous wife. I have no desire for worldly pleasures. So please have no anxieties on my account.

Vyasji says – When Sukanya spoke thus, all the ministers were astonished. In the end King Sharyati agreed to his daughter's request, and went to the forest. When he came before Muni Chyavan, he offered pranaams and said respectfully—Swami! I give my daughter into your service. Please accept her with the proper rituals and ceremonies." After this the king made all the necessary arrangements and performed the marriage of his daughter Sukanya with Muni Chyavan. The Muni was pleased. The king offered the customary dowry, but the Muni refused it. He only accepted the princess, and her promise to serve him faithfully. Once the Muni was pleased, all the diseases which had inflicted great distress on the soldiers, ministers and animals in the kingdom, vanished miraculously. This made the king very happy and joyous. When the king prepared to leave, his daughter Sukanya expressed a desire to speak to him.

Sukanya said – Most Respected Father! Please take away all these rich clothes and ornaments. Give me the bark of trees and the skin of antelopes. I wish to live like a tapasvi's wife and serve my husband faithfully, so that you receive honour and renown in the three worlds. Never feel guilty that you have given

me to a blind muni, and have no fear that I will ever regret my decision, or break my resolve. I wish to emulate the great women – Arundati, wife of Vasishtji; and Anasuya, wife of sage Atri. I will also attain a place in heaven. So do not have any anxieties about me.

King Sharyati was a dharmic man. He bowed to his daughter's wishes and provided her with clothes made of bark and deer skin, but when he saw her, his eyes filled with tears. All the attendants also wept upon seeing their princess dressed as a tapasvini. Then the King bid farewell to his daughter, and left for his kingdom.

Chapter 7 Episodes 4-5

4-5 Sukanya takes care of Chyavan Muni. Arrival of Ashwinikumars; and boon to Chyavan Muni.

Vyasji says - After King Sharyati left, Sukanya lived as the chaste and faithful wife of Chyavan Muni, and took care of all his needs. Walking on the path of dharma, the princess never allowed a break in the daily routine of the ashram. She used to collect fruits and edible tubers and roots, and offer them to the Muni. All her time was spent looking after the Muni. In the cold winter season, she would make hot water for his bath, and cover him in deer skin clothes. Then she would seat him on the puja aasan, and place before him til, barley, kusha grass and kamandelu, and pray – Munivarji! Now you may perform your regular puja. After the puja, she would lead him by the hand and make him sit on an aasan, or lie on the bed. Then she would feed him ripe fruits or cooked rice. After he had eaten, she would wash his hands and offer water for rinsing the mouth. Then very sweetly, she would keep paan and supari before him. Only after he was completely comfortable, would she look to her own needs. She also ate only fruits and tubers. She would always ask – Prabhu! Is there anything else you need. If not, I will sit and press your feet. In this way Sukanya was constantly engaged in caring for her husband.

After havan in the evenings, she would offer delicious sweet fruits to the Muni. Whatever was left over, she would eat, with his permission. Then she would spread a clean bed and make the Muni sleep in it. And she would press his feet, and make him tell her all the dharmic stories of the women of his clan. After the Muni slept, she would make her bed near his feet and sleep. In the

hot summer months, she would fan him with the cool palmyra leaf. And in winter, she would collect wood and light a fire in front of the Muni. She would keep asking if he was comfortable and happy. She would wake up during Brahma-muhoorth, and get the water, vessel, and earth ready for the morning ablutions of the Muni. Then she would wash his feet with water and earth. She would get the prescribed stalks for rubbing on the teeth, and keep them near him. Then hot water for bath. And again enquire if he needed anything. After his bath, she would inform him of the auspicious time for the morning havan.

Princess Sukanya had a pure and chaste attention. Having accepted the great tapasvi Chyavan Muni as her husband, she observed all the rules and maryadas while caring for all his needs. There was never a break in his daily routine, and fire and oblations were always treated with honour and respect. Her entire life was devoted to assisting and caring for her husband.

One day the sons of Surya, the Ashwinikumar twins, arrived near the ashram of Muni Chyavan. They saw Sukanya returning to the ashram after her bath in the lake. She was very beautiful and looked like a demi goddess. The Ashwini kumars went to her and respectfully said – O Beautiful One! Please wait. We are the sons of Suryadev. We have come here as we have to ask you a question. You must answer truthfully. O You with Beautiful Eyes! Who is your father and who is your husband. How is it that you are alone and unaccompanied in this dense forest, and you have come to bathe in this lake. O Lotus-eyed One! You have so much luster that it seems as if Shree Lakshmi herself has descended here. We wish to know everything about you. Please tell us. When you place your delicate feet on this rough and uneven ground, we are filled with anguish. All vehicles are at your disposal, then why do you walk. What is the reason that you walk barefoot on these stones. Are you a

princess or an apsara. That mother is most fortunate who gave birth to you. And we cannot find words to express how lucky and fortunate your husband is. This place is beautiful, and now it has become divine after you have walked on it. Those deer and antelope which look upon you in this forest, are most blessed. So also all the other animals and birds. Where is your father; and where does your husband live. We most respectfully wish to meet them.

Vyasji says – Princess Sukanya became extremely shy and said - I am the daughter of King Sharyati. Muni Chyavan is my husband. I am a chaste and faithful wife. My father gave me in marriage with all the proper rituals and ceremonies. My husband has lost his sight. This great Muni has grown old. It is my honour to serve him faithfully. Who are you, and what is the purpose of your visit. My husband is in residence in the ashram. Please come there and make the place holy.

Rajan! Then the Ashwinikumars asked – How did your father give you in marriage to this aged tapasvi Muni. You give brightness to this forest like lightning. Even in the house of the gods one cannot find someone as beautiful as you. You should be wearing divine garments. This dress of bark and skin does not suit you. How did you get a blind husband. It seems as if Brahma made a mistake in choosing a husband for you. You are not right for him. You are a princess with a delicate body. Some lack of good fortune has landed you in this forest.

Vyasji says – Sukanya began to tremble. She picked up courage and spoke to them. - Devas! You are the sons of Surya Bhagwan. You are eminent and knowledgeable. I am a chaste wife who observes all the protocols of dharma. You should not speak to me in this manner. When my father has given me in marriage to this yogadharmi Muni, how can I walk on the path that loose

charactered women take. Surya who is the son of Kashyap, and giver of light, is the witness of the actions of all living things. He watches all. Therefore such words should never be spoken by you. How can a woman of high birth become averse or hostile to her husband. You who are aware of the illusions of this world, please leave me in peace. Otherwise I will be forced to curse you. I am Sharyati-kumari Sukanya, chaste and faithful wife of Muni Chyavan.

Vyasji says – The Ashwini twins were astonished beyond words. Fear of Muni Chyavan filled their hearts with terror. They immediately addressed Sukanya – "O Gracious Princess! Your virtue and righteousness has filled us with joy. Our hearts are bursting, and we are keen to grant you a boon. Ask for whatever you wish. We will give it to you. Know that we are the doctors of the devas. We have the power to transform your husband into a handsome young man. After we have turned him into a youth like us, you will have to choose your husband from among three of us, who will be identical". Sukanya was amazed to hear this. She went immediately to her husband Chyavan Muni and told him.

Sukanya said – You who illuminate the clan of Bhargav! O Muni! At this momet the Ashwinikumars, sons of Suryadev, are visiting your ashram. They have a divine appearance. They were very surprised to see me in this forest. They said to me – We have the power to change your husband into a young man of divine appearance and also restore his sight. There is no doubt in this. But there is a condition. After they transform you, all three will look the same, and I must choose my husband from them. O Sadhu! I have come to seek your advice. What should I do. It is difficult to understand this maya. I do not know what their intentions are. Whatever you advise, I am prepared to do.

Chyavanji said – O Loved One! I will tell you. Go to the heavenly physicians, the Ashwinikumars, and try to bring them to me. Accept their offer. There is no need to think too much about it.

Vyasji says – Sukanya went back to the Ashwinikumars and said – O Devas! I accept your offer. Now you can do the needful.

The Ashwinikumars accompanied her to the ashram. They asked the Muni to enter the lake. He was already keen to be transformed, so the Muni entered the lake. The two devas also went into the water. Then all three of them came out. They were identical in every way. They were young and godly; and dressed in divine garments and ornaments. They spoke in one voice – O Princess! Come and choose one of us as your husband. You must choose the one you love.

Vyasji says – The three divine youths had the same voice, and the same appearance. Sukanya was in a state of confusion. She began to panic, and thought – What shall I do. All three look the same. This is a very difficult situation. This is an illusion created by the gods to confuse me. For me this is death. I cannot live with anyone who is not my husband." She surrendered herself to the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba in deep meditation. She also began to sing Her praises –

Sukanya said – O Mother of the Universe! I have come to you in my deepest sorrow. O Devi! Beloved of Shankar. Who sits on a Lotus Throne. I bow my head to Your Lotus Feet again and again. Now the protection of my Sati-dharma (chaste and pious wife) is in Your hands. O Beloved of Vishnu! Shree Lakshmi. Mother of the Vedas, Saraswati! I offer You my pranaams. You are the sole creatrix of this living world. It is Your nature to protect the universe.

When the time comes for dissolution, You absorb it within Yourself. You are the Mother of Brahma-Vishnu-Shankar. They function for You. Those who are spiritually ignorant, but have pure desire, get Nirmal Vidya from You. The highly evolved worship You unceasingly, and attain Moksha or freedom from worldly attachments. You give pleasure to Param Purush, who witnesses Your creation. You exist in the form of Your creation, but all cannot recognize you. You are the source of happiness for all living things. Those who remain ignorant, and refuse to recognize, only reap sorrows – that is also Your institution. O Divine Mother! You grant yogis fulfillment, victory and honour. I am in deep distress. In this situation only You can help me. Mother! I am floundering in this ocean of illusion. Please have mercy on me, and indicate to me which one is my husband. These devas have spread a web of deception, and my judgement has become blunted. Whom can I choose as my husband. You please show me the real Muni. I have never faltered in my duties as a chaste and faithful wife. You already know this.

Vyasji says – Tripurasundari Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba was pleased by the worship of Sukanya. She blessed her with knowledge in her heart, so that she was able to identify her husband from among the three youths. She opened her eyes and they immediately rested on her husband Chyavan Muni. This pleased the Ashwinikumars, and they gave more boons and prepared to leave. Chyavan Muni, with his sight and youth restored, said to the Ashwinikumars – Devas! You have bestowed great blessings on me. Even though I had such a young and beautiful wife, I had no happiness. My blindness caused me great hardships. Also I had become very old. I lived like an unfortunate being in the forest. In this situation you came and granted me sight, beauty, and youth. Now it is my desire to give you something. If one does not show gratitude to a benefactor, it is a great shame. In this world, even devas can become indebted, so how much more humans. Therefore it is my heartfelt desire to

offer you some gift. You have given me back my sight, and a new body. To free myself from this obligation, I can give you something which is difficult to obtain, even for the devas and the danavas. I am very pleased with this great boon you have given me. So please ask me for something.

The Ashwinikumars consulted each other. Then they went to Chyavan Muni, who was seated with Sukanya, and said – Muni! By the grace of our father Surya, all our wishes have been granted. But our desire to sit in the company of the Gods and partake of Somras (divine nectar) has not yet been fulfilled. During yagyas, when the moment comes for drinking of Somras, the gods prohibit us, saying we are doctors. There was a yagya of Brahmaji on Mount Sumeru. On Indra's objection we did not get Somras. Therefore, O Knowledgeable Tapasvi! If you possess the power to make us eligible to drink the nectar of the gods, we will be very happy. We have been thirsting for Somras, and it causes us great distress.

Chyavan Muni spoke to them very gently – You did me the great favour of restoring my sight and my youth, and I have this most beautiful and virtuous wife. In my joyful state, I will certainly make you eligible for partaking of Somras. Indra will be deceived. This is the absolute truth. At the present moment, a yagya is being performed by the illustrious king Sharyati. The Ashwini twins were very happy, and returned to their abode in heaven. Chyavanji took Sukanya and went back to his ashram.

Chapter 7 - Episodes 6-7

6-7 Raja Sharyati has doubts and suspicions on seeing the new Chyavan Muni. Doubts are cleared. Sharyati performs Yagya and Ashwinis drink somras. Raja Rewat goes to Brahmalok.

Raja Janmejay asked – How did Mahatma Chyavanji make the divine physicians eligible for partaking of Somras. How did it materialize. How did the human shakti overcome the divine shakti, and how did Chyavan Muni succeed in overcoming Indra's objections. Please narrate this amazing incident in detail.

Vyasji says – Maharaj! When Raja Sharyati hosted the Yagya on earth, Chyavan Muni also attended. I am going to tell you the whole story. Listen well. Chyavan Muni was as lustrous and glorious as a god. Having married a beautiful princess, Sukanya, his happiness knew no bounds. He honoured her like a god honouring a goddess. One day King Sharyati's wife became very concerned about her daughter Sukanya. She went crying to the king and said – Rajan! You gave our daughter away to a blind and aged Muni. We do not know how she is in the forest. Is she still alive, or has she died. You should go and see how she is. Lord! Please go and pay respects to Muni Chyavan, and see how Sukanya is, and how she is living with a most unsuitable husband. My heart burns when I think of her sorrowful state. She must have become weak and frail from tapasya. Please bring my beautiful daughter with bright eyes, so that I can see her. She must be working hard to minister to a blind tapasvi. And she wears clothes made of rough bark. I long to see my daughter.

Raja Sharyati said – O You with Big, Beautiful Eyes! Most Chaste Queen! I am leaving immediately to see our daughter, and to offer respects to the great tapasvi, Muni Chyavan.

Vyasji says – Speaking thus to the queen, he led her to his chariot, and both started their journey to the ashram. As they neared the ashram, they saw a youthful muni who looked like the son of a deva. The king was filled with apprehension and misgiving. He thought – I hope my daughter has not committed any despicable act. Chyavan Muni was an aged man. Could it be that the old muni died and she has taken another husband. No matter how placid and temperate one may be, the torments of desire and passion, become the cause of committing base and contemptible acts. This Kamdev is insufferable, and in young age, impossible to overcome. This will leave an indelible stain on the holy clan of Manu. It will bring shame to the parents. In a way, I am responsible for this act of hers. Inspite of knowing that the Muni was blind and old, I gave my daughter to him in marriage. It is the duty of a father to find a match that is suitable in every way, and only then give his daughter in marriage. According to my action, the fruit is here before my eyes. If I kill my daughter for her shameful act, I will become guilty of Stree-hatya (murder of a woman). More so, because she is my daughter. I have brought disgrace on the most supreme Manu clan. The whole world will condemn me. What shall I do. I cannot think clearly." King Sharyati was sinking into despair. Just then he saw his daughter, and their eyes met. She noticed that her father was very disturbed. She immediately came to him and asked – Father! It seems that you are wondering who this young muni with lotus eyes can be, and what he is doing here. Your eyes are filled with concern and fear. O King who adds Grace to the Clan of Manu! You are a noble being. Come and meet my husband. This is not an occasion for expressing sorrow".

Vyasji says – When Sukanya said this, the king who was already distraught spoke. The king said – Daughter! Where is that revered old tapasvi Chyavan Muni? Who is this proud young man. I am full of suspicion. Have you become unprincipled and immoral. Could it be that you have murdered the old muni.

You have brought disgrace to our clan. Have you become a slave of this youth. The presence of this youth in your ashram is causing me grave concern and suspicions. You please unravel this mystery as soon as possible, and put my fears at rest."

Hearing her father speak like this, Sukanya began to smile. She took her father's hand and led him to Chyavan Muni and said – Father! That son-in-law Chyavan Muni, whom you are searching, is this same youth. By the grace of the Ashwini Kumars his appearance has become so pleasing. They are the ones who gave back his lotus eyes. Both the Ashwini Kumars had come to this ashram. Out of their compassion they granted this boon. Father! I am your daughter. Upon seeing this young muni, whatever doubts and imaginations you had about my activities, are most unfounded, because I am incapable of committing any shameful deeds. Rajan! Offer your pranaams to this Muni Chyavan, who illuminates the clan of Bhrigu. Father, you may ask him for all the details so that you get peace of mind. The king did pranaam by bowing his head on Chyavan Muni's feet. Then he spoke.

The King said – O Muni! You who are an ornament in the clan of Bhrigu. Please tell me quickly, how you got your eyes, and how your old age vanished. Brahman! There is no end to the astonishment and amazement I feel, at seeing your present form. I am impatient to hear your story.

Chyavanji said – The Ashwini Kumars are physicians to the gods. They came here. They have been benevolent and restored to me my sight and my youth. In gratitude I gave them a boon - Both of you devas will become eligible to drink Somras at the yagya to be performed by Raja Sharyati. Now be at peace, and take your seat.

Raja Sharyati accepted the aasan offered by Chyavan Muni and sat down. The queen sat beside him. They talked auspicious things. Then Muni Chyavan said to the king – Maharaj! I will preside over the yagya in your kingdom. Keep all the samagri ready. My promise to the Ashwini Kumars, that they will drink Somras, will be fulfilled at your yagya. Great and noble King. During your Soma-sacrifice if Indra shows anger, I will calm him down by my yogic powers. Then the Ashwini Kumars can peacefully enjoy the Somras.

Maharaj! King Sharyati was very pleased with the Muni's words. He accepted the Muni's instructions and left with his wife, back to his kingdom. After choosing an auspicious date, the king built a grand canopy for the yagya. All great and well known munis, including Vasishtji, were invited. When everything was ready, at the most auspicious time, Bhriguvanshi Chyavan Muni commenced the great Som-yagya of Raja Sharyati. The Maha Yagya was graced by Indra and all the gods. With the intention of drinking the Somras, the Ashwini Kumars had also come. When Indra saw them, he became suspicious. He asked all the devas – Why have these Ashwini Kumars come here. They heal and cure, and have no right to partake of Somras. Who invited them.

During the Maha Yagya of Raja Sharyati, when Indra asked this question, none of the gods replied. After this, when Muni Chyavan began to offer Somras to the Ashwini Kumars, Indra stopped him and said – Do not give them Somras.

Chyavan Muni said to Devraj Indra – O Husband of Shachi! What makes these Suryakumars ineligible for Somras. Please give us the proper reasons and proof. They are not varn-sankar i.e. (hybrid; of mixed caste, generation or species). They were born to the wife of Surya. Devendra! What defect or shortcoming do you find in these divine physicians, that you are disqualifying

them from partaking of Somras. Shukra! Let all the gods here present, declare their decision. I will give Ashwini Kumars Somras to drink. Because I have given them the right to do so. It is on my suggestion that this king is hosting this yagya. I speak the truth. All these efforts were made with the sole purpose of creating an opportunity for the Ashwini Kumars to drink Somras. They have done me the great favour of granting me youth. It is my obligation to give a favour in return.

Indra said – Muni! Because of their occupation as physicians and healers, the gods have opposed them and scorned them. They are not eligible for Somras. Therefore do not reserve any share for them.

Chyavanji said – O Killer of the demon Vrittr! Keep calm! Showing temper at a time like this is useless and to no avail. Because, I see no reason why these sons of Surya, Ashwini Kumars, should be considered ineligible.

Rajan! While this argument was going on between Indra and Chyavan Muni, none of the gods were able to say anything. Then, on the strength of the power of his tapasya Chyavan Muni offered the vessel of Somras to the Ashwini Kumars.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Indra fell into a rage. Showing his supremacy and might, he said – O friend of Brahma! You have no authority to establish a new maryada like this. If you insist on opposing me, I will treat you like another Vishvaroop and kill you.

Chyavan Muni said – Devendra! This is an insult to those benevolent devas, who have given me this divine body and youthful appearance. Apart from you, why do these devas drink Somras. Please remember, that these Ashwini Kumars are also devas.

Indra said – O dull and retarded soul! Those who heal and cure can never be considered eligible for partaking of yagya offerings. If you insist on giving them the Somras, I will cut off your head.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Disregarding Indra and as if in contempt, Chyavanji gave a share of Somras to the Ashwini Kumars. They were most eager to receive it, and took the vessel. Indra became furious and threatened to use his thunderbolt, as he did on Vishwaroop. Chyavan Muni observed all the protocols and handed over the vessel containing Somras to the Ashwini Kumars.

Indra began to glitter like a crore of suns. He took his thunderbolt, and in full view of all the gods, hurled it at Chyavan Muni. By his yogic powers, Muni Chyavan halted the thunderbolt, and it became motionless. At the same time he used the power of his tapasya to creat a giant demon. He chanted mantras and offered oblations to agni, to empower the demon to kill Indra. The demon was called Madh, and was fearful to behold. He had sharp pointed teeth, and four tusks hung out of his mouth. He was as wide as he was tall. His arms could encircle a mountain. The top of his head touched the clouds, while his feet were in Pataal. He had claws like a tiger, and his body and hair were jet black. Seeing this terrible form the devas screamed in fear. The demon leapt towards Indra to swallow him. He already had the thunderbolt in his mouth. Indra tried to release a second weapon, but his arms seems paralysed. Indra began to remember his all-knowing and all-powerful Guru Brihaspati, who could even stall Fate. Brihaspati appeared immediately. He saw that Indra was in a difficult situation. He meditated on the problem, and then said to Indra – Vasav! This daitya Madh, cannot be destroyed either by mantras or by your Vajra. He is invincible because he has been created out of the tapasvic powers of Muni Chyavan, and has come out of agni. It cannot be controlled by

you, me, or any god. I would advise you to go to Chyavan Muni and seek refuge. Only he can control the daitya which he has created. Actually, no one has even succeeded in neutralizing the wrath of a bhakt of Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

Vyasji says – On the advice of Brihaspati, and overcome with fear; Indra went to Chyavan Muni. Humbly he folded his hands and bowed before the Muni and said – Munivar! Forgive me, and please remove this daitya from here. O All-knowing One! Be pleased with me. I accept your decision. From today the Ashwini Kumars will be entitled to drink Somras. Be pleased O Brahmin, as I speak the truth. All your efforts to give them the right to partake of sacrificial offerings, have met with success. I know that you will not fight for a cause that is meaningless. Now, by your benevolent act, the Ashwini Kumars will always receive their share of the offerings of all yagyas. At the same time, Raja Sharyati will also gain fame and renown in the whole world. Munivar! Let it be understood, that I was merely testing your power and prowess. Brahman! For my safe passage, please send away this demon Madh. The well being of the devas is in your hand.

Muni Chyavan, who was a glorious tapasvi, removed all signs of his wrath, and gently reassured Indra. Then he made arrangements for the demon to go and live in places where immoral women, intoxicating drinks, gambling, and hunting were flourishing. He escorted Indra and the gods back to the yagya shala, and completed the ceremonies for closing the yagya. As per protocol, he first offered Somras to Lord Indra. Then he gave permission to the Ashwini Kumars to drink.

Rajan! In this way the great tapasvi, Muni Chyavan, obtained for the Ashwini Kumars, the right to drink Somras. The ashram of Chyavan Muni became

famous. Raja Sharyati gained name and fame, and returned to his kingdom. A son, Anarth, was born to him, and Anarth had a son Revath. Revath vanquished all his enemies and established a kingdom called Kushsthal, in the middle of the ocean. He had one hundred sons. The eldest was Kukudmi. Also Revath had a beautiful daughter Revathi. When she grew into a maiden, her father began to look for a boy from a good clan. One day he thought – Why not I go and ask Brahmaji to whom I should give my daughter. So he took his daughter and went to Brahmalok. In those days, the devas, yagyas, music, mountains, seas and rivers, were all in the form of gods residing in Brahmalok. Standing before Brahma, and singing stutis, were the rishis, siddhis, gandharvas, serpents and bards.

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CHAPTER 7 episodes 8-9

8-9 Raja Revath meets Brahma. Marriage of Revathi and Balraj. Story of the birth of Mandhata.

Raja Janmejay said – Brahman! It is very amazing to hear that Raja Revath and his daughter Revathi went to Brahmalok. I have heard that only those who have the knowledge of Brahma, and who have a pure and tranquil attention, can reach Brahmalok. Satyalok is very far from earth, and exceedingly difficult to reach. All the scriptures say that only after death one can go to heaven. How can anyone with a mortal body enter Brahmalok. And even if one does go, how does he come back into the mortal world. How is this possible.

Vyasji says – Rajan! On the summit of the holy mount Sumeru, there exists Indralok; Vahnilok (Gandharvas); Sayyamnipuri (Yamlok); Satyalok (abode of Brahma); Kailash (abode of Shiva), and Vaikunth (abode of Vishnu). It is Vaikunth which is called Vaishnav Padh. Just as Kuntinandan Arjun, went to Indralok and stayed there for five years in his human body; so also Kukutsth and many other kings have visited Swarglok. Therefore O King! One should not have doubts about this. Punya atmas and tapasvis can visit all lokas, as they are. O King! Virtues, meritorious action, pure disposition, and amiable nature, are the pre-requisites for permission to visit Brahmalok and other lokas. In the same way, those holy souls who perform yagyas can merit the right to visit all the lokas.

Raja Janmejay said – Brahman! What happened after Raja Revath and his daughter Revathi reached Brahmalok. What advice did Brahmaji give, and to whom did Revath give his daughter. Please tell all this in detail.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Listen. When Raja Revath reached Brahmalok, the Gandharvas were singing. So he waited outside. The music stirred him, and filled him with joy. After the music stopped, Raja Revath approached Brahmaji and offered obeisance. Then he placed before him his request.

Raja Revath said – Devesh! This maiden is my daughter. Please suggest a suitable match for her. I have seen many princes from illustrious families, but my restless mind could not decide. So I have come to your lotus feet. Please suggest a Prince who belongs to a good clan; who is brave and strong; who has all good qualities; and who is generous and dharmic.

Brahmaji said – Rajan! All those princes who came before you as suitors, do not exist any more. Neither father, nor grandsons, nor brothers nor friends. All have been devoured by Time because the third part of the twenty-seventh Yuga is in progress. All the people of your clan are also dead and gone. Even the country has ceased to exist. The daityas have destroyed it. At the present moment, kings of the Chandra (lunar) Dynasty, are ruling. The kingdom is known as Mathura, and the king is Ugrasen. He was born into the clan of Yayati. The entire kingdom of Mathura was under his rule. But he had a son Kansa, who is a manifestation of a demon. Kansa put his father into prison, and took the reins of the kingdom into his own hands. Of all the kings, he was the most arrogant and egoistical. Mother Earth became distressed and could not tolerate his evil ways. She came to Brahma for help. All the great gods say that whenever Mother Earth is unable to bear the burden of evil upon her, then Bhagwan incarnates. So, at that time, the lotus-eyed Bhagwan Shri Krishna took his birth. He was known as Bhagwan Vasudev. It was by his hand that the evil Kansa was killed.

Kansa's father-in-law was Jarasandh. He was very wicked, and also very powerful. He reached Mathura to fight with Shri Krishna. But he was defeated by the Lord. Then he sent Kalayvan with a huge army. But when Sshri Krishna heard that he was coming, He left Mathura and went to Dwaraka. That city was in ruins, but Shri Krishna got architects and builders to rebuild the city with fortresses all around. Shri Krishna established Ugrasen as King of Dwaraka, and made arrangements for the Yadava clan to live there. At the present moment Bhagwan Shri Krishna is in residence in Dwaraka. He has an elder brother Balaram. He carries as his weapons the plough and the pestle (pounding hammer). He is very brave and strong, and is said to be the incarnation of Sesh. He is the most suitable match for your daughter. Perform the necessary ceremonies and rituals and give your daughter Revathi to Balbhadraji. Rajendra! After the kanya-daan you must go and start tapasya in Badarikashram. Because only by tapasya and meditation all wishes and desires are fulfilled, and the attention becomes purified.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Raja Revath immediately obeyed Shri Brahmaji and left for Dwaraka. He gave his daughter Revathi in marriage to Baldevji. Then he settled on the banks of the holy Ganga and did severe penance. Then he renounced his mortal body and went to Divyalok (heaven).

Raja Janmejay said – Bhagwan! You have just said that Raja Revath and his daughter waited in Brahmalok for one hundred and eight yugas before meeting Shri Brahma. How is it they did not become old and infirm.

Vyasji says – O Sinless King! In Brahmalok hunger, thirst, death, fear, old age, and inertia – nothing can affect or influence. While Raja Revath was in Brahmalok, the rakshasas had demolished the clan of Sharyati. They all abandoned Kushsthal and hid themselves in various places. Then from Kshuv

Manu was born the famous and illustrious Ikshvaku. He was the founder of the Surya Dynasty. He had performed severe tapasya, and meditated on Devi Bhagawati for the establishment of the Surya clan. He had received advice and initiation from Naradji. Rajan! Ikshvaku had a hundred sons. The eldest was Vikukshi. Maharaj Ikshvaku was the King of Ayodhya. He appointed fifty sons, including Shakuni, to look after the northern part of his kingdom, but two sons stayed back to serve their father.

Vyasji says – Ikshvaku's son, Vikukshi, became king and was known as Shashad. He had a son Kukutsth, who was also known as Indravah and Puranjay.

Raja Janmejay asked – Why so many names for one person. Please tell me the reason which caused him to have more than one name.

Vyasji says – Rajan! When King Shashad died, Kukutsth became king, and ruled very competently. At that time the Devas, greatly tormented by the daityas, went to the Swami of Triloki, Bhagwan Shri Vishnu for protection. Shri Hari advised them.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – O Foremost of Devas. You must pray to become friends of Shashadkumar King Kukutsth. Only he can kill the daityas. He is a virtuous king. By the grace of Bhagawati Jagaddamba, he has been blessed with incomparable strength and valour.

Maharaj! On receiving this advice in the divine and lucid tones of Bhagwan Vishnu, the devas led by Indra went to Ayodhya and met Shashadkumar King Kukutsth. He received them with all the respect and protocols, and enquired the reason for their visit.

Raja Kukutsth said – O Devas! I have become blessed and auspicious. The purpose of my life has been fulfilled by your coming and giving me darshan. Now please tell me what I can do. Even if it is difficult for other people, I will carry out your wishes.

The Devas said – Rajendra! We need your help. Become the ally of Indra, and defeat the daityas. They have become invincible. You have the grace of Bhagawati Jagaddamba upon you. Therefore nothing is impossible for you. We came here on the advice of Bhagwan Shri Vishnu.

The king said – O Divine Ones! I am ready to help you. But during the war Indra must become my vehicle if I am to get any success. I am speaking the truth. To succeed in this war it is imperative that I fight, seated on Indra. Only then I can defeat the daityas. I speak the truth.

The Devas considered this strange condition and said to Indra – Shachipati! Forget your shame and become the vehicle of this king. Indra fell into deep thought. Then remembering the advice of Shri Vishnu, he assumed the form of a bull, almost as if this was Bhagwan Shiva's vehicle Nandishwar. The king mounted the bull. Because he sat on the hump of the bull (kukud), he got the name Kukutsth. And because Indra was the vehicle, he got the name Indravah. And because he got victory over the city (the pur) of the daityas, he got the third name Puranjay. After defeating the daityas he handed over all the wealth to the devas. This is how Maharaj Kukutsth got so many names. Kukutsth and his wife had a son Anena. And Anena had a most virtuous and illustrious son Prithu, who was a partial manifestation of Bhagwan Vishnu. He was a devotee of the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Prithu had a son Vishwarandhi, and his son was Shriman Raja Chandra. Raja Chandra's son was Yuvnashva, and his son was Shavanth. He built the city of Shavanthi, which

compares favourably with Amaravati. Mahatma Shavanth had a son Brihadashva, and his son was Kuvalashva. He became famous by killing the daitya Dhundhu, and got the name Dhundhumar. His son Dhridashva protected the earth in many ways. He had a son Shriman Haryashva. Haryashva had a son Raja Nikumbh, and his son was Baharnashva. His son Krishashva had a son Prasenjit. Prasenjit had a very auspicious son called Yauvnashva, and he had a son Shriman Raja Mandhata who built one hundred and eight grand palaces. To please Bhagawati Jagaddamba he built temples in famous places of pilgrimage. He did not take birth from his mother. Instead he was taken out from his father's abdomen.

Raja Janmejay said – Mahabhag! What an astounding story this is! It has never been heard or seen before, that a child is born from the father. Please tell me in detail, the reason for such a birth.

Vyasji says – Rajan! The great dharmic King Yauvnashva had a hundred queens but none of them bore him a child. This made him very sad. He left the palace and went into the forest and began to live in the holy ashrams of the rishis. Many Brahmins were meditating in those regions. When they saw the king they felt compassion for him. They asked him – O King! Why are you so sad. What worldly problem is giving you so much sorrow. Please tell us the truth. We will try to solve your problem.

Raja Yauvnashva said – O Munis! I have a kingdom; untold wealth; and highly bred horses. In my palace there are a hundred chaste queens. In all the three worlds there is no enemy who is more powerful than I am. My ministers and petty kings all owe allegiance to me. O Tapasvis! My only sorrow is that I have no child. You have done penance and meditation, and acquired all the

knowledge of the Vedas and shastras. If there is anything that can be done for me, please let me know.

Vyasji says – The Brahmins were filled with concern for the king. With great care they made the king perform a yagya, with Indra as the presiding deity. The Brahmins had placed a kalash with water near the yagya, and by chanting mantras over the kalash they prayed that the king should have a child. In the night the king felt very thirsty. He went to the yagyashala. The Brahmins were asleep. There was no water anywhere. So he picked up the sacred kalash and drank the water. Actually the Brahmins had prepared this water (by chanting mantras), to be given to the queens in the palace. Unknowingly the king had drunk this water. In the morning when the Brahmins could not find the kalash anywhere, they were in panic. They asked the king, and he said that he had drunk it. Then the Brahmins realized that Fate is all powerful. After concluding the yagya, the Brahmins went back to their ashram. By the power of the mantras, the king became with child. When the time for birth approached, the lower abdomen of the king was cut open, and a son was born. This operation was performed by the trusted ministers of the king Yauvnashva. The gods protected the king and he did not die. After the birth, everyone asked – whose milk will the prince drink. Just then Indra placed his forefinger in his mouth and declared – I will take care of this child. He grew up to be the famous king Mandhata. Rajan! This is his story.

CHAPTER 7 Episodes 10-12

10-12 Reason why Satyavrat is called Trishankhu. By the grace of Bhagawati he is freed from a curse. Story of Harishchandra.

Vyasji says – Maharaj Mandhata was a just and upright emperor. His victory banners flew all over the earth. Out of fear all the robbers and dacoits had fled to the hills and caves. For this reason, Indra gave him the name Trassadhasyu. Mandhata was married to princess Vindumati, daughter of king Shashvindu. They had two sons, Purukuts and Muchukund. Purukuts had a son Aranya, and he had a son Brihadashva. He had a son Haryashva who had Tridhanva, and Tridhanva had a son Arun. Arun had a son Satyavrat, who became famous. He had enormous wealth. He became wayward, immoral, foolish and greedy. As a punishment for a mistake, King Arun banished him from the palace. He committed many more misdeeds, which caused Vasishtji to pronounce a curse on him – You will be known as Trishanku in this world, and all living things will only see your devilish and diabolical form.

Vyasji says – Rajan! After being cursed thus, Satyavrat began a severe penance. A son of a Muni taught him a precious mantra. He began chanting this mantra, and at the same time kept his unswerving, pure attention on the most auspicious Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

Raja Janmejay said – O Great Guru! After Vasishtji cursed him, how did Trishanku rid himself of the curse. Please tell me.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Because of the curse, all the characteristics of a demon began to manifest in Satyavrat. But he started his worship of Devi Bhagawati.

One day, after completing the chanting of the Navakshar (nine syllable) mantra, Satyavrat wished to perform a havan. So he went to the Brahmins and humbly requested them – O gods of the earth! I have come to you for help. Please preside over my yagya as the sacrificial priests. You are learned in the Vedas, and you are compassionate. The success of my yagya depends on the proper chanting of mantras. Only you can help me. My name is Satyavrat. I am a prince. By this yagya I can get many boons to make me happy. Please accept my invitation.

The Brahmins said – Brother! Your Gurudev has put a curse upon you. You are manifesting all diabolical traits. You have no right to the Vedas, and you cannot perform a yagya. When a living being manifests diabolical signs, he becomes an object of contempt in all the worlds.

Vyasji says – Janmejay! These words of the Brahmins filled Raja Satyavrat with remorse and sorrow. He thought – my life has no meaning. My father has disowned me. My guru has cursed me. I have no right to the kingdom. These horrible traits are afflicting me. What shall I do. Where shall I go." Thinking these thoughts, Satyavrat began to collect wood and build a pyre. He lit the fire and big flames appeared. First he went and bathed. Then he stood beside the fire, and with folded hands he praised Bhagawati Mahamaya and got ready to enter the burning pyre. Seeing that he had made up his mind to end his life, Bhagawati Jagaddamba appeared before him in the sky. Maharaj! The Devi was seated on a lion. She spoke in a voice, as loud and clear, as thunder.

Devi said – O Pious and Holy One! What are you doing. Do not burn your body in the fire. Auspicious One! Be in peace. Your father has become old. O Brave One! He has given the kingdom to you, and is about to retire into the forest. Rajan! Stop feeling guilty. Three days from now your father's ministers will

come to take you. With my blessings there will be a Raj-Abhishekh and you will be anointed king. After this your father will leave for Brahmalok. This is the absolute truth.

Vyasji says – Rajan! After this the Devi removed Herself from his sight. The prince was filled with grace, and gave up his idea of jumping into the fire. At that very moment, Naradji visited Ayodhya and narrated everything about the prince to the king. When the king heard that his son was preparing to die, he was filled with remorse. Then King Arun said to his ministers – You are aware of my son Satyarat whom I had banished to the forest. Even though he knew that he was the lawful heir to this kingdom, he left without a word. I have just heard that he is wandering in the forest. The curse of Vasishtji has made him appear like a demon. Unable to bear this misfortune, he was getting ready to die by fire. But Bhagawati Jagaddamba prevented him. He is still in the forest. All of you please go there and reassure him, and bring him back to the palace. He is most capable of ruling the kingdom. I have decided to enter the state of tapasya. I will perform his coronation and then leave for the forest.

King Arun sent his ministers to bring Satyavrat back. He felt a great surge of love for his son. The ministers returned with Satyavrat. The king saw that his son had become very lean and weak. His clothes were in tatters, and his hair was matted. His eyes were darting about, full of fear. The king realized that he had committed a grave mistake in banishing this wise and able son.

Rajan! The king embraced his son, and after coaxing and reassuring him, he made him sit next to him. Then he spoke to him in loving tones –

Raja Arun said - May your wisdom be rooted in dharma. May you respect your elders. May you keep only that wealth which is earned honestly. May

you always strive to protect your subjects. May you never speak an untruth, and may you never walk in the path of sin. May you always consult wise men before you act. May tapasvis receive honour and protection in your kingdom. May you destroy robbers and plunderers. May you be victorious over your senses. May you always take your ministers into confidence. Son! A King is the atma of his kingdom. He should be wary of even weak enemies. He should not trust any minister who keeps connection with the enemy. He should keep a careful watch over friends and enemies. He should observe dharmas and lead a righteous life. He should be generous. He should not cause emotional upsetting to anyone. He should never support wrong doers. He should regularly perform yagyas. He should support the Maharishis. He should never trust a woman, a gambler or a trickster. He should not be overly fond of hunting. He should not indulge in gambling, drinking, indecent and vulgar music and immoral women; and should also protect his subjects from them. He should get up during Brahma muhurtham, take a bath, and perform worship to Adi Shakti Bhagawati Jagaddamba. After taking initiation he should sing Her praises and offer flowers. Son! It is only by worshipping the Lotus Feet of this Para Shakti that we can fulfill the purpose of our lives. Whoever performs puja, even once, to Bhagawati Jagaddamba, and drinks charanamrit, he will never have to occupy a womb and take birth again. This is the absolute truth. This is Her entire creation - She is the enjoyer – She is the witness. Keeping this always in mind, stand fearlessly on the truth.

Every morning you should observe the protocols, and call your ministers and Brahmins to the council hall. Go into consultation and determine the moral and spiritual aspects of the business of the kingdom. Honour the learned and wise Brahmins with gifts of cows, gold and other materials. If ever you have to entertain an unwise Brahmin, do not give him anything more than food. Son, out of greed and covetousness, never transgress the codes of dharma. In

addition, there is one important maryada. Never be the cause of insult to a Brahmin. A Brahmin is Bhu-dev – on earth he is considered to be a god. Always treat them with respect. A Brahmin is the causal of a Kshatriya. There is no doubt about this. It is believed that from water comes fire; from Brahmin comes kshatriya; and from stone comes iron. Brahmins (realized souls) transmit divine vibrations into the atmosphere. Therefore, a king who desires auspiciousness for his kingdom, should honour and please the Brahmins. A king should see that justice is properly meted out, and laws and edicts are established.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Trishanku listened carefully to this valuable advice given by his father. Then he folded his hands and said in a loving voice – Very well father. I will obey all your advice. Then King Arun invited learned Brahmins and under their supervision made arrangements for the coronation. He installed Trishanku on the throne of Ayodhaya, and left for Vaanprasth ashram. He settled down in a forest on the banks of the holy Ganga, and entered tapasya. When his life span was over he went to heaven. Even the devas welcomed him there, and gave him a place close to Indra's throne.

Raja Janmejay said – Prabho! You have said that Satyavrat had been cursed by Guru Vasisht, and he started manifesting demonic symptoms. How did he get free of this curse. Because a man with demonic tendencies is not eligible to become a king. Did Satyavrat perform any virtuous act which prompted Vasishtji to free him from the curse. Prabho! Please tell me this, and also the reason why King Arun brought his banished son back with such honour.

Vyasji says – Rajan – As soon as Vasishtji pronounced the curse, all signs of demonic nature began to manifest from Satyavrat. He became grotesque, disfigured, ugly and fearful to behold. All living things shunned him. But he

started his meditation and worship of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Rajan! When the Devi became prasanna (pleased), a great change came over Satyavrat. He began to look divine. All the demonic manifestations got destroyed. Even a spot did not remain. Now there was no limit to the lustre that radiated from King Satyavrat, because he had received the Shakti of the Devi Bhagawati. Not only this, but by Her grace, even Vasisht became pleased with Satyavrat; and the king felt extreme love for his son. When Satyavrat became king, he hosted various yagyas to worship the eternal Deveshwari Bhagawati Jagaddamba. He had a son Harishchandra, who was very pleasing in appearance, and possessed all dharmic qualities.

After many years Trishanku decided to take sanyas. So he installed his son Harishchandra as heir to the throne, and left his kingdom. He went to the ashram of Vasishtji. He offered pranaams with folded hands, and said –

O You who have complete knowedge of all the mantras. O Tapasvi – son of Brahma! Be pleased to hear me. Now I desire to experience the joys of heaven. It is my desire to enjoy it in my present state – with this human body. So please advise me which Yagya I should perform to acquire the boon of entering heaven with this human body. O Foremost of Munis! Please be kind to do me this favour. That Yagya, which is difficult even for the devas should be performed by you on my behalf, so that I get entry into heaven.

Vasishtji said – Rajan! It is impossible to find a place in heaven with a human body. The rule is very clear, that only after death, on the merits of virtuous deeds, one gets permission to live in heaven. Therefore O wise being! I am afraid to help you in this pursuit. Because it is not possible for living beings to stay in heaven in the company of apsaras. O Fortunate One! You may certainly host the Yagya. But only after death you can enter heaven.

Vyasji says – These words of Vasishtji made Raja Trishanku impatient and angry. He said – Brahman! In your arrogance and self conceit it you refuse to help me, I will invite someone else to be the presiding priest at my yagya.

This made Vasishtji pronounce another curse on Trishanku. He said – O ignorant and foolish one! May you become a low-caste untouchable (chandaal). With this same body, may all the chandal traits manifest in you. King! You are a hypocrite who is corrupting and defiling the transit route of saints. You are a great sinner. Even after death there is no way for you to gain heaven.

Vyasji says – Rajan! As soon as Gurudev Vasishtji pronounced this curse, King Trishanku immediately became a chandaal. The gem studded golden earrings that he wore, turned into stone. The sandalwood paste that covered his body immediately became a foul smelling layer of dirt. His yellow coloured silken robes turned black. The curse of Mahatma Vasisht gave him large, flapping ears (gajakarn). Rajan! Vasishtji was a devotee of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. The effect of his wrath was clear to see. Therefore one must be very careful, and never insult a Devi Bhakt.

Rajan! Seeing the change that had come over his body, Raja Trishanku became very depressed and helpless. He did not go back to his palace. Instead he went into the forest and thought – what shall I do. Where shall I go. I have become repulsive. I cannot see any solution for getting out of this state. If I go back home, even my son will turn me away. No woman will marry me. My ministers will disrespect me. My family and friends will disown me. I will have to live in isolation. Death is a better alternative. He thought of killing himself, but was prevented by the knowledge that in all subsequent births he will be reborn as a chandaal. And as a fruit of his action for killing himself, he will

never get released from the curse of the Muni. He decided that it would not help him if he committed suicide. He would stay in the forest and live out this lifetime. Only then would the curse come to an end. He would live close to the ashram, offer homage and hospitality to holy men, and spend his time in the worship of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. He thought – If I live in this way, I will be able to make reparation for my sins, and by some good fortune I might even meet a saint.

King Trishanku gave up his kingdom, and settled on the banks of the holy river Ganga. When his son Harishchandra came to know about the curse on his father, he was very upset. He sent his ministers to meet his father. When they came before him he was filled with shame. But they were most respectful and bowed before him saying – O King! We are the obedient servants of Harishchandra, and have come here on his command. He has sent this message- Most respectfully bring my father back to the palace. He will be looked after by the ministers and subjects. We will try to appease Guru Vasisht to win his compassion. It is possible that Vasishtji will feel merciful and release you from the curse. Rajan! Your son repeated this message many times. If you agree, please come with us to the palace.

Vyasji says – Rajan! King Trishanku, who was now in the form of a chandaal, listened to the message from his son, but he had no inclination to go to the palace. He said – O Faithful Ministers! Return to the kingdom and give this message to Harishchandra. "Son, I do not wish to come. You look after the kingdom. Hold as many yagyas as you can. Honour the Brahmins and worship the gods. This present form of mine is despicable, and shunned by great mahatmas. I will not come to Ayodhya in my present state." Now you must not linger. Go back to the palace. My son is very wise and capable. Make

necessary arrangements and install him on the throne of Ayodhya. This is my only command.

The ministers wept to see the king. They left him to continue his vaanprasth life of renunciation in the forest. They returned to Ayodhaya and coronated Harishchandra as king on an auspicious day. After this, Harishchandra took the reins of the kingdom in his hands. But concern for his father still filled his mind.

CHAPTER 7 episodes 13-17

13-17 Trishanku receives a boon from sage Vishwamitra. Story of Harishchandra.

Raja Janmejay asked – Mune! As per the command of King Trishanku, Harishchandra was anointed King of Ayodhaya. Did Trishanku get freed from the curse. Did he die in the forest. Did he jump into the river Ganga, or did Guru Vasishtji release him from the curse. Please tell me this story.

Vyasji says – Janmejay! Raja Trishanku was very pleased after the coronation of his son. He settled down to continuous meditation on the Lotus Feet of the embodiment of auspiciousness, Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

One day, the great sage Vishwamitra, after completing his tapasya, came to that forest to meet his wife and sons. When he saw that his family was well and happy, he became pleased. He asked his wife – O Beautiful-eyed One! There was great famine in this land. How did you manage in those difficult days In the absence of foodgrains, how did you sustain these children. O Beautiful One! I was completely engrossed and thoughtless in my meditation. That is why I did not come. Please tell me how you passed those difficult days.

Vyasji says – The very soft-spoken and beautiful wife of Vishwamitra said – Munivar! As soon as you left, we faced very difficult times. Hear me. I will tell you. All your children were hungry, and I used to roam in the forest to collect wild rice. Clouds of despair hovered around us. Somehow I found some fruits. In this way we passed a few months. When the season ended I was again in distress. Nowhere in the forest could I find rice, nor was there any possibility

of receiving alms. All the trees had become barren. Even roots and tubers had dried up under the parched earth. Children used to cry continuously from hunger. There was no place I could go; and no one to whom I could tell my sorrow. In desperation I thought I would sell one or two children to rich families, and with that money feed the other children. There was no other way. I told my eldest son about my plan. He became full of fear and wept. I suppressed all my feelings and my shame, took the child and went out. On the way I met the royal sage Satyavrat, and he asked why the child was crying. I told him – O King! I am taking this child to sell him. He felt great pity and his heart melted. He said – Take this boy and go back to your home". After that, somehow he provided food for the children. Because of me Guru Vasisht cursed Satyavrat and gave him the name Trishanku. He also cursed him to become a chandaal. Kaushik! Seeing the distress and dishonor being suffered by the king, I am also very sad. It was for my sake that he was cursed. Therefore it is now your responsibility to free him, either by tapasya, or by your yogic powers.

Vyasji says – O Vanquisher of enemies, King Janmejay! Seeing his wife so full of concern, Vishwamitra gave her this assurance.

Vishwamitraji said – O Lotus-eyes One! I will most certainly free that great king, who helped you and the children during your difficult days. By my knowledge and powers he will be freed of the curse very shortly.

Rajan! This Muni Kaushik was the knower of the highest and most subtle truth. After due consideration, he went to meet Trishanku, who was staying the hut of an untouchable. He was greatly surprised to see Sage Vishwamitra. He prostrated on the earth and touched the feet of the sage. Kaushikji lifted

him up and spoke gently to him – O King! Because of me you received this curse. Now I will fulfill a desire of yours. Tell me what I can do for you.

The King said – Mune! A long time ago I requested Vasishtji to preside over my yagya. I had asked him to perform such a yagya that would grant me entry into heaven with my human body. Vasishtji became very angry and refused. He said I was foolish to have such a desire, as no one can enter heaven with the body. I was so determined, that I told him I would ask some other muni to preside over my yagya. O Gracious Muni! I have told you the cause of the curse. Now only you can help me. Vishwamitra Muni began to think of a way to remove the curse.

Vyasji says – The great tapasvi Vishwamitra decided to hold a yagya. He gathered together all the prescribed samagri, and sent invitations to munis to attend. The invited munis understood the motive of the yagya, and declined to come. Also, they had been advised by Vasishtji to refuse. This made Vishwamitraji very sad. He went to the place where Raja Trishanku lived and told him – Rajendra! Vasishtji has prevented all the Brahmins from accepting my invitation. Not a single Brahmin came for the yagya. Now! See the power of my tapasya, by the strength of which I will send you to heaven. Because I must fulfill your wish. Saying this, the greatest muni of all, Kaushikji, took water in his hands, and by chanting Gayatri Mantra, made a solemn declaration, transferring all his punyas to the King. After bestowing on Trishanku, all his punyas, Vishwamitraji said - O King! Now you can go to heaven in the way you wish. Rajendra! After many years of tapasya, this punya was granted to me. By the power of this punya, you can go to Indralok. You will be blessed there".

Vyasji says – Janmejay! As soon as the great sage Vishwamitra said this, Trishanku was lifted from the earth and began to rise like a bird in flight. His appearance was still like that of a chandaal. When he neared heaven, the devas ran to Indra and said – Someone is trying to imitate the devas and is flying in the sky with the speed of wind. He seems to belong to a very inferior caste, and is terrible to look at." Indra immediately went to see, and he recognized Trishanku. He shouted out – You low down chandaal. How dare you try to enter heaven! Go back to earth. You cannot stay here". Hearing Indra's fearful voice, trishanku began to slip downwards, just like the gods do when they fall from grace. As he was falling, Trishanku kept calling to Vishwamitra – I am falling down from heaven. Please save an unfortunate being like me." Hearing his cries, Vishwamitra directed his glance towards him. He saw him falling with great speed towards the earth. He shouted – Stop! Trishanku had already left heaven, but by his powers Vishwamitra stopped him in mid-air. Then Vishwamitra made a decision to create another heaven. He took water in his hand and began to rinse his mouth in preparation. Then he built a very big havan kund for a yagya. Seeing this Indra came down from heaven. He said – Brahman! What are you doing. What is the reason for your anger. Tell me. What can I do for you.

Vishwamitra said – Lord! The most unhappy and afflicted Raja Trishanku has just fallen from your kingdom. Kindly take him, lovingly, back to heaven with you.

Vyasji says – When Indra discovered the decision of Sage Vishwamitra, he was filled with apprehension. But knowing the might and power of his tapasya, he accepted the suggestion. He immediately transformed King Trishanku into a god-like form, made him sit in his heavenly vehicle, and took him to Amravati

with him. Vishwamitra became very pleased, and returned to sit on his tapasya aasan.

At that time King Harshchandra was ruling Ayodhya. When he heard that his father had entered heaven as per his wish, he knew that sage Vishwamitra had done him this favour. King Harishchandra had a young and beautiful wife, but she had not borne any children. So he went to the ashram of Guru Vasisht. He offered pranaams to the Guru and expressed his concern at not having a child. O Generous and Compassionate Muni! You are well-versed in the science of astrology and the knowledge of mantras. Please do something which will help us to have a child.

Vyasji says – The human son of Brahmaji, Muni Vasisht, listened to the troubled king. Then, after contemplating for some time, he said –

Vasishtji said – Maharaj! You are right to be sad. You must perform worship to the deity of the waters, Shri Varun. He will certainly help you, because there is no other deva who grants this boon of a child so readily. O Rajendra! You who observe all the dharmas, you engage yourself in worship of Varun. I am sure your desire will be fulfilled. Man must respect and accept both destiny and the object of his birth. Without effort and exertion one cannot accomplish anything. O King! Great philosophers make their efforts within the boundaries of morality and honesty. Only if you try you can succeed. There is no other alternative.

Rajan! On the advice of the great guru Vasisht, King Harishchandra decided to do meditation and renunciation. He offered pranaams to the guru and left. On the banks of the holy river Ganga, he set up his aasan and settled down to meditate. He put all his attention on Varun-dev, and began his tapas. Very

soon Varun was pleased, and he smiled like a lotus that has just bloomed. He appeared before Harishchandra and said – You have pleased me by your worship. Ask any boon that you desire and I will grant it.

Raja Harishchandra said – I have no child. Please grant me a favourable son, so that when I die, I will be free of all debts.

Varun devata granted him his wish, and a son was born to him.

CHAPTER 7 episodes 18-19

18-19 Raja Harishchandra incurs wrath of Vishwamitra; gets deceived into giving away his kingdom as alms.

Vyasji says – Rajan! It happened once that Raja Harishchandra went hunting in the forest. He saw a maiden with large, beautiful eyes, crying. Full of pity he asked her – O You with eyes as large as lotus leaves! Why are you crying. Tell me, who has caused you sorrow. How are you alone in this forest. Who is your father, and who is your husband? In my kingdom, even demons do not trouble another man's wife. Tell me the name of your tormentor and I will kill him. Evil doers cannot live in my kingdom.

The maiden wiped her tears and said – For my sake the muni who is doing severe tapasya in this forest, that Muni Vishwamitra, is the cause of my sorrow. O King! You are most dharmic. But living in your kingdom I am suffering at the hands of this muni. My name is Kamna.

The king said – O large-eyed One! You may live here in peace. I will request the muni to desist from troubling you. After that the king went immediately to Vishwamitraji. He bowed his head and offered pranaams. Then he said – O Great Muni! Why do you torture your body by this severe penance. What is it you wish to achieve. Please tell me. I am ready to fulfill your requirements. So end your tapasya and get up. No one in my kingdom should perform such severe austerities and penance, because it puts the body to great hardship. Thus, preventing Vishwamitra from continuing his tapasya, King Harishchandra went home. Muni Vishwamitra was very angry. He went back to his ashram, but began to contemplate revenge. After considering many plans, he sent a frightful danava to King Harishchandra. By his powers he turned the danava

into a ferocious wild boar. Grunting and screaming, the boar rushed into the palace gardens. He frightened the palace guards, and destroyed the gardens. The gardeners chased him with rods and weapons, but he fearlessly continued his destruction. All the guards ran to the king, crying for help. The king said – Tell me who has caused you so much fear. I am not afraid of gods or demons. I will kill him with a single arrow.

The gardeners said – Rajan! This is neither a god nor a demon, nor a yaksh nor a kinnar. It is a huge animal like a boar. With his tusks he has uprooted all the flowering plants, and trampled them. Our weapons are of no use, and he turns and charges at us.

Vyasji says – Maharaj Harishchandra got very angry when he heard this. He immediately mounted his horse and rode towards the gardens. His army followed him with horses, elephants and chariots. They saw the huge boar, grunting and growling. The gardens were in ruins. The king put a sharp arrow to his bow and shot it at the boar. The boar turned and began to charge the king. He shot a volley of arrows to kill the boar. This made the boar run, and the king gave chase, shooting arrows as often as he could. Sometimes the boar would come into sight, and sometimes he would disappear completely. The king changed horses for a faster one, and chased the boar from one forest to another. The army lagged behind. At exactly mid-day the king found himself in a dense forest. He was overcome with fatigue, hunger and thirst. He began to wonder how he would ever find his way out, and whether anyone would come to help him. Just then he spied a river with clear, clean water. He was relieved and thankful. He gave his horse water to drink and then quenched his own thirst. His mind became calm and he decided to go back to his kingdom. But he became disoriented and could not judge the directions. Just then Vishwamitra, disguised as an old Brahmin, came into sight. The king

bowed to the Brahmin, but before he could say anything Vishwamitra said – Maharaj! May you prosper and live long. Why have you undertaken this visit to a lonely and dense forest. Rajendra! Be at peace, and tell me the reason for your visit.

Raja Harishchandra said – Munivar! A most ferocious and huge boar came to my gardens and caused great havoc. He has uprooted and trampled all the fruits and flowers. I chased after him on my horse and shot many arrows at him. My army followed behind. But the boar ran so fast that the army lost me and went in a different direction. The boar led me into this dense forest, and has disappeared. Mune! I am not able to find the direction to go back to my kingdom. I am so fortunate that you have come here. Can you please show me the way. I am Harishchandra, king of Ayodhaya. At the present, I am observing the Rajsuya Yagya (a sacrifice that only a universal monarch is entitled to perform). Anything that anyone wants - he can obtain it from me. O twice-born One! O Brahmin! If you desire wealth for performing your yagyas, you must do me the honour of coming to Ayodhya. I will give you untold wealth.

Vyasji says – Vishwamitra smiled. He said – Rajan! This most holy and auspicious river destroys all sins. Take your bath here, and perform tarpan – libation of water to the dead ancestors. It is also an auspicious time. So after the rituals, you should also give alms according to your status. Manu himself has said that he who visits a holy place, and leaves without the ritualistic bath, is worse than a person who commits suicide. Therefore O king, it is advisable that you put attention on your status and well being, and perform (snaan-daan-punya) – holy bath, charity, and good works. After this I will show you the way and you can return to your kingdom.

This advice of Vishwamitra was full of deceit and revenge. Obeying him, the king went to the rivers edge and prepared for bath. He tied his horse to a tree. King Harishchandra was completely insensitive to the venom in Vishwamitra's suggestion. Fate cannot be averted or altered. Maybe that is why he succumbed to his guile. He had his ritual bath and made offerings of sacred water to the gods and the ancestors. Then he went before Vishwamitra and said – Swami! I am ready to offer gifts to you. Whatever you wish, I will provide. Cows, land, gold, elephants, horses, chariots, and any other vehicles. You may choose what you wish. There is nothing that cannot be given away. When I hosted the glorious Rajsuya Yagya, many great munis attended. In their presence I made this solemn promise to give any Brahmin anything that he wanted. I am most fortunate that I have met you in this holy place. Please express your desire. I am here to fulfill it.

Vishwamitra said – Your reputation as a liberal and generous king has spread far and wide. I heard about you before I met you. Vasishtji has said that in the whole world there is no one like you. You were born in the clan of Surya. Your father was Trishanku. The world has never seen, nor will they see again, a king as noble and generous as you. That is why O Rajan! I am placing before you my problem. I have to celebrate the marriage of my son. And for that I need wealth.

The king said – O Brahmin! Please go ahead with the marriage. I will provide all the money you need.

Vyasji says – Rajan! With the intention of defrauding him, Vishwamitra used Gandharva-maya (illusory images) and brought before the king a boy and a ten-year-old girl. He said – O Foremost of Kings! I have to get these two married today. If one performs the marriage of the children of grihastis

(householders) then they get more punyas than from a Rajsuya Yagya. Therefore if you perform this marriage you will be greatly blessed. The king had lost his sense of discretion under the spell of Vishwamitra. He promised to meet all expenses. Then Vishwamitra showed him directions, and the king left for his kingdom. Sometime later, Vishwamitra went to the palace and said – Rajan! You may now give me the money for completing the marriage ceremonies.

Raja Harishchandra said – O Twice-born One! Ask for what you want. The only thing I cannot give is fame and glory and reputation. After accumulating wealth, if one does not achieve renown and glory, then his life has been wasted. Pure honour entitles one to the happiness of heaven.

Vishwamitra said – Maharaj! On this auspicious occasion give the bridegroom as dowry, your entire kingdom with its horses, elephants, chariots, gold and gems.

Vyasji says – Rajan! The king was so stupefied by the maya created by Vishwamitra that he did not hesitate. He said – Very well. I give you my kingdom. Immediately the stone-hearted Vishwamitra said – Yes. I accept. But O King, for the completion of almsgiving, there is still dakshina (remuneration to the Brahmin) to be paid. Because Manu has said – without dakshina the almsgiving becomes null and void. Therefore to make it fruitful you must arrange for payment of dakshina.

Rajan! When Vishwamitra said this, King Harishchandra was astounded. Still he said – Swami! What else do you wish me to give. Tell me what it is and I will make necessary arrangements. But please keep your peace.

Vishwamitra said – King! You must give two hundred and fifty seers of gold. For this also the king agreed. Just then the army reached the palace. They were overjoyed to see their king again. But they noticed that he looked worried. They asked him what was troubling him.

Vyasji says – The king did not answer. It seems he was introspecting. He wondered why he agreed to make a gift which involved the total surrender of all his possessions. This Brahmin has acted like a swindler and a cheat, and has duped me with his smooth talk. I have made a commitment to give my entire kingdom and possessions; and I still have to give two hundred and fifty seers of gold. I cannot understand the motive for this deceit. It is evident that one cannot understand the workings of fate. One cannot know what lies in the future.

The king had gone deep into his conscience. The queen came and asked the reason for his concern. She said – Prabhu! What is troubling you so much. Please tell me. Your son is well. You have just completed the Rajsuya Yagya and earned great punyas. Then why this sadness. At this moment you have no enemies. Even the god Varun is pleased with you. O Wise King! Worrying makes one weak and is akin to death. So please come out of it and become normal.

He wanted to tell his wife, but he could not. Every cell of his being was overcome and distraught. He could not eat or drink or sleep. In the morning when he was performing his prayers and rituals, Vishwamitra arrived. The king offered pranaams. Vishwamitra said – Leave all these attachments and hand over your kingdom to me as per your promise. Now give me the gold and prove what an honourable king you are.

Raja Harishchandra said – O You who illuminate the clan of Kushik! This is not my kingdom. I have already given it away. I will leave immediately. Have no fear. All my possessions I surrender to you. At the present moment I do not have the gold to give you. But as soon as I get some wealth, I will pay you. Then the king declared to his wife Madhavi and son Rohit – I have gifted my kingdom to this Brahmin. That includes all my property, houses, elephants, gold, precious gems, chariots and everything. Excepting the three of us, he now owns everything. We must leave Ayodhya and go into the deep forest.

Rajan! The king took his wife and son, and left the palace. At all times he showed only respect for Vishwamitra. The whole kingdom began to weep. They cried – O King! What have you done. From where did this misfortune come upon you. It is clear this Brahmin has cheated you". All the subjects and the Brahmins began to condemn the Brahmin who had caused the king to lose his kingdom. Even as the king was leaving, Vishwamitra followed him and cruelly said – Rajan! Give me my dakshina of gold just now, or say you will not give it. Then I will forego it. Rajan! If you still have any attachment to your kingdom you can have it back. If you have promised to give it, you must honour the promise. Then why the hesitation and delay?

The king humbly bowed before Vishwamitra with folded hands and began to speak

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CHAPTER 7 episodes 20-22

20-22 To pay the dakshina King Harishchandra goes to Kashi and sells his wife and son.

Raja Harishchandra said - O Muni! You who observe the highest austerity, I hereby promise that until I give you the dakshina of gold, I will not eat. Have no fear. I belong to the Surya dynasty. I am a Kshatriya king. I have just completed the Rajsuya Yagya. After freely giving away all my possessions as gifts, how can I deny dakshina. Paying your debt will be my first obligation. Be assured, I will pay all that I owe you. Please give me some time.

Vishwamitra said – Rajan! From where will you get wealth again. You have lost your kingdom. You have no right over your treasury. You have no army to make new conquests. Rajan! It is useless to hope for wealth. And I cannot tempt you. Therefore O King! Say it. Say that you will not be able to pay me. Then I will give up the idea of waiting for the gold. So why don't you declare – I have no gold. What can I give you." Then you and your family can leave.

Vyasji says – Rajan! The king said – Brahman! Please believe me. I will give you the gold. I have nothing of my own, but the sacred bodies of my wife and son are available. I will sell them and give you the gold. Prabhu! Please make enquiries in Kashipur for a buyer. All three of us will get into bondage and serve him. With that money you can buy the gold and be happy and satisfied.

King Harishchandra took his family and left for Kashi, where Shiva and His consort Uma are enthroned. That city gives joy and auspiciousness to all who visit it. When the king saw it he exclaimed – What a radiant and splendid place this is. I am blessed". Then he went to the banks of the holy Ganga, took his bath, and offered libations to the gods. Then he went around to take a better

look at the place. He thought to himself - This beautiful land is the property of Trishuldhari Bhagwan Shankar. Sad and forlorn, the king went everywhere on foot. The queen was by his side. On entering Kashipuri, the king seemed to derive solace and peace. Suddenly, in order to collect his dakshina, there came before him Munivar Vishwamitra. The king folded his hands and spoke respectfully – Muni! Herewith my life, my son, and my wife – are all at your disposal. Whichever one of us will serve your purpose you may take. If there is still anything left to be done, please let me know.

Vishwamitra said – Rajan! May you prosper! Today completes one month. If you remember your promise, then make arrangements to fulfill it.

The king said – O Brahmin who shines with the luster of your powerful tapasya! The month will be completed today, but there is still half a day left. Please wait until then.

Vishwamitra said – Maharaj! Let it be so. I will come later. But when I come, if you still do not give me the gold, I will pronounce a curse on you. The Muni left, and the king became desperate. He thought – How can I ever pay the dakshina that I promised. Where will I meet a wealthy friend, or where will I get so much wealth. Even if I meet a wealthy man, how can I ask him for gold. In the dharma shastras three conditions have been laid down for kings. He cannot beg. He must honour his promise to a Brahmin. If he dies without doing so, he will have to take birth in the insect yoni. Or he will have to become a goblin or an evil spirit. The best thing would be to sell myself.

Sootjee says – King Harishchandra was very dejected and was sitting with his head down. His condition was pitiable. The queen spoke to him in gentle, loving tones - Maharaj! Stop worrying and act righteously. Anyone who is not

honest and truthful is shunned and abandoned like an evil spirit. To be faithful to your promise is the greatest dharma. For the one who speaks a lie, all his yagyas, study of the Vedas, and pious and generous deeds are of no avail. In the dharma shastras it is written that truth is the main causal for a wise man's salvation, and untruth is the main causal for the damnation of a sinner. If a king conducts a hundred ashvamedhas and rajsuya yagyas, but speaks a lie even once, he has to forfeit entry into heaven.

Raja Harishchandra said – Gajjgamini! (one whose gait is as graceful as an elephant)! Our son here will preserve and enlarge the clan. Therefore whatever suggestion you have, I will carry it out.

The queen said – Rajan! I hold you to your promise. A wife completes her mission in life after giving birth to a son. Now you sell me, and with that money you pay the dakshina to that Brahmin.

Vyasji says – Rajan! The king was struck dumb on hearing his wife's words. Then when he regained his composure, he said – It is a very sad and grievous situation that you have had to say a thing like this. How can I sell you! Saying this the distraught king fell down in a faint. The grief stricken queen began to speak compassionately to her husband. – Maharaj! By whose negligence and carelessness has this misfortune come before us that you are now groveling on the earth like a miserable pauper. The same person who happily gave away crores of wealth to Brahmins; who ruled the world as an emperor, is now lying in the dust. It is very sad. O Fate! O Destiny! What misdeed has this king committed, that you have caused his ruination and destruction. Saying this the queen also fainted. Their son Rohit kept crying from hunger and thirst.

Vishwamitra arrived on the scene. His appearance was like Yama. He had come to collect his dakshina. Seeing the king in a faint, he sprinkled water on him to revive him. Then he said – Rajendra! Get up and pay the dakshina because indebtedness increases with every moment of delay". The water that Vishwamitra sprinkled on the king revived him, and he looked at the Muni. Inspite of this kindly act, Vishwamitra was still angry.

Vishwamitra said – Rajan! If you stand on firmness and constancy, kindly hand over my dakshina. The reason – Truth and dignity makes the sun give heat; on the power and might of truth, the earth gets her gravity and stability. The supreme principles of dharma are based on truth; and the attainment of heaven is dependent on truth. If a hundred ashwamedha yagyas are put on a balance with a single truth on the other side, it will always tilt in favour of truth. But what use is it to me to speak or listen to all these things. You should give me my dakshina immediately. Rajan! If I do not receive the dakshina before Surya goes to Asthachal (a certain mountain in the west, behind which the sun is supposed to set), I will certainly pronounce a curse on you. Saying this, Vishwamitra left. The king sank into fear and despair.

Sootji says – At this very same moment a Brahmin, who was very learned in the Vedas, came out of his ashram. Many Brahmins accompanied him. He reached the place where Raja Harishchandra sat. When the queen saw all these Brahmins, she spoke aloud to the king, making a suggestion which was filled with significance. She talked of the codes of righteous conduct, the merits of virtue, and justice. The queen said – Prabho! It is said that a Brahmin is the father of three castes or tribes. A son has a right or privilege to his father's wealth – This is the absolute truth. There I would advise you to pray to this Brahmin for some wealth.

Raja Harishchandra said – O part of my being! I am a kshatriya. It is not fitting for me to accept charity. To claim or solicit befits a Brahmin. Not a kshatriya. A Brahmin is a guru for all castes, and should always be honoured and respected. To implore or demand from a guru is neither proper nor decorous. Kshatriyas are supporters and patrons. Giving of alms, studying, hosting yagyas, giving refuge to those who come for help, and protecting their subjects – these are the occupations instituted for kshatriyas. A kshatriya should never utter the inauspicious words – "give me something". Every corner of my heart is filled with the sentiment "I give. I am generous." I am always ready to arrange for wealth and give it to the Brahmins.

The queen said – Swami! Fate causes favourable and adverse situations to come before us. It is fate which brings honour or disgrace upon a man. Whether a person becomes the receiver or the benefactor, is all caused by fate. A learned and powerful Brahmin feels offended by a king. As a fruit of his action the king has to give up his kingdom and lose all his peace and happiness. It is evident that all this is the working of fate.

The king said – I would rather have my tongue cut off with a sharp blade, than utter the words – please give me! Please give me! O Auspicious one! I am a kshatriya. I cannot ask any one for anything.

The queen said – Maharaj! If you cannot bring yourself to petition anyone, then I am your wealth and property. All the gods with Indra, gave me to you in marriage. You have always protected me. Therefore O splendid One! Sell me and use that wealth to pay dakshina to Guru Vishwamitra.

Rajan! This caused the king great pain and sorrow. He began to cry out – This is too much. This is too much! But the queen persisted. She said – Please

accept my advice. Otherwise the fire of the brahmin's curse will turn you to ashes, and we will have to take a birth in a very inferior strara. You are not doing it to finance some bad habit like drinking, gambling, expanding your kingdom, or for satisfying your carnal desires. You are doing it, so that you can honour your promise with my cooperation, and pay dakshina to your guru.

Vyasji says – When the queen kept repeating her request, Raja Harishchandra said – O Pious and gentle one! You have worn down my resistance. I have become harsh and cold hearted, and I am accepting your suggestion to sell you. If your sweet and gentle voice could utter such a merciless suggestion, then I am about to commit a vile and despicable deed, which even the lowest and meanest person will hesitate to do.

Saying this, Raja Harishchandra went into the city. There was an arena which was used for public entertainment. He made his wife sit on the platform. Tears were pouring out of his eyes. He was choked. He kept calling out to the people – O all your town-dwellers. Kindly come and hear me. This wife of mine is dearer to me than life, but if anyone needs a maid-servant, you can pay the price and purchase her". Among the crowd there were many wise men. They asked – Pray! Who are you, and why are you selling your wife?"

The king said – You want to know who I am? Then listen. I am an inhuman, brutal person. You may even consider me a murderous rakshasa. That is the reason for this brutal inclination and tendency.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Hearing these terrible words, Vishwamitra disguised himself as an old Brahmin and appeared suddenly. He said – I am ready to pay your price and purchase this maid-servant. Give her to me. I have boundless wealth. My wife is of delicate constitution and cannot do house work.

Therefore give her to me. But tell me. How much wealth will I have to pay." Raja Harishchandra became exceedingly sad and confused. He could not utter a word.

The Brahmin said – Taking into consideration your wife's capability, state, appearance, and disposition, I am giving you this much wealth. Accept it and hand her over to me. According to the dharma shastras the worth of a man and a woman have been calculated and valued like this. – If a woman possesses all thirty-two prescribed auspicious characteristics, is efficient, is virtuous and amiable, and is endowed with attributes, then her value is one crore mudras (silver coins). If all these qualities are present in a man, then his value is one thousand million coins.

Hearing the brahmin's words, King Harishchandra was sad, and no sound came from his mouth. Then the Brahmin placed the money on the deerskin. He caught the hair of the queen and began to drag her.

The queen cried – O Honourable One. Please let go. Leave me. I cannot go till I have seen my son. Please forgive me. I do not know when I will see him again. Look Son! She said. Your mother has become a slave. O son of a king! Do not come near me, because I am not worthy to be touched by you. The child cried out "Amba!" and ran towards his mother. He caught hold of her clothes, and dragging and falling, he clung to her. The Brahmin scolded him, but still he did not leave his mother.

The queen said – Lord! Have compassion on me, and purchase this boy as well. Because, even though you have bought me, my mind will be distracted towards my child, and I will not discharge my duties efficiently. I am most unfortunate. Please help me.

Sootji says – For this also the Brahmin put some wealth on the deerskin, and bought the boy also. Mother and son got united. Then the Brahmin took both of them and went towards his house. The queen was in a most pitiable state. Before leaving she did pradakshina of the king (circumambulation – walking round an object of reverence with the right side towards it) and then went down on her knees and offered pranaam. She said – If I have given charity; if I have performed yagyas; and if Brahmins have received food and gifts to their satisfaction; then may all the punyas thus accrued, cause me to get Raja Harishchandra as a husband very quickly". The king who greatly respected and loved his queen, was shattered seeing her prostrated at his feet. He wailed – O most faithful and chaste wife, you are leaving me and going. Is it possible for the shade of a tree to leave the tree. Then he turned to his son – Son! Where are you leaving me and going. Where will I go, and who will remove my sorrows". O twice-born one! Leaving my kingdom and becoming a van-vaasi has caused me great sorrow. Now I am also losing my son". Then he spoke to the queen – It is the duty of a wife to always remain beside her husband and be the cause of his happiness. Then O auspicious One! How have you chosen sorrow as your partner and left me alone. I was born in the clan of Ikshvaku. I had unlimited wealth and the greatest kingdom. But today you have been reduced to the state of being a servant. Devi! Keeping the spotless words of the puranas as my witness, I ask who will deliver me from this abyss of grief and sorrow.

Sootji says – Then the old Brahmin (Vishwamitra) began to take away the queen and the prince.

Vyasji says – While the king was lamenting, the old Brahmin vanished. At the same time Muni Vishwamitra arrived. He spoke in a very stern manner.

Vishwamitra said – Rajan! You with powerful arms. If you have even a little self respect, then honour your promise at the rajsuya yagya, and pay me dakshina.

Harishchandra said – O Sinless One! I offer you my pranaams. The dakshina is ready as per my promise. Please accept.

Vishwamitra said – What is the source of this wealth that is being given as dakshina. Tell me clearly how you acquired this wealth.

The king said – O Rishi! You who observe the highest austerities. What is the use of telling. It will only increase my grief and sorrow.

The Rishi said – I do not accept corrupted and defiled wealth. I should get pure and honestly acquired wealth. Tell me truthfully the source of this wealth.

The king said – Mune! I sold my chaste and pious wife for one crore coins. For my son Rohit I received ten crore coins. In this way I collected eleven crore coins. Please accept.

Sootji says – The wealth received from the sale of his wife and son appeared insufficient to Vishwamitra. He became angry and said –

The Rishi said – Rajan! The dakshina for a rajsuya yagya is not so little. Make arrangements to procure more wealth so that the dakshina amount is complete. O King! You are disinclined and disinterested in your observance of the duties laid down in the shastras. If you think that with this much wealth you can fulfil the dakshina due to me, I will demonstrate to you the scope of my power. Listen! I am a Brahmin tapasvi of the highest and purest mind and

consciousness. I have made a pure study of the greatest scriptures. I have done severe tapasya. I possess all the shakti.

The King said – Bhagwan! I will give you more wealth in addition to this; to complete the dakshina. Kindly wait for a little more time. Just now I have sold only my wife and son. I am still left.

Vishwamitra said – The fourth quarter of this day is coming to an end. As soon as it ends, it will be time to end my waiting.

CHAPTER 7 episode 23

23 – King Harishchandra sells himself to a chandal and pays Vishwamitra.

Vyasji says – After speaking these harsh and cruel words, Vishwamitra picked up the wealth and left. The king was bowed with despair and kept shouting – As I have sold myself for money, I have become a fiend, worse than a dead spirit. Whoever can alleviate my sorrow should come before the fourth quarter ends. Just then Dharm, in the guise of a chandal came before him. His body emitted a foul smell. He had huge teeth and a long matted beard. His chest stuck out, and he looked merciless. His appearance was black. He had a long belly. He had smeared fat on his body. He wore a garland of skulls, and had an old whip in his hand.

The chandal said – I am in need of a servant. How much will I have to pay if I want to buy you.

Vyasji said – Rajan! That chandal looked fearful. He looked harsh and cruel. The king asked – Please tell me who you are.

The chandal said – Rajendra! I am a chandal. Here everyone calls me Praveer (bold and valiant). You can work under my command. Your job is at the smashaanghat (burial ground), where you have to take charge of the shrouds and palls bearing dead bodies. The king said – I would rather a Brahmin or a kshatriya bought me.

Vyasji says – Maharaj Harishchandra was just saying this, when the great tapasvi Vishwamitra arrived. His eyes were red with anger. He said to the king

– This chandal is prepared to pay your price. Then why don't you accept it and complete my dakshina amount.

The king said – Bhagwan! Kaushik! I consider myself to have been born in the Surya dynasty. For the sake of wealth how can I become a slave of a chandal.

Vishwamitra said – If you do not sell yourself to this chandal and give me the wealth due to me, I will curse you this instant. Take the wealth from chandal or Brahmin; but pay me my due. At the present moment, excepting for the chandal, there is no one else who can give you the wealth. And without taking the wealth, I will not leave. This is my decision. King! If you do not give me my wealth now, there is only aadhi-ghadi (space of 24 minutes) left of the last quarter of this day. Then with the fire of my curse you will be turned to ashes.

Vyasji says – Rajan! The dam of his patience and tolerance burst. He said – Be happy. Then he caught hold of the feet of Vishwamitra.

Harishchandra said – O revered Brahmin! I am a sad devotee of yours. My condition is miserable. But what is important is that I am your bhakta. Being a servant of a chandal is an insult I cannot bear. Therefore please have mercy on me. To pay the balance wealth to you, I will be your slave and work for you. I will do whatever you command.

Vishwamitra said – Very good! Let it be so. You become my servant. Rajan! The condition is that you will implicitly obey every command of mine.

Vyasji says – Hearing this king Harishchandra's flagging spirits revived, and a smile lit up his face. O One with the purest mind and conscience! O Twice-born One! I will obey you continuously and implicitly. There is no doubt in this. Give me your order immediately.

Vishwamitra said – O Chandal! How much will you pay me for this servant of mine. Take him because I have no need of a servant. I want wealth.

Vyasji says – Rajan! The chandal was overjoyed. He came closer to the Muni and said –

The chandal said - The border of Prayag is ten yojans from here. (one yojan is four, eight or sixteen miles). I will cover the entire distance with gems, as payment. By selling him to me, you have relieved me of great sorrow.

Vyasji says – The chandal gave Vishwamitra gold and countless gems and pearls, which he accepted. King Harishchandra did not feel, even a little bit of sorrow. He had accepted the fact that Vishwamitra was his master, and could do with him as he wished. He thought - it is my bounden duty to do as my master wishes. At that very moment a voice spoke from the heavens – "Maharaj! By giving the dakshina you are liberated from the debt." Flowers rained down on the head of Raja Harishchandra. Indra and all the gods praised him. He was very happy and spoke to Vishwamitra –

The king said – O Great Soul! You are my mother, you are my father, you are my friend. Because in one moment you have released me from my debt. By your kindness I am free of all obligations. Now please give me your command.

Vishwamitra said – Rajan! From today it will be your foremost duty to obey every wish of the chandal. Now may you always prosper. Saying this Vishwamitra took all the wealth and left.

CHAPTER 7 episode 24

24 – Harishchandra goes to smashanghat (cemetery)

Shounak asked – Most respectful Sootji. What did Harishchandra do after going to the chandal's house. I am impatient to know.

Sootji says – After Vishwamitra left the chandal was very pleased. He bound king Harishchandra and began to beat him with a rod saying "Will you tell lies again?" The king's attention became restless and unsteady, and his senses became foggy and dull. As it is his heart was broken over the separation from his wife and child. The chandal took him to his house and put him in a prison. He spent his time locked up in a room.

He renounced food and water. He constantly thought of his wife, who now must be weak and pitiful; and his son. They must be thinking I will get them released very soon; after paying the dakshina to the muni. That beautiful wife, with the eyes of a deer, does not know that I have become a chandal. I lost my kingdom. My friends abandoned me. I was forced to sell my wife and son. What mockery of sacred precept is this!

In this way, with his memories and remembrances, Harishchandra passed his days in the house of the chandal. Four days passed. On the fifth day, at noon, the chandal took him out of the prison and ordered him to go to the smashaan and take charge of all the corpses that would be brought. Using harsh language, the chandal said – In the southern part of Kashi, there is a huge smashaan ghat. You go and look after that place. Do not move from there. Take this old rod with you. Let everyone know that this rod belongs to the powerful Praveer.

Sootjee says – Shounak! Obeying the chandal, Harishchandra left for the funeral place. It was in the south of Kashi. Dead bodies were cremated here. The air was always pervaded by the foul smell of burning bodies and acrid smoke. There was always the sound of weeping and wailing. Hundreds of jackals and vultures lurked nearby. Wherever one looked, there were only dead bodies, and the whole place was strewn with bones. The stench was unbearable, and the screaming and wailing of friends and relatives of the dead, was maddening. Sons, friends, relations, brothers and students, would weep and say - Today you are leaving us and going away", or "come back! Come back!" The sound of the living, and the silence of the dead, and nothing else. The hissing of the fire consuming flesh and fat, and the crackling of the burning wood. A grim scene, as if the final annihilation of the universe had begun.

Raja Harishchandra had to run from one corpse to another. His body was covered in dirt. This running hither and thither had made him as thin as the rod he carried. Now his mind was always busy with collecting funeral fees. I will get this much for this body, and that much for that body. This is mine, this is for the king's tax collector, and this is for the chandal. Daily he faced insurmountable difficulties. He had only one dress, which was in shreds and knotted together. He had a patched quilt. His hands, feet, belly and face were full of dust and ashes from the pyres, and his fingers were coated with blood and partially burned flesh. Working in these horrible and depressing conditions, he had lost his appetite. Neither did he sleep in the daytime, nor in the night. In this way he passed twelve months, which seemed like a hundred years.

CHAPTER 7 episode 25

25 – Rohit dies of snakebite. Queen in grief, and cruel behavior of the chandal.

Sootji says – Shounak! One day prince Rohit went outside to play. Many boys were with him. After playing, he began to gather kusha grass. He pulled it out with the roots and said – This will please my guru. Then for the yagya he collected wood of the palash tree. He tied everything into a bundle, put it on his head, and began to walk back home. On the way he felt tired and thirsty. He found a small pool. He put his bundle down and drank the cool water. Then he rested. When he went to pick up his bundle, Vishwamitra, by his powers, caused a venomous snake to come out of its burrow. It was a dangerous looking snake. It bit the prince and put its poison inside him. Prince Rohit fell to the ground. Seeing that Rohit was dead, the boys ran, trembling with fear, to the ashram of the Brahmin. When Rohit's mother came, they said to her – O servant of the Brahmin! Your son went out to play. We were also with him. A snake bit him and life has gone out of him. This news hit her like a thunderbolt, and she fell down in a faint, like a banana tree that has been chopped. The Brahmin became angry and splashed water on her face. When she revived he scolded her –

The Brahmin said – O You impious woman. Weeping in the eventide is an evil omen. With this, misfortune comes into the house. Knowing this, why are you crying. Don't you have any shame.

The queen made no reply. She was drowning in the sorrow of the death of her child. Her face was wet with tears, her hair was in disarray, and she was covered in dust. The Brahmin again spoke in anger – " O untruthful one! You

have cheated me. Even though I paid and bought you, you are purposely neglecting your duties. If you were unable to do work, why did you take wealth from me." In this cruel way the Brahmin repeatedly scolded the queen. With great sadness in her voice she explained to the Brahmin the reason for her weeping – Swami! My little son went out to play. He was bitten by a poisonous snake and he is dead. I wish to go and see the boy. Please give me permission". But the Brahmin only got angrier.

The Brahmin said – O you who commit low and base acts. Have you no understanding of sin? The person who takes wages from the master, but does not do the job satisfactorily, he falls into a formidable hell called Raurav. After staying in that hell for one kalp (one day of Brahma, consisting of 4320,000,000 years), he takes birth in the yoni of poultry. If you have, even an iota of fear of the netherworld, you better continue with your housework.

The queen was shaking with grief and fear. She fell at his feet and implored him – "Please have mercy! Kindly give me enough time to see my son and come back immediately". Still he would not relent.

The Brahmin said – "Of what concern is your son to me. First complete all your work. Are you not aware that my anger is like a whiplash".

The queen composed herself, and quietly began to do the housework. By the time she finished massaging oil and pressing the legs, it was midnight. Then the Brahmin said – "Now you may go to your child. Complete all the formalities and come back, as soon as you can, so that there is no disruption in the work of my house."

The queen went alone in the darkness, weeping and calling out to her son. When she saw the body of her son, she was stricken. She looked like a cow

which had lost its calf. She kept calling – "Son! Please get up and come to me. Why have you left me and gone away. You always called out Amba! Amba! Why are you so silent." Then she fainted. Later, when she revived, she again cried – "Please wake up from this terrible sleep". It was long past midnight. Hundreds of jackals were howling. Eerie sounds were coming from ghosts, goblins and evil spirits.

Sootji says – Shounak! In her sorrow the queen also called out to her husband – "Rajan! Come and see in what condition your son is. The same child who used to colour his face with my sindhoor; who used to rub out the kasturi-sandal paste from your forehead; is now lying in the dust, and flies are buzzing around him.

O Fate! O Destiny! What heinous crime did I commit in my past, that there is no end to my fruit of suffering. O my Son! My Child!" The queen wept loudly and unashamedly. Her sound woke up the townspeople from their sleep. They immediately came to her.

The townspeople said – "Who are you? Whose child is this? Where is your husband. How have you come here alone, and why are you weeping?" The queen did not say a word. This made the people suspicious and fearful. They said – "This is not a human. She does not speak. The hair on their skin stood up in goose-pimples. They picked up their weapons saying – She must be a child-eating demoness. We should try to destroy her. If she was a respectable woman, she would not be out of her house at this unholy hour. Definitely she is a fiend, and she has killed this child to eat it."

They caught hold of her hair. Some caught her hands. And many encircled her throat with their fingers. "Rakshasi! Now there is no escape for you". They

dragged her to the chandal's house. They said – "Chandal! This rakshasi catches children and eats them up. That is why we have brought her to you. Take her somewhere and kill her".

The Chandal looked at the queen and said – "I know this woman. I have heard about her from many people. She does eat people's children, but before this no one has ever seen her. By catching her, you have done a punya. Your fame will spread in the whole world. Now you may go in peace. You accumulate merits if you kill a person who murders cows, Brahmins, women or children; who steals gold; who commits arson (fire); who obstructs roads; who drinks alcohol; who sleeps on his guru's bed; and who opposes virtuous men. Even if a brahmin's wife indulges in these misdeeds, it is not a sin to kill her. Therefore I will be justified in killing her".

The Chandal bound the queen with strong ropes. He caught her by the hair and dragged her. Then he called Harishchandra and said – "Hey servant! Without any hesitation kill this demonic woman". These words were like a thunderbolt. The thought of killing a woman made Harishchandra tremble. He said to the Chandal – "I cannot do this. Give me some other order. Excepting this, I will do anything else that you order me to do!" Hearing this the Chandal said – "Ah! Don't be afraid. Just take my sword and cut off her head. You will get merit by doing this. You should never protect a person who terrifies children and eats them. She is a rakshasi".

King Harishchandra said – "No matter what. One should always protect women. At no time should one kill a woman. Because our learned and wise elders have said that it is a great sin to kill a woman. Anyone who kills a woman knowingly or unknowingly, will have to suffer the tortures of a hell called Raurav."

The Chandal said – “There is no need to discuss so much. Take that gleaming, sharp, sword of mine. Because to kill one who is terrorizing so many, is actually a punya. This horrible woman has killed and eaten many children. By her death the world will be rid of one fear.”

The king said – “Chandalraj! I have sworn never to kill a woman as long as I live. Therefore I cannot even attempt this heinous act.”

The Chandal said – “O Wicked One! What greater work is there than obeying your master. Now that you have taken money and sold yourself to me, why are you refusing to carry out my orders. He who disobeys his master, and does only half his work, has to suffer in hell for crores of kalpas.”

The king said – “Chandalnath! Please give me any other work. No matter how difficult or impossible. Tell me who your enemies are. I will kill them instantly, and give you the earth. I can even defeat the gods, including Indra, the nagas, and the gandharvas.”

This enraged the Chandal. He said – “You are overstepping the behaviour prescribed for servants. Having accepted to serve a Chandal, you are talking of defeating gods. Stop all your talking. If you were so afraid of committing a sin, why did you accept slavery to me? Now pick up this sword and cut off her lotus-like head from her body”. Saying this he put the sword into Harishchandra’s hand.

CHAPTER 7 episodes 26-27

26-27 Raja Harishchandra and queen Shaivya meet. They prepare for death. Arrival of the gods, and Harishchandra enters heaven.

Sootji says – Shounak! Then King Harishchandra hung his head and spoke to the queen – "O Innocent woman! I am a sinner. Please sit here in front of me. If my hand will rise, I will try to cut off your head." The king prepared to commit this gruesome act. Up till this time, neither did the king recognize the queen, nor did the queen recognize him. But having surrendered herself to death, the queen spoke –

The queen said – "Chandal! If you think it right please listen to me. Outside this town, my little son lies dead. Please wait till I bring him here to you for the last rites. After that you may kill me".

Then King Harishchandra gave her permission to go. She left, wailing and lamenting. She brought the dead child to the smashaanghat and laid him on the ground. She began to call out – "Rajan! Your dearly beloved son was playing with his friends. A horrible snake bit him, and his life flew out of him. That same child now lies in the dust. Can you see him." Harishchandra came near, and moved the cloth from the child's face. But still he did not recognize the queen, because so many days of difficulties and unbearable sorrows had made her very lean. The king also had changed. He used to have thick, shining hair. Now it was matted and full of dust, and his dirty skin resembled the bark of a tree. The queen could not recognize him either. When the king looked at the child he began to admire its royal features. His face was round like a full moon. He had a straight nose and chubby cheeks. His hair was curly and

black. His closed eyes were like lotus petals, and his lips were pink like the bimba fruit. He had a broad chest, high shoulders, and long arms. His feet were long with small toes. The king thought – The sad thing is that this child took birth in some unfortunate king's clan. That is why Yamraj tied him in his noose of time, so early in life.

Sootji says – Seeing the lifeless child lying on his mother's lap the king began to remember his own son. He said aloud – "I hope my son is not in similar circumstances. I hope Yama has not taken him as well."

The queen was also thinking of her past. She said – "Dear child! I must have committed some terrible sin to get this kind of fruit. I cannot understand. O child! O Rajan! Having left me in such sorrow, how can you be peaceful. You have lost your kingdom. Friends have abandoned you. You were forced into selling your wife and child. Hai! Fate! To what dreadful state you have reduced Raja Harishchandra."

When King Harishchandra heard this, he came nearer, because now he knew that this was his pious queen, and this was his dead son. He exclaimed – O Misfortune! What a calamity! This is my queen, and this is my child. The floodgates of his emotions burst, and he fell to the ground in a swoon. When the queen realized that this wretched chandal was none other than the king, she too, fainted. When they revived after some time, they wept together.

The king said – "O Son! I always remembered your smiling face, and the way you used to call – Father! Father! When will I ever call out to you again – Son! Son! Now who will climb on my clean bed with dirty knees and dusty hands. You brought endless joy to my mind and my heart. Even when I lost my kingdom and my friends, you were always with me. Yet I had to commit the

crime of selling you. And now unkind Fate has reunited us, but in a way that you will never know."

Then he picked up the body of his son, and again fell in a faint. The queen suddenly realized that the voice of this man was enough proof that he was indeed the great King Harishchandra. How did he end up in a smashaanghat. Leaving aside her grief for her son, she began to feel concern for her husband. Seeing her husband and son, both lying on the ground, filled her with mixed emotions. She began to address Fate - "O merciless, lawless, and culpable Fate! Shame on you! You have turned a godlike king into a chandaal. He lost his kingdom. His friends deserted him. He even had to sell his wife and child. By your workings, he has fallen to the depths of becoming a chandaal. There is no throne. There is no canopy. The emperor, whose path used to be swept clean by lesser kings, is now roaming in a smashaanghat. In his path there are skulls and bones, broken pots and shreds of cloth. The hair and half-burnt limbs of the dead are strewn all over. All the drippings of fat and blood from the burning bodies are giving out a foul smell. Jackals, vultures and other scavenging birds are calling and screaming. Smoke has enveloped the place in darkness."

The queen went and embraced the unconscious king, and kept asking – "Is this a dream, or is it really happening to us. Please tell me the truth. Because if this is really happening, then of what use was our virtuous life, protection of Brahmins, and worship of the gods. It seems as if there is no value for dharma, truth, innocence and compassion. That is why a virtuous king like you, has lost his kingdom."

Sootji says – Shounik! The king let out a deep breath. Then he told her all the circumstances which brought him to this chandaal state. Then the queen told

him all that happened to her, and how their child died. Both were drowning in grief. Then the queen entreated the king – "Rajan! Now carry out the orders of your master, and prevent yourself being branded disobedient and a breaker of promises."

The king again fell down senseless. Then when he got up he said – "Priye! How can you speak such harsh words. When I cannot even utter such brutal words how can I put it into action."

The queen said – "Prabho! I have worshipped Bhagawati Gouri. I have also worshipped the gods and the Brahmins. By their blessings you will always be my husband in every life."

The king said – "Priye! I cannot bear this sorrow any longer. I want to renounce this body. But look at my misfortune. If I sit on this burning pyre, without the permission of my master, the chandaal, then in the next life I will again have to come as the servant of the chandaal. My only child, who would have carried on the clan, also became a victim of fate and got bitten by a poisonous snake and died. I cannot bear to live. When I light my son's pyre I will definitely jump into it. Whatever has to happen, let it happen. So please forgive me and do not prevent me. I order you to return to the brahmin's house. If you have led a chaste and righteous life, if you have given alms, done havans, and satisfied the Brahmins with food and gifts, then in the next life you will be reunited with your son and with me. If I have ever caused you any emotional upsetting, please do not remember it. Do not get conscious that you are a king's wife and ever insult the Brahmin. It is the duty of a servant to do work which pleases the master."

The queen said – “O King! Now I will also turn into ashes. I cannot bear any more trials. We will make the journey together. That is my only salvation. With you by my side I can suffer hell or heaven.” The king said – “So may it be”.

Sootji says – Then the king set up a pyre and laid his son Rohit’s body upon it. Then both he and the queen folded their hands and meditated upon the Creatrix of the world; Who possesses a hundred eyes; Who exists eternally within the five sheaths (pancha-kosha); of Whom Brahma is a manifestation; Who wears red garments; Who is the ocean of compassion; Who holds in Her hands all varieties of weapons; and Who constantly protects and preserves Her creation – Parameshwari Bhagawati Jagaddamba. They were absorbed in this beautiful state of meditation. At that very moment Indra and all the gods arrived, keeping Dharm in the forefront. They spoke in one voice – Rajan! O Great Soul! Look! All the gods are here – Brahma, Dharm, Saints, Deities of the wind; God of the earth, Deities of the four quarters; serpent gods, gandharvas, ganas of Shiva; Ashwini kumars and many other gods. The great Muni who establishes peace and friendship in the three worlds – Vishwamitra, is also here. He is expressing a wish to fulfill all your desires.

Dharam said – Rajan! Please do not make this rash decision. Because it is your high level of tolerance; your capacity to bear hardships; your victory over your senses; your honesty and truthfulness; your goodness, and all your admirable qualities have pleased me and brought me before you.

Indra said – O Fortunate Harishchandra! I Indra, am present before you. Rajan! Today, together with your queen and your son, you have gained victory and mastery over this ancient universe. Now do us the honour of entering

heaven with your wife and son. Besides you, for anyone else to enter heaven in this way, is an almost impossible task.

Sootji says – Then Indra ascended into the sky, and sent reviving rain on to the pyre where Prince Rohit's body lay. In addition to this rain of nectar, he also showered fragrant flowers. Drums began to beat. Maharaj Harishchandra was a great soul. His son slowly came to life and sat up. The king embraced his son. The queen was also present. All the lost wealth re-appeared. They were gradually covered in royal garments. There was great peace all around. Every corner of their hearts was filled with divine joy (Niranand). In an instant everything changed dramatically. Then Indra said to Harishchandra – "Maharaj! Now all of you come to heaven. This superlative course of events is the fruit of your virtuous life."

Harishchandra said – "Devraj! Chandaal is my master I have not taken leave of him. Without his permission I cannot go to heaven.

Dharam said – "Rajan! After reflecting on the pre-destined trials and tribulations that were coming your way, I decided to become the Chandaal. Even the smashaanghat and all its distressful surroundings, were illusions created by my power of maya."

Indra said – "Harishchandra! Please come to that most holy and sacred place that all mortals pray for. Only those who have led a righteous and pious life merit entry."

Maharaj Harishchandra said – "Devraj! Namaskar! Please hear one prayer of mine. In Ayodhya there are many subjects of mine who are filled with sorrow at my plight. How can I leave them and go to heaven. Killing of cows; killing of women; and killing of Brahmins are considered grievous sins. Deserting your

bhaktas is also counted among this. I cannot renounce my faithful friends. So you may please return to Devalok. Lord! If there is provision for all of them to also enter heaven, then I will most willingly come. If I must accompany them to hell, then I am willing to go there also."

Indra said – "Rajan! The townspeople of Ayodhaya have severally committed sins and good deeds. Why are you expressing a desire that all common people should enjoy heaven".

Harishchandra said – "Devraj! The subjects are part and parcel of the king. Because of them a king has a kingdom. It is with the cooperation and help from the subjects that yagyas are performed and the gods are worshipped; and the king succeeds in administrative projects like digging of wells and lakes; and building of monuments and places of worship. It is only by their shakti that I accomplish all my functions as king. That is why I cannot abandon those who have stood by me, for the lure of heaven. Therefore Devesh! Whatever merits have accrued to me, and whatever length of time I am entitled to the joys of heaven; divide them and give all my subjects and me, only one day in your Devalok. I await your decision."

Sootji says _ Indra agreed and said – "So may it be." Dharam and Gaadhinandan Vishwamitra were exceedingly pleased. Then all those present, went to Ayodhaya which was thickly populated with people of all four castes. Devraj Indra addressed all of them in the presence of their king. He said – "All citizens of Ayodhaya! Prepare to go to heaven. By the grace of Dharam this great gift is being given to you." Then the king confirmed – "Yes! All of us are going to heaven.

Sootji says – Everyone was overjoyed. All the elders handed over their responsibilities to their sons, and got ready to leave. Divine transport had arrived. They all began to glow with the radiance of the sun. All hearts were light and joyful. Harishchandra performed Rajabhishekham (coronation) of Rohit. There was no unhappy person in the whole of Ayodhaya. Then all those who were to accompany the king took their places in the celestial cars, decorated with bells, which were hovering in the air. Witnessing this most amazing and beautiful sight, Shukracharya, Guru of the Daityas, and most learned of all the Shastras, composed a shloka –

Shukracharya said – " Aho Titiksha mahatmyamho daan phallam mahat Yada gato Harishchandra Mahendrasya salokatam".

"The dignity and magnitude of endurance, patience and fortitude

And the fruit of generosity

Is the most exalted

It merited for Raja Harishchandra

Entry into the kingdom of Indra."

Sootji says – Shounak! I have related to you, the entire story of Raja Harishchandra. If any sad person listens to this story, his sorrows will be turned into joy. Those who desire heaven, and those who desire a child, will have their wishes fulfilled. Also he who desires a chaste and pious wife, will have his wish fulfilled.

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CHAPTER 7 episodes 28-29

28-29 Illustrations to show how Bhagawati Jagaddamba got the names Durga, Shatakshi, and Shakambhari. Withdrawal of Shaktis – Mahagauri and Mahalakshmi.

Raja Janmejay asked – Mune! You have just narrated the most magnificent story of Rajrishi Harishchandra. You mentioned that the king meditated on Bhagawati Shatakshi (who has a hundred eyes). How did this name "Shatakshi" come to be attributed to Bhagawati Jagaddamba. My life will have additional meaning once I know this.

Vyasji says – Rajan! I will tell you how Bhagawati Jagaddamba manifested as Shatakshi. Listen. You are a devoted worshipper of Devi Bhagawati. There is no story about Her that you are not qualified to listen to. It happened in ancient times. There was a famous Daitya called Durgam. His appearance was most fearful. He was born into the clan of Hiranyaksh. His father was Raja Ruru. The chief strength of the Devas is the Veda (sacred scripture, revealed by Brahma, preserved by tradition, and arranged in the present form by Ved Vyas. They were originally three in number viz: Rg, Yajus and Sama. The fourth – Atharva Veda, was added afterwards).

If the Vedas disappear, the devas will cease to exist. There is no doubt about this. So this horrible Daitya thought – "First of all I must destroy the Vedas". He went with these intentions, to meditate and do tapasya on the mountain Himalaya. He fixed his attention on Brahmaji, and started his severe tapasya. He only lived on air. He did this for one thousand years. All the gods, danavas, and all living things, became distressed with the heat of his tapasya. Then the god with the four faces like lotuses, Shri Brahma, came before him, seated on a

swan; and eager to grant him a boon. At that time Durgam was in deep meditation and his eyes were closed. Brahmaji spoke to him in loud and clear tones – "May you always have good fortune. Whatever desire you have in your mind, ask me for it. I am the god of benefactors. Today I am pleased with your tapasya, and have come before you".

Rajan! Hearing this, Durgam stood up carefully and cautiously. He worshipped the creator Shri Brahma, and asked for his boon. – "Sureshwar! Kindly give me all the Vedas. All the Vedas should come to me. Also give me that power and strength, by which I can defeat all the gods. Shri Brahma, the origin of the Vedas, said – Tathasthu! (so may it be) – and went back to Satyalok. From that moment, all the Brahmins forgot the Vedas. It vanished from their minds. All the Vedic rites for bathing, evening prayers, homams, shraadhs, yagyas and chantings, got wiped out of existence. All the Brahmins were confused and did not know what to do.

The whole world was invaded with improper and harmful ideas and thoughts, which would grow unchecked into frightful negative forces. The Devas were starved of their nectar and other sacrificial offerings. Those who were untouched by age, began to grow old and infirm. Then the Daitya used his power and strength, and surrounded Amravati. The gods were no match for his newly acquired strength, and they left heaven and ran away. They hid in the mountains and valleys, and spent all their time in prayer and worship of Para Shakti Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Since no havans were performed to agni, even the rain stopped. Absence of rain caused severe drought. There was not a drop of water on earth. Wells, ponds, lakes and rivers, all dried up. These unfortunate conditions lasted for one hundred years. Animals, cattle and birds died. Every household witnessed deaths of their loved ones.

The Brahmins decided to beseech the embodiment of auspiciousness and compassion, Bhagawati Jagaddamba. They all went to the sacred Mount Himalaya. They fixed their attention, and meditated on Her Holy Lotus Feet; and sang Stutis. They renounced food and water, and meditated with single minded devotion. They sang - Parameshwari! Bhagawati Nirmala! Have mercy on us. Ambike! We have committed many transgressions. We are not worthy of your attention. O Devi Who abides within all beings. It is on impulses from You that this Daitya is doing all this. Without You what can he do. O Maheshwari! Why are You only witnessing. Whatever You desire You can accomplish. O Devi! Great calamities have befallen us. Please deliver us from distress. You who preside over millions of brahmands (universes). Maheshwari! Jagaddambe! Be pleased. We offer you our pranaams, our worship, our surrender. O You Who are constant and immovable; You who are the embodiment of attention; You Who are the quintessence of the Vedas. O Bhuvaneshi! Praise be to You again and again. After negating every thing by uttering "Neti! Neti!" what is left, is You. O Supreme Causal of all existence, O Devi Bhagawati! We have come to Your Lotus Feet for refuge and protection.

When the Brahmins praised Her in this way, Bhagawati Parvati, Who is also Bhuvaneshi and Maheshwari, granted a darshan of Her aspect, which is possessed of countless eyes. That divine form was more fuliginous (magnificent black) than Mount Kajjal. The eyes were like dark blue lotuses. The shoulders were proud, and the hips were wide and grand. She held in Her hands, a bow, a lotus, edible tubers and shoots. She also held all varieties of fruits, vegetables and grains which satisfy hunger and thirst, and conquer old age. This nourishing form of the Devi was most satisfying and pleasing. The brilliance of a thousand suns radiated from Her, and She was the embodiment of love and compassion. After giving them this glorious darshan, the

compassionate Bhagawati, Who is constantly engaged in the preservation of the world, began to emit streams of pure water from Her countless eyes. This satisfied the thirst of the parched universe. The pouring of water caused continuous rain on all the three worlds for nine nights. Seeing the extreme difficulties being experienced by the three worlds, tears poured out of the eyes of the Devi, in the form of sacred rain. All living things revived. The forests were green again. The rivers and oceans swelled with the water. All the gods came out of hiding. The Brahmins and the devas, together, praised and thanked the Devi.

O Devi! Embodiment of Brahma! You can only be experienced through complete knowledge of the Vedas (Nirmal Vidya). Obeisance to You, again and again. O Devi Who manifests as the Universe! O Devi! Who in Her generosity, manifests as Kalpavriksh (a tree which yields everything desired) and other nourishing and beneficial resources, a thousand pranaams to You. O Devi! Whose only desire is to give contentment and satisfaction to Her creation, O Bhuvaneshwari! We worship You. O Devi! To remove our difficulties and to give us relief, You have assumed the most incomparable form with a thousand eyes. Please keep this divine form, and may this aspect of Yours be known as Shatakshi! Due to extreme hunger, our worship and prayers have not been worthy to be offered at Your Lotus Feet. O Ambike! O Maheshani! Please do us the great kindness of retrieving the Vedas from the horrible Daitya Durgam.

Vyasji says – Hearing these pleas of the devas and Brahmins, Bhagawati Shiva gave them, with Her own hands, a great variety of delicious and nourishing fruits and vegetables. She also gave them different kinds of grains. For the animals and birds there were tender shoots, roots and tubers. Rajan! From that day, Devi Bhagawati was known by one more name – Shakambhari.

When Durgam heard from his spies that there was great activity in the three worlds, he understood the situation. He got together a huge army, and prepared for war. He surrounded the Devas, and went and stood before Devi Bhagawati. The Devas and Brahmins were overcome with fear and cried – Protect us! Protect us! Devi Shiva surrounded them with a protective chakra consisting of brilliant light, and Herself stepped out of it to face the Daitya. A terrible war began. Showers of arrows hid the sun. Sparks flew when arrows collided in mid-air. Deafening sounds came from taut bowstrings.

After that, from the divine form of the Devi, many formidable and terrible Shaktis emerged – Kalika, Tarini, Bala, Tripura, Bhairavi, Rema, Bagala, Matangi, Tripurasundari, Kamakshi, Devi Tulja, Jambhini, Mohini, Chhinamasta, Guhyakali and Dashsahastra-bahuka. In all thirty-two Shaktis and then sixty-four more; and countless others. All the Devas held weapons in their hands. The battlefield resounded with drums and blowing of conches. These Shaktis destroyed a large part of the daitya army. Then their chief, Durgam, came to the forefront and began to fight with the Devis. Rivers of blood flowed. In ten days the entire army was destroyed. The eleventh day was dreadful and fearsome. Durgam made elaborate preparations – he wore red clothes, red garland, and smeared his body with red sandal paste. Then he mounted his chariot. In a short time he defeated all the shaktis. Then he brought his chariot alongside the Devi's chariot. A terrible battle ensued between Bhagawati Jagaddamba and Durgam Daitya. It continued, non-stop, until mid-day. Then the Devi directed fifteen arrows at Durgam. Four horses were struck down with four of the arrows. One arrow killed the charioteer. Two arrows pierced the demon's eyes, and two arrows cut off both his arms. One arrow cut down his flag. Five arrows entered his chest. The daitya fell down dead before Bhagawati Parameshwari. The luster from his body flew towards the Devi and got absorbed into Her Form. Upon the death of this strong and

powerful Daitya, the blaze and turbulence being experienced in the three worlds became tranquil and peaceful again. All the gods, with Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar in the front, began to praise the Devi in sweet, loving tones.

The Devas said - O Primal Cause of the rotating universe, Bhagawati Parameshwari! Shakhambhari! Shatlochane! Namaskars to You, again and again. You who are praised and extolled in the Upanishads; You who have slain the Daitya Durgam; You who reside in the Pancha-koshas (five receptacles within the body); to You, O Kalyanswaroopini (embodiment of auspiciousness), Bhagawati Maheshwari, our obeisance. The One who is meditated upon with peaceful attention by the munis, and whose form is verily Pranava (or life's breath), we worship that Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. The One who has given birth to crores of brahmands; the One who is absolute Divinity; and the One who created Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh; we place our heads at the Lotus Feet of that Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. Mother Shatakshi is filled with love and compassion, and there is no king or emperor who can weep so many tears on seeing their subjects in distress.

Vyasji says – Rajan! When Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar, and other gods worshipped in this way, Bhagawati Jagaddamba was pleased. The Goddess whose tones are sweet and melodious like a cuckoo, took away the Vedas from the Daitya and gave them to the gods. Then She spoke to the Brahmins – "The Vedas, in whose absence all these difficulties befell you, have emanated from My Body. You should protect and preserve them in every possible way. It is imperative that you should always be engaged in My pujas, because you are My devotees. For your prosperity and auspiciousness there is no greater advice or counsel. You must continuously venerate and worship this Nirmal Vidya. It will please Me, and I will protect you and remove all your difficulties. The Daitya Durgam has been vanquished by Me. Therefore one of My names

is Durga. I am also called Shatakshi. Those who worship these names, they will gain mastery over maya and overcome it, and attain a place at My Lotus Feet.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Sat-Chit-Anand Roopini (Sat is absolute truth; Chit is the consciousness, Anand is the bliss. These are the three components of the ultimate. They are therefore Her Forms) Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba withdrew Herself from their sight. Rajan! I have just narrated to you the most supreme and consummate revelation. By its influence the most auspicious blessings are endowed on those pious beings who continuously engage in worship and meditation. And finally they attain the Param Dham (Lotus Feet) of the Devi.

Vyasji says – Rajan! I have told you some episodes in the lives of Suryavanshi and Chandravanshi kings. By the grace of Bhagawati Parashakti, those kings gained great glory, honour and dignity. It should be understood that when the Devi is prasanna (pleased), nothing is impossible to be obtained. Because, whatever has dignity, majesty, splendor, power and energy – all that substance should be recognized as a manifestation of the ingredients or cells of the luster and effulgence of Devi Bhagawati. These, and many other noble kings, have, by their worship of Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba; put a hatchet to the roots of the tree of worldly bondage. Therefore, in every possible way, strive to please the Devi by your worship and your righteous life. Just like the farmer who discards the husk once he gets the grain, so also we should discard all attachments and concerns. Rajan! Devi is the Para Shakti (the Supreme Self beyond the range of perception or comprehension). Her Lotus Feet are the most precious and priceless Divine Gems. By the churning of the Vedas, symbolic of the ocean of milk, I obtained them, and it has given purpose and completeness to my existence. When none of the gods would agree to sit on

the Pancha-Brahma-Manch, this Maha Devi accepted to take that seat. (It happened once that Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Ishvar – these four deities took the form of a pedestal. On top of this a dais was erected. Sadashiva stood as a canopy over the throne. This is the Pancha Brahma Manch). She who is supremely beyond these five deities; is called as Avyakrit (secret; not open to view) in the Vedas. Within Her the whole creation exists like beads on a string. It is this unmanifest Shakti who is called Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. Without acquiring the knowledge of this form of Hers, one cannot be freed of worldly bondage.

In the Shwetashvatar (a branch of Krishna Yajurveda) this has been revealed by great and learned sages. By constant meditation, and reciting of her Holy Names, they got a darshan of that supreme divine Shakti, Bhagawati Jagaddamba, who very rarely appears in all Her splendor and attributes. Therefore to fulfill the purpose of our birth, we should spend all our life meditating and contemplating on Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. Whatever be the cause or the excuse – fear, shame, devotion, or love – it should guide us into the state of worship. The advice of the Vedas is very clear – completely detach yourself; bring your mind and heart into a peaceful state, and engage yourself in meditation. Whosoever puts attention on Bhagawati, when walking, sleeping or working; that person gets released from the worldly bondage. There is no doubt in this. Therefore Rajan! Make the proper preparations and get involved into worship of the Devi, Bhagawati Maheshwari. Bhagawati Parashakti also reigns supreme in the Viraatroop, Sutraroop (precept); Antaryami roop (pervading the internal parts of the universe); and Satchitanand Brahmaroop. Once the conscience is clean, then worship can be started, step by step. She is neither pleased nor impressed by the ostentation or artifice of the world. All the business and endeavour to keep the attention fixed on Her Lotus Feet, is called worship. Rajan! All the stories of the kings of

the Surya and Chandra clans, bear testimony to this. Now I have completed this. What would you like to hear next.

Janmejay said – O Great Muni! In the sixth episode of the third chapter, you have mentioned that Bhagawati Jagaddamba, Who resides in Manidweep, manifested Gauri, Lakshmi and Saraswati; and commanded them to live with Shankar, Vishnu and Brahma. At the same time, it is mentioned elsewhere that Gauri is the daughter of Himalaya and Daksh Prajapati; and Mahalakshmi of the Ocean of Milk. Then how did these goddesses, who were manifested out of Jagaddamba, come to be the daughters of others. Muniver! Please unravel this mystery.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Listen! I will tell you. You are the greatest devotee of Bhagawati Jagaddmaba. Therefore nothing should be hidden from you. Rajan! From the moment Bhagawati Jagaddamba presented the three devis to the gods, they began the business of creation. O King! It happened once, that a race of daityas called Hallahal, came into being. They were very strong and powerful, and in a short time they invaded Triloki. They had received a boon from Brahmaji, that made them invincible. They took their armies and surrounded Kailas and Vaikunth; and Shri Shankar and Shri Vishnu entered into battle with them. The war was fierce, and lasted a long time. Finally Bhagwan Shankar and Vishnu defeated them. Rajan! It was only by the power of Maha Shakti that they were able to kill the daityas, but they began to disdain and disregard the Shaktis. This caused Mahagauri and Mahalakshmi to laugh. The gods took this as an insult and reproached the Shaktis. In a Divine Play, that very instant the two Shaktis, Mahagauri and Mahalakshmi separated themselves from the great Ishwars, and vanished. As soon as they departed, the two gods, deprived of Shakti and luster, were cast down in bewilderment and confusion. They even lost their power of understanding and discretion.

Seeing this, Brahmaji became very concerned, and in panic he closed his eyes and meditated. He got the knowledge that this was the result of the abandonment by the Parashakti. Brahmaji immediately became cautious and vigilant. He took into his own hands, the responsibilities of Shankar and Vishnu. With complete surrender to His Shakti, He managed the business of the entire creation for some time. Then, for the benevolence of Vishnu and Shankar, he called his sons Manu and Sanak, and others. All of them came and bowed before Brahmaji. Brahma said – I am extremely busy with the work of creation. I cannot perform the difficult tapasya to please Parameshwari. The entire responsibility is on my head, because Bhagawati Shakti Parameshwari has withdrawn Herself from Shiva and Vishnu, and they have become devoid of energy. Therefore O Sons! Perform that quality of worship that will re-unite Shiva and Vishnu with their Shaktis. You will earn fame and glory in the three worlds. The clan in which these two Shaktis, Mahagauri and Mahalakshmi, deign to take their births, will not only attain fulfillment, but they will also make the earth sacred.

Vyasji says – Rajan! In absolute obedience to their father, the creator Brahmaji, all his sons including Daksh, went into the forests to praise, worship and meditate on the Devi, Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

CHAPTER 7 episode 30

30 – Siddhpeeth and the presiding Shaktis.

Vyasji says – Rajan! On receiving the command from the god with four faces, Shri Brahmaji, the munis went through the forests, and reached the Himalaya mountains. They calmed their thoughts and with full attention, chanted the Maya beej, which is the sacred mantra of Bhagawati Bhuvaneeshwari. Rajan! The sole object of their attention was Bhagawati Parama Shakti. After meditating for a very long time, the Devi Bhagawati was pleased, and gave them a sakshat darshan. She bore in Her Four Arms – Goad, Noose, and Abhay mudra (boon and promise of protection). Three eyes enhanced the beauty of Her Face, which was filled with benevolence and compassion. Her form was of Sat, Chit and Anand. On beholding the Creatrix of the entire universe, the munis of pure conscience, began to sing Her stutis. They sand --- Devi! You are of the form of the universe – Vishwaroopa. You are of the form of the Almighty – Vaishvanaroopa. You are Tejaroopa – effulgence and luster; and You are Sutraroopa – the formulator of precepts. Obeisance to You. We worship that Divine Form of Yours which encompasses the subtle form of the corporeal body; Who is verily wisdom and learning; Who is the hidden supreme soul; Who becomes perceivable and manifests in Sarva-roop – all existing forms. And we pay obeisance to that form which beautifies Sarva Lakshmi roop – wealth, prosperity, fortune, beauty, success, splendor, royal dignity and queen of the household.

In this humble and loving way, the munis headed by Daksh, sang the praises of the goddess, with their heads permanently bowed at Her Lotus Feet. Then the Devi, with voice as sweet as a koel, began to speak – O Fortunate Munis! Ask for a boon. Know this always – I am ever ready to grant boons. Rajendra! The

munis made their request. They said – Devi! In Your great mercy, be pleased to restore the Shaktis to the great gods Shankar and Vishnu. Then Daksh prayed – Devi! Ambe! Please deign to take Your avatar in our clan, so that the purpose of my existence is fulfilled. Bhagawati Parameshwari! Please tell us in Your Divine Voice, the prescribed chanting, meditation, pujas and the sacred places where You can be worshipped.

Devi said – Shiva and Vishnu insulted and disrespected My Shaktis, and that is why they are in their present pitiable and deplorable state. One must never commit this great transgression against My manifest forms. Alright. By the tiniest bit of My compassion, their Shaktis will be restored to them. My Shaktis, Gauri and Lakshmi, will take birth in the clans of yourself and Kshirsagar. By My instigation and intervention, the Shaktis will go back to them. The Mayabeej is My principal mantra which pleases Me. You should meditate upon My viraatroop; or the form that you see before you now; or My Satchitanandroop. And for performing worship to Me, the entire universe is available to you. It is for your benevolence that you should always be engaged in puja, worship and meditation upon Me.

Vyasji says – Rajan! After saying this the Devi Who resides in Manidweep, Bhagawati Jagaddamba, removed Herself from their sight. Daksh and all the munis went to Brahma, and respectfully told Him all that had happened. Rajan! In a short while Shiva and Vishnu revived and regained their lost glory. They received the Shakti to resume their business of preservation and annihilation of the creation.

Maharaj! After some time, a ray of light of Bhagawati Jagaddamba took incarnation in the house of Daksh. Music and songs of joy filled the air in all the three lokas. The gods showered petals from heaven. All saints and sages

of pure consciousness, felt the pure joy. The water of the rivers became holy and nirmal. Bhagwan Bhaskar (the Sun) spread golden light all around. The whole universe became auspicious by this manifestation of the most auspicious Bhagawati. As this incarnation was the manifestation of Her quality of righteousness and truth – Satya-ansh – this incarnation of Parabrahma-swaroopini Bhagawati Jagaddamba, was called as Sati. Later this Devi Sati became the wife of Shiva; because previously it was She who was given to Him as His Shakti. As per the workings of destiny, this Sati immolated Her body in the sacred fire of Daksh's yagya, which turned to ashes.

Janmejay asked – Mune! This story does not please the mind. When a person is surrounded by burning flames; the mere utterance of Her name saves him. Then how can that Supreme Shakti Sati, turn to ashes in the sacred fire. Of what unfavourable act was this the result - that such an unfortunate happening took place in the house of Daksh.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Hear the reason for Sati turning into ashes. The story is ancient. Once Muni Durvasha went to the Primal Goddess Bhagawati Jagaddamba, whose abode was Jambudweep (one of the seven divisions of the world according to the Puranas, which includes the whole of India). He got a sakshat darshan of the Devi. After that, he began to chant the Mayabeej mantra. Deveshwari was pleased, and gave him as a Prasad, the flower garland from Her neck. The filaments of these divine and sacred flowers were bursting with fragrant pollen, and the bees were swarming and buzzing around them. The Muni bowed and accepted the mala on his neck. Then he left, and taking the heavenly routes he reached the place governed by Daksh Prajapati. Daksh asked him – Prabho! Whose divine garland is that. It is completely out of reach of mortals. How did you come by it.

Hearing the words of Daksh, tears came into the eyes of Durvasa. His heart swelled with love. He replied - This most precious Prasad has been given to me by Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Then Sati's father Daksh, requested sage Durvasa – Please be kind and give me this mala. In the Triloki there is no object that cannot be given to a bhakta of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Thinking this, the Muni gave the flower garland to Daksh. Daksh bowed his head to accept the garland. Then he placed the mala on his conjugal bed and slept on it with a woman. As an effect of this most disrespectful and sinful behavior, the negativities of hatred and rancour entered the mind of Daksh against Shiva and Devi Sati. The end result or fruit was, that Sati took birth in Daksh's house, and in a demonstration of the chastity of a faithful wife, entered the yagya-agni and turned to ashes the body that she got from her father Daksh. Then that ray of the light of Bhagawati Jagaddamba manifested in the house of Himalaya.

Janmejay asked – Mune! What did Bhagwan Shiva do when His beloved Sati burned Herself to ashes.

Vyasji says – Rajan! It is beyond my capacity to fully describe what happened. The fire of the wrath of Bhagwan Shiva, began to annihilate the three worlds. There was a manifestation of Virbhadra, and together with Bhadrakali, the destruction of the three worlds seemed imminent. Then the Gods, led by Brahma went to Bhagwan Shiva for protection. Daksh had been killed, and the yagya was in shambles. Then the ocean of compassion, Bhagwan Shiva, gave protection to the gods. He also ordered a goat's head to be placed on the neck of Daksh, and brought him to life. Then the great lord, Maheshwara, became very sad and retired to the yagya-shala. He saw the sacred and luminous body of Sati, burning in the fire. He kept saying Hai! Hai! Then he picked up the sacred body, put it over his shoulders, and began walking, as if in a daze, from

country to country. Brahma and all the gods felt deep concern. Then Bhagwan Vishnu picked up his bow, and arrows to search for the body parts of Devi Sati, which kept falling from Shiva's shoulders. The arrows cut the parts into pieces; and wherever the pieces lay, an image of Shiva manifested. Shiva said to the Devas – Whoever worships Bhagawati Shiva in these places, with full attention and devotion, will get all their desires fulfilled. Because in every part of Sati resides Devi Jagaddamba. These places are extremely auspicious and efficacious for the uttering of the maya beeja mantra. Then Shri Shiva Himself, deeply grieved by this separation from Sati, spent his time in these holy places, in meditation.

Janmejay said - O Learned One! How many Siddha Peethas are there (holy place where devotion quickly brings about the desired end); where are they located; and what are their names. Please tell me this. Also, kindly tell me the names of the presiding Devi-forms, so that my existence becomes meaningful.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Hear this! I am going to tell you about the Devi Peethas, where by devotion and worship alone, one can get freedom from the bondage of sin.

In Varanasi, the Divine Face of Gauri fell. The presiding Devi is called Vishalakshi.

In the ancient forest Nainisharanya, the presiding Devi is Lingadharini.

In Prayag She is known as Lalita

In the Gandhamadan mountain, as Kamuki

In Manas, She is called Kumuda

In the South, Vishwakaama, and

In the North She is called Vishwakaam Prapoorini

In Gomanth She presides as Gomati

In Mahdarachal She presides as Kaamcharini

In Chaitrarath She is called as Madothkata

In Hastinapur She presides as Jayanti

In Kanyakubj She is called Gauri

In Malayachar She is called Rambha

In Ekambrapeeth She presides as Keertimathi

In Vishwapeeth She is Vishveshwari

In Pushkar She is called Puruhuta

In the sacred region of Kedar, She is Sanmargdayini

In Himvanpeeth She is Manda

In Gokarnpeeth the Devi is Bhadra Karnika

In Sthaneshwari She is Bhavani

In Bilvakpeeth She presides as Bilvapatrika

In Shreeshoul She is Madhavi

In Bhadreshwar the Devi is Bhadra

In Varahapeeth She is Jaya

In Kamalalay She is Kamala

In Rudrakoti the Devi is Rudrani

In Kaalanjar She is Kaali

In Shaalgram She is called as Mahadevi

In Shivaling She is Jalpriya

In Mahaling She is Kapila

In Makot the Devi is Mukuteshwari

In Mayapuri She is Kumari

In Santaanpeeth She is Lalitambika

In Gaya the Devi is Mangala

In Purushottampeeth She is Vimala

In Sahastraaksh She is Utpalakshi

In Hiranyaksh She is called Mahotpala

In Vishakha She is Amoghakshi

In Pundravardhanpeeth She is Paadla

In Suparshva the Devi is Narayani

In Chitrakoot She is Rudra Sundari

In Vipulkshetra She is Vipula

In Mallyachal She is Bhagawati Kalyani

On Mount Sahyadri She is Ekvira

In Harishchandrapeeth She is Chandrika

In Ramtirth the Devi is Ramana

In Yamunapeeth She is Mrigavati

In Kotiteerth She is Kotvi

In Madhav-van She is Sugandha

In Godavari the Devi is Trisandhya

In Gangadwar She is Ratipriya

In Shivakund the Devi is Shubhananda

In Devika-tat She is Nandini

In Dwarika She is Rukmini

In Vrindavan She resides as Radha

In Mathura She is Devaki

In Pataal the Devi resides as Parameshwari

In Chitrakoot She is Sita

In Vindhyachal Mountain She is Vindhyavasini

In Karvir-kshetra She is Devi Uma

In Vaidyanath Dham She is Aarogya

In Mahakaal Peeth She is Maheshwari

In Ushnateerth She is Abhaya

In Vindya Parbat She is Nitamba

In Mandavyapeeth She is famous as Devi Swaha

In Chhagaland She is Prachanda

In Amarkantak She is called Chandika

In Someshwarpeeth She resides as Vararoha

In Prabhas-kshetra She is Pushkarvati

In Saraswati Teerth She is Dev Mata

In the Peeth called That, she is Paravara

In Mahalay She is called as Mahabhaga

In Payyoshini She is Pingaleshwari

In Kritt-shouch Teerth She is Singhika

In Kartik-Kshetra She is Atishankari

In Vartak-teerth She resides as Utpala

At the sangam (confluence) of Subhadra and Shona, She resides as Lola

In the forest Siddha-van, She is Mata Lakshmi

In Bharat-ashram-teerth She is called Ananga

On Mount Jaalandhar She is Vishwamukhi

On Kishkinda Parbat She is Tara

In the Devdaaru-van She is called Pushti

In Kashmir Pradesh She presides as Medha

On Mount Himadri, She is Devi Bheema

In Vishveshwar-kshetra She is Thushti

In Kapaalmochan teerth She is Shuddhi

In Kayavarohan teerth She resides as Mata

In Shankho-dhar teerth She is Dharra

In Pindaarak teerth She resides as Dhritti

On the banks of the river Chandrabhaga – Kala

In Achhod-kshetra She resides as Shivdharini

On the bank of river Vaina, She is Amrita

In Vadri-van She is Urvasi

In North Kuru She is Oshadhi

In Kushdweep She resides as Kushodka

On Hemkoot parbat She is Manmatha

In Kumud-van She is Satyavadini

In Ashwatha teerth She is Vandaneeya

In Vaishravanalay Kshetra She is Nidhi

In Vedvadan Teerth She resides as Gayatri

In close proximity to Shiva, She is Parvati

In Devalok She presides as Indrani

In Brahmalok She is Saraswati

In the glimmer of the Sun, She is Prabha

In Matrika (mothers) She resides as Vaishnavi

In the Satis (virtuous and chaste) She is Arundhati

In the Apsaras led by Rema, She resides as Tilottama

And, in the consciousness and attention of all living things, She resides as Brahmakala.

Janmejay! These are the 108 Siddhi-peethas and the presiding aspects of the Devi. They are related to the sacred parts of the Divine Body of Devi Sati, which fell on this fortunate earth. The person who visits these peethas with devotion and worship, finds a place in the param-dham of Devi Bhagawati. Pilgrimages have to be undertaken with full protocol and understanding. On reaching, one should offer libation of water to the deceased ancestors, and offer food to the Brahmins in their honour. Then special pujas should be performed, with full attention and devotion to the Supreme Devi Bhagawati. One should ask forgiveness, (for all transgressions committed knowingly and unknowingly), again and again. Brahmins should be given gifts and food to their satisfaction. Rajan! Married ladies (suvasini), unmarried girls, and brahmacharis, should also be served food. Even the chandaals who live in the region, are considered aspects of the Devi. Therefore they also should be honoured. In all these siddh-peethas, it is prohibited to accept alms or charity of any kind. The mantras of the Shakti should be uttered. Mayabeej is

considered the crowning mantra. In all the peethas, this is the mantra to be used during Puja to the presiding Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Rajan! There should be no miserliness when arranging for the Puja. Samagri should be of the highest quality; and devotion should be boundless. Then only the ancestors get permission to live in Brahmalok for a period of one thousand kalpas. (one kalpa is 4320, 000, 000 mortal years). After that they merit a place in Nirmaldham. The person undertaking the pilgrimage, is also blessed with Nirmal Vidya and gets self realization. Even the gods bow their heads when such a person utters the mantras, because at that time he becomes ananya. Wherever these 108 names of siddhapeethas and the presiding form of the Devi is written, in that place there can be no attack by negative forces. In fact the auspiciousness increases like the ocean swells with the phases of the moon.

Rajan! Whatever you desired to know, about Bhagawati Parameshwari, I have told you. Now, what could you like to hear.

CHAPTER 7 episodes 31-32

31-32 – Devas are defeated by Tarkasura. They sing Stutis. Devi takes birth in the house of Himalaya.

Janmejay said – Mune! You mentioned once, that a brilliant light manifested on the crown of the Mount Himalaya. Please tell me the story.

Vyasji says – Rajan! You are blessed. You are auspicious and you have fulfilled the purpose of your life. Great souls have given you a sound spiritual foundation. That is why this innocent inquiry, and sincere bhakti have flowered within you. Listen! I will tell you this ancient story. After the sacred body of Devi Sati, burned in the yagya-agni, Bhagawan Shiva roamed the earth, and settled down in one place. He pulled in His Attenion, from all sides and directions, and meditated upon Bhagawati Jagaddamba. All living things in the three worlds got deprived of auspiciousness. The whole world, including islands and mountains, lost their shakti. The essence of joy, which used to flow from all hearts, dried up. There was sadness on all faces, and all were sinking into the ocean of despair. The devas and the planets lost their directions. All homes were afflicted with illness. In the absence of Bhagawati Sati, the gods and mortals became arbitrary and ungovernable. At the same point of time, there appeared a powerful asura called Tarak. The ruler of the three worlds, Brahmaji had given him a boon that he could only be killed by a son born of Shiv and His wife. This made Tarkasura very arrogant and aggressive – because now there was no question of Shiva's wife giving birth to a son. The gods became dejected and sad, and went into hiding. They thought – Shankarji has no wife, so it is impossible for this son to be born who will kill this asura. We are most unfortunate. They decided to go to Vaikunth and tell Bhagwan Vishnu their problem. Shri Hari found a solution. He said – Why are

all of you so worried. Bhagawati Shiva is always present, like a Kalpavriksh, to grant your desires. Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari is not sleeping in Manidweep! It is only because of some mistake on our part that She is showing indifference. Nothing else. We should consider this a lesson. It is exactly like a mother who scolds or pets a child; but is constantly full of mercy and tenderness towards her children. This is how we should know Devi Jagaddamba. Her reaction is in direct relation to our deeds, good or bad. At every step a child commits transgressions. Excepting a mother, who will tolerate. So all of you become calm and peaceful; and completely cleanse your mind of guile, pretence and insincerity. Go for refuge to the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Do not delay. She will solve your difficulties.

Rajan! After giving this advice, Bhagwan Vishnu accompanied the devas, and they soon reached Giriraj Himalay. All the gods began to sing the praises of the Devi. Those who knew the procedure and protocol of Amba-yagya, performed this yagya. All the devas embarked on Trithiyadi Vrat. Some also sat in deep meditation. Others recited the Devi Sookta (invocation). Some became ascetics. Some devas very carefully settled down, to utter the profound Maya beej mantra. Janmejay! Many years passed. Then that self revealing, luminous, splendrous flood of light, of God, manifested itself before them. The day was Friday, the ninth day of the bright fortnight (shukla paksh) of the month of Chaitra (first month of the year). All the four Vedas stood in the four directions and sang stutis. That jyoti had the radiance of a thousand suns, and the coolness of crores of moons. It glittered like a crore of lightnings. The colour was red. It had no beginning and no end. It was neither of male nor female form.

Rajan! As soon as this effulgence manifested, the Devas eyes got closed. Then, when they tried very hard and opened their eyes, they beheld a most

pleasing, divine form of the Devi. Her limbs were beautiful, and She had a young appearance, like someone just entering the stage of youth. Small bells and chains on Her waist, and bells on the anklets, tinkled and enhanced Her beauty. She wore divine golden ornaments like armlets, bangles and necklaces. A necklace of priceless gems adorned Her neck. Her hair was jet black – blacker than a bumble bee, and fell in heavy tresses like the new leaves of the Ketki plant (kewda). Her waist and hips were of elegant proportion. She had pressed between Her teeth, tiny rolls of betel leaves and camphor. Large golden rings hung from Her ears, and tinkled. Spread on Her forehead were the black crescents of Her eyebrows, like an eight-day-old moon. Her eyes were like red lotuses. Her nose was high and straight. Nectar dripped from Her lips. Her sparkling white teeth were like half-opened jasmine buds. She wore a necklace of pure pearls. On Her head rested a jewel-encrusted crown, bearing the mark of the moon. Entwined in Her hair, were braids of mallika and malathi flowers, giving out sweet fragrance. Bindi of kesar adorned Her forehead. Her three eyes glistened with a beautiful luster. In Her hands She held Noose, Goad, Boons and Promise of protection to devotees (Abhay Daan Mudra). She wore red garments. Her skin had the gloss of newly bloomed pomegranate flowers. She was decorated with all ingredients of shringar. All the gods bowed in obeisance. She was no ordinary, normal woman. She was the all-powerful, wish-fulfilling, universally pleasing, Mother of all creation - Mata Jagaddamba. Her face was wreathed in smiles. This wonderful aspect of the Goddess, possessed of form, gave darshan to the assembled gods. They prostrated in worship. Their throats were blocked with tears of joy. They could not utter a word. They somehow collected their attention, bowed from the shoulders, and began to sing stutis. Tears of joy rolled out of their eyes.

The gods said – Salutations to the Devi. Salutations to Maha Devi Shiva. Pranaams to Prakriti and Bhadra. With all respect and protocols we bow

before the Devi. We take refuge at the Lotus Feet of that Devi Durga, Who is of the tint of fire and flame; Who enlightens with Nirmal Vidya; Who is splendid and illuminated; the One who can be worshipped as the result of previous good deeds; and Who delivers us from the ocean of worldly attachments. We worship that Devi Who is of the form of life; and Who has created the faculty of voice and speech, which all living things manifest in multifarious ways. One aspect of the goddess is Kamdhenu, the wish-fulfilling divine cow. We worship Vag-roopini Bhagawati, the embodiment of speech, Who is pleased with our stutis and has appeared before us. We offer pranaams to the destroyer of Kalka; to Vishnushakti Who is praised by the Vedas; to Skandamata (Shiv-Shakti) to Saraswati (Brahma Shakti); to Devmata Aditi; to Daksh-kanya Sati; and to the destroyer of sins Paapnashini, Kalyaankaarini Bhagawati. We know the goddess Mahalakshmi, because it is solely on Her that we put our attention during meditation. May She continuously flow into our attention. We offer pranaams to the Devi, Who assumes the Virataroop. We worship the Devi who resides within all in the subtle form. Obeisance to Her, Who assumes the form of Brahma. We bow our heads to that Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari Whose non-knowledge causes us to mistake the unreal for the real, and once we know Her, our ignorance and delusions are destroyed. We worship that Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari Who signifies the status of the supreme soul; Who is all intelligent and almighty; Who is joy – perfect and intact; and Who is the essence of the Vedas. We worship that Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari Who is beyond the panchakoshas (five sheaths of the body); Who is the witness of the three moods; Who gives status and dignity to the word “twam”; and Who embodies the universal soul. Our namaskaar to pranavroopa “life-force” Devi. Namaskar to the Devi Who makes the mantras effective. O compassionate Devi. Obeisance to You, again and again.

This form of worship and praise filled the Devi with joy. That Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, Who resides in Manidweep, spoke in a clear, sweet voice, like that of a koel.

Shree Devi said – All of you Devas have gathered here. Tell Me what is the reason. I am the Kalpataru waiting to fulfill all the desires of My bhaktas. When I am in residence why should the Devas worry about anything. I deliver My bhaktas from the ordeals and turmoils of this worldly ocean. O Most Fortunate Devas! You should accept this as the absolute truth.

Melting with love, Bhagawati Jagaddamba made this promise. The gods were filled with joy at hearing this most divine voice. Fearlessly they began to tell the cause of their fear.

The Devas said – Parameshwari! There is nothing in the three worlds that is hidden from You. Because You are omniscient and Vishwasakshini (silent witness of the action of the Universe). Shivo! The terrible daitya Tarak is causing us great distress day and night. Shri Brahma has granted him the boon, that only the son of Shiva and His wife can kill him. But Devi, it is not hidden from You that Shiva is living in grief and sadness after the loss of Sati. We who have limited knowledge, what can we speak before You. Ambike! That is why we have come. May our bhakti flow continuously on to Your Holy Lotus Feet. Our second prayer is for protection.

Rajan! Hearing the prayer of the Devas, Bhagawati Parameshwari said – My Shakti Who will be known as “Gauri”, will manifest in the house of Himalaya. You must work it out that there is an alliance between Shiva and Gauri. Place all your devotion at Her Lotus Feet. Also it is imperative that Himalaya

worships Me with full attention. Then only he will be worthy, for Gauri to be born in his house.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Himalay was also present there, and he heard these sacred words of Devi Bhagawati. His throat was choked, and his eyes filled with tears of gratitude and joy. He said to the Devi –

"Jagaddambe! You are so merciful to this dull and senseless person like me. In your great compassion You are trying to make me great and worthy, otherwise I am just an inert and worthless mountain. O Great Goddess! Even after hundreds of births; thousands of yagyas and ashwamedhas; and after centuries of meditation and tapasya, I would still not consider myself worthy to be Your father. This is Your generosity and compassion. This will bring glory and blessings. In all the three worlds it will be known – Jagaddamba is the daughter of Himalaya. He is so fortunate and blessed. We should be grateful to him. She, within Whom the entire universe exists; has Herself taken birth in the house of Himalay. There is no one who can compare with him in sacredness and holiness. My ancestors also will be gratified, that in their lineage a son like me was born. O Devi! I do not know which place will be suitable and worthy for Her to live. The same way that You have shown compassion, love and kindness to me, in choosing me to be the father; please also describe Her, because She is beyond the Vedas or any other scriptures. O Parameshwari! To make me worthy; to fill me with the necessary knowledge and bhakti, is completely in Your Hands.

Vyasji says – Hearing these words, spoken in utmost humility by Himalaya, the Devi's face bloomed with happiness. She smiled a heavenly smile, radiant and sweet. She graciously accepted to reveal the secrets and mysteries hidden in the Vedas and Scriptures.

Shree Devi said – I will tell you. Listen very carefully, and with full attention. Just by hearing You can know My identity. Parvatraj Himalay! In the beginning there was only ME. There was nothing else. Absolutely nothing; in existence. I was the Supreme Soul in the form of Sat-chit-anand. That formless energy is undebatable; indescribable; unequalled; incomparable; and without name. From out of that, a Shakti manifested by itself. It was called as Maya. That Maya was neither chaste nor unchaste; truth nor untruth. In between the two, in the void between the two, there came into being a profound and exceptional essence. The glow of the fire, and the luster of the moon, are all parts of My Shakti. They should be accepted without any doubt or hesitation, as My companions or helpers. Life or death of all living things is the work of those shaktis.

At the time of Pralay (dissolution) there remained no duality or multiplicity. Each and everything merged into that Shakti. Then with the cooperation of that Shakti, I became the origin or cause (beej-roop). At that time the same Shakti became My support and My protective covering. That is why some of Her faults and shortcomings have rubbed off on Me. My causal form, assisted by consciousness, brought about the transformation of creation, and illusion, and for this reason, that form is said to be inseparable from the Divine source of the universe. Some people call that Shakti "tap" (heat), some call it "tam" (darkness) and some call it "jada" solidity. Those learned in the Shaiv-shastras have agreed among each other, that it is fitting to call this Shakti as knowledge, maya, principal, prakriti (material cause of the universe), Shakti or "aja" (unreality of the universe). Those who have made a thorough study of the Vedas say that "no, She is avidya". In this way She has been given manifold names in the Vedas. When it became apparent that this Shakti has insensibility and the capacity to destroy knowledge, the name "asati" also became associated with Her.

Chaitanya is not perceptible. If “visibility” nature, comes into it, it is called solid. Becaise Chaitanya is light itself, it does not get enlightened by some other source. If we say that light enlightens light – it cannot be so. It will become flawed with instability. The deed and the doer are diametrically opposite, and can never become one. Therefore, My form is like light – self illuminating. Parvat! The illuminator is used to manifest or make others apparent – just understand this. Therefore, the eternal permanence of My awareness or consciousness, is proved beyond doubt. I am unseen. If I am considered visible, then My form is adulterated by the wakeful, sleeping or unconscious state. It is impossible to experience Me in both, My visible and unseen states at the same time.

If I am experienced in My unseen state, the part of you which experiences or witnesses, is your central nervous system. That is why the wise and learned of the Vedas, call it eternal.

The second, being the receptacle of love, becomes the embodiment of joy. Before, I was nothingness. Now I am not. I was. Even then! Those with pure love in their hearts are My containers. All else is falsehood. I do not merge with them. This is very clear. Thereby, the indivisibility of My being is also proved. Knowledge can never be the attribute or characteristic of the Atma. Otherwise matter or solidity can permeate into it. Matter and insensibility exists in some part of knowledge. But this has never been seen, nor can it be seen. The same can be said for attention.

So this proves that Atma is devoid of (unsullied by) knowledge, happiness, truth, attachment and duality. This same Atma, when it is assisted by Maya (which has affinity to desire and action), and influenced by the maturity of the

fruits of previous deeds and time, assumes a body to accomplish the work of creation.

Himalaya! My Form, which I have described to you, is also the embodiment of the Supreme Spirit; is inaccessible to thought; is unmanifest; and is possessed of strength, power and force. In all the scriptures, this form has been described as the Primal Power; the cause of all causes; the consciousness bliss which has been transformed into the universal body; as the energy manifested in every particle; the Adi-bhoot – the primordial substance of the elements; and the embodiment of Sat-chit-anand. This Divine aspect has also been described as the Creatrix, having the universe as Her form; as the ocean of Divine Knowledge – Nirmal Vidya; as the form of the syllable Hrim; and as the seed desire of the Primordial Being. From this very same form of Mine, have evolved, step by step, the element ether from its subtle state of sound; the element air from its subtle state of touch; fire from its subtle state of luster or luminosity. After this, from its subtle state of fluidity came water; then from the subtle state of fragrance – came the earth element.

Ether had only one quality – sound.

Sound and touch were the qualities of Air

Sound, touch and luster, were the qualities of Fire

Sound, touch, luster and liquidity were the qualities of Water

And sound, touch, luster, liquidity and fragrance, belong to Earth.

From this emerged the Maha-tattwas, which is also called Ling or Prime Nature-- The corporeal body of the Paramatma. Within, lies the Seed of the

Universe. As previously mentioned this is the unmanifest causal body of the Parabrahma.

Then, through the Panchi-karana process, the Tanmatras or subtle elements, are converted into five gross elements. I will describe the process.

Divide each subtle element into two parts. Now set apart the first half of each of the five elements.

Divide the second half of each element into four equal parts. Mix the first half of each (which was set aside), with each of the fourth part. These five parts combine to form one gross element. Thus five gross elements came into being.

From the essences of the five elements, the five sense organs, called Jnanendriyas (ears, skin, tongue, eyes and nose – for sound-touch-taste-form-fragrance), came into existence. All these were inter-related to each other. After this manifested the consciousness, which had four different states.

When it gets involved into Sankalp-vikalp, i.e. resolutions and doubts, it is called the Mind.

When this conscience has the capacity to make sound decisions without doubts, it is called as Buddhi.

When it begins to investigate or contemplate, it is called Chitta (attention). When the state of "I"ness develops, it is called Ahamkar or Ego.

The Rajasic energy in the elements (the power by which activity or motion is produced), gave birth, step by step, to the Karmendriyas or organs of action.

They were all inter-related. After this, from their same Rajas energy, the five Pranas or vital breaths, were manifested – Pran or life breath in the Heart; Apan (flatus) in the Anus; Saman or balance, in the Nabhi; Udan (air which rises upward to the throat) in the Vishuddhi; and Vyan (which pervades the whole) in the whole body.

Thus the five sense organs or Jnanendriyas (viz ears, skin, tongue, nose and eyes); the five Karmendriyas or organs of action (viz mouth, hands, feet, anus and organ of generation); the five vital breaths or Vasus (pran, apan, Saman, udan and vyan); plus the conscience and intelligence – have developed into seventeen subtle bodies. This is what is called Linga-shareer or corporeal body of the Paramatma. Thus the causal, subtle and gross are the cause of the separations between Ishwar (the formless) and the Gross (the living cosmos) of the Paramatma.

Rajan! That which was known as Prakriti, also had two forms – Maya (illusion) and Avidya (non-knowledge).

The nature in which pure consciousness is predominant, is Maya.

The nature in which impurity is predominant, is Avidya.

The one which protects those that come for refuge, is Maya. That which constantly abides with pure-consciousness – maya, is called Ishwar. This Ishwar is fully conversant with Parabrahma. He is omniscient (all knowing). He is the creator of all, and is compassionate and benevolent.

Parvatraj! The reflection, which fell on that part of nature that was predominantly impure, is called Life. Life experiences happiness and sorrow. So Ishwar and Life (Jeeva) are connected with the afore mentioned causal –

subtle and gross. This connection makes them also into three. Jeeva's connection with causal, is called Pragya (wisdom); connection to subtle is called Taijas (luminous, nourishing); connection to gross is Vishva (worldly or material). In the same way, Ishwar is all called "Ish" – God; Sutra (having the nature of a string or thread, called Hiranyagarbha); and Viraatpadh (State of Viraat). The Jeeva (life) is individual form; and Ishwar is the Universal Collective form. It is this Universal Sarveshwar, who, in His compassion and benevolence, creates this manifest world with the support of the elements. Rajan! That Ishwar becomes empowered with My Shakti and performs this continuous work of creation.

CHAPTER 7 episodes 33-34

33-34 - Devi shows Her Virata-roop and again Her Sowmya-roop (mild, gentle). Instruction and counsel to Himalaya.

Devi said – Himalay! It is My Mayashakti that has created this entire universe. If you become spiritually subtle, you will perceive that Maya is in no way different from Me. For the sake of function and transaction, it got the name of Vidya (knowledge) and Maya. In essence there is no diversity. There is only one tattwa, and that is Me; and after the creation I get absorbed back into my original Tattwa form. Together with Maya and their deeds committed with knowledge and understanding, I put the living beings in front, and then only make my entry. If I do not do it this way, the cycle of births and deaths will not continue. According to the information divulged by Maya, there is extension in My work. For example – One Akash can become clear sky or cloudy sky. In the same way, I am one, but can have many designations. And, like the sun, which is most important and also cruel – it shines continuously on all alike – but it remains blameless and guiltless; so also I am never tainted with blemish, defect or blame. Actually, the division between the soul and the Ishwar has been contrived by Maya. Similar to clear sky and cloudy sky; the difference between Jeevatma (soul) and Paramatma (supreme soul) should be considered as contrived or engineered. Just as many life forms have come into existence by the influence of Maya; so also Brahma and other ruling gods, who are under the subjection of Maya, become diverse. Avidya gives rise to desires connected with body and senses; and Avidya is the causal of the diverse life forms.

Himalay! The one which causes diversity in the desires for qualities, is Maya. Dharanidhar! (one who supports and sustains). This entire creation, well mixed and woven, exists within Me. Because I am Ishwar. I am also Vishnu and Brahma. I am Rudra, Gauri, Saraswati and Lakshmi. I am Surya, Chandrama, and the planets. Animals, birds, chandaals, robbers, hunters; doers of cruel acts; doers of virtuous acts; distinguished persons; women; men; and the neuter gender – I am all of these. There is no doubt in this. Any object or substance, that can be seen or heard; whether inside or outside; is pervaded by Me. In this entire universe, there is nothing which is separate from Me. If anything is considered separate from Me, it is Impossible. As impossible as a child from a barren woman. In the same way that a rope, even if mistaken for a snake or a garland, remains a rope; so also My Divine Form only gets diversified. There should be no doubt in this. Nothing can exist or get diversified, if separated from Me. Therefore this entire creation exists due to Me. Otherwise it is nothing.

Himalaya said – Deveshi! You have described Your glorious and imposing Viraata form. Please be compassionate and benevolent, and show me that form. It is my pure desire to behold it.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Hearing this request of Himalaya, all the devas were full of joy. They supported his request and said – O Devi! We also desire to see. The Devi who fulfils the desires of Her devotees, Bhagawati Shiva, manifested Herself to all those present. The devas began to see that most magnificent form of Maha Devi – Her Viraat Roop!

They say – The Akaash was Her Head. The Sun and the Moon were Her Eyes. The Directions took the form of Her Ears. Sound of the Vedas and Vayu were the Supreme Soul. The Universe was the Heart. The Earth was the Loins.

Pataal was the Nabhi. Jyotish-chakra (heavenly bodies) formed the Chest. Maharlok (a fourth of the upper worlds) formed the Neck, and Janlok (one of the seven divisions of the universe) was the Face. Tapolok (one of the seven worlds which is just below Satya-lok, abode of Brahma) formed the Forehead. Indra and all the devas were the Fore-arms. Sound was the organ of Hearing. Learned men say that the Ashwini-kumars were the Nose of the Viraat-roopini Bhagawati. Fragrance was the organ of Smell. Flames formed the Face. Day and Night were the two Eyelids. Brahma was in the place of Eyebrows. Water was the Palate. Taste became the tongue. Yamraj formed the Jaw. The Teeth of Maheshwari were formed of Love. Maya was Her Laughter. The Creation was Her Glance (Kataksh). Bashful modesty formed Her Upper Lip. The Lower Lip of Viraat Maheshwari, was Attraction. The path of Unrighteousness is called the Back. The Creator of the Universe, Prajapati Brahma was the Ling (Prime Nature) of the Viraat-roop. The Ocean was the Stomach. The Mountains were the Bones. The Nadis of Maheshwari were the Rivers. Trees formed the Downy Hairs on the Body. Her Age was the aggregate of Youth and Old Age. Dense Black Clouds formed Her Hair. Morning and Night, Twilight and Dusk, were Her Raiments. Rajan! At that time the Mind of Bhagawati Jagaddamba was the Moon. The Discretion was Hari; and Rudra formed Her Consciousness. All animals of the category of Horses, formed the Loins of Maheshwari. All the great Lokas, from Atal to Pataal, formed the region from Waist downwards.

The most fortunate Devas got a darshan of this most magnificent Viraat-roop of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Thousands of rays of light were blazing from all sides of Her Body. She was continuously licking Her Lips. Her Teeth made grinding sounds, and Her Eyes rained fire. She held in Her Hands, all forms of weapons. It was a Powerful and Almighty Form with thousand Heads, thousand Eyes and thousand Feet. The radiance was as blinding as the flashes

of one crore lightnings and suns. It was an extremely awesome sight. It was ruthless and ferocious in appearance. The splendor and dignity filled the hearts with awe, and the gods began to exclaim. Their hearts beat faster, and many fainted. They had no recollection that this was in fact Bhagawati Jagaddamba. The Vedas, who were sitting on all sides of this Supreme, All-Pervading Form, gave consciousness and sensibility to the gods who had fainted. When they regained consciousness, the gods picked up courage and remembered the grand Stutis. With tears in their eyes, and love and respect in their voices, they prepared to sing the praises of the Devi.

The Gods sang – Mother! We are your humble children. Forgive our transgressions, and protect us. Deveshi! We became afraid on seeing Your awesome form. We are dull and blunt. What stuti can we sing to adequately praise You. Your form is unaware of the magnitude of your strength, valour and prowess, so how can we comprehend you. O You Who rule over the creation; Who are decorated with Pranave; Who sustains all Vedic knowledge; and Who assumes the form of the seed mantra Hrimkar, we worship that Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, again and again. The One Who is the source of Fire; from Whom the Sun and the Moon have manifested; from Whom all medicines have taken form; we worship that Universal Form of Bhagawati. The One Who has given birth to life, breath, foodgrains, heat, cold, devotion, truth, chastity, sacred precepts; to that Bhagawati we bow in worship, again and again. The seven-headed life force; the seven fuels used in sacrifice; the seven havanas and seven lokas - the origin of which is Devi Bhagawati, our obeisance to You, again and again. From Whom is born the oceans, the mountains, the medicines, and all essences; to that Bhagawati our namaskaars. To the One Who has created Yagyas, Consecrations and Initiations; the sacrificial post; presents for Brahmins; Vedic hymns, rites and Sam-mantras; to that Universal Bhagawati, we offer our worship. Mata! From

the front and from the back; from both the sides; from above and below – from all directions, we offer You worship and pranaams. Deveshi! We pray, please withdraw this dazzling and awesome Form, and show us again, that benign, mild, gentle, and completely beautiful Form as before.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Bhagawati Jagaddamba is the ocean of compassion. Seeing the gods awestruck and almost paralysed in fear, She hid Her formidable Form, and instantly appeared in Her most pleasing and gentle Form. She held in Her Hands the noose, goad, boons and protection. Her Body was soft and delicate. Her eyes were filled with tenderness and compassion. Her lotus-like face had a beautiful smile. When the gods beheld this desirable and pleasing Form, all their fear vanished. With their minds at peace, and their total attention on Her Lotus Feet, they bowed deeply in obeisance.

Shree Devi said – Because I am Bhaktavatsala (lover of devout ones), I have shown this Form of Mine to you. Apart from this, nothing else can cause Me to show this Form. No amount of study of the Vedas; yoga; charity; tapasya or yagyas – nothing can help. Rajendra! Now listen to the counseling or Brahma Vidya.

It is Paramatma Who creates life forms in their various designations and denominations. Then the characteristics necessary for their particular function comes into them. Then they get the ability to decide whether they will act in a dharmic or adharmic way. In their different lifetimes they pass through various yonis or stratas of births, and experience happiness and sorrows. As he advances into more lives, his tendencies and inclinations are formed. As a result of his actions, he merits a birth in a particular yoni or strata. He is never released from the cycle of happiness and sorrow, birth and rebirth. Like a

watch, he has no time for stopping. His actions are in constant motion. The causal for this, is only Agyan (non-knowledge). Therefore a man should always try to destroy avidya. When he achieves this, he is successful. The ending of mortality, and the release from birth, is totally dependent on destruction of avidya. This is the highest knowledge – the Nirmal Vidya. Himalay! Actions which are performed in the state of avidya, cannot destroy avidya, because both are against Dharma. In fact it is futile to try and destroy avidya by actions; because nonsensical and meaningless actions creep in unawares; influenced by anger, hatred and malice. Actions never cease. So, it is advisable for a human being to put all his efforts and attention on acquiring Pure Knowledge – Nirmal Vidya.

Learned men say that by the performance of good actions, a man fulfills the purpose of his life. But since every human being aspires to unity with the Almighty, Nirmal Vidya is also absolutely necessary. Actions which are benevolent, support Pure Knowledge; but are not connected or related to Pure Knowledge. Because, action and knowledge work in opposition. Like action causes the knot of illusion in the heart, whereas Pure Knowledge pierces that knot and unravels it. They cannot exist simultaneously, just like light and darkness cannot exist together in the same place.

O Intelligent One! All activities prescribed in the Vedas have to be performed within the boundaries of pure attention and clean heart. Therefore they should be done diligently and carefully. Those actions are forgiveness, endurance, patience, freedom from worldly desires and chitta shuddih – pure attention. These actions are worth doing. Nothing else remains to be done. After doing the above; in other words after attaining the state of sanyas; he must live with a Brahmin who is completely learned in the Vedas, and make a thorough study himself. He must be alert about himself at all times. He must

meditate on the meaning of Tattwamasi. Tattwamasi is the indication of the union of the Jeeva with the Brahma The human being, convinced of this union, loses all fear and merges into Me.

Himalay! First you get the knowledge of the meaning of matter. Then the meaning of the spoken word or expression. The word "Tatt" verily menas "I" or "Me". "Twam" is the living being. There is no doubt in this. Learned and wise men say that "Asi" is used to indicate the union of "Tatt" and "Twam. If the words get adulterated by mispronunciation or misinterpretation; it makes absolutely no difference to the power of the union. Therefore the union should become your aim and destiny. If it is done with pure attention, the union happens. Once you feel the bodh or experience on your central nervous system, the duality ends, and the union begins. This is the state of "Devdutt" (given by God, given to God). Therefore, without the material body, Brahma is called the eternal spirit or male. The body, which is made of the five elements, is the vessel for experiencing pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow. The fruits of all actions have to be experienced by the body, and therefore it has to suffer the ravages of ageing and sickness.

Parvatraj! By the influence of Maya, this creation which seems apparent and tangible, is actually an illusion; because this material body is another aspect of My Own Atma. That which is endowed with the five sense organs, and five organs of action, the five vital breaths; and mind and intelligence, is named as Sookshma – Subtle Body, by wise persons. This subtle body, devoid of the five elements, is considered to be the body of the Spirit. That which is composed of the five elements and experiences happiness and sorrow; is called the Gross Body. It is insensible, ignorant and undefinable. This causal body of the Atma, is called the third body. When the subtle, causal and gross bodies cease to exist then only Paramatma is left. Within all the three bodies the five sheaths

(panchakoshas) exist. When these are renounced, then one achieves the nebulous state or Brahmapucch. Brahmapucch is that form or state of Mine, which remains after "Neti, Neti" (not this, not this). This spirit neither takes birth nor dies. When you reach that state, it is as if it has not happened, it had never happened. Because it is unborn, eternal, ancient and everlasting. Even when the body is killed, this is never killed. Those who consider the atma the killer, or the killed; are both ignorant; because neither does it kill, nor can it be killed. This atma is minuter than the minutest (atom); and greater than the greatest. It stays in the intelligence/consciousness of living beings. It is beyond belief and doubt; and only by the grace of Parameshwar, one can experience its grandeur and dignity. Then all confusion and distress vanishes.

Himalay! Atma should be considered the rider in a chariot. The body is the chariot. Intelligence is the charioteer. The mind is the reins. The senses are the horses. The atma goes where the senses and mind takes him, and keeps wandering among the sense objects and experiencing them. He who is full of avidya, whose mind is out of control and who is impure; will never attain Nirmal-dham. He has to keep on taking births in this world. He who has acquired Nirmal Vidya; whose senses are tranquil; and who is pure and holy; he attains Nirmal Dham, and never again has to be born in this world. He whose intelligence is a charioteer with wisdom; whose mind holds the reins with careful attention; only that charioteer can steer the chariot safely, and bring the rider to My Lotus Feet.

Listen to all that I have said, carefully; and introspect yourself. Then, with single-pointed attention, sit on the aasan (prayer mat) and meditate. Only after the yoga should one start meditating on the meaning of the supreme mantra. This mantra is known as Devi-pranav. The mantra, and the meaning – both should be meditated upon.

In this mantra, the sound “Ha” is the gross body. “Ra” is the subtle body, and “Ee” is the causal body. “Hrim” is Me, Myself. Thus the wise one recognizes the three beejas (seeds) within the three bodies; and meditate on them – individually and in totality – both being My Forms. After this meditation only, should one put attention on My Complete Form as you see Me now. Then close your eyes and meditate on Bhagawati Jaggadeshwari. At that time there will be a balance between pran and apan (the life breaths). The eyes should be closed and in repose. There should be no thoughts whatsoever. No desires. You should not find faults with anyone, nor feel jealousy. Sit in a place where your attention will not be disturbed. Then starting with the sound of the universe “ha”, combine it with the lustrous and divine sound “ra”, and merge it into the embodiment of knowledge “ee”, and hold on to the total satchitanand producing divine mantra “Hrim”. And finally, meditate on that Supreme, Universal Form of Mine, which requires no speaker or words, and is devoid of duality.

Rajan! Through this kind of meditation the great and noble souls realize Me. This is ananya bhakti, where the worshipper and the worshipped become One. He identifies with all My Forms, because there is no Duality. This is God Realisation!

CHAPTER 7 episode 35

35 – Devi imparts knowledge to Himalaya. Description of different Yogas.

Himalaya said – Bhagawati Maheshwari! Please explain all those aspects of yoga, which give complete knowledge. So that I can practise, and become worthy of Your Tattwadarshan (the experience of the essence and principles of the most Supreme).

Shree Devi said – Giriraj! Yoga is neither in the Akaash, nor in the Earth, nor in Pataal. Those learned ones who are competent in Yoga, say that the union of the individual soul with the Universal Soul, is Yoga. O Sinless Himalaya! There are six obstacles to the attainment of Yoga. They are Lust (kaam), Anger (krodh), Greed (lobh), Attachment (moh), Conceit (muth) and Jealousy (Matsar). The one who is seeking Yoga can, by its various practices, defeat these enemies and succeed in attaining Yoga. Yoga has eight branches - Yam (restraint of passions); Niyam (discipline); Aasan (postures); Pranayam (restraining and regulating of breath); Pratyahaar (austerity – restraining the sense organs); Dhaarana (steadying the attention); Dhyan – (meditation); Samadhi – (thoughtless awareness – yoga) Seekers should practice this.

There are ten kinds of Yam – Ahimsa (non-violence); Satya (truth); Astheya (not stealing); Brahmacharya (observance of celibacy); Daya (compassion); Saralta (innocence); Kshama (forgiveness); Dhriti (satisfaction); Parimit (regulated and temperate eating habits); and Pavitrata (purity).

Parvatraj! It is written that there are ten Niyams (codes of conduct) given by Me -

Tap (devotion and penance); Santosh (contentment and satisfaction); Aastikbhav (belief in the existence of God; Daan (charity); Worship of the Gods; to be devoted to the principles and dogmas of scriptures and sacred books; to have a sense of shame and desist from evil deeds; Sadbuddhi (knowledge of the truth, wisdom; Prayers and Havan (burning away of negative tendencies).

Five kinds of Aasans (postures) have been told - Padmaasan; Swastikasan; Bhadrasan; Vajraasan and Viraasan.

Sit with both legs folded, and feet with soles upwards on each thigh. Put hands behind the back, and with the right hand hold the right toe, and with the left hand hold the left toe. This is called Padmaasan, and fills the yogi's heart with pleasure.

From kneeling position sit back in such a way that the soles of the feet are firmly placed between the knee and the thigh. Straighten the body. Yogis call this Swastikasan.

Sit on the feet with both heels pressed underneath, and hold both feet with the hands. This is the Bhadrasan. Yogis hold this asan in great respect.

Gradually place both feet on thighs, close to the groin. Anchor the hands into the folds of the knees. This is Vajrasan.

Sitting with one leg tucked into one groin and second leg tucked into second groin, and straightening the back, is Virasan.

Breathing in through Ida, left nostril, for the length of time it takes to say "Om" sixteen times, is called Poorak Pranayam.

Then retain this air in the Sushumna for sixty-four counts of “Om” is called Kumbhak Pranayam.

Then release this air, upto thirty two counts of “Om” through Pingala, right nostril. This is called Rechak Pranayam. Those who are proficient in the yoga shastras, call this Pranayam.

This breathing technique should be repeated many times, increasing the time span of Poorak, Kumbhak, and Richak. It can be repeated, at first twelve times; then sixteen; and then more often.

Pranayam is of two kinds – Sagarbh and Vigarbh. That which is accompanied by chanting and meditation, is called Sagarbh. And that pranayam which is without chanting and meditation, is called Vigarbh.

When the practice of pranayam causes perspiration, it is called Adham or inferior. That which causes trembling is medium; and that which causes the body to rise above the ground (levitation) is called the superior form. Till this state is achieved, one must keep practising.

The senses keep wandering, unrestrained, among worldly attractions. To detach them in a strong and disciplined way, is called Pratyahaar.

There are twelve points in the body, where the vital breath should be held – Big toes, heels, knees, groin, rectum, genitals, nabhi, heart, neck, throat, between eyebrows, and top of the head (sahasrara). This is called Dharana.

Getting your attention into single point, and meditating on Adi Shakti, is called Dhyan.

The final state of oneness or union of the Jeevatma (soul) with the Paramatma (the Supreme Soul), is called Samadhi. This is the Ashtang or eightfold yoga. Now I will explain the most superior Mantra Yoga.

Parvatraj! This great body of creation, made up of five elements, is called Vishva (Universe). When one gets freed from the influence of Sun, Moon and Agni (after realization the Ida, Pingala and Sushumna come into balance); then there is union of jeeva-brahma. In this body there are three-and-a-half crore nadis. Out of these, ten are main, and out of these ten, three are the most vital. In the spine reside the Sun, Moon, and Fiery light and brilliance. On the left side the faultless white Chandra nadi called Ida, exists. It is verily the nectar filled seed energy of God's desire. On the right side is the Sun channel called Pingala. It is the energy of action and creation. And in the middle is the lustrous Sushumna Nadi. Deep within lies the swayambhu ling (self existent Primordial Energy), resplendent like one crore suns, and containing the almighty powers of Desire/Existence; Awareness/Evolution; and Action/Creation. On top of it is the Mayabeej (the Sat-chit-anand endowing Divine Mantra) "HRIM". And, wrapped around, in the three and a half coils at the apex, is the glowing, golden Kundalini. Himalayraj! That Divine Kundalini is not separate from Me. One must meditate on the Golden Lotus, which is outside it. This has four petals with the letters Ver, Sher, Shh, and Ser. One must meditate on these sounds. This is the Mooladhar Chakra.

Above this lies the shatkon (six petalled) Lotus. Like the yellow flames of fire, it shines like a diamond. It has the letters Ber, Bher, Mer, Her, Rer and Ler . This is the Swadishthana Chakra. It is of the nature of "Swa" and should be considered the centre for creation (param ling).

Above this in Nabhidesh is the centre which blazes like thunder and lightning. Because it shines like a mani (gem) it is called the Manipur Chakra. It is also called Manipadma. It has ten petals, with the letters Der, Dher, Aner, Ther, Thher, Dh, Dhh, Ner, Per, Pher. This lotus is the abode of Shri Vishnu, and is the means of getting His darshan.

Above this, shining like the sun, is the Anahat Chakra. It has twelve petals, each bearing the letter K, Kh, G, Gh, Anga; Ch, Chh, J, Jhh, Gny, T, TTh. In the middle, blazing like ten thousand suns, is the Baan-ling (emblem of Shiva). From this chakra comes sound without percussion. Because of this Divine Sound the munis call it Anahat. This lotus has joy-giving qualities, and the Supreme Spirit resides here.

Above this is the sixteen petalled lotus called Vishuddhi. It has the sixteen sounds – A Aa E Ee O Oo Rho Rhoo; Lu Loo Aay Aii O Ow Ang Aha. It is the colour of smoke. It also has the divine Hamsa form (divine discretion) to help in achieving Nirmal Atma. It is also called Vishuddhakhya Chakra and Aakash Chakra.

Above this is the Agya Chakra. Paramatma presides over this lotus. The Will of God is transmitted from here. For this reason it is called Agya Chakra. It is extremely pleasing, and is decorated with the sound Hum and Ksham.

Above this is a chakra called Kailash, and above that is the Rohini Chakra.

O Sinless One! I have told you all about the chakras. Crowning them all, is the Sahasrara Chakra. Paramatma in zero-state abides here. For this reason it is also called Shoonya Chakra. It has one thousand petals. This is the ultimate path of Yoga.

Now what should be done – I will tell you. First of all, by means of pranayaama, come into balance. Then with full attention on Kundalini, invite Her to rise. Then in complete thoughtless awareness, invite Kundalini to make Her way through all the chakras, and enter the area of Sahasrara. Then meditate on the union of Parashakti with Parameshwar Shambhu. This will give you a taste of the Divine Nectar that starts flowing down from Sahasrara. This should also be offered to the deities who preside over the six chakras. The more you practice this meditation, the more efficacious your mantras will become (sarva mantra siddhi). There is no doubt in this. This releases a man from the perplexities of old age and death, and other travails of the world. He gets awakened within himself the attributes of Jagadjanani, which is Myself. There is no doubt in this. Revered One! I have told you the best and ultimate path to Yoga.

Now listen carefully. I will explain Chitta-dharana Yoga – the yoga of attention. My form cannot be influenced or divided by directions, time or regions. One who gets totally absorbed and engrossed with full attention on My Devi Form, gets his union with Divine very fast; and acquires the Pure Knowledge (Nirmal Vidya). Invariably, due to impurities of thoughts and desires; the attention wavers and one cannot achieve yoga. In such a situation the sadhaka (seeker) should keep trying this practice again and again.

Parvatraj! My Hands and Feet are most pleasing. Pure Attention should be put on each and every part of My Divine Body, accompanied by song of praise. Then Attention on my Whole Being. Meditate on My Entire Self.

Himalay! Until the mind and attention get fully immersed in My Being, one should keep repeating the desired mantra and perform havans and pujas It is only after yoga that a mantra becomes effective and grants Nirmal Vidya. It is

reciprocal. Without mantras being effective, there can be no yoga, and without yoga mantras have no meaning. So Mantra and Yoga should be done in balance and with pure, undisturbed attention. They they become the causal of Divine Union. In a house which is enveloped in darkness, one cannot see an earthen pot. But as soon as a lamp is lit the pot becomes visible. Similarly, an atma which is blinded by surrounding maya, can become visible in the light provided by mantras.

Parvatraj! I have told you comprehensively about all the systems of yoga. But you need the guidance of a wise guru. Just by reading crores of scriptures you cannot achieve anything. Therefore one must practice under the guidance and supervision of a guru.

CHAPTER 7 episode 36

36 Himalay receives knowledge from Devi. Description of Brahmaswaroop.

Shree Deviji began to speak – Parvatraj! In this way, after getting Yoga, you must meditate on the Brahmaswaroopa Devi form of Myself. Sit on an aasan, and with a bhakti which has no motives or strings attached, meditate on Brahmaswaroop. What is Brahmaswaroop. I am going to tell you. It is that which is the embodiment of life. It is that which stays in very close proximity. It is that which resides in the cave of the heart, and is called Guhachar. It is that which is supreme and yet attainable. All those who make efforts; all those who breathe; all living things that open and shut their eyes; each and everyone is contained within that Brahma. Truth and untruth, everything is that. It is beyond comprehension – cannot be understood by the mind. Know this. That which is light itself; which is extremely subtle; within Whom exists all the lokas and the life forms that inhabit those lokas; that is verily this imperishable and permanent Brahma. It is the life in all beings; the sound in all beings, and the mind in all beings. That is the supreme truth and ambrosial indestructible tattwa. O Mild and Gentle One! Try to penetrate this mystery because it is penetrable. Become totally engrossed in it.

O non-violent One! Pick up as a symbolic weapon or bow, the knowledge of Vedas given in the Upanishads. Then fix on it the arrow, sharpened by devotion. Then pull it with fully concentrated attention, and make the indestructible, eternal Brahma, your target. Pranav (Om) is the bow. Jeevatma (soul) is the arrow, and Brahma is the destination of the arrow. Without any attachment and distraction, completely alert, and with full realization, one should make this entry into Brahma, and remain enmeshed

and merged. That Brahma which encompasses and contains heaven, earth, the space between heaven and earth (antariksh); all living things, all senses, the form of mind (man buddhi) and intelligence and consciousness, is the One and Only Paramatma. Know this. Leave everything else. This is the only bridge that leads to the nectar-giving, ambrosial, Paramatma. Just like the wheels of a chariot have spokes radiating from the centre axle; so also all the nadis of the body remain collectively anchored in the Heart. It is within the heart that Parabrahma manifests His various aspects. He resides in the Present as Antaryami (pervading the internal parts of the Universe and the individual). Meditate on this Atma to the sound of Om. This takes you beyond the darkness of ignorance, across the ocean of illusion, to the place of Brahma. May you always be blessed with auspiciousness. He Who is omniscient, He Who is omnipotent; He is verily the all pervading, all encompassing Parabrahma.

He works on the Central Nervous System, and regulates the functions of the body. He makes into His abode, the hearts of all those who possess gross bodies. The steady and prudent; through their wisdom and knowledge, get to see that most joy giving, lustrous vision of the eternal Brahma. Once they see that Purushottam, Who is the causal of all actions; it cuts the knot of avidya and all doubts and false knowledge gets destroyed. Then he gets a glimpse of Nirmaldham, the residence of the Pure, Indivisible Brahma; radiating faultless brilliance. It is the giver of light to even the most bright and shining object in creation. Only can be known by the Self Realised. In that self illuminating Nirmaldham the light of the sun cannot be seen, nor the light of the moon, nor the flashes of lightning. What can one say of that source of light itself. It is the one which gives effulgence to the sun, and luminosity to the moon. It enlightens the whole creation. It is Brahma who is in front; it is Brahma who is at the back; it is Brahma who is on the left, and it is Brahma who is on the

right. It is Brahma who is spread out, above and below. This entire creation, is verily Brahma. The one who recognizes and experiences this, has succeeded in his realization. They enjoy eternal bliss and awareness. They have no sorrows and doubts. Parvatraj! Fear comes when there is the other. But when one gets the ananya state, where there is no other, then there is no fear. The actual truth is that I am never separated from such a soul; and such a realized soul is never separated from Me. Parvatraj! Believe this without a doubt – I am he; and he is Me. Wherever such a person resides, there you can have a darshan of Me. I neither abide in the Teerthas (holy places); nor do I abide in Kailash; nor do I abide in Vaikunth. I live in the Lotus of the hearts of My devotees. He who reveres and respects a realized soul receives rewards, one crore times more than when he performs puja to Me. He whose attention is fully merged and absorbed in Me, his entire clan gets purified. The one who has given him birth becomes auspicious; and the earth which supports him becomes holy and sanctified. O foremost among Mountains! As you desired, I have given you the full Brahmagyan, Nirmal Vidya. This knowledge should only be given to a virtuous, humble and modest eldest son who has deep devotion; and to other seekers who have these qualities. It is not to be given to others. The one who has parabhakti; the one who respects and reveres his guru, is only the one authorised to give this message, this Nirmal Vidya to others. The one through whom this Nirmal Vidya is imparted, he is verily Parameshwar. You cannot pay or make compensation for this knowledge. That is why a sishya always remains indebted to his guru. The one who causes this knowledge to grow within you, is more worthy of respect and veneration, than your mother and father; because the life that they give you is destructible, but spiritual life is eternal and indestructible. Therefore Parvatraj! One must never disrespect or rebel against the guru. The guru through whom Nirmalvidya was born within you, is the foremost person in your life. The guru can save you from the wrath of Shiva; but even Shiva

cannot save you from the wrath of the guru. That is why, O Parvatraj! One must use body, mind and obedience to please the guru. Otherwise, it amounts to ingratitude; and for one who is ungrateful, there is no salvation.

It happened a long time ago. Atharvan Muni entreated Indra to impart to him Brahmavidya. Indra said – "I will give you the vidya; but if you give it to anyone else, I will cut off your head!" The Muni gave his promise. Later, the Ashwini kumars requested the Muni for the Brahmavidya. When he told them that Indra would cut off his head, the kumars said they would rejoin the head. So the Muni gave them the vidya, and Indra cut off his head. The Ashwini kumars who were divine doctors, rejoined the head and brought the Muni back to life. This Nirmalvidya is very difficult to attain, and once you get it you should consider yourself very fortunate and blessed.

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CHAPTER 7 - episode 37

37 Discourse of the Devi – Different kinds of Bhakti. The importance and magnitude of acquiring Diving Knowledge.

Himalay said – Mother! Please tell me what kind of bhakti should be practiced by simple people occupied in self interests; so that we can easily obtain Nirmal vidya.

Devi said – Rajendra! There are three paths of Mine, by which you can get moksha. They are Karmayoga, Gyanayoga, and Bhaktiyoga. Out of the three, Bhaktiyoga is the easiest path, as it does not put strain on the body or mind. According to the temperament and qualities of a person, this is also divided into three kinds.

The one who goes into bhakti with the motive of causing pain to someone, or for revenge, or out of anger; that bhakti is called Tamasi.

Giriraj Himalaya! The one who does not wish pain or hurt to anyone; but has selfish motives; whose heart is never free from desires; who is always greedy and avaricious; and who worships Me only for the fruits he will get, because of his feeble understanding of Who I am; such a person's bhakti is Rajasi.

The one who surrenders all his actions; one whose only actions are directed at cleansing himself of sins; who follows the injunctions of the Vedas to keep oneself occupied in good deeds; and whose every movement is aimed at pleasing Me; His bhakti is Sattwic. This helps in attaining Me. I can never be attained by Tamasic and Rajasic bhakti.

Now I am going to tell you about the greatest form of bhakti. Listen carefully. You must constantly meditate on My qualities and sing My praises. I am a treasure house of the gems of auspiciousness and virtues. Keep your attention on My Lotus Feet like a constant stream of oil. Never entertain rational or irrational thoughts. There are four privileges attached to mukti. They are – Samipya or nearness or proximity to the Divine; Sayugya or ultimate union with Divine; Salokya or omnipresent company of the Divine; Sarshti or uninterrupted vision of the Divine. One must never allow even a germ of anticipation or desire for this to rise within the attention. Always recognize and understand that there is nothing greater or more important than service to Me. One should be so deeply engrossed in the worshipper/worshipped state; that even there is no knowledge of desire for moksha. With unbreakable, unconquerable bhakti and shraddha (faith and devotion) one should put attention on Me, and Me alone. There should be no consciousness of any separateness between you and Me. "All living things are My form" – this knowledge should be firmly established within. One must feel equal affection for self and others. Param Chaitanya embraces and envelops all alike – this fact should always be in your awareness. Have respect for everyone, with the full knowledge that I abide within all beings. Parvatraj Himalay! Even a chandaal is a form of Bhagawati! These are the sentiments you should have. Shed your differences, and have no animosity or hostility. Rajan! Visit My holy places (darshan); meet My Collective Bhaktas; Listen to My scriptures; and keep faith and reverence in My mantras. May My vibrations always bubble within you, and may your body experience peace and tranquility. May tears of love flow from your eyes, and may joy and happiness overwhelm your voice.

Parvatraj! I am the Parameshwari who created this universe. I am the Root Cause of all causals. My everlasting and causal activities are Divine. Observe all activities and ceremonies as directed by Me, without miserliness. Himalay!

People should eagerly look forward to My Festivals and celebrate them with enthusiasm and joy. These feelings should become innate. With raised voices they should sing and dance in My name. There should be no ego. Vanity and self conceit should be renounced. It should be understood that destiny will give only those fruits that we merit by our past actions. Do not worry about life and death.

Bhakti that is performed in the aforesaid ways is called Parabhakti. When no other deity, excepting Devi is worshipped – that is Parabhakti. When one does not even remember, or think of any other deity – that is Parabhakti. Himalay! When this kind of pure, unadulterated bhakti, awakens in the heart of a devotee; that very instant he becomes entitled to the dignity of becoming a cell in My Divine Body.

The highest point of bhakti is Gyan. Even the ultimate step of renunciation and asceticism, is Gyan. Because, when you get the Nirmal Vidya, it is the culmination of both bhakti and renunciation (detachment) Himalay! If at all any devotee of Mine does bhakti but does not attain gyan; then he goes to My Divine Manidweep. There, without getting entangled in the pleasures, he bides his time. Girivar! Ultimately he gets the gyan of My entire form. That is the moment of his moksha or release. Nirmal Vidya is the most unfailing means of obtaining moksha. All are My forms, and I exist in all – who ever understands this mystery, can never fall into confusion. He who uses this knowledge in all things; who constantly meditates on Brahma, gradually gets absorbed into Brahma. Like someone is wearing a gold necklace; but because of illusion and confusion it seems as if it is not there – it is lost. But later, when wisdom prevails, the illusion melts away and the necklace is visible again. Because, in reality it was there all the time. In the same way, Parvatraj! I am

in existence in all forms. But because of non-knowledge, I appear separate and diverse.

He who has achieved renunciation, but has not attained gyan; and dies in that state; he gets a place in Brahmalok. He stays there for a kalpa (a day of Brahma consisting of 4320,000 000 years). Then he takes birth in the house of a deeply religious and honourable man. Then with bhakti and meditation, he attains Nirmal Vidya. Rajan! It takes many births and sincere efforts to attain this Nirmal Vidya. So one should be constantly engrossed in acquiring Divine Knowledge. If there is any slackness or lack of dedication, it can cause irrepairable harm. Because to get a human birth again is very difficult. Even if he gets a human birth, it will not be in the house of a realized soul, or a man well-versed in the Vedas. He will never be endowed with noble qualities like control over senses; self restraint, tolerance, patience; fortitude. It will be almost impossible to have a competent guru, and to actualize his yoga. Even if he has the fitness and the ability to use his sense organs, he will not be able to maintain the purity of body and mind. Only when there is an accumulation of punyas of many births; a desire for moksha is born within a human being. After all this, if a man does not make efforts for acquiring gyan, then his birth is futile and worthless.

Therefore Rajan! It is imperative that one should get totally engaged in acquiring Nirmal Vidya through the practice of bhakti. On the path of knowledge, every step gives the fruit of an ashwamedha yagya. Like the ghee which is hidden in the milk; so also gyan lies hidden in the heart of every being. A person should use his mind as a churning stick and draw this knowledge out. The Vedas have always declared that once you acquire Nirmal Vidya, you get released from worldly bondage.

Himalay! I have told you the essence. What else do you desire to hear.

CHAPTER 7 episode 38

38 Devi tells about Her holy places of worship; austerities; festivals and Pujas.

Himalay said - Deveshi! Tell me about all those places on earth which are dear to You, which are holy, and which should be visited on pilgrimage. Please also tell us about disciplines to be observed; and festivals to be celebrated. So that the purpose of my birth may be fulfilled.

Shree Devi said – Whatever place on this earth is visible, all those places are Mine. Every moment is for discipline. And all times are right times for celebrating My Festival. Because I am all encompassing, and I exist in all forms. But still Parvatraj! Because I am Bhaktavatsala (I love My devotees), I will name a few places. Listen with full attention.

Kolhapur is the seat of My Divine Aspect of Lakshmi. She permanently resides there. In Matuhpur resides Bhagawati Renuka. Then there is Tuljapur and Saptashringi. The places named after the presiding Devi are Hindula; Jwalamukhi; Shakhambhri; Bhramri; Raktadantika; and Durga. The highest place of Bhagawati Vindhyachali is the Vindhya Mountain. Annapurna Sthan and Kanchipur Sthan are very important. The places of Devi Bhima and Vimala bear the names of the goddess. The great place of Shree Chandrala is in Karnataka. There is also a place called Kaushiki. The place of Neelamba Devi is on the summit of Neel Parvat. Jambunadeshwari resides in a place near Srinagar. Bhagawati Guyhakali has Her place in Nepal. The main place of Bhagawati Meenakshi is Chidambaram. Devi Sundari resides in Vedaranya. Bhagawati Parashakti is venerated in a place called Ekaamber. Bhagawati Mahalasa and Yogeeshwari reside in places named after them. Devi Neel

Saraswati has Her abode in China. Devi Bagala has Her sacred place in Vaidyanathdham. I contain all the Ishwaris within Me, and I am Bhuvaneshwari. My residence is called Manidweep Parvat. Shankar was wandering the earth with the body of Sati across His shoulders. Where the organ of generation fell, is the place called Kamroo. There resides Bhagawati Tripurasundari. This place which is adorned by Mahamaya, is the jewel among all the holy places. In the whole world there is no place greater than this. It is such a magnetic and vibrating place, that every month, the phenomena of the female cycle of nature takes place. During that time all the gods retire to the mountain top and stay there for that duration. The wise say that during this period the entire earth of that place takes on a feminine hue. Know this O Himalay! There is no place which is greater, or more sacred, than this Kamakhya Yoni Mandal.

Himalay! The place endowed with majesty, the Pushkar region, is the seat of Bhagawati Gayatri. Amarkantak is the place of Bhagawati Chandika. Bhagawati Pushkrekshini presides in the Prabhas region. Naimisharanya is very holy. There the greatly endowed Bhagawati Lalita reigns. Pushkar is the place of Devi Puruhoota, and Aashadhi is the place of Devi Rati. In the place called Dhandamunid resides the slayer of the demons Chand and Mund, Bhagawati Parameshwari. In Bharbhuti resides Devi Bhuti; and in Nakul resides Devi Nakuleshwari. In the place called Harishchandra resides Bhagawati Chandrika; and on Mount Shreeshail resides Bhagawati Shaankari. In Japyeshwar resides Devi Trishula, and in Amrakeshwar resides Devi Sookshma. Devi Shaankari reigns in Mahakaal (in Ujjain). In a place called Madhyam stays Devi Sharvani. In the holy land of Kedar, presides Devi Margdayini. Devi Bhairavi reigns in Bhairav, and Bhagawati Mangala reigns in Gaya. Devi Sthanupriya lives in Kurukshetra, and Devi Swayambhuvi lives in Nakul. Devi Ugra resides in Kankal. The place of Devi Vishvesha is Vimleshwar.

In a place called Atthaas presides Devi Mahananda. Devi Mahantaka lives on the Mahendra Parvat. On Bhima Parvat lives Bhagawati Bhimeshwari. Bhagawati Shaankari presides over Vastraapath. Devi Rudrani lives on the mountain Ardhakoti-Parvat. In the region of Avimukth lives Devi Vishaalakshi. Devi Mahabhaga resides in Mahalay. Devi Bhadrakarni lives in Gokarn. Devi Bhadrasya lives in Bhadrakarnak. In a place called Suvarnaksh lives Devi Utpalakshi. In Sthanu lives Devi Sthanvisha. Devi Kamala reigns in Kamalalay. In Chagalandak in the South, on the seashore, lives Devi Prachanda. In Kurandal lives Devi Trisandhya. In Maakot lives Devi Bhrikuteshwari. In Mandlesh lives Devi Shandki. On Kaalanjar parvat lives Goddess Kali. On Mount Shankukarn resides Bhagawati Dhwani. On Mount Sthoolkeshwar resides Devi Sthoola. Parameshwari Hrillekha resides in the lotus of the collective hearts of realized souls.

Parvatraj Himalay! All these holy places are dear to the Devi. First one must listen to the significance and greatness of all these places. Then perform pujas as prescribed in the shastras. Actually Nagraj! All these holy places exist in Kashi. Therefore through uninterrupted worship and devotion to the Devi, one strives to live in Kashi. Station yourself there and you get a darshan of all the sacred abodes of the Devi, and spend your days worshipping by mantras and pujas; and meditate on the most sacred and divine Lotus Feet. This grants the ultimate boon of release from worldly bondage.

Himalay! The person who wakes up early in the morning and utters these precious names of the Devi; all his sins are instantly turned to ashes. During prayers for the ancestors, uttering these holy names, gives them salvation and a place in heaven.

Himalay! You who observe all austerities and dharmas, I will explain disciplines (vrat) to you. This is for men and women alike, and should be observed carefully. The Tritiyavrat which is performed on the third day of each half of the lunar month, is called by three other names – Ananta tritiya vrat; Raskalyanivrat and Ardra-anandakari vrat. On Fridays and on Chaturdashi (fourteenth day of the lunar month), one must observe Devi Vrat. Pradosh (on the thirteenth half of a lunar month) is that vrat of the Devi, when in the dark night, Shiva places his beloved on an asan, and with all the gods, dances for Her entertainment. On that day one must observe austerities and perform puja to the Devi. This vrat and puja is particularly pleasing to the Devi, and should be done on every half of the lunar month. Himalay! Observing Mondays as My holy day, is also very pleasing to Me. One must fast and abstain from distractions the whole day. Then in the night one should perform Puja to Me, and then eat food. The Navratras of Chaitra and Ashwin are very dear to Me.

Rajan! There are many such regular and casual fasts. Those who are free from hatred and malice, and jealousy, and perform these disciplines, get as a boon, their self realization. I count such a person as My devotee and one who is dear to Me. Rajan! During these practices one should decorate a swing and celebrate. There are also other festivals like Shayyanotsav (swing), Jaagranotsav (keeping vigil), and Rathotsav (Chariot) and Damanotsav. It is necessary to celebrate these. There is a festival in Shraavan (fifth month of the Hindu year) which gives Me great pleasure. My devotees should celebrate this. They should serve food to my devotees, and also to maidens and brahmacharis. Generously they should perform puja with flowers and gifts to the unmarried daughters of Brahmins; and brahmacharis. Those who celebrate these festivals regularly are dear to Me. Himalay! I have told you, in

short, all these things which are dear to Me. Those who have no faith or interest in these things, should never be told about it.

CHAPTER 7 episode 39

39 Description of different kinds of Puja to the Devi

Himalay said – Deveshri! Maheshani! Karunanideh! Ambike! Please deign to tell us all the ways in which we can please You while performing your Puja.

Shree Devi says – Rajan! Parvatraj! I am going to tell you the precise and correct way to perform pujas to Me. Listen to Me with complete devotion and attention.

My Puja is of two kinds – outward, external; and inward, internal. The outward is again of two kinds – Vedic and Tantrik. Himalay! When pujas are performed with the mantras appropriate to the deity being worshipped, it is called Vaidici; and pujas where mystical formulas are used for the attainment of supernatural powers, it is called Tantriki puja. Thus anyone who performs or participates in a puja without proper knowledge, is in great danger of falling down, and getting lost.

First I will tell you about the Vaidici Puja. Himalay! You were fortunate to have a darshan of My most glorious and majestic form, so extensive, it had no boundaries; and which was endowed with all the great Shaktis. That is the Form you must worship by puja, praises, meditation and surrender. Parvatraj! This is the highest form of worship. With great care, with tranquil mind, and single pointed attention; and without any ego, hypocrisy or arrogance, you must go to the Lotus Feet of that Devi. Throughout the Puja, that image should be in your heart. The link between chanting and meditation should never be broken. With pure love and ananya bhakti, every action of puja and yagya should be performed, solely to please Me. If you can do this, by My grace you will get your Moksha. He who is totally surrendered to Me, and who

keeps Me constantly in his attention; he is My greatest bhakta. It is My promise that I will deliver him from this Bhavasagar.

Rajan! Karmayog is not the only way to attain Me. I can also be attained by Dhyanyog, Bhaktiyog and Gyanyog. Karm is not purposeless. Because by virtue of good deeds sins get destroyed, and dharmic disposition is established. Dharmic disposition gives birth to Bhakti. Bhakti is instrumental in acquiring the Pure Nirmal Vidya. Good deeds which are performed because of knowledge of the scriptures and codes of law delivered by tradition, is called Dharam. The Dharam which is contained in all the scriptures is only written instruction. I am of the complete form of knowledge, and omnipotent (having unlimited power to do everything). Because the Vedas manifested from Me, they are endowed with these same qualities. From the Vedas came Shruti, the revealed law, which is authentic. In the light generated by Shruti came Smriti (code of law delivered by tradition), which is known as Manusmriti, and others.

The authenticity of the Shrutis and Smritis have been substantiated by themselves. Therefore the seeker of moksha should take resort to the Vedas for acquiring Vidya. Just as no one in this world can question the decree of a king; so also which human being can question the Shrutis which have manifested from Me, the Master of all Knowledge. My commands should be carried out for this specific purpose. I created Brahman, Kshatriya and other categories. Shruti is My voice and language, and one must understand the purpose and significance of it. They are authoritative.

Himalay! Whenever Dharma declines and evil prevails I incarnate Myself. Rajan! That is why the devas and the daityas got divided. Those who do not act according to the Truth and the Divine laws which are congenial to Me; for them I have created different kinds of Hell. Those hells are so atrocious and

hideous, that just by hearing about them, the heart begins to tremble. Those who renounce the Dharmas contained in the Vedas, and adopt other dharmas; should be expelled by the kings and thrown out of their kingdom. The realized souls should neither speak to them, nor permit them to sit in the collective.

Whatever other scriptures exist in world are contradictory and inconsistent with all the Shrutis and Smritis; and for this reason they are called Tamasi. The names of those scriptures are Vaam; Kaapaal; Kaulak and Bhairvagam. These were fostered by Shiva to put one into illusion and delusion. It does contain some portions which are not against the Vedas. If learned men can identify those portions, there is no harm. To accept anything which is contrary in meaning to the Vedas, is unauthorized. Therefore it is desirable to only go to the Vedas for Pure Knowledge. This is the permanent and immortal Dharm. It is only through this that one can get enlightenment of Parabrahma. He who renounces all desires; who is compassionate to all living things; who is free from vanity and ego; whose attention is permanently anchored in Me; whose life is surrendered to Me; and who is the channel for spreading awareness about Me --- if that Sanyasi; Vanaprasthi (who has retired to the forest); Grihasti (householder); or Brahmachari (vow of celibacy) – worships My Viraat-roop; I will remove all his non-Knowledge with the brilliant light of Nirmal Vidya. There is no doubt in this. Himalay! Observing the principles and doctrines of the Vedas, constitutes My First Puja. I have just described it to you.

Now I will tell you the procedure and protocol of My second Puja. You may use an image; a Vedi (altar); a sphere of the Sun or the Moon; Water; a Diagram;; a Painted Portrait; or the Lotus of your heart. Place Me, the Parameshwari there and worship Me. You should meditate on My attributes and qualities thus - Devi is the ocean of compassion. She is fresh and

youthful. The tint of Her complexion is exquisite like the red skies during sunset. Her Divine Form is of ultimate beauty. All Her limbs are most pleasing to behold. Her decoration and ornamentation is flawless. Nothing is missing. She gets saddened by the sorrows of Her bhaktas. The Divine Face of Devi Jagaddamba is filled with smiles of happiness. Her crown bears the new moon, and is adorned with peacock feathers. She holds a noose and goad in two hands; and the other two are held in Abhay Daan Mudra. She is in the form of Joy. With the mind absorbed in this meditation, get the samagri and perform the puja. Till you get the permission for inner puja; you must perform this outward worship. As soon as you become entitled to perform inner worship, you can discontinue this puja. In a very short time this inner puja merges with the Nirmal Vidya. This unconditional vidya is My Supreme Form. You must always keep your attention on this Form of Mine. Beside this supreme form, everything else in this created world is untruth. That is why, to end this cycle of birth and death, one must meditate on Me. I am the witness; and the Supreme Spirit. After getting self realization one must keep Me constantly in the attention.

Himalay! After this, I am going to tell you about the outward forms of worship. Listen with careful attention.

CHAPTER 7 episode 40

40 Puja Protocols

Shree Devi said – Himalay! Wake up early in the morning, and meditate on the pure, thousand-petalled lotus on your brahmarandhra. The meditation should be like this :-

This lotus is pure and white like kapoor. My Most Supreme Guru is seated on this lotus throne. Her face is happy and shining. All kinds of ornaments adorn Her. After this, meditate on Devi Kundalini in this way -- When the Primordial Mother made Her first journey, that is, when She arrived at Brahmarandhra, then Her form was a bundle of radiant cool flames. Then when She reached Her abode Kundalini, She became golden, ambrosial, in the sacrum bone. When She rises in the innermost channel Sushumna, this same Supreme, Primordial Shakti, gives darshan as an ordinary, gentle lady. Her form is extremely pleasing. I worship at the Lotus Feet of that Devi. Rajan! After this, put your attentionon the pinnacle of the risen Kundalini, and meditate on My Sat-chit-anand Swaroopini (form). This should be the final step of your evening meditation. Then you may perform Havan. After the Homa, sit on an aasan and perform puja to Me. First purify your body. The first mayabeej "Ram" should be uttered. Then "Ha" for Mooladhar, "Rer" for Heart; "EE" for Hamsa (between the eyebrows, and "Heem" for the forehead. Then, one by one repeat all the nyasas. The sentiment should be, that "my whole body is an altar (Peeth) of the Divine. All the gods, including Dharm, are present in their seats. Then the meditation should be – by the virtue of my balanced breathing, the lotus of my heart is open. It is made of Five Great Spirits. Seated on this throne is Bhagawati Mahadevi.

Himalay! Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Ishwar and Sadashiva – these five gods are called Panchapreta or Five Great Spirits. They abide at My Lotus Feet. Meaning that four of them form the columns of My dais, and one is the Canopy. The five elements – Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether; and the five states, of wakefulness, sleep, slumber, auspiciousness or blessedness, and beyond (ateet), are controlled and regulated by them. My Almighty form is an unknown quantity. I am beyond all these states. It is a fact that Brahma and all the gods respond to the invitation and are present at My Pujas. They should be properly welcomed. Then you should perform a puja of the offerings. Then chant the holy names of Shree Devi, which is Myself; and make arrangements to give Argya – adorable, precious and valuable items, worthy to be presented to Me. First of all purify all the vessels which will be used, by pronouncing the mantra "Om Phat". All the quarters or directions should also be purified by pronouncing this mantra. Then one must prostrate before the Guru, and offer pranaams. After worshipping Me as your Supreme Guru, the Guru of all the Gurus; you must perform the Bahyapuja (outward puja) as instructed by Me.

Rajan! My pleasing, Divine Form, which has been enthroned in the Sadhaka's heart; should be invited (avahan) to be seated on the Singhasan. This should be accompanied by the Veda-mantras and total involvement of the attention. All the formalities of offering a seat, invitation, and begging permission to perform the puja; offering of Arghya; washing of Feet; offering water for rinsing the mouth; offering perfumed water for bath; and offering vestments (clothes) should be completed with deep reverence and respect. Two cloths (sarees) should be offered. Ornaments; sringar items; five great perfumes – kumkuma (kesar); Kasturi; Aguru; Chandan; kapoor; fragrant flowes and other worthy articles should be offered with bhakti and humility. Then the proper welcome and reception should be offered to all the deities who come

to attend the puja. Those who cannot perform puja daily, should fix Fridays as their regular puja day.

Now I will tell you the connection with the other devatas. First of all you should pay obeisance to Mool Devi. She is radiant and enlightens the three worlds. After you have worshipped all the attending devatas, you must perform puja to Me as Mool Devi (the principal deity). It is imperative that you try to please Me by offering flowers, chandan, fragrant incense, clothes (vastra), Naivedya, Tarpan (water for libation), Tambool (betel leaf and betel nut) and Dakshina. I get very pleased when you recite the Sahasranama (thousand names of the Devi) that you have composed. Rajan! The Kavach; the Aham Rudrobhihi Sookta; the Devyatharvasheersha and other great mantras should be chanted to please Me and awaken My Shaktis. Then everyone should fill their hearts with deep devotion and love; and very humbly pray to Me, the Jagaddamba; to graciously forgive all trespasses and transgressions. The devotion, dedication and love should be so great, that tears fill the eyes, voices get choked with feeling, and the hair on the body stands on end. Again and again, one should sing and dance to please Me. All the Vedas and Puranas are filled only with My praises and glory; because they have come out of My omniscience and My omnipotence. Therefore you should make use of the Vedas and Puranas to please Me. One should offer, daily to Me, one's everything, including body and soul. Perform homas, offer food to Brahmins and suhagan ladies (married). Feed also the small, small, innocent children. Then, in the same order as you welcomed the devatas, you should arrange their departure.

O Himalay! You who observe the highest discipline. My Puja gets completed with the Hrilekha mantra, the Hrim-kar, as this is the origin, the source, of all the mantras. This mantra is like a mirror. And My reflection keeps appearing

on it. This single mantra causes acceptance of all offerings, however unworthy. After this, the Supreme Guru, Who is also your Mother, and also your Goddess, should be worshipped with offerings and samagri befitting the Guru. Nothing remains at any time, unavailable or unattainable, to the bhakta who worships in this way, Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. After relinquishing his body, he goes straight to My place – Manidweepa – Nirmaldham. He gets the Form of the Devi, and the Devas completely bow down to him.

Rajan! Thus I have explained to you the procedures and protocols of Pujas to Mahadevi. Put it into your attention, and as per your means and privileges, get engrossed in My pujas. It will endow on you all kinds of blessings and auspiciousess. This knowledge, this shastra that I have given you, is the holy Devi Gita. You are not to tell it to those who are not My devotees; those who are enemies; and those who are cunning. If one gives out this secret, it is equal to the sin of disrobing your Mother to public gaze, So keep this secret carefully guarded from unworthy people. It can be given to the eldest son who is obedient, virtuous, trustworthy, and who is devoted to the Devi. During shradh, if this reading is done in the company of Brahmins; the forefathers get authorized to enter the Param Dham of the Devi.

Vyasji says – After saying all this, the Devi removed Herself from their sight. The Devas were profoundly grateful for this darshan.

Vyasji says – Rajan! In due course, Devi took birth in the house of Himalay, and was called Haimvati. This is the same Devi Who manifested as Gouri; and who was given to Shankar by Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. After this, Swami Kartikeya was born, and he vanquished Tarakasura. (Now the manifestation of Lakshmi will be described) Rajan! It happened a long time ago. The ocean was being churned. Many gems were obtained. The gods had begun to sing

stutis to Bhagawati Jagaddamba for the manifestation of Lakshmi. To fulfil their prayer, Bhagawati Jagaddamba Herself manifested as Shree Lakshmi. On the request of the Devas, Lakshmi was given to Bhagwan Vishnu.

Rajan! I have described to you the greatness and majesty of the Devi. This story of the manifestation of Gouri and Lakshmi, fulfils all desires. This should not be told to all and sundry, because it is a precious and valuable knowledge. O Sinless Rajan! Whatever you desired to know I have told you in a condensed form. This story itself is Pure, and purifies all who read or hear it.

Now, what else would you like to know.

End of Chapter 7

CHAPTER 8

CHAPTER 8 episode 1-2

1-2 In the beginning of creation Swayambhuv Manu sings stutis to the Devi. Story of Varaha-avatar.

Janmejay said – O Learned Brahmin! I have already heard the nectar filled stories from you about the kings of the Sun and Moon dynasties. I now desire to hear the pure and spotless stories of Bhagawati Jagaddamba -- in every manavantar (era or age), whichever places, and for whatever reasons, Pujas have been offered to the Devi; together with knowledge of the mantras and protocols used. Please tell me every single thing that you know. Please also describe to me the most awesome and magnificent Viraata-roop of the Devi.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Listen. I am going to tell you about that greatest puja, which not only blessed those who performed it; but also blesses those who listen to its narration. It is an ancient story. This same request was made by Naradji to Bhagwan Vishnu. That source; originator and Master of Yoga; Bhagwan Vishnu, gave him the knowledge, and I am recounting it to you.

Once long ago, in ancient times, Shri Narada, son of Brahmaji, was roaming on the earth; and he reached the ashram of Bhagwan Narayan. He placed a question before Yogatma Shri Narayan.

Naradji said – Deveshwar! God of Gods! You are the knower of all the Puranas. You are the sustainer of all the Gods. You support the Universe. Omniscient! In whom all the qualities are expanded. Bhagwan! Please give

me the knowledge of Adya Tattwa – the Primordial Principle. Out of whom did this world manifest. Who sustains and protects it. And who dissolves it. In what circumstances was the karmaphal created. What is the secret knowledge that can defeat spiritual ignorance and give freedom from the bonds of maya; and, what are the forms of chanting, meditation and pujas that will bring divine light into this dark and unenlightened world. Prabho! Be kind and benevolent; and give us this Nirmal Vidya which will help the world to cross the ocean of illusion, and continue their ascent.

Vyasji says – Rajan! Bhagwan Narayan is Yogeshwara, crowning glory of the Munis; and the eternal Purusha. On the request of Devrishi Narada, the Lord began to speak.

Bhagwan Narayan said – Devrishi Narada! Hear now about the utmost and sacred Primordial Tattwa. In the whole universe, there is only one Tattwa, and that is Bhagawati Jagaddamba. I have already mentioned this before. This is also the evidence of the gods, the rishis, the gandharvas, and other wise and learned men. It is She Who creates, nourishes and dissolves the universe. By virtue of being Trigunatmika, the entire responsibility rests on Her. I am now going to describe that aspect of the Devi, Who is worshipped by those who are knowledgeable (realized souls); Who removes all obstacles for those who invoke Her, and Who is also the giver of the invaluable gift of self realization and moksha (freedom from bondage).

Brahmaji's sons are known as Swayambhuv and other Manus. The wife of these illustrious and dignified Manus, was Shatroopa. They are known as the progenitors of the world. Once, long ago, the glorious Swayambhuv Manu went to his father, the most holy prajapati Brahmaji. Brahmaji said to him – Son. You should engage yourself in the worship of the most powerful

Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Only if She is pleased, you will succeed in your pure and chaste work of creating progeny (praja srishti). This most respected and glorious Swayambhuv obeyed his father and continuously engaged himself in the worship of Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, with the sole purpose of pleasing Her. The Devi is verily the creator of the gods; the Primordial Adi Shakti; the Maya and the cause of all causals. Swayambhuv with great caution and attention, began his singing of Stutis to the Goddess.

Manuji said – O Causal of the cause of the Universe; O You Who hold in Your Hands, Shankh Chakra and Gada (Conch, Discus and Mace); and You Who reign supreme in the Heart of Shri Hari. O Bhagawati Deveshwari! Obeisance to You, again and again. You Who are the embodiment of the Vedas, O Bhagawati Jagaddambike! From Whom all creation is renewed. O You Who are the Knower of the three Vedas! O Supreme object of worship of the Devas! Embodiment of Auspiciousness! Parabrahma Parameshwari – the great Lord and Mother of the Universe. Supreme Enjoyer of the creation. Divine Providence! Mahamaya – the supreme creator of illusion and confusion; worshipped by the highest; eternal companion of Shiva; beloved of Mahadev; Gopendrapriya (the supreme power of the Dark Blue God); the most ancient and eternal One. The Mahananda (ultimate bliss)! Destroyer of evil tendencies in Her devotees; Who is worshipped by the Gods! Namastasye! Namastasye! Namastasye, Namoh Namaha!. O Devi Narayani! Of supreme generosity. Giver of boons to the Trimurtis! O Sacred Spouse of Sadashiva! You are the bestower of fulfillment. Who gives loving care to those who come for shelter – Sharanagat Vatsala! O Goddess having three eyes! O Devi Gouri! Obeisance to You, again and again.

O Devi! On whose desire the whole creation was manifested; Who pervades the world; Who is the Param Chaitanya; Who is Alone – the unitary basis of

the plurality of the universe. Who has no beginning and no end. Who is the source of all radiance and light. On whose beckoning Brahma creates universes; Vishnu protects; and Rudra dissolves. That Devi, to Whom the god Brahma did stutis and prayed for protection from Madhu-Kaitabh. To that Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, I offer my thousand pranaams. O Devi! Verily You are Kirti (honor and fame); Smriti (recollection); Kanti (lustrous beauty); Kamala; Girija; Sati; Dakshayani; Vedgarbha; Buddhidatri; and countless other aspects O Mother! I beg You to accept my Stuti, Puja, Pranaam; Jap; Dhyan; Reflection; installing You in my heart; and listening to stories of Your greatness and majesty. Kindly be pleased with me. O Devi Who assumes the sweetest and most pleasing forms, it is by Your gracious benevolence that Brahma has become the treasure-house of the Vedas; Shri Hari has become the Swami of Lakshmi; Indra has become Lord of Triloki; Varun has become the God of the Waters; Kuber has become the Divine Treasurer; Yamraj the Ruler of the Dead; Nairith, King of the Demons; and Chandrama became an object of veneration. O Devi Jagaddambike! Obeisance to You, again and again!

Bhagwan Narayan says – Devrishi Narad! Brahmaputra Swayambhuv Manu worshipped the Devi in this way. She became pleased and spoke to Manu.

Shree Devi said – Rajendra! Brahmaputra! Whatever you desire, ask for that boon. I am extremely pleased with your stuti, bhakti, and worship.

Manu said – O most compassionate and benevolent Devi. If I have pleased You, please grant that the creation of humanity is accomplished without any obstacles or impediments.

Shree Devi said - Rajendra! By the favour of My boon and blessings, your responsibility of creating humanity will be fulfilled without any hindrance or impediments; and will continually grow. Whoever has bhakti, and worships Me with your stutis and puja; will obtain knowledge, progeny, fame and honour. There should be no doubt in this. Rajan! By virtue of this stuti that you have composed; human beings will get prosperity and auspiciousness. They will never lose their energy. They will be victorious over all obstacles.

Bhagwan Narayan says – After giving this boon to the most intelligent and illustrious Brahmaputra Swayambhuv Manu, Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba removed Herself from his sight.

After receiving this precious boon, Raja Swayambhuv went to his father Brahmaji and said – Honoured Father! Please give me some isolated and secluded place where I can go and start my work of creation. I will worship the Devi by performing yagyas. I await your order. Brahmaji was the lord of the creation (Prajapati), and also he was very powerful. Hearing his son Manu he contemplated for a long time. He wondered – How can this work of creating progeny be successfully accomplished. Since long I have been creating this world, but the earth is not able to stabilize. The waters of the ocean keep drowning her. In this situation only Adi Purush Bhagwan can help me.

Shri Narayan says - O Great Tapasvi Narad! These thoughts were causing ripples in the mind of Brahma. All the Manus, all the Devas were on all four sides. O Sinless Narada! Just then there emerged from the front of his nose a tiny, baby boar; as small as a finger. Narad! In front of their eyes, he assumed a huge form. He became as big as an elephant. Padmayoni Brahma was seated, and all the gods, Brahmins and rishis were around him. He thought – Which divine personality is this, who has assumed the form of a boar and

come out of my nostrils. This is most amazing. Just now he was the size of a finger, and before our very eyes he has become as huge as the king of the mountains. I am certain this is Bhagwan Shri Hari.

The great creator Brahma was contemplating thus, when suddenly the Boar-form of Shri Hari roared deeply. This sound sent waves of happiness through Brahma and all those present. All the directions vibrated with the sound. The announcement of Bhagwan Varaha is the rumbling, snorting sound. When the tapasvis, rishis, Brahmins and members of Satyalok heard it, they immediately began to chant stotras from the Rg, Saam, and Yajur Vedas. Bhagwan Varaha was pleased, and cast a benevolent glance at all those present. Then he entered the ocean. The waves caused by His entry sent fear into the heart of Samudra. He prayed – O Bhagwan who removes the sorrows of all who take refuge in You please protect me. The all-encompassing Shri Hari was Himself the Boar. Hearing the prayer of Samudra, He carefully avoided all the marine creatures; and began to search the waters for Prithvi. He was using His snout to catch the smell of Earth. Bhoomi became aware of the presence of the Lord. At that time Bhoomi who gave sustenance and protection to all living things, was herself hiding in the water. The Boar incarnation of Dev-adhidev Bhagwan Shri Hari, lifted Her with his tusks and placed her on the tips. It was a most beautiful sight, as if a tiny lotus was being supported by eight elephants. Yagyesh, Yagyapurush, Deveshwar, Shri Hari emerged holding Prithvi on His snout. As soon as Manu and Dev-adhidev Brahma got a glimpse, they began to sing Stutis.

Brahmaji said – O You who remove the difficulties of your bhaktas, O Lotus-eyed Bhagwan Shri Hari, Jai! Jai! Jai! To You. O Bhagwan who fulfils all desires! All the gods prostrate before You. Prabho! Prithvi supported on your tusks, looks as beautiful as a many-petalled lotus held aloft by the trunks of mighty

elephants. Because it is You who is holding Prithvi on your tusks, she looks as beautiful as a lotus that has been uprooted and held aloft on the mighty trunk of Airawat. O Devesh who are the protector of the creation and destroyer of negative forces, Namaskar to You! O Refuge of all the Devatas; who is also called wealthy; we worship You from the front and from the rear Obeisance to You, again and again. It is You who gave me the instigation to create. I am forever obedient to You. The commencement and conclusion of creation takes place at Your command. Hare! It is with Your help that from ancient times the devas became entitled to partake of Amrit. You commanded Indra to occupy the throne of Triloka and become guardian of the immense Divine Wealth. You bestowed on Agni the quality to burn; and by virtue of his Jathragni power (the fire of the stomach which helps to digest food) he gives trupti (satisfaction) to the devas, asuras and humans. Dharmraj who is responsible for computing fruits of actions; who is the eternal witness of all actions, and who is the presiding deity of ancestors; was also appointed by You. It is You who made Nairath ruler of the rakshasas. That Yagyapurush who has the power to remove all obstacles, and who witnesses the actions of all living beings; was also born of You. By the power of Your command, the lord of the oceans, Varun, rules all creatures of the water; and reigns over the deities who protect different regions of the universe (lokpals). Vayu who disperses fragrance, and is also called the life- breath of living things, was entitled by you to be called Lokpal and Jagatguru. Such is your sovereignty. Kubera, who is extremely dear to the Yakshas and Kinnaras, pays obeisance to You and thus gains the respect of all the Lokpals. Ishaan, the greatest of the eleven Rudras, because he causes dissolution of even the most powerful and mighty beings; that Ishaan, who is the guardian of good and the destroyer of evil, is worshipped by the swamis of the three lokas. This is all a part of Your majesty and glory. O Lord, whose kingdom covers the entire creation, we Worship You, again and again.

Naradji says – When the creator of the world, Brahmaji, sang these stutis to the Adi Purush Bhagwan Shri Hari; He became so pleased that He created a play and wanted to shower grace and boons. The great Daitya Hiranyaaksh arrived there. This ferocious demon had blocked the way. Bhagwan Shri Hari brought His gada (mace) down on him and ended his life. The blood gushed out and wet the Divine body of Adi Purush. He held Prithvi in his tusks, and in an amazing movement tossed her on to the top of the water, and she miraculously stayed, anchored there. After that Jagatprabhu returned to His abode. The drama of this incarnation was played to rescue Bhoomi Devi from Rasatal (the sixth lower region). That fortunate person who reads or hears this story, will have all his sins and negativities destroyed. At the same time he gets entitled to enter into Vishnulok.

CHAPTER 8 episodes 3-4

3-4 A short account of the progeny and clans of the daughters of Swayambhuv Manu; the commencement of the Ascent of the seven islands.

Bhagwan Narayan says - Narad! After Bhagwan Shri Hari established the position of Prithvi, and left for Vaikunth; Brahmaji called his son Swayambhuv Manu and said - O Son with powerful arms! You are splendid and noble-spirited. Now you must live on this Prithvi who has been stabilized on its Axis; and fill it with progeny. Vibho! First of all, in accordance with the divisions of Time and Space, you should collect the highest and medium quality ingredients, and use them to perform Yagyas to Param Purush. Follow the procedures and protocols of Dharam. It is also extremely important to establish Varnashram (different castes and aptitudes to which a person belongs). If you adhere to this program there will be propagation, progress, and growth of descendants. You must produce sons of your caliber in qualities, honour and luster. They should be wise; humble; of good conduct; virtuous; and of generous and benevolent disposition. Daughters should be carefully and cautiously given in marriage to virtuous and honourable men. Always keep Param Purush Bhagwan Shri Hari established in your heart. Worship Him with full bhakti and protocols. In this way you will attain that highest place, which is desired by all who practice yoga.

Narad! Prajapati Brahmaji gave this advice to his son Swayambhuv Manu, and engaged him in the great work of creating humanity. Then he returned to his abode. “Son. Create humanity!” This order from his father took a sacred place in the heart of Swayambhuv Manu. He began his grand work. Two great sons were produced – Priyavrat and Uthanpaad. He also had three daughters –

Aakruti, Devhuti, and the one who made holy the earth, was called Prasuti. Swayambhuv Manu gave these daughters in marriage – the eldest to Ruchi; the second to Kardam; and the youngest to Daksh Prajapati. It is their descendants who inhabit the world.

In the house of Ruchi and Aakruti, the Lord Adipurush Bhagwan, took birth as Yagyapurush. In the house of Kardam and Devhuti was born Bhagwan Kapil. This great sage Kapil was the originator of Sankhya shastra. The whole world knows him. In the house of Daksh and Prasuti, many girl-children were born. These girls became the mothers of the devas, humans and animals. Thus it was during the era of Swayambhuv Manu, that the Lord incarnated as Yagya purush. With the help of all the devatas he saved his father from the rakshasas. The great yogi Bhagwan Kapil stayed in his ashram and imparted Pure Knowledge to his mother Devhuti. All other knowledge pales before Nirmal Vidya. He explained to her in great detail, the secrets of meditation and self realization. This Kapil shastra removes all avidyas. After giving enlightenment to his mother, bhagwan Kapil went and settled in the ashram of Pullaha Muni, and continues to remain there. I offer pranaams to that great Yogacharya Kapil, whose very name when uttered with bhakti, grants Sankhya Yoga.

Narad! I have just described to you the story of the clans who descended from the daughters of Swayambhuv Manu. This pure and holy story destroys the sins of the narrators and listeners. Now I will tell you about the holy descendants of the sons of Swayambhuv Manu. It will also include the description of the creation of the islands, the continents, and the oceans, for the benefit of all living beings.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The eldest son of Swayambhuv Manu was Priyavrat. He was always in the service of his father. He was firmly established in Truth. He was married to Bahrishmati, the beautiful daughter of Prajapati Vishvakarma. They had ten virtuous sons. Their last child was a girl named Urjaswati. The ten sons were named Aagnigrah, Idhmajiva, Yahyabahu, Mahaveer, Rukmashukra, Dhritapristh, Savan, Medhatithi, Agnihotra and Kavi – and they were collectively called Agni. Three of these sons, Kavi, Savan and Mahaveer, took to a life of asceticism. They became great scholars of Atmavidya. They observed complete celibacy (brahmacharis) Completely free of worldly desires, they settled down in Paramahans' ashram. Priyavrat had three more sons called Uttam, Tapas and Raivat. They each ruled a different Manavantar (era). Maharaj Priyavrat ruled over the whole world. He had conquered all his senses; and ruled for a long time. Once during his reign he noticed that when the sun shone on one half of the earth, the second half was in darkness; and when it shone on the second half, the first half was in darkness. So he thought – During my reign there should be no darkness anywhere in the world. I will do tapasya and get the power to change this. After this, Priyavrat mounted a splendid chariot which shone like the sun, and did pradakshina around Prithvi seven times, spreading light all around. While he was circumambulating the earth, great furrows were formed by the wheels of his chariot. These became benevolent for the world, as they formed the seven oceans. The land between the furrows, became seven islands (dweep), and the waters of the newly formed oceans quickly surrounded them.

From that time, the seven islands became established on earth. They were called Jambu, Plaksh, Shalmali, Kush, Kraunch, Shaak and Pushkar. The magnitude of the islands gradually doubles as one goes northward. The waters which surround the seven islands are also demarcated into seven

oceans called Ksharod, Ikshursod, Surod, Ghritod, Kshirod, Dadhimandod and Shudhadod. From that time these seven oceans became famous.

Maharaj Priyavrat installed his son Aagnigraha as king of the first island Jambudweep, which was surrounded by salty, alkaline water.

The second island Plakshdweep was surrounded by water as sweet as sugarcane juice. His son Idhmajiva was made king of this island.

The third island Shalmali was surrounded by strong, intoxicating waters. Priyavrat made his son Yagyabahu as king of this island.

Kushdweep was an island of pleasure and enjoyment. The sea was made of ghee. Priyavratnandan Hiranyareta became king of this island.

The fifth is Kraunchdweep, which is surrounded by the ocean of milk. The powerful son Dhritpristh was appointed king.

Shaakdweep is the most beautiful of all the islands. The ocean Dadhimandod (curdled milk) surrounds it. Priyavrat's famous son Medhatithi ruled here.

Pushkardweep is surrounded by an ocean of sweet water. On his father's command Vitihotra ascended the throne of this island.

Maharaj Priyavrat gave his daughter Urjaswati in marriage to Shukracharya. They had a daughter called Devyani. Everyone knows this.

After installing all his sons as rulers, Privrat embraced the path of Yoga and became a sanyasi.

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CHAPTER 8 episodes 5-7

5-7 Evolution and expansion of the Bhoomandal (Earth). Description of rivers formed out of the juice of fruits of mango, jambu, kadamb and banyan trees. Descent of the Ganga.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Devrishi Narad! Now listen how the islands were divided into continents.

First Jambudweep was created with the dimensions of one lakh yojans (one yojan is sixteen miles). This vast island is so perfectly round, it resembles the seed of a lotus. This island, spread over thousands of miles, has nine divisions. It is surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains. Eight mountain ranges separate the nine divisions. Two continents are in the form of a dhanush (bow), which spreads from south to north. In that place there are four more huge continents. One is called Illavrit and is a perfect square. This is called the madhyavarsh (middle continent). It lies on the Nabhi of Jambudweep. On this spot, one lakh yojans tall, stands the sacred Sumeru Parvat. This holy mountain is the pericarp (seed vessel) of the lotus-like Prithvi. The summit of this mountain is spread over thirty-two yojans. The base of this mountain is sixteen thousand yojans, and its depth into the earth is also sixteen thousand yojans. Illavrit continent has as its northern boundary, three mountains. They are called Neel, Swet and Sringvan.

The second continent is golden, and is called Ramyakvarsh. The third continent is Kuruvarsh. These continents are spread out in front, and have the salty ocean as their boundary. They are more than two thousand yojans wide. They have gradually spread towards the East. Towards the North there is a

difference of one tenth between them; and the width gradually reduced. This continent contains many rivers and seas. On the Southern end of Illavritvarsh there are three majestic mountain ranges – Nishad, Hemkoot and Himalay. It is said that the height of these mountains is ten thousand Yojans. Harivarsh, Kimpurush and Bharatvarsh – these three continents can be accurately measured. Nishad, Hemkoot and Himalay are their boundaries. On the West of Illavrit is the mountain Malyavan. The East is decorated by the majestic Shriman Gandhamadan mountain. These two mountains span two thousand yojans between Nilgiri and Nishad parvat. Ketumaal and Bhadrashva continents are bound by Malyavan and Gandhamadan mountains.

The four mountains – Mandar, Merumandar, Suparshva and Kumud – are like four pillars or props of Mount Sumeru. They spread over ten thousand yojans. They stand in all the four directions of Mount Sumeru, as if they are its columns or supports. On these four mountains are four kinds of trees – Mango, Jamun, Kadamb and Banyan. These trees are eleven hundred yojans tall, and serve as banners or flags. All four types of trees, and all four mountains, are spread out equally. In that place there are four bottomless lakes, each filled with milk, honey, sugarcane juice, and sweet flavoured water. Whoever bathes or rinses the mouth with that fragrant water, gets all the benefits of yoga. In that same place are four beautiful groves which are very pleasing to ladies. They are called Nandan; Chaitra rath; Vaibhraj and Sarvabhadra. The Devatas reside here with their partners, roam about freely, and enjoy the beauty of the surroundings.

In the bosom of Mandarachal grows a divine mango tree. It is eleven hundred yojans tall. The fruit is sweet as nectar, and large like the Trikoot mountain, extremely tasty and delicious. As soon as the fruits fall from the tree, they burst, and their juice keeps flowing. The colour of the juice is as red as the sea

at dawn. That juice flows as the river Arunoda, and its water is fragrant and cool. Maharaj! On this mountain resides Bhagawati Shree Aruna. All the leading Devatas and Daityas offer worship to Her. The Devi who grants all desires also destroys all negativities and sins. She gets pleased with offerings and worship, and removes all sorrows and makes Her devotees fearless. She presides over the world in various forms – Adya, Maya, Atula, Ananta, Pushti, Ishwarmalini, Dusht-naashkari and Kantidayini. As a result of the Devi becoming pleased, gold was born in the earth.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The river that I have described, has its source in Arunoda Mandar Parvat and flows towards the eastern part of Illavritvarsh. The female attendants of Bhagawati Jagaddamba; and the wives of Yakshas and Gandharvas, bathe in these waters. While they bathe, the fragrance from their bodies perfume the water.

In the same way, on the bosom of Meru Mandar, grow the tall Jamun trees, whose fruits are dark and large like an elephant. The juice of the jamuns runs down as the river Jambu, towards the south of Illavritvarsh. The devi who enjoys the taste of Jamuns is called Jambvadini, and She is worshipped by devatas, nagas, rishis, and rakshasas who live there. She is extremely compassionate and benevolent; and those who worship her get cured of illnesses, and cleansed of all their sins. She removes all obstacles to ascent Devotees constantly worship Her in the forms of Kokilakshi; Kaamkala; Karuna; Kaampujita; Kathor-vigraha; Dhanya, Naaikimanya and Gabhastini. The soil on both banks of the Jambu river get soaked with the jamun juice. Then the sun dries it. This is used for making ornaments and jewellery for the wives of the gods and demi-gods. It is called Jambunad gold, and the celestial goldsmiths make it into crowns, armlets and waistbands.

The great tree of Kadamb grows on the Suparshva mountain. The tree has five hollows from which five streams emerge. These streams fall from the Suparshva mountain to reach the earth, and are called Madhudhara (stream of honey). They flow to the western part of Illavritvarsh. Mahadevi Dhareshwari presides here, and is worshipped as Devpoojya, Mahotsaha, Kaalroopa, Mahanana, Karmaphalada, Kantagrahaneshwari, Karaldeha, Kaalangi and Kaam Koti Pravarthini. Sarvadeveshwari Bhagawati Jagaddamba should be worshipped in these forms.

In the same way, on Kumud Parvat, there is the famous Banyan Tree called Shatbal. From its branches many rivers flow down to earth. They are rivers of milk, curds, ghee, honey, jaggery, foodgrains, cloth, beds, thrones, and many other things. This is known as Kaamduha – yielding whatever is desired. These rivers flow into the northern part of Illavritvarsh and nourish all parts of the continent. It is on the banks of these rivers that the Meenakshi Temple stands. She is worshipped by devatas and danavas alike. Because of granting endless boons to the devas, She is known as Neelambara, Raudramukhi, Neelalakyuta, Naakini, Devsangha, Phalada, Varada, Atimanya, Atipujya, Mathmatangini, Madanonmadini, Maanapriya, Maanpriyantara, Marvegdhara, Marpoojita, Marmadini, Mayurvarshobhadya, and Shikhivahangarbhabhu. The Lotus Feet should be worshipped while reciting these holy names. She is also called Meenlochana. It is Her nature to grant recognition to those who worship Her through chanting and meditation.

Narad! One who drinks the waters of the above mentioned rivers, gets vibrations in every cell of his body. Old age never comes to him. Nor is one tormented by tiredness, perspiration, body odours, infirmity, disease, death, heat, cold, wind, aches and pains. This water grants eternal life.

Now I will tell you about the mountains which surround Mount Sumeru. Mount Sumeru is known as the golden mountain, and twenty mountains form a ring around it like an ornate earring. The names of these twenty mountains are – Shrinvat, Kurang, Kurag, Kushumbh, Vikankath, Trikoot, Shishir, Patang, Ruchak, Nishadh, Shithivas, Kapil, Shankh, Vydoorya, Charudhi, Hansa, Rishab, Naag, Kaalanjar, and Narad.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! To the east of Mount Sumeru are two mountains. They are eighteen thousand yojans long, and two thousand yojans wide. They are called Jathar and Devkoot. Two mountains lie to the west. They are called Pavmaan and Paariyatra. They are as lofty as Jathar and Devkoot. To the south of Sumerugiri, are the holy Kailas and Karveer mountains. On the north are Trishang and Makar hills. These eight famous mountains surround Mount Sumeru. Mount Sumeru is also known as Kanchangiri. It keeps on shining like the sun. Padmayoni Brahmaji resides here. Exactly in the centre of the mountain is the dham of Brahmaji. The length is ten thousand yojans. This region is golden and has four equal sides. Great souls and wise scholars say that keeping this dham as the central point, the eight lokpals established their eight stations. These are also made of gold. They are all settled according to the directions that they protect and govern. They each measure two and a half thousand yojans. They are called – Manovati, Amaravati, Tejovati, Sayyamani, Krishnangana, Shraddhavati, Gandhavati, Mahodaya, and Yashowati. Brahma, Indra, Agni and Yama live here along with other gods.

Bhagwan Vishnu incarnated as Waman avatar during the sacrifice conducted by King Bali. The toe of His left foot, created a hole in Brahmand (the Universe). From the exact centre, manifested Ganga. She came and halted on the peak of heaven. She has the capacity to cleanse sin and impurities. In the

whole universe She is known as Sakshat Bhagwatpadi (flowing from the footsteps of the Devi). She is the queen of all the rivers. After one thousand yugas She arrived at the crown of heaven, which in the three worlds, is known as the footstool of Vishnu. Here resides the most holy and illustrious, the most constant, Dhruv, son of sage Uttanpadh. It is his nature to retain and contain the precious pollen from the Lotus Feet of Shri Hari. Even now Rajrishi Dhruv is fixed in his position. Here also dwell the saptarishis (group of seven principal sages). They have experienced the effect of Ganga. They are always concerned about the benevolence of the whole world. So they keep performing Pradakshina around Ganga. They know that She is the embodiment of compassion and generosity. And with matted hair and braided locks (jatta-joot) they bathe daily in the waters of Ganga.

After leaving Vaikunth, Ganga took innumerable celestial vahanas and reached Chandramandal. From there She came to Brahmalok. She divided into four branches and flowed in four different directions; and finally reached the sea. The four names of Ganga are - Sita, Alakananda, Chakshush and Bhadra. Sita, the Ganga who destroys all sins, came down from Brahmand, on to the crown of Mount Kesar. Then She fell on the crown of the Gandhmadan mountain. Then She flowed towards the east and entered the continent of Bhadrashva varsh. There She was worshipped by the gods, and finally entered the ocean of milk – Kshirsagar. The second branch of Ganga, called Shakshush, flowed out of the crown of the Malyavan mountain. Flowing with great speed, She entered the continent Ketumaal varsh and flowed westwards. Later, She flowed into the sea. Narad! The third branch of Ganga, is the auspicious Alakananda. This holy river flowed through the southern parts of Brahmand, and reached the crown of the noble mountain Hemkoot. On Her way She washed many forests and mountains, and with great speed entered Bharatvarsh continent. This third branch of Ganga – Alakananda – entered

the ocean in the south. The fourth branch flowed out of Shringvaan mountain. She was called Bhadra. After making holy and pure, the three worlds, She reached the ocean. By Her constantly flowing water, the land of Kuru got nourished.

Narad! Every continent is blessed with innumerable other rivers and seas. Most of their sources are from the Meru and Mandar mountains. Out of these nine continents, Bharatvarsh is called Karma Kshetra – sphere of action. The other eight continents, inspite of being on Prithvi, have entitlement to the fruits of heaven. Narad! The people who live in heaven – when their punya period ends – then they come to the place where they have to experience the fruits. Their life span is ten thousand years. Their limbs are as strong as steel, and they have the strength of a thousand elephants. They are fond of sport and amusement, and all pleasures are available to them. Once they have lived out their life span for one year, the women are given one year in which they can give birth. Like Treta Yuga (the silver age), time is always in the present.

CHAPTER 8 episodes 8-9

8-9 Bhagwan Vishnu is worshipped with Stutis in various continents – by Bhagwan Shankar in Illavritvarsh; by Bhadrashrava in Bhadrashva-varsh; by Prahlad in Harivarsh; by Shree Lakshmi in Ketumalvarsh; and by Manuji in Ramyakvarsh.

Shri Narayan says - In Jambudweep there are nine continents, including Illavrat. In all these continents, Brahma and other gods have their residence. All these gods are constantly engaged in worship, by meditation and chanting of stotras of Shree Devi. In these continents, there are rows and rows of forests, and in all seasons they produce fragrant flowers, fruits, and dense foliage. In those continents, there are innumerable forests, mountains and valleys. The deep caves are always filled with clear, sweet water. For the benevolence of all the nine continents and all the lokas, Adipurush Bhagwan Narayan presides there, and performs worship to Bhagawati Shree Devi. He is to be worshipped by all. For this specific purpose he has manifested as Swayambhus.

In the Illavritvarsh continent, Bhagwan Shri Hari is manifesting in the form of Rudra. He was produced from the eye of Brahma. His beloved Shakti resides with Him. No male can enter those premises. If any male does stray in; by the curse of Bhavani, he gets turned into a female. Only ladies who are in attendance on Bhavani, reside there. Surrounded by these ladies, Bhagwan Rudra worships Mahabhag Sankarshan. This Sankarshan is said to be the fourth Swayambhu of the Tamasic Nature of Bhagwan Shri Hari. It is solely for the benevolence of all living things, that Rudra worships Sankarshan. The worshipper Rudradev, is unborn. His attention is always at peace and rest.

Bhagwan Shankar says – Om Namoh Bhagawate Mahapurushaya. Sarvagunasankhya Nayananta yavyaktaya Namaha!

He in whom all qualities are manifesting, He who is eternal, and He who is Omkar swaroop, to that Parampurush Shri Bhagwan, I offer Namaskaar. O Prabho who is pleased by the chanting of bhajans, Your Lotus Feet forever grant refuge to Your devotees. You are supreme, majestic, and omnipotent; and the container of divine faculties. You manifest before Your devotees Your Shiva aspects (Bhoot-bhaavan swaroop) and release them from worldly bondage. But those who do not worship You, You put them into bondage. You are verily Sarveshwar (God of all). I chant Your bhajans. Prabho! We cannot conquer anger; and instantly our attention gets caught in sinful thoughts. But You, in Your role of governing the universe, watch all activities and interactions, as a detached witness. You never get affected by the illusions and delusions of the world, nor does your attention get influenced. According to the Vedmantras, You are the causal of the creation, protection and dissolution of the universe. But You are Yourself unaffected by change of form or deterioration. For this reason You are called eternal. On Your thousand foreheads, this earth lies like a mustard seed. You do not even feel its presence. I originated from You, and in My ahamkar roop I use the energy of My three principal qualities to create Devatas, sense organs and animate and inaminate creatures. The science of this creativity lies in the doman of Bhagawan Brahmaji. But yet, both of us are verily Your soul, intellect and wisdom; Your nature and Your principal attributes. O Great Supreme Being! The soul, the elements, the ego, the gods who control the senses; the sense organsa re like birds bound and subdued to Your Kriyashakti, and through Your grace, perform their respective functions. A being who is enchanted and captivated by the creation with all its qualities and attributes; and who is caught in the web of maya of action and reaction; may possibly understand it

mysteries. But he rarely succeeds in finding the way to throw off or break the bondage The birth and dissolution of this creation is also your manifestation. To all these manifestations, I offer obeisance, again and again.

Shri Narayan says – Narad! This is the way in which the Great God Rudra offered worship to Bhagwan Sankarsh in the continent Illavritvarsh.

In the same way, in the continent Bhadrashva, Dharamputra Bhadrashrava and his principal attendants, worshipped Bhagwan Vasudev in His famous form of Hygreev, by performing austerities and singing stutis.

Bhadrashrava and his attendants said – Om Namoh! Bhagawate Dharmayatma Vishodhanaya Namaha! – Namaskars to that Omkara-swaroop Bhagwan Dharam who purifies the attention. The Divine Play of God is most wonderful and amazing. You cause the situation where the being sees the all destroying Kaal but does not recognize it; and who pursues worthless dreams and gets ensnared in adharmic acts. Who does not recognize the transient world, and even after lighting the funeral pyres of his son and grandfather, still harbours a wish for immortality. The wise and learned have declared that the world is destructible, and the self realized have gained subtle knowledge of this same fact. Inspite of this, O Unborn One! They get deceived by Your Maya. You are eternal and You are the Doer. I offer you my pranaams. Paramatma! You are Akarta (one who does not perform any action) and You are free of the influence of maya. Yet it is said that You create, sustain and destroy the world. It is so. And there is no doubt in it, because You are beyond the creation; You are beyond the causal and the effect. Your form is a combination of human and horse. During Pralayakaal (time of dissolution) the greedy and covetous Daityas stole the Vedas, and on the prayer of Brahmaji You retrieved them from Rasataal. For this victory we offer You our Namaskars.

By singing these praises to Bhagwan Hygreev Mahatma Bhadrashravas enumerated the great qualities of Bhagwan Shri Hari. He who reads or listens to this holy story, not only gets rid of the scaly web of maya, but also gets a place in Nirmal Dham of the Devi.

Shri Narayan says – Narad! In the continent of Harivarsh, Bhagwan Narasimha presides. It is his nature to destroy sin. He is forever benevolent to his Bhaktas. The great devotee of God, Prahlad, had achieved in his heart, the state of ananya bhakti. He is fully conversant of all the attributes of his Lord. After having a darshan of Param Yogi Bhagwan Narasimha, the King of the Danavas, Prahladji, sings the praises of the Lord.

Prahlad says – Om Namoh! Bhagawate Narasimhaya Namas tejas tejase! Avir avir bhav Vajradanshtra Karmaashayan Randhay Randhay Tamo Gras, Om Swaha.

Abhayam Mamaatmani Bhuyishtah: Om Ksharoum! My Namaskar! You are more effulgent than the effulgence of Fire. Namaskar to You. Hail Vajranakh (sharp, steely claws). Hail Vajradanshtra (long sharp teeth). Please manifest before me. Please manifest before me. Please burn away all my negativities. Please burn away all my negativities. Please remove my avidyas (darkness of spiritual ignorance) Om Swaha! Please come into my attention; into my consciousness, in Your benevolent form of Abhay Daan (where You assure protection to those who come to Your Lotus Feet) . Om Ksharoum! Prabho! May the entire world become prosperous and auspicious. May righteous thoughts get awakened in the minds of the evil doers; may all living beings have mutual respect and understanding towards each other; may they always be concerned about the benevolence of others; May we always walk in the path of dharma, and, free from all desires, enter into complete union with

Bhagwan Shri Hari. Nath! May we have complete detachment from the bondages of house, wife, children, wealth and friends and relations. If at all there is attachment, let it be to God. Those who are under the dictates of their bodily requirements and comforts; the sooner they get this Pure Knowledge the sooner they will be freed from the desires of the sense organs. Then those Bhagwat-bhakts get the privilege and opportunity of listening to divine stories which are equal to a pilgrimage. Just by listening to these divine narrations, again and again, God enters through the ears and occupies the heart. Then the bhakta gets cleansed of all his impurities of body and soul. Who will not desire to be a part of this collective sanga of Bhagwat Bhaktas. The person who has complete bhakti in God, without ulterior motives; then in his heart reside all the gods with all their qualities and attributes. Those who do not acknowledge and worship God, have absolutely no source from which they can get divine blessings; Nirmal Vidya; or heavenly attributes. Their mind is always agitated with doubts, problems, and stress. Just like a fish loves water, because it supports and sustains it; so also Sakshat Shri Hari is dear to all living beings. Those proud and arrogant beings who renounce god and still continue to live long, their success in the world is only measured by the number of years they have survived; and not by their spiritual ascent. Therefore asuras, and all who are of demonic temperament --- renounce greed, anger, hatred, jealousy, arrogance, desire, fear – the root causes of all mental distress. Get free of the cycle of birth and death; and take refuge at the Lotus Feet of the most powerful and fearless Bhagwan Narasimha.

Narad! In this way Danavraj Prahlad renounced his elephant-sized bad qualities, and enthroned the lion-faced God, Bhagwan Narasimha in his heart.

In the continent of Ketumaal varsh, Bhagwan Shri Hari presides as Kaamdev. The Goddess of this continent is the daughter of the ocean, Bhagawati

Lakshmi. It is Her nature to recognize and honour great beings. She offers homage by singing stotras to Bhagwan Shri Hari.

Bhagawati Lakshmi says – Om! Hram! Hrim! Hrum! Om! Namoh Bhagawate Hrishikeshaya Sarvaguna Visheshairvi lakshitatmane Aakootinaam Chittinaam Chetasam Visheshanaam Chadhipataye Shodshakalaychhando mayayann mayaamritmayay sarvamayay mahase Ojase Balaya Kantaya Kamaya Namaste Ubhayatra Bhuyaath.

O Master of all the sense organs! O Receptacle of all qualities and attributes! O Creator of Knowledge, action and will, and Controller of their functions. O You Who are endowed with sixteen petals; Who can be attained by vedic worship; Who are the sustainer, maintainer and benefactor; to that complete form of body, mind and senses, Bhagwan Kamdev! Namaskars from all quarters, together with the beeja mantras Om Hram Hrim Hrum! Bhagwan! You are verily the senses. Young women pray to You and worship You for the boon of a good husband. But those husbands get involved in protecting their wives, wealth, health and progeny; and the purpose of their life is wasted. They are completely attached. Prabho! Only he is a perfect husband who fearlessly helps those in distress, and gives equal protection to all. Such a perfect husband art Thou. Your only motive is that all should benefit from You. Bhagwan! The woman who prays to You, not for union with Your Lotus Feet, but for other frivolous requests; You grant her desires by giving her what she wants – useless transient things, which have no spiritual value. Ultimately she feels remorse. O unconquerable and undefeatable Lord! In order to attain Me, all the gods, including Brahma and Rudra perform severe penance. But I can only be attained by those who walk the path of Sattwa; who are dharmic; who are satisfied; who are generous; who worship Your Lotus Feet; because I reside in Your Heart. O Eternal and Imperishable One! Your bhaktas carry

Your Lotus Feet on their forehead as an ornament. You already bear Me on Your heart, and it appears like a blemish. You are self contained, and all encompassing. Who can comprehend Your Divine Play of Maya.

Narad! In this way, in the continent of Ketumaalvarsh, Lakshmiji worshipped Kamdev, manifestation of benefactor or the universe, Bhagwan Shri Hari. Prajapati and other authorized gods, also worship the Lord in this continent.

In the continent of Ramyakvarsh, Bhagwan Shri Hari presides in His manifestation of Matsya. This is a most adorable and venerable form for the devas to worship. Manuji is in constant state of worship in this place.

Manuji says – Om Namoh! Mukhyatmay Namaha. Satvay Pranayoujse Balay Mahamatsyay Namaha: -- O You Who bestows truth; Primordial Being; O Giver of Energy to Body, Mind and Senses; O You Who gives meaning to Omkara. To the greatest god Bhagwan Mahamatsya, I offer pranaams again and again. O Lord! Provider of instigation in all beings; You preside within and without all living beings and manifest as life. All the gods keep their vision constantly on You. You are Ishwar, the Great Purusha, on Whose commands the entire universe moves. It is possible that all the Lokpals are envious of You. This is what made them decide to get out of Your protection; and become the guardians of man, animal and reptile kingdoms. But they completely failed, and could not accomplish the job. O Unborn One! At the time of Pralay (dissolution), the ocean was majestic with huge tides and waves. You rescued Bhoomi Devi, who provides space for herbs and medicinal plants to grow; and also Me; and played with us in the ocean. O Lord Who are the embodiment of all life forms, to You, O Bhagwan Matsya, obeisance to You again and again.

In this way, the great king Manu worshipped Bhagwan Shri Hari, Who incarnated as a Fish. Manu is considered one of the foremost knowers of the Bhagwat. By his yogic practices he had destroyed all sins. Full of bhakti, and constantly worshipping the Lord, he reigns in the continent of Ramyakvarsh.

CHAPTER 8 episodes 10-11

10-11 Worship of the various avatars of Bhagwan Vishnu - Aryama worships the Kacchap roop in Hiranyamayvarsh; Prithvidevi worships Varaharoop in Uttarkuruvarsh; Shri Hanuman worships Shri Ramachandra in Kumpurushvarsh; and Shri Narada worships Narayanroop in Bharatvarsh.

In North Kuruvarsh, Bhagwan Shri Hari presides in the form of Varaha. Prithvidevi worships this Boar manifestation of the Lord. The lotus of Prithvidevi's heart is full of the nectar of compassion and benevolence. She is constantly engaged in prayer, worship, and singing the praises of Adi Varaha, Who rescued her from the Daityas. Prithvi says - Om Namoh Bhagawate! Mantra tattwa Lingaya Yagyakratve Mahadhwaravayvay Mahavarahaya Namah! Karmashuklaya Triyugaya Namaste! -- He Whose nature can be understood through mantras; Who is Yagyaswaroop (the mahayagya is His Form) – Whose every action is pure; to that embodiment (Triyugamurti) of the three yugas – Satya, Treta and Dwapar - Omkar swaroop Bhagwan Varaha, I offer Namaskars, again and again.

To manifest the fire which is latent in the wood one has to rub it against another wood. Similarly, to get Your darshan, learned and holy men churn away all their negativities by austerity of attention. The One Who then manifests – to that One; to You; O Bhagwan Shri Hari; Namaskars again and again. Prabho! Matter, action, cause, dwelling, movement, master, doer -- these illusions are creations of Your Maya. Wise men are able to pierce the veil of Maya and get a darshan of Your Divine Self. To that Lord Who is beyond creation, Bhagwan Shri Hari, I offer pranaams again and again. As soon as You express a desire to incarnate, the whole process of creation, preservation and

dissolution, is set into motion – like an inert piece of iron which suddenly becomes mobilized by magnetism. To that witness of the qualities and actions of the universe, I offer pranaams again and again. Like one elephant overpowering and defeating another elephant, You defeated Your adversary Hiranyaksh, and rescued me. Then on Your majestic tusks You lifted me out of Rasataal. To that Primordial Causal of the universe, the all powerful Bhagwan Varaha, I offer pranaams again and again.

In Kumpurushvarsh continent, Dasharathnandan Shri Ramachandraji presides. Bhagawati Shri Sita reigns beside Him. Shei Hanumanji worships Him. Hanumanji says – Om Namoh Bhagawate Uttam Shlokaya Namah! Aryalakshan-sheelvrataya Namah! Upsikshit-atmane Upasitlokaya Namah: Sadhuvad Nikashnaya Namoh! Brahmanyadevay Namah: Mahapurushaya Mahabhagay Namah! – To the embodiment of Omkara. The most holy and renowned Bhagwan Shri Ram, my humble Namaskars. To that Maryada Purushottam, Who is the source of all good qualities, virtues and austerities, I offer pranaams. To that lord of pure attention, Lord Rama, Who is worshipped by all, I offer my pranaams. To that Lord Rama, Who came to demonstrate a life of piety and simplicity, I offer pranaams. Worshipper of Brahmins and most auspicious Lord Rama, pranaams to You, again and again. Who exists in the consciousness of all living beings in the pure and unadulterated form; by Whose effulgence all attributes are enlightened; Who dwells in a mind which is pure and undisturbed; Who is not attached to name or form; Who is devoid of ego; I surrender at His Lotus Feet. Bhagwan! You incarnate, not only to destroy the negative forces, but to also show by example to the world, that joys and sorrows come and go, but one must remain constant and untouched. Otherwise why should you have suffered the pangs of separation from Your Shakti, Shri Sita. O most honourable elder brother of Laxmanji! Verily you are not impressed by high birth; beauty; expertise in conversation; wisdom and

time of birth. Prabho! You are the atma and the greatest friend of realized souls. Even though You are concerned about the three worlds, You are completely detached from their qualities. You are beyond emotions like sorrow when You were separated from Sita, or loss of Laxman. That is not Your nature. But still, just to teach the world the lesson of love, You played the drama. Bhagwan! The Devatas, Danavas, Manavs and Vanars (monkeys); no matter what they are, they should all worship the human form that You, Shri Hari, have assumed as Shri Rama, and sing your bhajans. Even a small expression of love is appreciated by You. Your heart is filled with such boundless love and compassion, that when You left for Your sacred abode, You took all the inhabitants of northern Kosal with You.

Shri Narayan says: Narad! In this manner, in the continent of Kimpurushvarsh, the lotus eyed Lord, Bhagwan Shri Hari, is worshipped by Kapivar Hanuman. The fortunate man who hears this story of Bhagwan Shri Ram, gets all his sins washed away, and becomes entitled to a place in the sacred dham of Shri Ram.

Shri Narayan says – Narad! In this Bharat varsh I preside as Adipurush, and you are constant state of worship.

Naradji says – Om Namoh: Bhagawate Upshamsheelayo-parthanathmyaye Namoh Kinchan vittaya Rishi rishabhaya Nar-narayanaya Paramahans Param guruve Atmaram Adhipataye Namoh Namaha: -- He who is Shantswabhav (embodiment of peace); Who is devoid of Ahamkar; Who is the wealth of the moneyless; foremost among Rishis; Guru of ascetics of the highest order; and Ishwar of those who have knowledge of the Supreme Spirit; to that Omkarswaroop Bhagwan Narayan, I offer pranaams again and again. He who is the Doer at the time of creation, but does not get caught in the web of vanity and conceit; He Who lives in a body but does not get enslaved to its

requirements like hunger and thirst; He who sees everything but whose vision is not adulterated by the sights and displays; to that detached, pure witness, Bhagwan Narayan, I offer pranaams, again and again. O Most Supreme Yogi! Hiranyagarbh Brahmaji has pronounced, that when life is about to end, one must surrender the ego and put complete attention on Your sacred, attributeless Brahm Form. Bhagwan! In the same way that a worldly man desires all the pleasures of this world and the next; and dies worrying about wife, children and possessions; so also if a wise man is in constant fear of death, all his accumulation of knowledge is a wasted exertion. Therefore O Master of Senses; give me all those devotees of Yours, who are only engrossed in the Spirit, so that in their company I can get rid of the maya-created attachments and ego. Thus prayed the most wise and knowledgeable sage Narada. He worships Me in My limitless, immeasurable, unable to be proved Form.

O Devrishi! I am now going to describe to you all the rivers and mountains contained in Bharatvarsh. Bring your attention to single point, and listen carefully.

Malay, Mangalprasth, Mynaak, Trikoot, Rishab, Kutak, Koll, Sahya, Devgiri, Rishyamook, Shreeshail, Vyankat, Adri, Mahendra, Vaaridhar, Vindhya, Muktiman, Raksh, Pariyatra, Dron, Chitrakoot, Goverdhan, Raivtak, Kukubh, Neel, Gaurmukh, Indrakeel, and Kaamgiri are the main mountains. Besides these, there are countless other mountains which bestow punyas.

From these mountains, thousands of rivers take birth, which provide water for drinking, bathing, irrigation, performing of rites, and washing away of sins. The names of these rivers are – Tamraparni, Chandravansha, Kritmala, Vatodaka, Krishnavena, Sharkaravartaka, Godavari, Bhimrathi, Nirvindhya, Payoshnika,

Tapi, Reva, Sursa, Narmada, Saraswati, Charmanvati, Sindhu and Andh. Also Shon, Rishikulya, Trisama, Mahanadi, Vedsmriti, Kaushika, Yamuna, Mandakini, Drishdwati, Gomati, Sarayu, Rogvati, Saptavati, Sushma, Shatadru, Chandrabhaga, Marudvriddha, Vitastha, Asiki, and Vishva.

Narad! Those who are born in this Bharatvarsh, according to their Sattwic, Rajas or Tamas actions, merit birth in the strata of Deva, Human or Demon. Everyone gets opportunities to experience various kinds of pleasures. According to the quality of spiritual life that one leads, one can even attain moksha in this blessed continent of Bharatvarsh. Because of its innate sacredness and all other qualities conducive to spiritual life, this Bharatvarsh commands so much dignity and glory. All the rishis and munis who live in heaven, bear testimony to this fact. They say –

Pray! What great punyas have these beings performed and pleased Shri Hari; that He has caused them to be born in this holy land of Bharatvarsh where they can constantly worship Bhawan Mukund. We pray that we also get such a blessing. We performed severe penance, vows, austerities and yagyas to become entitled to a place in heaven. But of what use is that when we cannot worship the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Narayan.

Here in Heaven there are good arrangements for experiencing joys and happiness of the senses. But our intelligence has become dull. All those who go to heaven must live there for a full kalpa (a day of Brahma equal to 4320,000,000 mortal years and then take another birth. All this time we spend in anticipation of taking birth in Bharatvarsh, even for a small life span. Because, with that mortal body we can surrender all our actions to the Doer, - Bhagwan Shri Hari, and earn a place at His Lotus Feet.

Those places where the nectar-filled praises of Shri Hari are not sung; that place whose inhabitants are not Bhagwad bhakts; where yagyas are not performed and festivals are not celebrated; even if that place is Brahmalok, we do not desire to live in such a place. Human birth is filled with opportunities for Nirmal Vidya, and materials and means for the performance of spiritual ascent. Having got the privilege of a birth in Bharatvarsh, if one does not use it for striving for Moksha, then he is just the same as an animal who is a pashu (in bondage). Verily inhabitants of Bharatvarsh are fortunate and auspicious. When they perform yagyas, and invoke the gods and offer oblations and other precious substances while uttering mantras, the most Supreme Brahm Parmeshwar Himself receives the offerings.

It is true that on asking, God gives everything that one desires. But this gift is not real or intrinsic; because one does not become desireless. Only the Lotus Feet of Shri Hari removes all desires and bestows peace. Those who sing bhajans without any motives or desires, receive the blessings from Shri Hari to attain His Lotus Feet and fulfil the meaning of their life. Therefore we, who by our yagyas, austerities, generosities and other good works, have merited heaven, desire that as soon as our term is over, we should get a human birth in Bharatvarsh. Because that is the place Bhagwan Shri Hari is most benevolent to His bhaktas.

Narad! In Jambudweep, eight smaller dweeps (islands) are famous. The ocean made inroads, and the erosion has carved out these smaller islands. Their names are – Swarnaprasth, Chandrashukra; Aavartan; Ramanak; Mandar; Harin; Panchjanya; Singhal; and Lanka. This is the full description of Jambudweep. After this I will tell you about Plaksh and six other islands.

CHAPTER 8 episodes 12-13

12-13 Description of Plaksh, Shalmali, Kush, Kraunch, Kak and Pushkar islands.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Just as Jambudweep has been described as large and extensive, so also is the ocean which surrounds it – large, extensive, and salty and alkaline. Jambudweep surrounds Mount Meru on all sides; and Jambudweep itself is surrounded on all sides by vast, salty ocean. And all this is engulfed by the island Plakshdweep, which is twice as large. It is like a forest surrounded by a moat. Here grows an Indian Fig Tree (Paakad) which is as huge as the Jamun Tree of Plakshdweep. For this reason it is called Plakshdweep. It is the tranquil, chosen place of the golden hued Agni devata. This Agnidev, with seven tongues, is the son of Maharaj Priyavrat. His name is Idhmajivha. He reigns over Plakshdweep. Raja Priyavrat divided his island into seven divisions and gave it to his seven sons, and himself retired into the company of realized yogis. He finally got his god-realisation.

The seven islands of Plakshdweep are – Shiv, Yavas, Bhadra, Shanth, Kshem; Amrit; and Abhay. In these there are seven mountains and seven rivers. The rivers are - Aruna; Nrimna; Angirasi; Savitri; Suprabhatika; Ritambhara; and Satyambhara. The mountains of Plakshdweep are - Manikoot; Vajrakoot; Indrasen; Jyotishman; Suparna; Hiranyashtiv and Meghmaal.

The rivers are so holy, that just by darshan or contact, the inhabitants get purified. All their sins get washed away. Plakshdweep has four tribes - Hans, Patang; Oordhvayan; and Satyang. They live for thousand years. They are all endowed with good qualities, and worship Surya Bhagwan according to rites laid down in the three Vedas. They say – “We are surrendered to the Lotus

Feet of that Puranpurush Vishnumay Bhagwan Surya, Who is the Ruler of Truth; the Vedas, and virtuous deeds." Narad! All those who take birth in these five islands plus Plakshdweep, are endowed with regulated life span; senses; shakti; strength; intelligence and prowess.

In comparison, the Ikshuras Samudra (Ocean of sugarcane juice) is much greater than Plakshdweep. Consequently Shalmalidweep is twice the size of Plakshdweep. And this huge island is completely surrounded by sweet water of the ocean. In this island there is a Semar tree, as huge as the Pakad in Plakshdweep. King of the birds, Pakshiraj Garudji, presides here. The ruler of Shalmalidweep is Raja Yagyabahu, who is the son of Raja Priyavrat. Raja Priyavrat is the one who divided this island between his seven sons. The names of the seven divisions are – Surochan; Sowmanasya; Ramanak; Dev-varshak; Paribhadra; Aspyayan; and Vigyan. In these there are seven mountains and seven rivers. The names of the mountains are - Saras; Satshring; Vamdev; Kandak; Kumud; Pushpvarsh; and Sahasrashruti. The rivers are – Anumati, Sinivali, Saraswati, Kuhu, Rajani, Nanda and Raka. The inhabitants belong to the different tribes - Shrutdhar; Viryadhar; Vasundhar; and Ishundhar. They worship Vedswaroop Chandrama as Bhagwan Ishwar. They say "May that Bhagwan Som be pleased; Who has used His rays to divide the path of the forefathers into Shukla and Krishna fortnights.

In the same way Kushdweep is double the magnitude of the ocean of sweet water. It is surrounded by an ocean of ghee. In this island grows a dense clump of Kusha. This is why it is called Kushdweep. Agni devata with His blazing fire has burned away all the wood, and reigns supreme here. This Kushdweep is ruled by Raja Hiranyaretha, son of Priyavrat. Hiranyaretha divided this island into seven parts for his seven sons. Their names are – Vasu; Vasudaan; Dhridruchi; Nabhigupt; Stutyavrat, Vivikth and Bhamdev. There

are seven mountains that mark the boundaries - Chakra; Chatuhshring; Kapil; Chitrakoot; Devanik; Urdhvaroma and Dravin. There are also seven rivers – Raskulya; Madhukulya; Mitravinda; Shrutvinda; Devgarbha; Ghritchyuta and Mantramallika. All the people of Kushdweep drink the water of these rivers. The four tribes are Kushal, Kovid, Abhiyukt and Kulak. They worship Agni as the embodiment of Shri Hari and worship him by performing yagyas. All are versed in the Vedas, and are effulgent like the gods. Their prayer to Agnideva, is – "O Agnideva, Who is also called Jaatveda; You personally deliver our oblations to Parabrahm Paramatma. Therefore, when You convey the offerings of the devas to Parampurush Paramatma, please include our offerings also.

In this way, in the island of Kushdweep, Bhagwan Shri Hari is worshipped in the form of Agniswaroop.

Naradji said – O All-knowing Prabho! Please tell me about the other remaining islands.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Kushdweep is completely surrounded by the endless ocean of ghee. Outside this, and twice as large, lies Kraunchdweep. It is surrounded by a vast ocean of milk. In this island stands a mountain called Kraunch, which has given the island its name. It happened a long time ago. With the shakti of Swami Kartikeya the stomach of this island burst. It was put right by Ksheersamudra and Varun. The ruler was Ghritpristh, son of Priyavratkumar. He was a greatly respected king. He divided the island into seven parts for his seven sons. After appointing each son as a ruler, King Ghritpristh attained the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Hari. The names of his sons were – Aam; Madhuruh; Meghpristh; Sudhamak; Bhrajisht; Lohitarn and Vanaspati. Here also there are seven mountains and seven rivers. The

mountains are – Shukla; Vardhman; Bhojan; Upbarhan; Nand; Nandan and Sarvattobhadra. The rivers are – Abhaya; Amritougha; Aryaka; Tirthvati; Vrittiroopwati; Shukla and Pavitrawati. All four tribes drink the holy water of these rivers. The names of the tribes are Purush; Rishabh; Dravin; and Devak. They worship God of the waters Varundev. They pray thus - Bhagwan Varundev! By the grace of Purushottam Shri Hari You have been endowed with boundless shakti. You purify the three regions Bhu; Bhuvah; Swa. It is Your nature to remove all negativities. We immerse ourselves in you. Please cleanse and purify us". They even chant this prayer as a mantra. And sing Stutis.

Beyond Ksheersamudra (Ocean of Milk) lies Shakdweep. It has an expanse of thirty-two lakh yujans and surrounds Ksheersamudra. Then Shakdweep is surrounded by the ocean of buttermilk. In this island grows a huge Shak tree, which has given the island its name. Meghatithi, son of Priyavrat, was the ruler of this island. He divided and distributed the island among his seven sons, and retired into the forest to practice yoga. The names of the sons of raja Meghatithi were - Purojav; Manojav; Pavman; Dhumanik; Chitrarekh; Bahuroop and Vishvadhrik. It has seven mountains and seven rivers. The mountains are eeshaan; Urushring; Balbhadra; Shatkesar; Sahasrashrot; Devpal and Mahasan. Names of the rivers are Anagha; Ayurda; Ubhayasprishti; Aparajita; Panchpadi; Sahasrashruti and Nijdhriti. The natives are divided into four tribes - Satyavrat; Kratuvrat; Daanvrat and Anuvrat. They perform pranayam and worship Bhagwan Vasudev. They sing Stutis in this way - O God Who resides within all beings and sustains and nourishes; and who rules the entire universe; we pray to You, O Antaryami Bhagwan (existing within) to protect us.

Narad! Beyond the ocean of buttermilk, is the expansive Pushkardweep. It is double the size of Shaakdweep. It is surrounded by an ocean of sweet water. In this island there is a brilliant and resplendent Lotus. From its countless petals, radiate so much brightness and splendor, that it seems to be on fire. One lakh golden leaves add to its glorious beauty. At the beginning of creation, the sole doer, Shri Hari, created this lotus for the most auspicious Brahmaji, as His abode. In Pushkardweep, this is the only mountain in this island, and it separates the East from the West. It is ten thousand yojans in height and girth. In its four directions are four cities, and Indra and other Lokpals live here. The sun rises from here and perambulates Sumerugiri Mountain. The wheel of Surya's chariot symbolizes one year. It follows the path of Devyaan and Pitryaan (aerial chariots of the gods and the ancestors). Vitihotra, son of Priyavrat, ruled here. He divided the island into two, for his two sons Raman and Dhataki. Vitihotra renounced his worldly life and became a devotee of Bhagwan Shri Hari. The people worship Brahmaji as Sakshat Parabrahma Parameshwar. They sing – We worship that form of Shri Brahma which is one, which is Peace, and where there is no other.

CHAPTER 8 - episodes 14-15

14 – 15 Placement of Lokalok Parvat; and description of the movement of the Sun.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Devrishi Narad! Beyond this is the Lokalok mountain. There are two regions – one which is illuminated, and one which is not. In the centre stands Mount Lokalok with the purpose of marking the boundary. The distance between Mount Maansottar and Mount Sumeru is the height of this mountain. Here the earth is golden. It is so clear it is like a mirror. Ordinary beings cannot survive here. Only the gods can live here. Whatever touches it, becomes gold. So nothing lives here. That is how it got the name Lokalok. It stands in the exact centre of the place that gets enlightened by the sun, and the place that does not. Bhagwan Shri Hari established this mountain over all the three lokas, so that it determined the four different directions and boundaries. From Surya to Dhruv (Polar star) they are, all the planets subservient to Lokalok Parvat. Consequently the rays of these planets illuminate the three lokas that lie behind it. The lokas on the other side, never see light. Narad! As high as this mountain is, it is equally long. On top of this mountain in all four directions, Shri Brahma himself has created four supporting elephants (Diggaj). The names of these Gajjarajs are – Rishab, Pushpchud; Vaman, and Aparajit. They are there to support and stabilize the lokas – (all quarters of the world). Presiding over this lofty Lokalok Parvat, is Sakshat Bhagwan Shri Hari. The main reason for His presence here is that the supporting elephants and Indra and all the gods, benefit from his majesty and glory. That they should fully absorb His Sattwic attributes and become auspicious, compassionate and benevolent. All the eight siddhis are in attendance. Vishvaksen and other courtiers stand guard. In His four hands He bears Shank, Chakra, Gada (mace) and Padma (Lotus). In this manifest form,

the eternal Shri Hari reigns here for a full Kalpa. In order to protect this universe, created out of His Maya, He has made arrangements to abide here. It is said that as long and wide as the mountain is inside, the same expanse is outside. No one can traverse this pure and sacred place, except great yogis.

Narad! Between heaven and earth is Brahmand, and in the center of it resides the Surya. The distance between Suryamandal (solar system) and Brahmand, is twentyfive crore yojans (one yojan is sixteen miles). The sun exists in that part of the universe, which is chetana-shoonya (devoid of consciousness), and that is the reason the sun is called Marthand. Because he took birth from Brahmand, the sun is also called Hiranyagarbh. It is the function of the Sun to define the divisions of Directions, Akash, Antariksh lok (the celestial space), Prithvilok, Heaven, Apvarg (the area of deliverance from Transmigration of the soul), Hell, and the nether regions. Devatas, humans, animals, crawling life forms and plants – the soul of all these is the sun. He is also called Netendriya Swami. Narad! This is the extent of Bhoomandal (Earth).

In the middle of these two lokas, lies Antarikshlok. The ruler of the Solar System, Bhagwan Surya, who enlightens and illuminates, resides in the heart of this loka. During Uttarayan (summer solstice, when the sun is on the north of the equator), his movement becomes slow. With his mighty and powerful brilliance, he gives light and heat to the Trilokis. He is always burning and glowing. His Uttarayan position is very high. When he reaches this station, days begin to get longer. Then when he starts on his journey to Dakshinayan (winter solstice, south of the equator), then his velocity increases. This station is at a lower point, and when he reaches here, the days get shorter. The third station of Surya is called Vishuvat (Equinox, when the Sun is on the equator). On this station his speed stabilizes, because it is on a level plane. Then days and nights are almost equal.

When the Sun enters Mesh (Aries), and Tula (Balance) rashis, then days and nights are equal. When he enters Vrish (Taurus) and other five rashis, then the days start getting longer and nights shorter. When he enters Vrishchik (Scorpio) and other five rashis, then again there is a change in lengths of day and night.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Now I will describe the movements of the Sun. He moves with three speeds – fast, slow and medium. Munivar! The places of the Planets are three in number. They are called Jaaragdav, Airawat and Vaishvaanar. Jaaragdav is in the middle; Airawat in the North; and Vaishvaanar is in the South. In each planetary sphere there are three divisions. Ashwini, Bharani and Krittika are in one division called Nagavithi. Rohini, Mrigshira and Ardri are in Gaj-vithi. Pushya, Punarvasu and Aashlesha are in Airawati vithi. These three vithis are called the Northern passage. Magha, Poorvaphalguni and Uttaraphalguni, are in Aarshbhi-vithi. Hasth, Chitra and Swati are in Go-vithi. Vishakha, Anuradha and Jyeshta are in Jaaragdavi-vithi. These three vithis are called the central passage. Mool, Poorvashad and Uttarashad are in Ajj-vithi. Shravan, Dhanishta and Shatbhisha are in Mrig-vithi. Poorvabhadrapad, Uttarabhadrapad and Revathi are in Vaishvaanari-vithi. Ajj-vithi, Mrig-vithi and Vaishvaanari-vithi are called the Southern passage. When Surya's chariot traverses the Uttarayan path, the two wheels are drawn by Dhruv using a flow of wind as a harness. Then it is said that the sun is in Aarohan-gati (speed of movement). The chariot moves inside the mandal. Munivar! During this slow movement the days begin to get longer and the nights shorter. This is the gradation process.

In the same way, when the chariot of the Sun is pulled on the Dakshinayan path, then the speed is called Avarohan-gati, and the chariot moves outside

the mandal. At that time the sun moves with greater speed. Length of daytime decreases, and nights get longer.

When the Sun is on Vishuvmarg, it is not pulled in any direction. He is in balance. He presides in the centre of the mandal, and that is when days and nights are equal.

When, on the command of Dhruv, Pavan puts the reins (Pash) on the chariot and pulls it, then the Sun orbits the inner part of the mandal. As soon as the chariot is released from the chains of Dhruv, the Sun orbits the outer part of the system.

On the eastern side of Meru Parvat is Indra's city Devdhani. On the southern side of Meru Parvat is Sayyamani, city of Yamraj. The great city of Nimlochani belongs to Varun, and is situated on the west side of Mount Meru. Vibhavari, the beautiful puri of Chandrama, lies to the north of Meru Parvat. Those who are learned in the Vedas say that the Sun rises in the city of Indra. When it reaches Sayyamanipuri, it becomes noon. Then it becomes dusk when it reaches Nimlochini puri; and when it reaches Vibhavari puri, it is midnight. All the gods honour Surya Devata; and all beings organize their lives around the movements of the Sun. For those who live on Sumeru Parvat, it is always mid-day. Although the chariot of the Sun travels with Sumeru mountain on its left, Pravahavayu (one of the seven winds) causes it to turn towards the south. Sunrise and sunset takes place in front of all beings. Narad! All beings, living in the directions and intermediate points of the compass, count their daybreak with the rising run, and dusk with the setting sun.

Narad! When the sun enters the cities of Indra and other Lokpaals, at that time all the Trilokis get enlightened by his rays. Two triangles, their three

corners, and two cities, get the sunlight spread over all of them. All the islands and continents are fixed to the north of Sumeru mountain. For all those who witness sunrise, the point from where the sun rises, is their East. Exactly in the opposite direction will lie Meruparvat. This has been accepted as a dogma. The Sun, with his thousand rays, determines time and passage. When He moves from Indra's city to Sayyamani puri (Yamlok) it takes him fifteen ghadis (one ghadi is twentyfour minutes) to travel the distance of two and a quarter crore, twelve lakh and seventyfive thousand yojans. In the same way He sets the time and distance when travelling to Varunlok, Chandralok and back to Indralok. Surya is also called Kaalchakra-atma and Dhyumani. This constant perambulation computes time. Chandrama and all other celestial bodies, together with the planets, keep rising and setting. The Sun is also called Trayeemay. His chariot makes one revolution of thirtyfour lakh, eight hundred yojans in one muhurth (one hour forty eight minutes). This covers the four puris (cities) in four directions. The wind names Pravaha constantly rotates the wheels of his chariot. According to wise men, each wheel of the chariot of the Sun, represents one year. Each has twelve spokes, three axles and six wheel boxes. One extremity of the axle is on the peak of Sumeruparvat, and the other extremity is on Maansottar parvat. The wheels of Surya's chariot move like an oil-press. In this way, from the top of Maansottar parvat, the sun performs his perambulation. Within this axle there is one other axle. It is four times greater in magnitude than the first axle. Moving round like an oil press, it goes upto Dhruvlok.

Narad! The seat of Surya's chariot is thirty-six lakh yojans long and nine lakh yojans wide. These are said to be the dimensions. Arun is the sarathy (charioteer). Gayatri and other stanzas are said to be the high quality horses. When they are harnessed by Arun, they carry the Sun to the places where he bestows blessings and auspiciousness. Arun is the elder brother of Garuda.

Surya has engaged him as his charioteer. In the chariot he sits in front of the Sun, but facing him. Always accompanying the Sun, are Balkhil and other Rishis, numbering sixty thousand. They surround the Sun, and sing his praises and recite Vedic mantras. In the same way, other rishis, gandharvas, apsaras, nagas, yakshas, rakshasas and devas, each worship him for a full month. In this way, for seven months, seven devas worship him continuously. Surya is considered all pervading and foremost of devas. He eternally revolves around prithvi, which is nine crore, fifty lakh yojans. His speed is two thousand yojans per kshan (four minutes).

CHAPTER 8 episodes 16-18

16-18 Description of the movement of the Moon and other planets; Sishumar Chakra, Rahu and other stars.

Bhagwan Narayan says – I will now tell you about the wonderful movements of the moon and other stars and planets. It is from these movements that human beings get knowledge of auspicious and inauspicious times. Just as a potter's wheel moves – ants and insects on it also move – then these ants and insects have their own speed of movement and also they do not remain motionless or fixed at a point, but roam here and there. In the same way when the Sun moves with Sumeru and Dhruv on his right side, another movement of the planets becomes apparent on the wheel of time, influenced by the signs of the Zodiac (a band of the sky divided into twelve equal parts) through which it passes. The movement is dependent on the planet it is passing. Therefore when one nakshatra ends, the next one begins, and there is a change in the speed of movement. These two movements are not contrary or against each other. They are in harmony. This is constant. The one whom all are seeking, that universal Adipurush Bhagwan Narayan, keeps traversing the creation for its nourishment and protection. Also to purify and cleanse our actions, He has divided His Vedic form into twelve parts, and made arrangements for six seasons, with their attributes. Holy men constantly perform the duties advised by the Vedas, and piously practice yoga and worship the Surya-roop of Bhagwan Narayan. In this way they achieve auspiciousness. Bhagwan Surya is the soul of all living beings. His movement is in the central path of Heaven and Prithvilok. He moves, firmly fixed on Kaalchakra (wheel of time). Twelve months are the divisions of the year. Mesh and other rashis are His embellishments. Step by step He travels through these twelve months. A month has two Pakshs (halves or fortnights) Shukla and Krishna, bright and

dark. The ancestors counted it as one day and one night. According to the solar measure it is two and a quarter Nakshatras. The time it takes for the Sun to travel a sixth part of the year is called Ritu or season. It is a part of a year. The time it takes for the Sun to go round the Akashmandal, including heaven and earth is called a Year. Years are of five kinds---Sanvatsar; Parivatsar; Idavatsar; Anuvatsar and Idhvatsar. Those

who have knowledge of the speed and time, say that the Sun does not move at a constant speed. Sometimes he moves fast, sometimes slow, and sometimes at an even speed.

Narad! Now listen to the description of the speed of the Moon and the Planets. The Moon is one lakh yojans above the rays of the sun. He is known as the swami of medicines. He completes the one year journey of the sun in two fortnights; one month's journey in two days, and one fortnights journey in one day. In this way the Chandrama perambulates Bhu-chakra (equator). When it gradually grows to Full Moon, its display pleases the gods; and when it decreases gradually to New Moon, it pleases the Manes (ancestors). Its fortnights on the eastern and northern sides make day and night for the gods. The moon is the life of all living beings. In thirty muhurths (one muhurth is one hour forty eight minutes), it passes all the Nakshatras. It has sixteen divisions. He is called the Anadi Sresht Purush (the eternal one). He is also called Manomay; Annamay; Amritdhara and Sudhakar. He nourishes the devatas, the ancestors, humans, snakes, animals, insects and plants. Therefore he is called Sarvamay (all abounding). Three lakh yojans above the moon is the Naksatra-mandal (the planetary system). Including Abhijit, there are twenty-eight Nakshatras. God has tied them to Kaalchakra. Keeping Meruparvat on their right they perform their perambulation.

Narad! Shukra (Venus) is stationed two lakh yojans above the Nakshatra mandal. He moves alongside the Sun. Sometimes in front, and sometimes behind. It also has three kinds of speeds – fast, slow and medium. For all living beings it is friendly and favourable. It is called an auspicious star. It keeps neutralising the obstacles and ill effects of Bhargav varsha. Two lakh yojans above this lies Budh (Mercury). It also has three speeds – fast, slow and medium. When it crosses the path of the Sun, then we have cyclones and tempests; or droughts. Two lakh yojans above this lies Mangal (Mars). If it does not become oblique, then it passes each rashi in three fortnights. Devrishi! In this way it perambulates twelve rashis. Because it gives an indication of imminent misfortune and disaster, it is considered undesirable. Two lakh yojans above this lies Brihaspati (Jupiter). If it is not oblique, it stays in one rashi for one year. It is very pleasing to the Brahmins. Two lakh yojans above this is the fearful Shani (Saturn). It is called Ghor (formidable). His father is the Sun. He halts at each rashi for thirty months. Wise men say that its presence bodes ill for all. Narad! Eleven lakh yojans above this is the constellation of Saptashri (the seven great rishis or sages. The Great Bear). These rishis perambulate Dhruvlok, which is also called Vishnupad and spread auspiciousness to all living beings.

Narad! Above Saptarishisthan, thirteen lakh yojans away, is the supreme, most excellent Dhruv lok (North Polar Star). It is also called Vishnupad – (footstool of Vishnu.) The great bhagwan, Shriman Dhruv, resides here. His father is Uttanpad. The whole universe bows its head to Dhruv. Indra, Agni, Kashyap and Dharm – most respectfully do pradakshina around him. Dhruv becomes the support of all living things for one kalpa (4320,000,000 years). Kaal (time) never sleeps. Everyone does not see its speed of passage. This most powerful time influences and instigates into movement, all the planets, stars and other heavenly bodies. Parameshwar has anchored Dhruv as a pillar.

Worshipped by the Devas, Dhruv is self illuminating. Just as, in a granary, bulls are chained to a central post and they go around it husking the grain; in the same way all the planets and stars move around Dhruv. Being fixed to Kaalchakra, they move gradually from outside to inside, and out again. Anchored to Dhruv, and moved by the impetus of Vayu, they go round and round like eagles and kites circling the skies. In this way the moving celestial bodies have a connection with nature and humanity, and this divine relationship prevents them from falling to the ground.

Narad! Some people claim that the Yog maya (illusory power) of Shri Hari is the basis of the Planetary System (Jyotishchakra). They say this Jyotishchakra rests on Kundali (coils). The head is downwards. On the higher part of the tail rests the singhasan of Dhruv. At the root of the tail (mool) reside Prajapati, Agni, Indra and Dharm, representing the essence of the gods. On the tip of the tail reside Dhata and Vidhata (Creator and Preserver), and Saptrishigan (seven great rishis) reside in the middle part. This Shishumar (dolphin) or Planetary System, lies with his body turned to the right side. The fourteen Nakshatras of Uttarayan (Northern Hemisphere) are on its right side. The Nakshatras of Dakshinayan (Southern Hemisphere) are on its left side. Narad! Even when an earthly body forms itself into coils, the middle part of the body, near the ribs, remains in an equal and regular arrangement on both sides. The same arrangement prevails in the Cosmos also. In the rear part of the cosmic Shishumar (dolphin) is the Nakshatra called Ajj (ram); that is to say Mool, Poorvshad, and Uttarashad Nakshatras (19th, 20th and 21st Lunar Mansions). In the stomach part is Akashganga (Milky Way Constellation). On the left and right hip region is Punarvasu and Pushya (7th and 8th Lunar Mansions). On the two rear legs, left and right side, lie Aardra (6th) and Aashlesha (8th nakshatra consisting of five stars). On the left and right nostrils are Abhijit and Uttarashad (21st nakshatra and 21st Lunar Mansion). Devrisishi! On his left

and right eyes are Shravan and Poorvashad (22nd and 20th Nakshatras). Dhanishta and Mool (23rd Nakshatra composed of five stars) are placed on its ears. Mune! In Dakshinayan, the 10th Nakshatra Magha, and eight others, are placed in the bones of Vaamparshv (left rib cage). Similarly the eight Nakshatras of Uttarayan are in the Dakshinparshv (right rib cage). On the right and left shoulders are placed Shatabhisha and Jyeshta (25th and 18th Nakshatras). In the upper part of Todi (chin) is the place of Agasthya (the star Canopus), and in the lower part of the chin is the place of Yamraj. In the face is Mangal (Mars), and in Jananendriya (genitals) is the place of Shani (Saturn). On Kakud (the hump) is placed Brihaspati (Jupiter, also called as Guru). On the chest presides King of the Planets, Graharaj Surya. In the heart is enthroned Bhagwan Narayan and in the mind resides Chandrama. In the Sthan (udders) reside the two Ashwini Kumars (sons of the Sun, who are divine physicians), and in the Nabhi resides Shukra (Venus). In Pran and Apan resides Budh (Mercury), and in the neck is placed Rahu and Ketu. In this way there are Nakshatras in all the limbs and parts of the body, and also in the Romkoop (pores of the skin.)

Narad! This is the most complete, Divine form of Bhagwan Vishnu. It is recommended that men of temperate habits and spiritual nature, maintain silence in the evening, and worship this Form, chanting the mantra Om Namoh! Jyotirlokay Kalayanimishampathaya Mahapurushayabhidimahih: - Bhagwan! You are the refuge of all the Jyotirgans. You preside in the form of Kaalchakra. You are the ruler of all the gods, and You are the Parampurush. We offer You Namaskars. You are in the form of planets, stars and Nakshatras. Whoever worships You in this form of Yours, three times a day, gets released from his sins.

Ten thousand yojans below Surya lies the Rahu mandal. He was born of Simhika, or demoness. Even though not qualified, it moves like a planet. Chandra and Surya both tried to destroy it, but by the grace of Bhagwan Vishnu he has acquired planetary status and immortality. He who appears as a reflection of the burning Sun, is ten thousand yojans wide. Chandrama is twelve thousand yojans wide. This Rahu graha is always trying to eclipse the Sun and the Moon, because it is said he has not forgotten the past hostility. When Bhagwan Vishnu heard this, He sent His Sudarshan Chakra to Surya and Chandra. That fearsome Chakra has limitless brilliance, which is unbearable and which surrounds the Sun and the Moon. Rahu just cannot go near. He approaches up to a point, and recedes back again. Devrishi! This phenomenon is known as Grahan or Eclipse, on earth.

Narad! Below Rahu lie the most pure regions of Sindho, Charno and Vidhyadhar. They are ten thousand yojans wide. All the punyatmas reside here. Devrishi! Below these regions, are the spots occupied by Yakshas, Rakshasas, Bhoots, Prets and Pishachis. Below this, wherever the Vayu blows and clouds wander, is the place which learned men call Antariksh Lok. One hundred yojans below this starts the earth's atmosphere up to which height the eagles, kites, cranes and swans can fly. These are all composed of elements. This is the dimension and situation of Prithvi (Earth).

Devrishi! Below Prithvi there are said to be seven smaller worlds. Each one is one thousand yojans apart from each other. These worlds have beneficial influence on the seasons. Their names are Atal, Vital, Sutal, Talatal, Mahatal, Rasatal and Paataal. These worlds are, in a way, like heaven. In some of them there are more provisions for happiness and pleasure, auspiciousness, success and prosperity. They are full of gardens and pleasure resorts. Almost everywhere one can enjoy the pleasure of taste and desires. The residents,

who are mainly Daityas, Danavas and Nagas, live in pleasure with their wives, children, relations and friends. They are the heads of their families. Their society consists of friends and dependents. By the grace of Ishwar, all their wants are satisfied. All seasons are kind to them, and they live in prosperity.

In those worlds, a Danav called May, used his artful science of illusion, and created fantastic palaces studded with precious stones, thousands of bhavans with upper storeys, council halls and temples. Even the Devas did not have such opulent cities. Nagas and Asuras live in these surroundings. Pigeons and mynahs fly around. There are also many beautiful gardens, filled with trees bearing flowers and fruits. There are many ponds and lakes filled with clear water. When the fish frolic in the water, water lilies and lotuses of white, blue and red colour, begin to sway. Songbirds build their nests there, and fill the air with their sweet sounds. There is an air of enchantment and pleasure. But no existence of Divine Faculties. The people have no sense of fear. Big snakes roam around, and the gems on their heads dispel all darkness. Those who live here do not need medicines or potions to prolong life, nor do they need food or bath. No one gets sick. They are not troubled by old age, greying hair, wrinkled skin, perspiration, body odours, tiredness, wasted bodies or weakness. Time passes peacefully. They are only afraid of Bhagwan Shri Hari's Sudarshan Chakra. Narad! When Sudarshan Chakra comes near, there is so much panic and fear, that all the Raksasis lose their babies prematurely.

Chapter 18 Episodes 19-20

19-20 Description of Athal, Vithal, Sutal, Talatal, Mahatal, Rasatal and Pataal.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The first of the seven worlds is called Athal, and is very pleasing. A Danav called Bal lives here. He is very ambitious. His father was a Danav May, who used ninety-six kinds of Maya to create an illusionary system to fulfil all desires.

Narad! The second is Vithal. It lies below Athal. Here resides Bhagwan Shankar in the form of Hat Keshwar . He is accompanied by his parshads (attendants). His main purpose is to enhance the creation of Shri Brahma. He and His Shakti Devi Bhavani are worshipped by all the Gods. By the glorious lustre of Bhagwan Shiva and Parvati, there flows a river called Haat. Vayu instigates Agni to drink that water. While drinking, whatever excess water Agni spits out, becomes the famous gold called Haatak. The Daityas are very fond of this gold. Their wives adorn themselves with ornaments made from this gold.

Narad! Below this, lies Suthal. It is the best of all these worlds. Bali, son of Virochan, lives here. He is a very glorious and renowned king. To fulfil a request of Devraj Indra, Bhagwan Shri Hari assumed the form of a dwarf and incarnated as Vaman. It is He who arranged for Bali to live here. He first filled this place with the wealth of all the three lokas, and then He established Bali here. Bali has more blessings of Lakshmi than Indra and all the Devas combined. Bali worships with complete surrender, the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Hari. His attention is always pure. Suthal Lok is still under the lordship of Bali.

Narad! Great mahatmas say that Bhagwan Vasudev has the power to endow energy and valour on all beings. He is known as Lord and Master of the universe (Jagat Swami). The Lord came to Bali as a Daan-paatra (person fit for bestowal of alms), and Bali gave to him as alms, the whole world. But it was not for this act alone that he got the reward. Because in a state of surrender, if anyone takes the name of Devadidev, then He Himself cuts the knot of "fruits of actions". He is the most expert and competent master of the universe. Yogis perform all kinds of austerities, renunciations and yogas to cut the bonds of worldly sufferings and attachments. Therefore the bestowal of Suthal lok on Bali should not be misconstrued as an act of liberality or generosity on the part of the Lord. We should recognise it as a blessing upon all of us. He played this drama to make Indra experience the illusionary (mayamay) wealth and opulence. This aishwarya is the root cause of all sufferings and tribulations. When too much maya (riches, wealth, opulence) comes into your life, you cannot remember God, and your attention gets entangled. God moves far away. Bhagwan Vishnu is sakshat Ishwar. He is the complete knowledge. By the art of deception He relieved Bali of all his possessions. He was only left with his body. The reason is, that at that time and circumstance, there was no other solution. God is of course all-knowing and all-capable. He bound Bali to the wind god Varun, and transported him to this Suthal lok, and settled him there. Bali expressed his feelings in this way –

Inspite of having a counsellor like Brihaspati, Indra has shown himself to be most stupid and foolish. From the great Lord Shri Hari, Who was in a pleased and favourable state, he prayed for worldly riches and possessions. Verily the aishwarya of this Triloki is shallow and insignificant, whereas the blessings of God are invaluable and precious. Leaving this aside, and preferring worldly riches and possessions, is indeed the height of foolishness. My revered father Shriman Prahlad loved God. His only desire was welfare and good fortune for

the whole world. Therefore when he was offered a boon, he asked god to fill his heart with devotion and concern for his subjects. His father was a brave and powerful man. When he died Bhagwan Vishnu offered all his wealth to my father Prahlad, but he declined to accept. One cannot measure the divine effect that God has on His devotee. He is possessed of all attributes and qualities. How can I who are filled with so many negative traits, recognise and understand the Divine.

This most humble, most admirable and most respectable Danavraj Bali, reigns over Suthal Lok. Bhagwan Shri Vishnu Himself stands there as Dwarpal (doorkeeper). It happened once – the scourge of the world, Ravana, with intentions of conquering the world, came towards Suthal Lok. Just then Bhagwan Shri Hari , who is most benevolent to His bhaktas, jerked His toe and tossed Ravan away to a distance of ten thousand yojans. That is how dear Bali was to the Lord. He received the blessings of the greatest divine bliss. By the grace of Devadidev Bhagwan Shri Hari, he reigns as king of Suthal Lok.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Below Suthal Lok lies Talatal. Danavraj May resides there. This great Daitya was king of Tripur. In order to protect the trilokis Shri Shankar Bhagwan reduced to ashes the three cities of Tripur and settled him in Talatal. By the grace of Devadidev Bhagwan Shankar he became the king of Talatal. This Danavraj May is the guru of conjurers and jugglers. He has complete knowledge of the science of illusion; and Danavas pray to him for siddhis (supernatural powers) in the art of illusion and deception.

Below Talatal is situated the famous Mahatal, which is the abode of the serpents Kadru and all their descendants. Narad! These serpents have many heads. The main serpents are Kuhak, Takshak, Sushain and Kaaliya. They have

very big hoods and powerful bodies. They are very dangerous. They are always distressed and afraid of Pakshiraj Garud, King of the Birds. They live here with their wives, children, relations and friends, and spend their time in sport and amusement.

The world which lies below Mahatal is known as Rasatal. Many daityas live here, and are called Panis. Some famous daityas are Nivatkavach, Hiranyapurvasi, and Kalay. They are always hostile to the Devas. From birth they are very strong and active and fearless. But their strength is always reduced and kept in check by the effulgence of Bhagwan Shri Hari. That is why they remain within their world of Rasatal. One of the female messengers of Indra is Sarma. She contrived many mantras and caused great hardships to many asuras. The asuras are always in great fear of her.

Narad! Situated below Rasatal is Pataal Lok. Here many rulers of the serpent race live. Vasuki is the foremost serpent. The others are Shankh, Kulik, Shwet, Dhananjay, Mahashank, Dhritrashtra, Shankhachud, Kambal, Ashwatar and Devdutt. They all have great big hoods. They are high spirited, wrathful and extremely venomous. Many of them have five, seven, ten, hundred, and even thousand heads. They bear precious gems on their heads which keep glinting and gleaming. Devrishi! The brilliance of their gems dispels all the darkness from Pataal. Their bodies constantly burn with anger.

Narad! Below Pataal Lok, at a distance of thirty thousand yojans, there is a Tamasi creation of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Worshipped by all the gods it is called Anant. The special quality of this eternal form is, that even though it is created from ahamkar, it draws together the Drashta and the Drishya (the seer and the seen), and makes them one. Therefore it is called Sankarshan (blending together). The serpent is adorned with a thousand heads and is called Sesh.

This Bhagwan Sesh is also called Anant (eternal). This earth, which rests on his head, looks like a tiny mustard seed. At different times, when the desire for dissolution of the creation arises within the Lord, then from His eyebrows there emerges a Rudra called Sankarshan who is arrayed with Eleven Rudras. These Rudras have three eyes. The Rudra Sankarshan also holds in his hands, the three pointed Trishul. His Shakti has no bounds. His only purpose is to annihilate and dissolve the creation.

Mune! On both the feet of Bhagwan Sesh Nag, the toe-nails are like red rubies, and most beautiful. When serpent kings and other important serpents bow in deep devotion to Bhagwan Sesh, then they see, reflected in these nails their own images illuminated by the jewels on their coils. Many Naga maidens also live here. They have beautiful forms and slender limbs and they adorn themselves with paste of sandalwood, aguru and kasturi. Their only desire is to obtain the blessings of Bhagwan Sesh.

Bhagwan Anant is exceedingly benevolent. No one can measure his generosity and power. All divine attributes reside in Him. For the benevolence of the world He has reduced the impulse of anger, hatred and jealousy. All the gods are continuously engaged in worship of this great Shakti. He is meditated upon by the devas, siddhis, asuras, nagas, vidyadhars, gandharvas and munis. His eyes are intoxicated with divine love. He pleases all with His nectar-filled voice. On His neck he wears a Vyjayantimala. This mala which never wilts or dries, is made of tender tulasi stems, and to add to its beauty bumblebees keep hovering over it. Devadidev Bhagwan Sesh wears blue robes, and earrings in one ear only. His powerful arms rest on the hump of a plough. Wise men say Bhagwan Sesh is the foremost among Gods. The golden Prithvi rests on Him like a howdah on an elephant.

CHAPTER 8 Episode 21

21 Narad sings the praises and glory of Bhagwan Anant.

Bhagwan Narayan says - The most fortunate Narad is an ancient person. He is known as the human son of Brahma. One day he went to the court of Brahma and began to sing the praises of Bhagwan Anant –

Who can comprehend that great Bhagwan Sankarshan, whose very darshan causes the creation, sustenance and dissolution of universes, and gives one the capacity and energy to fulfill their functions. Whose form is eternal and primordial. Who supports this world, and many other worlds. Within Him lies the causal for all creation, and this caused Him to take the form of a lion. He has taken this Sattwic form of Bhagwan Sankarshan for the benevolence of all of us. A person who is in distress, if he even casually utters the name of the Lord as he has heard it from someone else; all his greatest sins are forgiven. Then why does a human being have to go looking for other gods. This Bhagwan Sesh has one thousand heads. Because He is infinite, He is also immeasurably powerful. This Bhu-mandal (earth), with all its rivers, mountains, oceans and all living things, rests on only one of these heads, like a speck of dust. If one has even a thousand tongues, he cannot adequately describe the all-pervading power and majesty of the Lord. No one can fully know the extent of the valour, the splendor, the qualities and attributes of Bhagwan Anand. He resides at the base of Rasataal. For the sustenance of this movable and immovable creation, He creates the play of supporting the Prithvi.

Munivar! According to a person's karmas, he gets a place in a particular state and situation. This is known as the maturity or result (Paripaak) of Karmas. If you want this knowledge, I can give it to you. You can listen to this explanation if you so desire.

Naradji says: Bhagwan! I pray You to please tell me the reasons for the diverse situations and circumstances in which living things exist.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! According to the faith and fervor with which a doer performs his actions, diverse fruits are received. Even in faith and fervor, there are three divisions, and the resultant fruits are different. When an action is performed with Sattwic fervor and inclination, then the fruits are a state of bliss and happiness. Actions done with Rajasi shraddha, puts one into circumstances of hardship and difficulties. And acts done with Tamasi inclination and fervor, gives as fruits, imbecility, ignorance, sorrow and unhappiness. Even variations in the intensity of the shraddha, proportionately grant intensity of the situation. Dwijwar! (twice-born; realized) – Maya is uncreated. But the karmas that Maya instigates or causes to be done, produce as fruits, states and situations, and these are thousands in number. Narad! Within Triloki, in the southern parts, reside the ancestors who have become deified; and other forefathers. They are called Agneeshvath, and they live in a place which is below Prithvi and above Athal. Being virtuous and upright, they are always in meditation on the Paramatma, and their only desire is that their descendants attain auspiciousness and spiritual ascent. Bhagwan Yamraj presides over these regions. In order to carry out his functions He has appointed some of these souls, to bring before Him, all the dead. By order of Paramatma, Yamraj is in charge of deciding the punishment or reward for actions committed. In proportion to the degree of good deeds and bad; He

delivers the reward or punishment. He is all-knowing. Even His ganas are fully conversant with dharmas, and are completely dedicated and obedient.

Narad! It is said that there are twenty-one kinds of Hell. Some say twenty-eight. I will tell you the names –

Taamistra, Andhatamistra, Raurav, Maharaurav, Kumbhipaak, Kaalsootra, Asipatra, Sookarmukh, Andhkoop, Krimibhojan, Sandansh, Taptasoormi, Vajrakantak-shalmali, Vaitarni, Puyodh, Praanrodh, Vishan, Lalabhaksh, Saarmeyadan, Avishi, Ayahpaan, Ksharkardam, Rakshogan-bhojan, Shootproth, Dandashook, Avatarodh, Paryavartan, and Suchimukh. These are the twenty-eight kinds of hell, where one has to suffer torture and torment. According to their karmas, the souls acquire the corresponding species of body.

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Chapter 8 Episodes 22-23

22-23 Description of the different hells.

Naradji said – O Eternal One! What are the various karmas which inevitably merit hell. I desire to hear it entirely.

Bhagwan Narayan says - Narad! The person who steals away another's property, wife, and children, is captured by the messengers of Yama, who are of most fearful appearance. They bind him in the chains of Time, and he falls into the hell called Aaamistra. He is beaten with whips, he is reprimanded, and then the punishment is pronounced. In the next life he has to suffer great hardships.

He who deceives another, and has illicit relations with his wife, is taken by the messengers of Yama after death, and thrown into the hell called Andhatamistra. There he suffers unbearable pains. He becomes blind. His intelligence fails. He falls into hell like a felled tree. Because of these sufferings, ancient seers called this hell Andhata-mistra.

"This is mine. This is I". With this kind of ego, pride and attachment, a man becomes hostile towards others, and only cares for his own family, and only looks after their requirements. When such a man dies, his selfish actions cause him to be thrown in the hell called Raurav. This hell is most fearful for all. All those who were murdered by this selfish man, live in this hell as animals called Ruru. And then, when their murderer dies and falls into this hell, they cause him extreme suffering. That is how it got the name Raurav. Elders have said that these Ruru animals are more dangerous than serpents. The Hell called Maharaurav is similar to this. Here the soul gets the body necessary for his

punishment. The Rurus here are flesh-eating animals, and they inflict untold pain and misery on those who are thrown there.

Narad! Those who are wrathful and violent in nature, and cruel and merciless towards all living things, and kill for sport and pleasure, are taken by the messengers of Yamraj, and thrown into a hell called Kumbhipak. They are thrown in cauldrons of boiling oil, and cooked. As many hairs as the killed animal had on its body, for that many thousand years he would remain in the boiling oil.

He who is hostile to his father and to Brahmins, is sent to a hell called Kaalsootra, which is constantly burned by Surya and Agni. There he suffers pangs of hunger and thirst, while the heat of the Sun and fire keep burning him. He is in a constant state of agitation; sometimes sitting, sometimes standing, and sometimes running.

Devrishi! Inspite of there being no disaster or calamity, if a person renounces the path of dharma and takes refuge in a false guru and imposter, that sinner is taken by Yama's messengers and thrown into a hell called Asipatra. There they are lashed with whips, and have nowhere to run. The whips are so sharp-edged that they get deep cuts all over the body. The pain is so great that they cannot walk. In this way, those who forsake the path of truth, and embrace false gurus and their wrong teachings, have to endure sufferings.

A man who is a king or a leader of the people, and who is unrighteous and unjust in his rule, and who tortures Brahmins and realized souls, he deserves hell. The messengers of Yama send him to the hell called Andhkoop. It is in total darkness. It is swarming with pests like biting animals, birds, snakes and

vipers, mosquitos, wasps, bees, lice and bugs. As soon as the sinful soul reaches, all these pests attack him and cause great fear, distress and misery.

All food and edible items should be offered to God first, for His blessings (vibrations) and then shared with others and eaten. This is laid down in all shastras. Those who do not observe this, are called Kaaks (crows). They are sent to a hell called Krimi-bhojan. Here there is a vessel which is one lakh yojans wide, and is called Krimi-kund. The selfish man who only fed himself, becomes a worm and lives in this kund, filled with other worms.

Devrishi! Even when there is no calamity or drought, if a man forcibly snatches or steals another man's gold, wealth or ornaments, such a man is thrown into a hell called Sandansh. He is branded with red hot irons.

A man who has illicit relations with a woman, and a woman who has illicit relations with a man, are thrown into a hell called Taptsoormi. They are lashed with whips, and made to embrace red-hot iron images of a man or woman.

The great sinners who use animals and other living things for sinful purposes, are thrown into a hell called Shalmili, which is filled with sharp iron darts and spears, and nails.

Narad! A King or his ministers, who breaks the codes of dharma, and becomes a fraud, they are sent to the hell called Vaitarni. There is a river here, called Vaitarni, which is filled with the slime and dirt of hell, and they are pushed into this horrible mess. They are tortured by water borne pests, and they neither die nor do their sufferings end. This sluggish river is full of excreta, urine, pus, blood, hair, bones, nails, fat, flesh and marrow; all impure and unholy. They fall in this, and flounder and struggle forever.

He who is high born, but behaves like a Shudra, is indifferent to virtues and morals, and behaves like an animal, he goes to a hell called Puyodh. This hell is filled with dirty, filthy things, and the messengers of Yama force them to swallow it.

Those who are born in spiritually evolved families, but later on keep dogs and donkeys as pets, and keep other animals in captivity; those who indulge in killing of animals for sport; who shoot deer --- lakhs of such people, when they die, are captured by the messengers of Yama, and thrown into a fearsome hell called Praanrodh, and their bodies are riddled with arrows.

Hypocrites and pious frauds, who perform yagyas to deceive people, and who offer animal sacrifices, are thrown into a hell called Vishsan, where they are whipped and lashed without mercy.

All thieves, dacoits, kings and ministers who set fire to others' property; who destroy others' belongings; and who loot villages -- when they die, the messengers of Yama put them in a hell called Sarmeyadan. In that hell there are seven hundred and twenty kinds of ferocious dogs. They tear everyone to pieces and devour them.

Mune! Now I will tell you about Avichi and other famous hells.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Devrishi! Those who encourage fraud in property deals; those who bear false witness; such sinful people, when they die, are taken to the top of a hundred yojans high mountain, and hurled into a hell called Avichhi. This is a horrible hell. When they fall, head first, they hit a bed of hard stones below. All their bones get pulverized; but they do not die. They suffer forever.

Narad! Out of stupidity, the Brahmins, kshatriyas, or vyshyas, who drink alcohol, are taken by Yama's messengers and dropped into a hell called Ayahpaan. There they thrust red-hot iron rods down their throat.

Those who are low born, but out of ego, do not recognize and respect realized souls, they are considered despicable and egoistic. They are sent to a hell called Ksharkardam, where they undergo untold sufferings.

Men who are bewitched by lust and carnal desires, and try to increase their virility by making sacrifice of male human beings; and similarly women who want to increase their attraction and consume the meat of male animals; are thrown into a hell called Rakshogan-bhojan. All those who were killed as sacrifice become rakshasas and wait near Yamraj. When the sinners die and come there, these rakshasas become butchers and attack them with sharp axes, drink their blood, and sing and dance.

Narad! Those who lure innocent and trusting people, and then torture them for pleasure and sport, suffer in a hell called Shoolproth. They are pierced with spikes and darts, and birds with pointed beaks poke them. All their past misdeeds hound them.

Those who are cruel and tyrannical, and cause harm to others, go to a hell called Dandshook. There, five-headed and seven-headed snakes keep striking them.

The man who forces another to be locked up in a dark room, or to live in gloomy dark houses, are taken by the messengers of Yama to a hell called Avatarodh, and locked in dark rooms full of poisonous smoke and gas.

When the head of a household does not welcome guests to his house, but glares at them as if to burn them to ashes; on his death the messengers of Yama put him into a hell called Paryavartan. Eagles, hawks, crows and other birds attack them with sharp talons and beaks, and take out their eyes.

There are people who are abounding in wealth, and this increases their ego. They are always suspicious of people, treat them with contempt; whose attention is completely occupied with amassing wealth and spending it; whose hearts are always dry; who never find peace; and who are always guarding their possessions like Yakshas. When such egoistical people die, the messengers of Yama take them to a hell called Suchimukh. There all their limbs are stitched together.

Devrishi Narad! All those who commit sinful acts, should remember that there are thousands of hells where one has to suffer the consequences of evil deeds. I have only mentioned a few. Mune! All these places are horrible and painful. All sinners have to go to hell. The virtuous, and the seekers of truth, go to peaceful and happy places. Munivar! I have already told you the true dharma of worship and praise to the Devi. This alone can save one from going to hell. As soon as She is worshipped, Bhagawati Jagaddamba rescues one from the ocean of illusion and worldly bondage.

CHAPTER 8 episode 24

24 Modes of worship to please the Devi.

Naradji asked – Maharaj! What is the best way to worship the Devi, to please Her, and attain Her Lotus Feet. What are the various pujas, songs of praise and other acts of worship which cause the Devi to deliver us from the sufferings of hell.

Bhagwan Narayan says – O Most Knowledgeable Devrishi Narad! Bring your attention to single point, and hear from me that dharmic form of praise and worship to the Devi, which pleases Her extremely. Narad! This world is eternal. Whoever comes into this world, and regularly worships Bhagawati Jagaddamba, no matter how insurmountable his troubles are, the most powerful Bhagawati Herself takes him under Her protection. All living beings should worship the Great Divine Mother. This is the main purpose of his birth. Now hear the puja procedures.

On Pratipada day (first day of each half of a lunar month) puja should be performed, using cow's ghee, and observing the Shodshopchar (sixteen methods of worship). Later that ghee should be given to Brahmins (realized souls). This puja gives the fruit of good health, and wards off all sickness.

On Dwitiya tithi (second day) one should perform the puja and offer sugar to the Goddess, and later give it to the Brahmins. This puja gives the fruit of long life.

On Tritiya (third day) milk should be offered to the Goddess during the Puja. Then it can be given to the Brahmins. This gives release from all difficulties.

On Chaturthi, perform Puja to the Devi, and offer Maalpuha. Later on, give it to the Brahmins. The fruits of this puja are that all obstacles are removed.

On Panchami day, perform puja and offer bananas to the goddess. Then give it to the worthy Brahmins This improves and mind and intelligence.

On Shashti day the puja should have honey as the offering. Then give it to the Brahmins. It gives as fruit an improved appearance.

On the seventh day, Saptami, perform puja and offer jaggery, which can later be given to the Brahmins. By doing this one gets freed of all sorrows.

On Ashtami day the puja offering should be coconuts. They they should be given to the Brahmins. This puja gives the fruit that no one can trouble or torment you.

On Navami day, during the Puja one must offer parched rice. Afterwards give it to the Brahmins. It ensures happiness in this world and the next.

Mune! On the Dashami day, the Puja offering should be black til seeds, (sesame). This can be given to the Brahmins. By doing this one gets rid of the fear of Yam Lok.

On Ekadashi day, one should worship Devi Bhagawati and offer curds, and then give it to the Brahmins. This gives great satisfaction to the Devi.

Munivar! On Dvadashi (twelfth day) it is important to offer chuda (beaten rice). The person who offers chuda to the Devi, and then gives it to the Brahmins, becomes very dear to the Devi Bhagawati.

On Triyodashi (thirteenth day), one must offer channa to the Devi. The blessings that come are, many children.

Devrishi! On Chaturdashi (fourteenth day), one must worship Devi Jagaddamba, and offer Sattu. This pleases Bhagwan Shankar.

On Poornima day, one must worship Bhagawati Jagaddamba, offer kheer, and then give it to the Brahmins. This grants release to all the forefathers.

There is no difference in the puja procedure for Poornima and Amavasya. Mahamune! To please the Devi, it is also recommended to perform Havn. Whatever offerings are prescribed for different days, the same should be offered as oblation to the sacred fire of Havan. A Havan neutralizes all impending calamities and disasters.

Now hear the importance of the days of the week.

On Sunday, kheer should be offered in puja.

On Monday, milk should be offered.

The offering on Tuesday should be bananas.

Narad! For Wednesday the prescribed offering is butter.

On Thursday offer Khaand (unrefined sugar)

On Friday, Sugar, and

On Saturday the offering should be ghee.

Mune! Now hear the offerings for the twenty-seven Nakshatras –

Ghee, til, sugar, curds, milk, cream, lassi, laddoo, taarpheni, ghritmand, kasaar (powdered wheat fried with ghee and mixed with sugar), pappad, ghevar (a sweetmeat), pakoda, kokum juice, ghritmishrit (ghee combined with powdered channa and sugar), honey, choorma (crushed rotis mixed with butter and sugar), jiggery, chivda, raisins, dates, charak, pooa (a sweet cake), butter, laddoo of moong flour, and pomegranate.

These twentyseven items should be offered, each for a different Nakshatra. This is called Nakshatra Naivedya.

Narad! Now hear the various Naivedya offerings to be made during Vishkumbh and other yogas. If one follows the prescribed procedures and makes the correct offerings, this pleases the Devi immensely. These items are – jaggery, honey, ghee, milk, curds, buttermilk, poha, butter, cucumber, sweet pumpkin, laddoo, jackfruit, banana, jamun, mango, til, orange, pomegranate, ber, amla, kheer, chivda, channa, coconut, lime, kasaar and churma. These offerings are most holy. These should be offered separately during Vishkumbh and other yogas. These have been prescribed by wise and knowledgeable elders.

Mune! For various functions that are celebrated, the prescribed offerings are - kasaar, juice, sweet vermicelli, modak, pappad, laddoo, sweet ghee, til, ghee, curds and honey. These should be offered with great respect and devotion to Devi Bhagawati.

Munivar Narad! I will tell you one more way to please Bhagawati Jagaddamba. During the month of Chaitra, on the third day of the bright lunar fortnight, one should perform puja to the mahua tree, with full attention on Devi Bhagawati.

Five kinds of edible offerings should be made. This same puja should be performed on the third day of the bright lunar fortnight of all twelve months. Offerings should be made with great care and devotion. Narad! In the month of Vaisakh the offerings should be prepared from Jaggery. In Jyesht month, offer honey. In Aashad, mahua juice should be included in the offerings. In Shravan, offer curds. In the month of Bhadon, sugar. In the month of Ashwin, kheer. In the month of Kartik, offer milk. In Marshshirsh offer feni (sweet vermicelli) In Paush, offer milk mixed with turmeric (dadhi koorchika). In Magh offer cow's ghee, and in the month of Phalgun, the bhog should be of coconut. In these twelve months puja should be performed, and the corresponding offerings should be made. Each time, attention should be on a different aspect of the Goddess while doing puja to the mahua tree - Mangala; Vaishnavi; Maya; Kaalratri; Duratyaya; Mahamaya; Matangi; Kali; Kamalvasini; Shiva; Sahastracharana; and Sarvamangalarooopini. Devdeveshwari Bhagawati Jagaddamba presides over the Mahua tree.

Stutis should be sung in this form –

Obeisance to Bhagawati, Who has beautiful eyes like lotuses. Bhagawati Maheshwari! You are Mahadevi. You are Jagaddatri, and Your form is Mangalmay (pleasing and auspicious). We offer You our Namaskaars. O Most Omniscient One! O Devi! You are Supreme! You are the destroyer of all sins. You give us the way to salvation. O Parameshwari! Parabrahma Swaroopini! Support of all. Easily accessible to devotees. Madonmatta! Maangamya! Mahonnata! Manaswini! Munidhyeya! Martanda Sahacharini! Jai Lokeshwari! These are some of Your names, O Great Goddess. You are lustrous and effulgent like the stormy lightning filled skies of Pralaykaal (time of dissolution). Devas and Danavas pray to You for release from illusion and delusion. O Most Powerful Bhagawati Jagaddamba! You remove all fear of

Yamlok. You are Yampoojya (worshipped by Yama); Yamgraja and Yamnigraha (obstructing the passage to hell). Obeisance to You, again and again. Bhagawati Sarveshwari! You are Samas-Swabhava (containing all attributes); Sarvasang-Vivirjita (companion of all); Sanganashkari (one who breaks attachments); Kamyaroopa (embodiment of pure desire); Karunyavigraha (embodiment of compassion); Kankalkrura (destroyer of cruelty); Kamakshi (form of the Goddess Durga); Meenakshi (having sparkling eyes; Marmabhedini (who pierces the knot of all mysteries); Madhuryaroopsheela; Madhurswarpoojita; Mahamantravati; Mantragamya; Mantrapriyankari; Manushyamanasgama and Manmathari-priyankari -- You are well known by these names O Devi! The Pipal, Vat (Banyan), Neem, Mango, Kaith (wood-apple), Ber, Jackfruit, Madaar, Kareel and Mahua – all these are sacred trees over which You preside. You reside in the Dughdhvalli creeper plant. You are compassionate and the ocean of mercy. Your form of Shree is flowing with compassion. Wise and knowledgeable people worship You. Victory to You – Jai Ho.

Those who perform Puja, and follow it with this song of praise to Deveshwari Jagaddamba, receive the same punyas as those who perform severe penance. This is the best way to please the Devi. The person who continuously sings these praises, never gets attacked by mental disease or physical agony, nor does he have fear of enemies. By the power of these stotras, those who desire wealth will get wealth; and those who desire dharma will get spiritual ascent. This stotra grants to Brahmins the knowledge of all the Vedas; to Kshatriyas victory and success; to Vaishyas prosperity and wealth; and to Shudras great happiness. During Shradh, if a person keeps attention on the Devi and sings this stotra, his forefathers are granted a lease of one kalpa in heaven.

Narad! This is how the gods worship Bhagawati Jagaddamba; and I have told it to you. The person who worships Bhagawati with great respect and deep devotion, attains a place in Devi Lok very easily. All pure desires are fulfilled and he is blessed with Nirmal Vidya – Pure Knowledge. He receives wealth and fame, without any effort. Even in his dreams, the fear of hell does not enter his awareness. Bhagawati Jagaddamba is Mahamaya.

Narad! This narration of the power of Devi Bhagawati, has the capacity to save one from hell. Mune! Puja to Mahadevi gives complete blessings.

Now I will tell you something else. It is called Prakritipanchak. This narration gives joy to the whole world. It is wonderful and most miraculour. It is the best way to get mukti (release from worldly bondage.) I will illustrate it with examples. Please pay attention.

End of Chapter 8

CHAPTER 9

Chapter 9 Episode 1

1 - Description of Devi Prakriti. Her five great aspects, and Her partial and fractional forms.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Ganesh Janani (Mother of Ganesh) Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Savitri and Radha – these five Goddesses are called Prakriti. They support the creation.

Naradji asked – O Foremost of Knowers! From where did Prakriti manifest. How is her form. What are her qualities, and why is she of five kinds. Kindly tell me everything about the description of these devis, the proper way to do their puja; their attributes; and the places where they manifested.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Vatsya! "Pra" means Prakrisht – natural or innate; and "Kriti" means – the creation or construction. Therefore the one who is supremely competent in creating the universe is called Devi Prakriti. "Pra" signifies the pre-eminent Sattwagun; "Kri" signifies the Rajogun; and "Ti" signifies the Tamogun. She Who embodies the Trigunatmika, She uses the energy of the Supreme Shakti and accomplishes the creation. She is the principal Prakriti. "Pra" means – existing in the beginning, and "Kriti" means creation. – The Devi Who existed when the creation began, is called "Prakriti". At the moment of creation, Parabrahma Paramatma manifested in two forms – Prakriti and Purush. The half on the right side was Purush, and the half on the left side was Prakriti. That same Prakriti was Brahmaswaroopa everlasting and eternal. All the qualities and attributes of Parabrahma Paramatma exist

within Prakriti. Just like the properties of heat and burning exist in fire. And this is why supreme yogis do not differentiate between male and female. Narad! They maintain that truth and untruth (sat-asat), real and real, is all composed of Brahma. Bhagwan Shri Krishna is Sarvatantra-Swatantra (verily the Shastras, and independent and self willed). As soon as there awakens within him a desire to create, then immediately the Mool Prakriti Parameshwari (the origin) manifests Her Form. Then on the command of the Adi Shakti, She divides into five forms. Accomplishing various kinds of creation is their prime function. Bhagawati Prakriti takes various forms according to the desires of Her bhaktas and for their benevolence. She Who is the mother of Shri Ganesh – Bhagawati Durga, is called Shivswaroopa. She is the beloved wife of Bhagwan Shankar. She is also known as Narayani, Vishnumaya and Poorna-Brahmaswaroopini. Brahma and all the gods, all the munis; and Manu – all offer Puja to Her. She looks after the needs of all. Narrations about Her are extremely holy. It is Her nature to grant glory, auspiciousness, happiness, moksha, and joy. She removes sorrow, pain and anxiety. She is always engaged in protecting all those who come to Her for refuge. She is effulgent, and a constant stream of light. She is called the Giver of Light. The energy of Surya has been given by Her. She constantly gives energy to Shankar. These are some of Her names - Siddheshwari, Siddhiroopa, Siddhi, Ishwari, Buddhi, Nidra, Kshudha (hunger), Pipasa (thirst), Chaya (reflection), Tandra (fatigue), Daya (mercy), Smriti (recollection), Jaati (caste or lineage), Kshanti (tolerance), Bhranti (delusion) Shanti (peace), Kanti (beauty), Chetana (consciousness) Tushti (satisfaction), Pushti (nourishment), Lakshmi (wealth), Ghriti (fulfilment), and Maya (illusion). Shri Krishna is Parabrahma Paramatma. She resides beside Him in the form of Shakti. In the Shrutis (scriptures), Her praises have been sung. She is eternal, without any beginning and without end. So also are Her qualities. Now I will describe Her second Form. Listen carefully.

She Who is pure, is Paramswaroopa. She is called Bhagawati Lakshmi. She is called the Shakti of Paramprabhu Shri Hari. All the wealth and prosperity in the world is Her form. She is called the giver and protector of all the wealth and assets of the world. She is most beautiful, the embodiment of forbearance and restraint; peace giving, manifesting the highest qualities and radiating auspiciousness. She is totally devoid of flaws and blemishes like greed, attachment, desires, anger, arrogance and conceit and pride. She grants favours and boons to Her devotees, and it is Her nature to love Shri Hari. For all women, She is the perfect example of Pativrata (devoted wife). Shri Hari loves Her as dearly as life. She never utters any words which are unpleasant or disagreeable. All grains and fruits are Her form. For the specific purpose of sustaining life, She has assumed this form. This most chaste and virtuous Devi Mahalakshmi resides in Vaikunth with Her lord, Shri Hari. She reigns in heaven as Swarglakshmi; among kings as Rajlakshmi; and among mortal householders as Grihalakshmi. The glory and dignity of all the material prosperity of the world, comes from Her. She is exceedingly pleasing to behold The lustre and honour of punya-atmas (great realised souls) is Her image. She is the royal dignity in kings. She presides over traders as business and commere. Her Shakti even permeates sinners and wrongdoers. At one time She had descended on this earth in the form of a mare. This has been mentioned in the Vedas. All bear witness to this, and She is worshipped in this form.

Narad! Now I will tell you about the other forms of the Devi. That Shakti of Parabrahma Parameshwar which gives vani (sound of speech); buddhi (intelligence); vidya (knowledge); and gyan (awareness, comprehension) – is called as Saraswati. All knowledge is Her form. It is by Her grace that human beings are endowed with intelligence, poetry, sense, brilliance and smaran-shakti (memory). It is Her nature to establish the truth of dogmas and

principles. She is the knowledge and the knower. By Her grace all doubts are dispelled. She is also called the causal for thinking and composing. She is Shakti-swaroopa-Divine Energy. Swar, Sangeet and Taal (notes, music and rhythm) are all Her forms. All things perceived by the senses, all knowledge, and all sound, are composed of Her. Every vani is supported and sustained by Her. She presides over all debates and discussions, and is the embodiment of peace. She bears in Her hands a veena and a book. Her form is Pure Truth. She is wholly occupied and intent on supporting morality and virtuous conduct; and She is dear to Bhagwan Shri Hari. Her lustre and splendour is like snow, camphor, sandalwood, jasmine, chandrama, lily and lotus. She puts a garland of gemstones on Shri Hari and worships him. She is the embodiment of penance and austerity (tapomayi). She is always anxious to grant boons to great tapasvis. Spiritual knowledge is granted by Her. If She withdraws Her Shakti, Brahman becomes mute and speechless; and as lifeless as a corpse She is called Tritiya Devi (the third). In the Shrutis (scriptures) She is called Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

Narad! There are other Devis also. I will tell them to you as they are in the Vedas. Listen. She is the Mother of the four classifications. The chhand and the vedas have come from Her. O Wise Narad! Sandhya-vandan (salutations, prayers and praises enjoined to be made three times a day by dwijas), and Tantras (mystic formulas) have all been created and constituted by Her. For the classes to worship Her, She has assumed this form. She is Jap-roopa (embodiment of all the forms of praise); vessel filled with Brahma-tej (Divine Spirit) and the composer of all codes of conduct and the supreme cleanser and purifier. This most pure and spotless form is called Savithri or Gayithri. She is beloved of Brahma. All the holy places (teerth sthans) depend on Her for their cleansing properties Her lustre is like that of a flawless gem. Her form radiates Truth and Purity. She is most pleasing to behold. She is eternally

beautiful. She is Parabrahma-swaroop. It is Her nature to grant moksha. She is the Primordial Mother who contains Brahm-shakti. The dust of Her Lotus Feet is sufficient to vibrate and purify the whole creation.

Narad! This was the description of the fourth aspect of the Devi. Now listen as I tell you about the Fifth. She is dearer than life to Paramatma Shri Krishna. Of all the Devi forms, She is the most beautiful. All the virtues and graciousness abide in Her. She is exceedingly auspicious (param sowbhagyawati), and full of dignity and majesty. She is the female half of Parabrahma (Vamaardhang). She is also called – Paravara, Saarbhoota, Paramadhya, Sanatini, Paramanand-roopa, Dhanya, Manya, and Pujya. She is the Presiding Deity over the divine play of the Raasmandal of Shri Krishna. As She resides in Go-lok, the abode of Shri Krishna, She is called Devi Raaseshwari and Surseka. She loves to play Raas, and abides there in the form of Gopis. She is the form of Divine Joy. She is the embodiment of happiness and contentment. She is Nirguna (attributeless – beyond the three gunas, and the three nadis. She is consciousness, devoid of the qualities and attributes of the mind). She is Nirlepa (untouched by various karmas and dualism). She is Nirakara (formless – beyond the five elements). She is Atma Swaroopini (Nirmal Atma); and She is devoid of Desire and Ego. For the benevolence of Her bhaktas, She takes forms and incarnations. It is only through the thoughtless meditation that She can be experienced on the central nervous system. Indra, Buddha (Surendra, Munindra), and all the gods never succeeded in beholding Her with outward vision (charmachakshu). She is draped in blue garments, and adorned with dazzling ornaments. Her lustre is greater than crores of moons. Her entire form is full of aishwarya (divine grandeur and majesty). She is constantly engaged in the service of Bhagwan Shri Krishna because, of all Her possessions, He is the most precious. She took birth in the house of Vrishbhanu as his daughter. When Her Lotus Feet touched the ground, the earth became

blessed and purified. Mune! The Devi who could never be seen by Brahma and all the gods, is now taking a form that will be visible to all in Bharatvarsh. She reigns on the chest of Shri Krishna, and looks like lightning in a cloudy blue sky. Brahma performed severe penance and tapasya for sixty thousand years to receive the boon of a darshan of Her toe-nail, by which he would be blessed and purified. But, even in his dreams he could not get this darshan, leave alone a darshan in wakeful state. It is due to that tapasya that this Devi has manifested in Vrindavan, before the Lord. This fifth form of the Devi is Bhagawati Radha.

This Devi Prakriti has multifarious forms in Her manifestations as whole, partial or fractional. In all the worlds, females are recognised as Her form. They are called Bhagawati Vidya. Now I will tell you the main divisions or portions of these Devis. Listen carefully, with full attention.

The most holy river which purifies Bhumandal is the Ganga. It is an important part. This ancient Ganga is in the form of water. She was created out of the form of Shri Vishnu. She is the burning fire which turns to ashes, the sinful fuel which instigates sinners to sin. Those who bathe in these cleansing waters, those who drink these holy waters, get liberated from the ties of the world, and attain the lotus feet of the almighty. She is the staircase to Go-lok. She is the foremost among all holy rivers and places of pilgrimage. She descended from heaven into the jata (matted locks) of Bhagwan Shankar. From there she fell in cascades towards Bharatvarsh. Her sole purpose of coming, was to help tapasvis to complete their disciplines of tapasya. Her purity and goodness causes Her to appear like the moon, the white lotus, or like pure white milk. There is absolutely no filth and ego. Not even traces. This chaste and pure Ganga is very dear to Bhagwan Narayan.

Shri Tulsi is another partial manifestation of Prakriti Devi. She is Vishnjpriya It is her main purpose to decorate Shri Vishnu. She abides at the Lotus Feet of Shri Vishnu. At the start of tapasya, vows, or pujas, She is always offered first and last. She is considered foremost among flowers to be offered during auspicious occasions. She represents the ultimate surrender; and just by its offering one gets entitled to a place in Param-dham. In order to burn the dry wood of sin and temptation, She has manifested as burning fire. Her appearance on this earth has purified Bhoomi. Before undertaking a pilgrimage, She should be worshipped. Where She does not exist, there nothing succeeds. Whatever one desires while worshipping Her, that gets fulfilled. She who has manifested as a plant, in Bharatvarsh, is the manifestation of Kalpavriksh. She has come to Bharatvarsh to bless and please Her devotees. She should be worshipped.

One more important form of the Devi is called Jaratkaru. She incarnated as the daughter of Kashyapji. She has the good fortune to be the shishya of Bhagwan Shankar, and became a learned woman of the highest order. Nagraj Sesh (king of the serpents) acknowledged Her as his sister. All serpents honour and respect Her. She who has a Serpent as Her conveyance is called Nageshwari or Nagmata. All the important serpents accompany Her, and She also wears serpents as ornaments. Nagraj sings stutis to Her in worship. She is the form of Siddhi and yoga. Her reclining couch is a serpent. She is Vishnu-swaroopini. She is constantly engaged in the worship of Shri Hari. She is of the form of tapasya. She is very fond of granting the fruits of tapasya to holy men. She Herself performs tapasya. She meditated on Bhagwan Shri Hari for three lakh years. Of all the tapasvis and tapasvinis of Bharatvarsh, She is the greatest. She is the creator of all mantras. Her form dazzles with the brilliance of Brahma-tej. She is called Parabrahma Swaroopa. She is constantly in meditation on Brahma. Jaratkarumuni is an ansh (partial manifestation) of

Bhagwan Shri Krishna. By Her grace one can always remain chaste and pure. She is the mother of the great Tapasvi, Muni Aastik.

Narad! One important part of Prakriti Devi is called Devsena. She is the foremost among mantrikas. She is called Bhagawati Shashti. She bestows progeny; and She has given birth to Triloki. She is Shashtansh (sixth part) of Prakriti Devi, and for this reason She is called Shashti Devi. When pujas are performed for the boon of having children, She is the one who is worshipped. Throughout the year She is worshipped. After a child is born, on the sixth day She is to be worshipped. This is an ancient practice. Some offer puja on the twentyfirst day also. When munis offer pranaams, She fulfils all their desires. She is the great mother. She is full of compassion and constantly protects Her bhaktas wherever they may be – on the ground, in the water, or in the air.

Another important division of Prakriti Devi is called Mangalchandi. She manifested from the mouth of Prakriti Devi. During the creation She presides as auspiciousness. And during dissolution, She takes the form of anger and destruction. For this reason She is called Mangal-Chandi. On Tuesdays She is worshipped throughout the world. By Her grace, Her bhaktas get blessed with children, grandchildren, wealth, fame and auspiciousness. When She is pleased, She grants the wishes of all women. This same Bhagawati Maheshwari, when She is enraged, can destroy the whole creation in one instant.

Devi Kali is an important part of Prakriti Devi. Her eyes are like lotus petals. During the war against negative forces, when Bhagawati Durga was confronted by the rakshasas Shumbh and Nishumbh, this Devi Kali manifested out of the locks of Bhagawati Durga. She is considered one-half of Devi Durga. She is effulgent like a crore of suns. Of all the Shaktis, She is the most powerful.

There is no one stronger than Her. She is a great devotee of Shri Krishna, and constantly meditates on him. Her body is also dark like Shri Krishna. If She so desires, She can destroy the whole creation with one breath. For Her own entertainment, and for the protection of the world, She always fights wars with the Daityas. When She is worshipped, She grants dharm, arth, desires and moksha. Brahma and all the gods, as also munis, Manu, and all beings, worship and honour Her.

Bhagawati Vasundhara is also a part of Devi Prakriti. She is the support of the whole world. She is also called Sarvashasya, Ratnakara and Ratnagarbha (the earth). She sustains kings and common men. For this purpose She has manifested as the support of life. Without Her the entire creation will cease to exist.

Munivar! I will tell you about all the powers of Prakriti Devi and Her forms, and also whose shaktis they are.

Devi Swaha is the wife of Agni. She is worshipped throughout the world. Without Her the gods cannot receive the oblations offered in pujas and havans.

The wife of Yagya is Dakshina. She is honoured by all. Without Her there are no fruits of actions.

Svadha is the wife of the ancestors. The munis, manu and all humans offer Puja to Her. If She is not invoked when offering oblation to the forefathers, the ceremony becomes null and void.

The wife of Vayu is Devi Swasti. She is honoured in all the worlds. Without her there can be no offering and receiving.

Pushti is the wife of Ganesh. The whole earth worships Her. Without Her, there is no energy in man or woman.

Tushti is the wife of Anant. Without Her there can be no satisfaction in the world.

The wife of Ishan is Sampatti. She is honoured by Devas and men. Without her the world would be stricken and wretched.

Dhriti is the wife of Kapil Muni. She gives courage and fortitude.

Sati is known as the wife of Satya. She is loved and respected by all. She gives the relationships.

The great sadhvi Daya is the wife of Moh. She is worthy of love and worship. Without Her there is no purpose in life. It is fruitless.

Prathishta is the wife of Punya. She gives punyas to all. Without Her the whole world is like living dead.

Kirti is the wife of Sukarm. The very favoured and fortunate always worship Her. Without Her there can be no fame and glory.

Kriya is the wife of Udyog. In Her absence there ceases to be rules, precepts, formulas, rites or ceremonies.

The wife of Adharmi is called Mithya. All cheats and deceivers respect her. During Satya Yuga she was latent and invisible. In Treta yuga she appeared in subtle forms. In Dwapar Yuga she manifested half of herself. But in Kali Yuga she has grown massive and gross. She persistently and intractably establishes

her supremacy. Her brother is called Kapat (fraud, hypocrite). Together both of them hover about in every household.

Shanti and Lajja (bashful modesty) are the wives of Sushil. If they are not present, human beings behave demented and intoxicated.

Gyan has three wives – Buddhi, Medha (comprehension) and Dhriti (firmness of mind). If these abandon us, then the whole world will be like imbeciles and insane people.

The wife of Dharam is Murti. She is most pleasing and beautiful. Without Her Shakti and support, Paramatma becomes incapable and ineffective. Shree Lakshmi gets Her lustre and beauty from Her. She manifests as Shree and Murti. She commands the highest respect, prosperity and worship.

The name of Rudra's wife is Kaalaagni. She is also called Yognidra. She gives sleep and rest at night, to all living beings.

Kaal has three wives – Sandhya, Raatri and Din (daytime). Without them Brahma would be incapable of making calculations.

Kshuddha (hunger), and Pipaasa (thirst) are the wives of Lobh (avarice). They are worthy of respect and honour. Without them the world would be sunk in anxiety.

Prabha (lustre), and Dahika (conflagration) are the wives of Tej (effulgence, radiance). Without them Brahma would not be able to create.

Jvar (sickness) has two wives – Jara (old age) and Mrityu (death). They are daughters of Kaal (time). Even though they are lovable, they are disliked by all.

If they did not exist, the regulation and functioning of the universe would be disturbed and put out of gear.

The daughter of Nidra is Tandra (drowsiness). This and Preeti (enjoyment, gratification) are very pleasing to Sukh (contentment) This world, which has been created to a particular mode and formula, is pervaded by these two.

The most worshipful Shraddha and Bhakti, are the spouses of Vairagya (freedom from worldly desires). By their presence and grace, the whole world can attain Moksha.

The mother of the Devas, Aditi; the one who produces cows, Surabhi; the mother of the Daityas, Diti, Kadru, Vinta and Danu – all these Devis assist Shrishti in the work of creation. They are known as Kala (technique) of Bhagawati Prakriti. There are many more Kalas of the Devi. Listen and I will tell you about them.

The wife of Chandrama is Rohini, and the wife of the Sun is Sangya (consciousness). The wife of Manu is Shatroopa.

The wife of Brihaspati was Tara. And the wife of Vasisht is Arundhati.

Ahalya is the wife of Gautam. Anasuya is the wife of Atri. The wife of Kardam Muni is Devhooti; and Prasuti is the wife of Daksh.

The human daughter of the Pitras (ancestors), Menaka, is also known as the daughter of Ambika. Everyone knows Lopamudra, Kunti and the wife of Kuber. Also the wife of Varun is well known. The wife of Bali is Vindyavalli.

The other Kalas of Bhagawati Prakriti are Kanta, Damyanti, Devaki, Gandhari, Draupadi, Shaibya, Satyawati, Vrishabhanupriya, the mother of Radha – the virtuous Yashodha; Mandodari, Kausalya, Subhadra, Revathi, Satyabhama, Kaalindi, Lakshmana; Jambvati, Nagnajiti, Mitravinda, Rukmini, Sita who was swayam Lakshmi; Kaali; the mother of Vyas – the mahasati Yojangandha; Baanputri, Usha, her friend Chitralekha, Prabhawati, Bhanumati, Mayawati; mother of Parashuram – Renuka; mother of Balram – Rohini; and Eknanda who is also the sister of Shri Krishna, the great sadhvi Durga; and also all the graam devis (worshipped in the villages).

All the women of the world should be recognised as part of partial divisions of the Kalas of Bhagawati Prakriti. Any dishonour or debasement towards women, is an act of irreverence and contempt upon Devi Prakriti. Whoever performs puja, accompanied by husband and son, and offers sandal paste, clothes and decorations to a brahmani, gets the blessings of a puja to shakshat Bhagawati Prakriti.

Women of all levels, first, middle and lower qualities, are all limbs of Devi Prakriti. And great women of virtuous conduct and chaste wives, are considered the quintessence of Prakriti Devi. They are of the first class.

Those women who enjoy pleasures manifest Rajas qualities and are classified as medium. They are always engaged in acquiring pleasures and comforts.

The women who have come out of the Tamas division of Devi Prakriti, are considered inferior. Their lineage is unknown. Their countenance is unsightly. They are cunning, deceitful, wilful and arbitrary; and extremely quarrelsome. In the world they are called as unchaste hussies, or prostitutes.

Narad! I have described to you all the aspects of Devi Prakriti. Bharatvarsh is a very holy land. All aspects of the Devi who put their lotus feet on earth, have received honour and worship in Bharatvarsh. Durga destroys durgati (adversities and calamities in the course of events). Raja Surath was the first to worship this aspect of the Devi. Later Shri Rama worshipped Her for strength to kill Ravan. After this Bhagawati Jagaddamba was worshipped in all the three Lokas. She first manifested in the house of Daksh.

After killing the Daityas, when She saw Her Swami being insulted, She surrendered Her body into the flames of the Yagya.

Then She took birth in the house of Himalaya. She married Bhagwan Shankar. Her two sons were Ganesh and Skand. Ganesh is also called the son of Shri Krishna. Skand is also Vishnuputra.

Narad! After this, Raja Mangal was the first to worship Devi Bhagawati in the form of Lakshmi. Then, in the three lokas, She was worshipped by Devatas, Munis and Manavs (humans).

Raja Ashwapati was the first to worship the Devi Savithri. Then all the gods, including Brahmans and great munis, began to worship Her.

Brahma was the first to worship Saraswati. After that, this Devi Saraswati became the object of worship for all the gods and munis.

For the first time in Go-lok, during the Raas mandal, Bhagawati Radha was worshipped. Accompanied by Gopas, Gopikas, Gopkumars and kumaris; and dressed in fine garments and ornaments, Shri Krishna worshipped Radha. It was Kartiki Poornima (eighth lunar month) and the moon was silvery bright. Even the cows of Go-lok participated. Then with the permission of the Lord,

Brahma and all the devatas, as well as all the Munis, with great devotion and happiness, began to shower flowers and chant verses of worship and obeisance. On the earth, Raja Suyagya was the first to perform puja to Bhagawati Radha. He lived in the holy land of Bharatvarsh. He had been advised by Bhagwan Shankar to worship Radha Devi. Then with the permission of Shri Krishna, the Munis of the triloki offered flowers, incense and other fragrant articles of worship. All the aspects of Bhagawati Jagaddamba that have manifested; all of them are worshipped with great devotion and recognition and reverence.

Mune! That is how the system of graam-devis (deity of a village) evolved. I have narrated to you the most auspicious description of the various aspects of the Devi which have manifested They are all authenticated in the Vedas.

Now what else do you desire to hear.

Chapter 9 Episode 2

2. Manifestation of Chinmay Devi from Parabrahma Shri Krishna and Shri Radha.

Naradji said – Prabho! You have graciously told me in concise form the description of all the aspects of the Devi. For me to fully comprehend, please be kind and tell it to me in greater detail. At the time of creation, how did Bhagawati Adya Shakti manifest. O Great and Learned One who are fully conversant with the Vedas, why is the Devi called Panchvidh (creator). It is said that all life forms have manifested from the divisions and parts and fractions of Trigunatmika. Who is Trigunatmika. I desire to know how the Devi's various forms manifested, how to worship, how to meditate, how to sing stutis, stotras, kavach; Her grandeur, majesty and auspicious valour.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Atma, Akaash, Kaal (time), Disha (directions), Vishvagol (spherics) and Golok-dham (abode of Shri Krishna), are all eternal. There is no beginning and no end. In Golok-dham there is one more – Vaikunth-dham. Only the meek and humble can enter here.

In the same way, Prakriti is eternal, without beginning and without end. She is the eternal companion of Parabrahma. Just as heat and flame is always present in fire; pleasing beauty is present in Chandrama and the lotus; and radiance and brilliance exist in Surya; in the same way Prakriti is a part and parcel of Paramatma. She can never be separated. Just as, without gold a goldsmith cannot make ornaments; and without clay a potter cannot make a

pot – in the same way, without the energy or Shakti of Prakriti, Paramatma cannot create. kBy whose Shakti Shri Hari remains All Powerful it is Shri Prakriti Devi Herself who is Shaktiswaroopa. Within Prakriti there exists intelligence, energy and prowess. She permeates these qualities into Paramatma. Therefore She is called Shakti Devi. She is completely possessed of the qualities of Nirmal Vidya, Samriddhi (prosperity, success); Sampati (wealth); Yash (fame, honour); Bal (strength); and Aishwarya (glory, majesty); and for this reason She is called Shakti. She never withdraws Herself. She reigns Supreme with Paramatma. Therefore She is also designated the title "Bhagwan". This sarvatantra-swatantra (one who knows all the shastras, one who is independent and unrestrained) Prabhu is both formless and with form. The Nirakar (formless) state is extremely lustrous and brilliant. Yogis constantly meditate on this. It is also said that Parabrahma and Ishwar are one and the same. The form is exceedingly pleasing. No one can see Him, but He sees all. He is omniscient, the causal of all causes; omnipresent; and existing in all forms. This Brahma is in the centre of all the brilliant Tej Mandal (heavenly bodies).

When He desired to manifest in Sakar roop (in form), He appeared in a most fascinating and Divine Form. He comes as a boy (Kishore avastha) of ten or eleven years. He is peaceful. All his limbs are delicate. There is no one more glorious in the whole creation. He is blue like a water-filled cloud. His big, gentle eyes are like the lotuses which bloom in Sharadkaal (autumn). His row of teeth resemble the most beautiful pearls. Peacock feathers adorn his crown. Wearing a garland of malati flowers, He appears to be smiling. His nose is straight and noble. This most pleasing Prabhu has come on earth to grant benevolence to his devotees. Like the colour of burning flames, He is covered in pure Pitamber (yellow silk cloth). His two arms wear gem studded ornaments. He holds a flute in His Hands. He is the refuge of all, the lord of

all; the most powerful and all pervading. It is His nature to grant benevolence to all. He is called as Siddhi, Siddhesh, Siddhikarak, and Paripoornatam Brahm. He is the god of gods, and the saints meditate on Him. By His grace, one gets freed of the effects of birth, death, old age, disease, sorrow and fear. The duration of life of Brahma is equal to the twinkling of His eye. He is verily Parabrahma Shri Krishna.

"Krishi" means which encompasses, and "Na" means devotion. Therefore one who awakens the all encompassing devotion, is the one who can be called Krishna. "Krish" is all encompassing and "Na" is the seed of knowledge. Therefore he is called the Adi-srashta, the Primordial Creator. Within Himself He had a desire to create. His Ansh-kaal (that part of Him which was Time), caused Him to become eager and intent. Spontaneously He divided His Form into two portions. The left is called the Female, and the right half is the Male aspect. This primaeval man looked upon the divine woman before him. Her entire being was beautiful, like a freshly bloomed lotus. Her rounded hips challenged the reflection of the moon. Her waist was slender like the stem of the plantain tree. Her breasts were like sculpted Shreephal. Fragrant garlands of flowers covered Her belly. Prabhu was greatly attracted and enamoured by this beauty. She was in complete Divine form. She sent a delicate, slanting gaze at the Lord. She was dressed in pure white robes, and was adorned with divine ornaments. With eyes like a chakori (a partridge which is said to be enamoured of the moon) She drank in the lustre and beauty of the moon face of Shri Krishna. The face of Shri Krishna was so radiant and bright, that it outshone even a crore of moons. That Devi wore a bindi of Kasturi (musk) on the upper part of Her forehead. On the lower part of the forehead, She was decorated with dots of Chandan (sandal paste). In the centre of Her forehead, a bindi of sindoor enhanced Her beauty. Her dark hair was luxuriant and curly. Entwined in Her hair were garlands of malathi flowers. She radiated the light

of a crore of moons. Her graceful gait deflated the vanity of the swan and elephant. Shri Krishna is Rasik (one who appreciates beauty and elegance), and also the master of Raas (makes the Divine Energy circulate through everyone). He was so pleased with the Devi that He entered the Raasmandal to dance the dance of joy and energy. They danced for a full year of Brahma. Then Shri Krishna rested.

O most virtuous Narad! When the Raas ended; due to fatigue and due to the unbearable vibrations emanating from Shri Krishna, the Devi began to perspire, and it flowed down in tiny streams. All the droplets that fell then, became the sphere of the universe. The breath that She exhaled, became Vayu, by which the whole world lives. Vayu resides within every living thing in the universe. Then Vayu became a corporeal body. From his left side there manifested a woman more dear than life. She bore five sons. They were Pran, Apan, Saman, Udan and Vyan. So there were these five vayus, and their five sons – the five vital airs. The perspiration flowed as water, and Varun became the Lord of the water. From the left half of Varun, manifested his wife.

At that time, the almighty Shakti of Shri Krishna became with child. For one hundred manavantars (day of Brahma) Her body glowed with the radiance and lustre of Brahm. She was more dear to Shri Krishna than life. She always stayed by His side. Her place was on the chest of Shri Krishna. When the hundred manvantars ended, She gave birth to a golden hued boy child. He appeared most capable of supporting the world. But the Devi's face was full of sorrow as She beheld him. She took the child and put him in the unfathomable depths of Brahmand. Seeing that She had abandoned the child Shri Krishna exclaimed - This is a most despicable thing you have done. As a result of this action, from today you will become barren and never have children. And not only this - Whatever goddesses manifest from you, inspite of having eternal

youth, they will never see the face of a child. Just then, from the forepart of Her tongue, there manifested a most beautiful maiden. Her complexion was white, and she was dressed in white. She bore in Her two hands a Veena and a Book. She had complete knowledge of all the shastras. She was bedecked in gem-studded jewels.

After a little while, this Moolprakriti Devi divided into two. From the left side Kamala was formed; and from the right side Radhika. At that moment Shri Krishna also divided into two. The left side remained a two-armed form. The right side manifested as the four-armed Vishnu. Then Shri Krishna said – "Devi Saraswati. You please become the wife of Vishnu. Radha will stay here. You will be blessed." In the same way He requested Lakshmi to accept Vishnu. The great protector and support of the universe, took Saraswati and Lakshmi and left for Vaikunt. Having manifested from Moolprakriti Radha, both the Devis had no children. From the body of Narayan, many courtiers manifested. They were similar to Shri Hari in form, nature and lustre. In the same way crores of female attendants manifested from the body of Lakshmi, who resembled Her in every way.

Munivar Narad! After this, countless gopas came out of the pores of Golokeshwar Bhagwan Shri Krishna. They resembled Krishna in every way. He made them His attendants. From the pores of Shree Radha came countless Gopkanyas. She made them all into Her maids-in-waiting. They wore heavenly ornaments and were ever young. But they were also under the curse of Param Purush and never bore children.

Then suddenly, there manifested Devi Durga. She is the maya of Bhagwan Vishnu. She is also called as Narayani, Ishani and Sarvashakti Swaroopini. She is the ruler of the Buddhi of Shri Krishna. All the goddesses emanate from Her.

This Ishwari is also called Moolprakriti. No part of Her is incomplete. All the three attributes reside within Her. She is of the colour of heated gold. Her radiance is more than a crore of suns. Her face wears a slight smile. She has thousands of hands, and each carries a weapon. She has three eyes. Her garments are of great purity, and She is bedecked with ornaments. All womankind are one of Her divisions. Her maya captivates all living beings. She gives grace and wealth to all. By Her grace bhakti is awakened for Bhagwan Shree Krishna. She is also Vaishnavi. It is Her nature to grant Moksha, and give happiness to all. She reigns in heaven as Swarga Lakshmi, and in the household as Grihalakshmi. She resides with tapasvis as tapasya; among kings as Shree; within fire as heat; within the Sun as sunlight; and within the Moon and the Lotus as beauty. This embodiment of Shakti always resides with Paramatma Shri Krishna. It is only by Her presence within, that any atma is capable of action. It is from Her that the creation gets power. If She withdraws, all living things cease to live.

Narad! For this great Tree of Life, She is the seed. The state of being, of existing, intelligence, fruit, hunger, thirst, mercy, sleep, drowsiness, forgiveness, fame, peace, bashful modesty, nourishment, illusion, honour, are all Her forms.

This Devi continuously sings praises to Sarvesh Shri Krishna. Radhikeshwar Shri Krishna has offered Her a throne studded with gemstones. Mahamune! At that time the god with four faces, Chaturmukh Brahma, arrived. He manifested, with his Shakti, from the lotus of the Nabhi of Shri Vishnu. The omniscient Brahma holds a Kamandalu in his hand. All his four heads sang Stutis to Shri Krishna. Then shining like a thousand moons, wearing beautiful garments, and adorned with divine ornaments, and singing stutis to Her husband, this most beautiful Shakti took Her seat on the gem encrusted throne

that Shri Krishna had offered Her. Just then Shri Krishna manifested in two forms. The left half of his body manifested as Mahadev. The right half remained as Gopipati Shri Krishna. The lustre of Shri Mahadev was like clear crystal. He shone with the splendour of one thousand million suns. He bore in His hands the mighty bow and the Trishul.. His garment was made of tiger skin. He glowed like molten gold. He wore his matted hair in coils on His head, and His body was smeared with bhasma (ashes). The crescent moon was an ornament on His forehead. He smiled. His throat was blue and He wore serpents as neck ornaments. In His right hand he held a mala of pure gemstones. With His five heads He sang stutis to Brahmajyoti Swaroop Shri Krishna. Shri Krishna is the embodiment of truth. The Paramatma, and Ishwar. He is the causal of all causes, the auspiciousness of all auspicious occasions. He is the victory over birth, death, old age, sickness, sorrow and fear. He is the death of death. For this He is called Mrityunjay (one who has conquered death.) After singing His stutis, the most auspicious Shankar ascended the gem studded throne that was placed for Him.

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CHAPTER 9 Episode 3

3 Manifestation of a Viraat-swaroop child out of the most complete Shri Krishna and His most powerful Shakti Shree Radha. (Adi Shakti has revealed that this is Jesus (Yeshu Krisht)

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The child who was then in egg form, remained in the waters of Brahmandgolak (universe) till the end of the lifespan of Brahma. Then, when the time came He manifested in two forms. One remained in the form of matter, and the other was born as a baby. (Shree Adi Shakti has revealed that this is Jesus (Yeshu Krisht), and the other half that remained as matter, is Shri Ganesha). He was so lustrous and radiant, He shone like a crore of suns. Not having received mother's milk he began to cry for some time. His parents were nowhere to be seen, so he again went into the water. This ruler of a thousand brahmands, was now an orphan and turned His gaze heavenwards. He was chubby and sturdy. He was Maha-viraat. He shone with the radiance of the sixteenth part of Shri Krishna. This great Child Viraat who had taken birth from the great, divine Radha, was the support of the Universe. He is also called Mahavishnu. He was born in the Primordial Cosmic Egg. Millions of universes are contained in His pores, and even Shri Krishna has no count of them. He is pure Pranava Energy. Just as one cannot count the atoms and molecules of the creation, so also no one can count how many Brahmas, Vishnus and others are contained within this child. Every Brahmand (universe) has a Brahma, a Vishnu and a Shiva. Between Pataal and Brahmalok, there are countless Brahmands. So how can one make a count.

Above is Vaikunthlok. It is outside of Brahmand. Above this, at a distance of fifty crore yojans, lies Golok Dham. Just like Shri Krishna, this place is eternal

and Divine. Prithvi is decorated with seven islands. Its beauty is enhanced by seven oceans. There are also fortynine smaller islands. One cannot count the number of mountains and forests. Above all and right on top are the Seven Heavens including Brahmalok. Below lie the Seven Hells. This is the description of Brahmand.

Immediately above Prithvi is Bhoorlok, above that is Bhuvarlok. Beyond that is Svarlok. Then Janlok. Above that is Tapalok. Then Satyalok, and last of all is Brahmalok. Brahmalok shines like molten gold. These are all temporary and destructible. Some are within Brahmand, and some are without. Narad! At the time of dissolution of Brahmand, all this gets destroyed. They are just like bubbles in the water, which are not eternal. Golok and Vaikuntlok are eternal and indestructible. That child who is the embodiment of Viraata, contains in every pore, countless brahmands. In each brahmand there are separate Brahmas, Vishnus and Shivas. Son Narad! The Devatas number three crores. They are all pervading. The gods of the directions; the guardians of the directions; the planets; the stars; are all included in this number. Bhoomandal is divided into four classifications. Below is Naaglok. All movable and immovable life forms exist here.

Narad! This Viraatswaroop child kept turning his gaze heavenwards. That Primordial Cosmic Egg was empty. There was no other object nearby. He became concerned. Overcome with hunger He began to cry. Then later, out of his inborn wisdom He began to meditate upon Param Purush Shri Krishna. Immediately he was granted the vision of the eternal Brahma Jyoti. Within the bright Jyoti, the form of Shri Krishna was dark, like a rain filled cloud. He had two arms. He wore Pitamber (yellow robes). He held a murali (flute) in His hands. There was a smile on His face, and He seemed keen to grant compassion and benevolence. On beholding Pita Parameshwar (the Almighty

Father), the child began to laugh. Then the great giver of boons, the most benevolent Shri Krishna said – Son! May you become the Ocean of Knowledge like Me. May you never know hunger and thirst. May you be the principle and the support of these countless universes that are within you. May you become Nishkami (free from all desires); Nirbhay (fearless); and the benefactor of all. May you never experience old age, death, disease or sorrow. Then Shri Krishna whispered in the ear of the child three times – The Shatakshar Mahamantra (mantra of six syllables). This foremost of mantras is the main body of the Vedas. The first sound is "Om". The next two syllables are "Krish-na". In the end Agni-patni "Swaha" gets intermingled. The mantra that emerges is – "Om Krishnaya Swaha". On chanting this mantra all obstacles are destroyed and removed.

Brahmaputra Narad! After initiating the child with the Mahamantra, Param Prabhu Shri Krishna made arrangements for nourishment for the child. Listen carefully while I tell you. In every world, the worshippers of Vishnu make offerings and oblations (Naivedya) to the Lord. Out of this, a sixteenth part goes to Vishnu; and the remaining fifteen parts go to this child - because this child is the complete Viraata Form of Shri Krishna.

The all-powerful and all-pervading Lord Shri Krishna then spoke to the child - "Son! Beside this, if you have any other desire, you may ask Me for whatever you wish. I am eager to grant your every wish." At that time the Viraata Himself was present in the form of the child. He gave a reply befitting the situation.

The child said – "Prabho! The only boon I desire is that my Attention should be fixed firmly, and unswervingly, on Your Holy Lotus Feet. Whether my life lasts for an instant or for eternity; I desire that throughout my life, I have bhakti and

shraddha for only You. All persons who are Your devotees, should be considered "jeevan mukth" (free of worldly bonds). Those who deny You are dead even though they live. The spiritually ignorant, who do not have You in their hearts, can never achieve anything with their outward jap, tap, yagyas, pujas, fasts, renunciations, charitable works and pilgrimages. Their whole life is a waste. Prabho! As long as one is "the pure spirit" the Divine Energy exists within him. Once the spirit withdraws, all the Shaktis also withdraw. O Supreme One! It is You who are the Universal Spirit; the Pure, Eternal, Indestructible Brahmajyoti Swaroop Adi Purush (Primordial Being).

Narad! In this way the child expressed his heartfelt feelings. Then Shri Krishna replied in tones which were most pleasing to the ears.

Bhagwan Shri Krishna said – "Son! Like Me, may you also be eternal and steadfast. Countless Brahmas may come and go, but you will remain indestructible. In every Brahmand you will reign supreme. From your Nabhi-kamal will manifest the creator Brahma. From Brahma's forehead will emerge Eleven Rudras. Being a part of Shiva, they will have the capacity to dissolve the creation. Out of the eleven Rudras, the one who is Kaalagni, will be the principal destroyer of the world. Then Vishnu will manifest out of the Rudras, for the protection of the world. I will grant you a boon by which you will always have bhakti for Me. In your meditation you will always behold My Supreme Form. This is a promise. Your most pleasing and beautiful Mother will reign on My Heart. You will have a darshan of Her as well. Son! I will now leave for Golok. You abide here."

After this Shri Krishna withdrew. He was in Golok the next instant. There He gave the necessary assignments to Brahma to create; and Rudra to destroy negativities.

Bhagwan Shri Krishna said – O Brahma! You must go and prepare for creation. Listen carefully. Within the pores of Mahaviraat there are countless brahmands. Out of those, there is a small brahmand. There is a Viraatpurush reigning there; out of whose Nabhi a lotus has emerged You must manifest on that lotus.

Then He turned to Rudra and said – "Mahabhag Mahadev! You are very dear to Me. In order to carry out the destruction of the negative forces You must manifest from the forehead of Brahma. The rest of the time You should pass in tapasya."

Narad! Jagatpati Shri Krishna spoke these words and became silent. Brahma and Shiva offered pranaams and left. The waters of the Primordial Egg were still within the pores of the Mahaviraat Purush. In that lives a plain Viraat Purush who is a part of the Mahaviraat. He is in a permanent state of Youth. He is dark complexioned, and wears Pitamber. He reclines on a watery couch. He has a smile on His face. This pleasant faced, all pervading Prabhu is called Janardhan. It is from the lotus of His Nabhi, that Brahma manifests. In order to discover the source of this lotus, Brahma roamed for one lakh yugas; but Narad, your father could not succeed in finding its origin. He became full of concern. Finally He sat in His place and meditated on the Lotus Feet of Shri Krishna. In that state He got a darshan of some part of Viraat Purush. Within the Primordial Egg, He was reclining on a watery couch. Then he got a glimpse of that Param Purush Shri Krishna, within whose pores the brahmand had manifested. He also got a glimpse of Golok dham, complete with gopas and gopis. Then he sang stutis to please Shri Krishna, and got permission from Him to start the great work of creation. First of all Brahma created four manasputras (human sons). Then from Shiva there manifested eleven Rudras (destructive powers). And then the Protector of the universe Shri Vishnu

manifested, from the left side of the Viraatpurush. He presides over Shwetdweep (the clear and faultless abode of Shri Vishnu). He has four arms.

In this way Brahma manifested on the Nabhi-kamal of Viraatpurush, and commenced His great work of creation. He created the Triloki – Heaven, Earth and Pataal – with its movable and immovable life forms.

Narad! In each pore of the Mahaviraat Purush there exist countless brahmands. Each brahmand is presided over by a Viraatpurush, a Brahma, a Vishnu and a Shiva, and their supporting Devas.

Brahman! I have just described to you the most auspicious story of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. This grants happiness and moksha to those who listen. Now, what else would you desire to hear.

CHAPTER 9 Episode 4

4 – The Puja procedure for worshipping Shree Saraswati. And Kavach.

Narad said – Bhagwan! By your grace I had the good fortune to hear this nectar filled story. Now please tell me in detail, the Devis who are the material cause of the universe. Tell me the different ways in which they were worshipped. How the first worship started on earth. Which mantras are used for puja, and which stotras are used in stutis (songs of praise). Which Devis granted what boons. I desire to know all these things; and also the stotras, type of meditation, the effects and the divine stories of each of the devis.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Ganesh-janani Durga, Radha, Lakshmi, Saraswati and Savitri – these five Devis are considered the natural cause of this creation (Srishti ki Prakriti). Worship of these Devis and the powerful effects, are very well known. Their stories are like nectar, and give benevolence and auspiciousness to all that hear them. Brahman! I am going to tell you about the Devis who are the prime divisions of creation. Prepare your attention, and listen carefully.

Munivar! The first thing that Bhagwan Shri Krishna did, was to worship Saraswati, by whose grace, even the most ignorant person becomes a pundit (a learned person). This Kaamswaroopini Devi had expressed a desire to attain Shri Krishna. This Saraswati is said to be the Mother of all. The all-knowing Bhagwan Shri Krishna was aware of Her intention. He spoke to Her, words that are the truth, which are benevolent, and which results in pure joy.

Bhagwan Shri Krishna said – “Sadhavi! You must go to Narayan. He is verily a part of Me. He has four arms. Just like Me, He is possessed of all virtues and

beauty. He is eternally fresh and youthful. He is as beautiful as a crore of Kamadevas. He is adorned and decorated with divine finery and ornaments. He is omnipotent. I am the Lord of all. Everyone acknowledges My supremacy. But I cannot create obstacles in the desire of Radha. Because in form, brilliance, qualities and virtues, She is equal to Me. Everyone values their life as precious. Then how can I abandon this Devi Radha who is verily My Life, and still be complete. O Beautiful Devi! Proceed to Vaikunth. It is for your benevolence to reside there. Accept the almighty Vishnu as your lord, and live in joy and bliss forever. His consort Lakshmi is equal to you in virtues, beauty and lustre. In Lakshmi there is a complete absence of desire, anger, lust, attachment, pride and cruelty. You can live with Her in peace and harmony. Vishnu will honour both of you equally. O Resplendent and Lustrous One! In every Brahmand, in the month of Magh (eleventh month of the hindu calendar) the occasion of Vidya-arambh (commencement of reading and writing) will be celebrated with an elaborate puja in your honour. You will be worshipped as The Goddess of Learning. As a result of this boon from Me, from this day onwards till the dissolution of creation, You will be worshipped with sixteen kinds of substances, by human beings, manus, devas, munis, vasus, yogis, nagas, gandharvas and rakshasas. All those who desire pure knowledge, will worship You in accordance with the puja procedures laid down by Rishi Kanv (who fostered Shakuntala in his hermitage). They will invite you into earthen pots and books. They will inscribe Your Kavach on the bhojpatra (leaves of the birch tree); worship it with sandalwood and perfume; encase it in gold, and wear it around the neck or right arm. During pujas You will be invoked with stutis and bhajans.

Saying this, Shri Krishna Himself performed Puja to the goddess of learning. After that, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Anant, Dharm, Munishwar, Sanakgan, Devatas, Munis, Manugan, and kings – all began to worship the Devi. From

then on, Goddess Saraswati began to be worshipped in all the worlds, by all beings.

Naradji said - O Foremost Knower of all the Vedas! Please describe to me in detail all the protocols to be observed while worshipping Bhagawati Saraswati; and also Her Kavach, procedure for meditation, Naivedya (puja substances, flowers, perfumes, pastes etc..) to be used. My heart is filled with eagerness.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! I will tell you all that is prescribed in the Kanvashakha. In the month of Magh, the fifth day of the bright lunar fortnight, is most auspicious for Vidyaarambh (commencement of reading and writing). In the morning, after bath, one must maintain a meditative state, and be temperate and moderate in actions. Install the Kalash and perform Ganesha Puja. Then, in a state of dhyan (meditation), invoke Ishtadevata Shree Saraswati, and invite Her to the place of Puja. Then worship Her with the Naivedyas prescribed in the Vedas -- fresh butter, curds, milk, puffed paddy, til laddoos, white sugarcane, sweets made with rice and jaggery, sugar candy, white sugar sweets; savouries made in ghee, chivda, havishya-anna (food to be taken during a sacrifice); savouries made from atta of barley and wheat; fresh ripe bananas mashed with ghee and sugar; delicate sweets made from cooked rice; coconut and coconut water; Kaseru (edible ber) and all seasonal fruits. These are the Naivedyas for the Puja.

Mune! The Devi should be offered white fragrant flowers, and white sandal paste; new white clothes, and Shankh (conch). She should be garlanded with malas of white flowers, and white ornaments. O Most Fortunate Muni! Meditation on Bhagawati Saraswati is most joy giving, and removes all confusion and misconceptions. One must meditate in this way - The form of Shree Saraswati is pure and white and unstained. This most

beautiful Devi is ever smiling. Her radiance is greater than a crore of moons. She is draped in dazzling white garments. In one hand She holds a veena, and in the other She holds a book. She is adorned with ornaments, studded with the most precious gems. She is worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and all the gods. The greatest of Munis, Manu and humans, bow their heads in adoration of Her Lotus Feet. To this Devi, Bhagawati Saraswati, I offer pranaams, again and again.

Then, while reciting Her mool-mantra, all offerings should be made, and puja performed. Then recite the Kavach, and then do saashtaang pranaam (prostrate oneself like a fallen rod). The mool-mantra to be chanted is -

Shrim Hrim Saraswatyai Swaha

This mantra is considered the Kalpavriksh and is also used in the worship of goddesses Lakshmi and Yogmaya by substituting the names. In ancient times, this mantra was given to Muni Valmiki, by the Ocean of Compassion, Bhagwan Narayan, on the banks of the Holy Ganga. The same mantra was given on a solar eclipse in the region of Pushkar, by Parashuramji to Shukra. Then on a lunar eclipse Mareech was very pleased, and gave this mantra to Brihaspati. In Badarikashram, by the grace of Brahma, this mantra became known to Bhrigu. Jaratkaru muni lived near Kshirsagar, and there he taught it to Aastik.

The most intelligent Rishyashring received knowledge of this mantra from Vibhandak muni on Meru Parvat. In a moment of joy, Shiva imparted this mantra to Kanvamuni of the clan of Gotam. Through the compassion of Surya, this mantra was given to Yagya-valkya and Katyayan.

The most fortunate Sesh was present in the court of Bali in Pataal. It was there that he imparted this knowledge to Panini (the celebrated saint who

composed Astadhyayi); the wise Bhardwaj and Shaktayan. It is only by repeating this mantra four lakh times that a non-realised human being can feel its effect. The blessing that this Mantra bestows is Pure Divine Knowledge – Nirmal Vidya, and one becomes as wise and knowledgeable as Brihaspati.

O Holy One! The Kavach of Shree Saraswati grants victory over spiritual ignorance. The creator of the universe, Shri Brahma, presided on Mount Gandhamadan and told this to Bhrigu Muni on his request. I will tell you the same. Listen carefully, and with undisturbed attention. –

Bhrigu said – Brahman! You are the first Brahmagyani. You are the complete knowledge. You are the father of all creation. You are honoured and worshipped by all. Please be benevolent to me and tell me the Kavach of Shree Saraswati, which is called as "Vishwa-Jai". This Kavach is the aggregate of all the mantras, and most holy.

Brahmaji said – Son! I will tell you this Kavach, that fulfils all desires. Listen. This is the nectar of Shrutis; most joy giving to the ears. It is mentioned in the Vedas where it is praised and supported. Raaseshwar (Lord of the dance of energy), Bhagwan Shri Krishna was in residence in Go-lok. The raasmandal was going on in Vrindavan. That is the time Prabhu recited this Kavach to me. This Kavach which compares with Kalpavriksh, grants protection and concealment. That which no one has heard, that mantra, is contained in it. It is only by the effect of this kavach, that bhagwan Shukracharya became the revered guru of the Daityas. Brahman! Brihaspati acquired all his great wisdom and Nirmal Vidya by the benevolence of this kavach. Valmiki always chanted this kavach and meditated on Bhagawati Saraswati. He got the honour of being called Kavindra, and he became a very good orator. After invoking and surrendering to this Kavach, sages Kanaad, Gotam, Kanva, Panini,

Shaaktayan, Daksh and Katyayan were successful in their literary compositions. This Kavach so enlightened Krishnadwaipayan Vyasdev, that without any effort he divided the Vedas, and wrote the Puranas. It is this kavach that enabled sages Shaatatap, Sanvarth, Vasisht, Parashar, Yaagyavalkya, Rishyashring, Bhardwaj, Aastik, Deval, Jaigeeshavya and Yayati, to make a complete study of all the scriptures and become honoured and revered among men.

The presiding sage is Prajapati. The metre is Brihati. The presiding deity is Mata Sharada. It embodies in entirety, insight and knowledge of the essence of all things. It explains the significance and meaning of all spoken and unspoken expressions, and is the fountain of all poetry and literature and arts.

May Srim-Hrim Bhagawati Saraswati protect my head from all sides May Vaagdevata, goddess of the power of speech, protect my forehead. Om Hrim Bhagawati Saraswati, protect my ears. Om Srim Hrim Bhagawati, protect my two eyes.

May Aim-Hrim Swaroopini, goddess of Vani (voice and speech) protect my nostrils.

May the embodiment of Hrim, the goddess of Vidya (knowledge) protect my lips.

May Om Srim-Hrim Bhagawati Brahmi constantly protect my rows of teeth.

May Aim, which is the single-syllable mantra of Devi Saraswati, protect my throat and windpipe.

May Om Srim Hrim protect my neck, and may Srim forever protect my shoulders.

May the goddess of knowledge, Devi Om Hrim swaroopini Saraswati, always protect my chest (vaksh-sthal)

May the embodiment of knowledge, Devi Om Hrim, protect my Nabhi.

May the Devi, who is the embodiment of Om Hrim Klim, the goddess of Vani, protect my hands.

May Om swaroopini Bhagawati Sarva Varnaatmika protect both my legs.

May Devi Om Vaag grant protection to my entire body.

May Om swaroopa Devi, who resides in the throat and windpipe of all beings, always protect me from the east.

May She who resides in the foremost part of the tongue of all beings, Om swaroopini Devi, protect me from the (agnikon) South-east.

Om Aim Hrim Klim Saraswatyai Buddhjananyai Swaha

This is called Mantra-raj. It is eternally present in this form. May this always protect me from the South.

Aim Hrim Srim – may this mantra of three syllables protect me from (nairityakon) South-west.

May the Devi Om Aim Swaroopini, who resides in the foremost part of the tongue, protect me from the West.

May Om Swaroopini Bhagawati Sarvaambika protect me from (Vayavyakon) the north-west.

May the Devi who is the embodiment of Om Aim Srim Klim, who resides in Gadya (unversified language) protect me from the North.

May the Devi Aim Swaroopini, who resides in all the Shastras, protect me from (Ishaankon) the North-east.

May the most worshipful Devi Om Hrim Swaroopini, protect me from above.

May the Devi who resides in all books Hrim Swaroopini, protect me from below.

May Devi Om Swaroopa, who is the Granthbeej (seed of all knowledge of literary compositions) protect me from all quarters.

O Fortunate and Auspicious One! I have placed before you the precious Saraswati Kavach. This is verily the embodied form of countless Brahma mantras. This embodiment of Brahma is called as "Vishwa Jai". A long time ago, on Gandhamadan mountain, I had the privilege and blessing of hearing this from the voice of Dharam-dev. You are very dear to me. Therefore I have told it to you. You should not divulge this to any unworthy person. A wise and deserving person, who is desirous of knowing this, should first take a bath and then worship the Guru by offering new clothes, sandal-paste, and other materials, and offer pranaams by prostrating the whole body. Then he should absorb the knowledge of this kavach from the Guru. This kavach becomes effective only after it is recited five lakh times. Then he becomes like Brihaspati in wisdom and knowledge. One gets proficiency in public speaking, becomes a prince of poets, and conquers the ignorance of the three worlds.

He becomes victorious over all spiritual ignorance and obstacles. This is all mentioned in the Kanva shakha.

Now I will tell you about stotras, meditation, praises and pujas, and all procedures. Prepare yourself, and listen carefully.

CHAPTER 9 episode 5

5 - Stuti to Bhagawati Saraswati by Yaagyavalkya

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Listen to the Stuti of Saraswati Devi, which fulfils all desires. In ancient times there was a famous Muni called Yaagya. He performed Stuti to Bhagawati Saraswati. His guru had cursed him and destroyed all his knowledge. Greatly saddened he retired to Lolark Kund (a most sacred place in Benares) which grants all pure desires. He did severe tapasya and in grief and sorrow sang stutis to Bhagwan Surya. Then the most powerful Surya gave him the knowledge of the Vedas, and Vedaang (its six subordinate branches). Surya Devata said – "In order to acquire Smaran Shakti (memory power), you must do with great bhakti, stutis to Bhagawati Saraswati". After saying this Surya Bhagwan removed himself from sight. Then Yaagyavalkya Muni arose, took his ritual bath, and with great humility and bhakti, with bowed head, began to sing stutis to the Devi.

Yaagyavalkya said – Jaganmata! Be compassionate to me. I have become very dull and spiritless. By the curse of my guru, I have lost my power of memory. I have become devoid of spiritual knowledge. I am overcome by sorrow. Please give me knowledge, memory, and ability to impart knowledge to my sishyas, proficiency in composing, and also please make me your Sishya. By your grace make me a self-confident orator who can give discourses and lectures in gatherings of learned scholars, and impart Nirmal Vidya to all. By some great misfortune all my wisdom and knowledge got erased. Please be kind and restore it to me. In the same way that the gods germinate seeds hidden in the dust of the earth, You also revive my lost knowledge and wisdom. You are verily Brahmaswaroopa, Supreme, (Jyotiswaroopa) embodiment of light,

eternal, the Mother of all Knowledge, and Bhagawati Saraswati. Obeisance to You, again and again.

You who reside as the magnitude and dimension within the visarg (colon), bindu (dot) and matra (vowel sound); You who are its science of morality; to You I offer pranaams, again and again. You are the word; and the meaning. You are the composition, and You are the interpreter. You are the comment, and the explainer of the comment. You are the riddle and You are the solution. You are the numbers, and without You, even the greatest mathematicians cannot reckon. To that Devi, who is the embodiment of the tense and calculation of Time, I bow again and again.

I worship that Devi who is enlightened knowledge, and who cuts the knot of confusion, illusion and delusion; who is the power of memory; who is the giver of wisdom.

To that Devi who is the power of intellect, and who is the power of creativity, I offer pranaams, again and again.

It happened once that Sanatkumar (one of the four sons of Brahma), asked Brahma for knowledge. Brahma had no words and was silent. He could not expound Brahma-siddhant. Just then Bhagwan Shri Krishna Himself appeared, and said – "Prajapati! Acknowledge Bhagawati Saraswati as your Presiding Deity and sing Her stutis". On receiving this advice from Param Prabhu Shri Krishna, Brahma immediately engaged in singing Her stuti. Then, by Her grace, he acquired proficiency in investigating and expounding the Divine Principles.

In another similar case, Prithvi requested Anant to explain the mysteries of Divine Knowledge. Sesh also had no words or knowledge. He could not talk on the subject. He was filled with fear and anxiety. Then on the advice of sage

Kashyap, he worshipped Bhagawati Saraswati with stutis. By Her grace he became so enlightened, that he could remove all confusion and misunderstanding and impart to his listeners, Nirmal Vidya.

When Vyasji put a question to the sage Valmiki regarding Puran Sutra, he became silent. In that situation Valmiki meditated on Bhagawati Jagaddamba. She was pleased, and granted him the boon of proficiency in Nirmal Vidya. He received the jyoti of enlightenment that could dispel the darkness of spiritual ignorance. He got the precious Nirmal Gyan. Vyasji was an ansh-avatar of Shri Krishna. (An ansh-avatar is an incarnation with limited powers) After hearing the Puran Sutra from the vani of Valmiki, he began to meditate on the Devi, so that he could compose the great epic poem. He stayed in Pushkar-kshetra, and meditated for one hundred years. O Divine Mother! Only after You were pleased and granted him a boon, he was able to become a Kavishwar (Divine Poet). That was the time he divided the Vedas, and composed the Puranas.

When Devraj Indra requested Bhagwan Shankar to give him knowledge of Divine Philosophy and Tattwagyan (Metaphysics), the Lord meditated for an instant on Devi Bhagawati, and then began His spiritual instructions. Then Indra asked Brihaspati a question on Shabda-Shastra (grammar). O Devi Jagaddambe! Then also Brihaspati went to Pushkar and meditated upon Your Lotus Feet for one thousand years. Only then did You grant him a boon. He was able to teach Indra the intricacies of grammar. All the sishyas who studied under Brihaspati, all the munis who obtained knowledge from him; were able to do so only after meditating on Bhagawati Sureshwari. O Mother! Verily You are that Devi! Munis, Manu and human beings – all have worshipped You and sung Your stutis. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Devas and Danavas – all have performed puja to You. When songs of praise and worship have been sung to You by the thousand headed Sesh; the five-faced Shankar; and the four faced

Brahma – how can an ordinary human like me, with one face, succeed in pleasing You with my stutis.

Narad! In this way the great Muni Yaagyavalkya performed stutis and worship to Bhagawati Saraswati. His shoulders drooped with bhakti and humility. Tears rolled continuously from his eyes. In this state of grace, he got a darshan of Jyoti-swaroopa Mahamaya.

Devi said – Become the most illustrious and renowned poet.

After pronouncing this, the Devi left for Vaikunth. Any being who reads with devotion, this stuti composed by Muni Yaagyavalkya, receives the status of Kavindra (prince of poets). He can give discourses in the same level as Brihaspati. Whether he is an ignorant person or devoid of any intelligence or wisdom; if he recites this Stotra as prescribed, for one whole year, he definitely gains the title of Pandit. He becomes wise and receives Nirmal Vidya.

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CHAPTER 9 episode 6

6 – Vishnupatnis – Lakshmi, Saraswati and Ganga, mutually curse each other, and this causes them to descend on Bharatvarsh.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Bhagwati Saraswati resides in Vaikunth with Bhagwan Shri Hari. Ganga pronounced a curse on Her and She incarnated on Bharatvarsh as a river. She purifies and makes holy the land through which She flows, and is called Punya-swaroopini. Those who are desirous of spiritual benefits should preserve Her with great devotion, because it is for the benevolence of humanity that She has come. For tapasvis She is the fruit of their tapasya All sins are like dried wood. In order to burn them, She contains flaming fire. The wise and knowledgeable inhabitants of this world know that if their material bodies are cremated on Her banks, they will be assured of a place in Vaikunth. They reside in the Bhavan of Shri Vishnu for many years. Those who take a holy bath in this river on auspicious days like Choumasa (four months of the rainy season); full moon day; Akshay Navami (23rd day of Kartik); Vyatipaath (the seventeenth astronomical yog); time of eclipse; or any other auspicious time – he acquires a reflection of the divine personality of Shri Hari. Without a doubt he will get a duration of stay in Vaikunth. Even if a foolish or ignorant man, bathes daily for one month, in this river, and utters the mantra, he will acquire the status of Kavindra. There is no doubt in this. The person who tonsures his head (completely shaves off all hair) and bathes constantly in the river Saraswati, gets freedom from taking birth from a womb. These are just a few descriptions of the greatness of Saraswati. Even by hearing this description, many desires are fulfilled and one is blessed with divine joy and happiness.

Now, what else would you like to know.

Sootji says – Shaunak! When Bhagwan Narayan said this, Naradji immediately asked – Why Ganga, who is the embodiment of truth, who is the giver of boons, pronounced a curse on Saraswati. It is certain that there was a good and justifiable reason. Please be kind to me and tell me.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! This is an ancient story. Listen carefully and I will tell you. Lakshmi, Saraswati and Ganga – all three are the wives of Shri Hari. Once Saraswati got the feeling that Shri Hari was more fond of Ganga than Herself, She spoke harsh words to Shri Hari. Then She began to speak bitter words to Ganga, and treated Her badly. Then Lakshmi, the embodiment of peace and forgiveness, restrained Her. This made Saraswati angry; and, accusing Lakshmi of taking sides with Ganga, She cursed Lakshmi – "You will assume the forms of a tree and a river!"

When Lakshmi heard this terrible curse She did not retaliate with a curse. She did not even feel a bit of anger. She just sat there and took the hand of Saraswati into Her own. But Ganga could not tolerate this curse. She pronounced a curse on Saraswati. She said – "O Sister Lakshmi! This Saraswati who has cursed you will also become a river. She will flow below, in martyalok (on the earth of mortals); in paapijan niwas -- where all sinners reside.

Narad! This caused Saraswati to pronounce a curse on Ganga – "You will also have to flow on Dharatal (Earth) as Angikaar (take upon Yourself the sins of all the sinners). Just then Shri Hari arrived there. The four-armed Lord was resplendent with his attendants. He took the hand of Saraswati, and with great love made Her sit near Him. Then the omniscient Lord began to explain

an ancient mystery. He first listened to the cause of anger and cursing between the Devis, and then began to tell them the reason for this happening.

Bhagwan Shri Hari said – Lakshmi! Auspicious One! By Your powers You must take your place in the house of Raja Dharmadhwaj. You will not take birth as any creature. You will manifest as a tree. A part of Me will incarnate as an Asura called Shankachud. You must become his wife. After that You will get the opportunity of becoming My beloved wife. In Bharatvarsh You will become famous as the holy Tulasi plant. O Beautiful One! For the present, to fulfil the curse of Bharati, You must go to the earth as the river Padmavati.

Then He spoke to Ganga. "Gange! To fulfil the curse of Saraswati, you must partially descend on earth as a universally holy river which destroys and neutralises all sin. Because of the Tapasya of Bhagirathi You will have to go to earth. There you will be known as Bhagawati Bhagirathi. The ocean is a part of Me. By My command you must accept Samudra as your husband." After this Shri Hari spoke to Saraswati. "Bharati! Accept the curse of Ganga and go to Bharatvarsh. Then in your Poorna-ansh (entire form) you go to Brahmasadan and become his beloved wife. This Ganga, in her entire form, must go to the abode of Shiva. And here in Vaikunth, Lakshmi in all Her entire form, shall reside. Because She is pure peace, She never reacts. She is never angry. She is totally devoted to Me. She is the embodiment of Truth. She is Holy, extremely auspicious; the embodiment of forgiveness; resplendent with ornaments and raiments; and observes Dharma. Just one aspect of Hers bestows on all womankind the qualities of good conduct, faithfulness and devotion to husband; peace; modesty and gentleness.

Then Shri Hari began to expound His views. Three women of varying temperaments, three servants, or three friends, cannot exist together

according to the Vedas. They cannot be auspicious as long as their natures and temperaments vary. The household in which the woman behaves like the man and takes a dominant role, and the husband becomes subservient to the wife, the lives of those people is considered nishphal (wasted and barren existence). Misfortune walks with their every step. They are ashubh (inauspicious). A person whose wife is from a low and base origin, who speaks foul language, and who is a quarrelsome and dissatisfied woman – for him the jungle gives him greater peace than his house. At least there he will find jal, phal, sthal – (food, water and shelter). Fruits and water are always available in the forest. But a man will always suffer torments and unhappiness living with a shrewish woman. It is preferable to live near fire, or with dangerous animals than with a horrible wife. O Beautiful One! A man can tolerate the blaze of illness; the venom of poison; but the constant verbal outbursts and violent temper of a malevolent woman are more painful and torturous than death. For a man who allows himself to be dominated by his wife, even if his body is burnt to ashes he does not get purified. Such a man does not reap the rewards of his good deeds. In this world and the next, he becomes an object of ridicule. He who sacrifices his self respect and honour, is considered a corpse, even though he lives. When there is no peace for a man with one troublesome wife, how much harassment and torture a man with many wives will suffer.

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CHAPTER 9 episode 7

7 From the sacred lips of Bhagwan Shri Hari, the value and importance of bhaktas; and a clear definition of characteristics and traits.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! After saying this, Bhagwan Shri Hari became silent. Then the Devis, Ganga, Lakshmi and Saraswati embraced each other and wept. They trembled with fear and sorrow. Tears fell from their eyes. They realised that their only refuge was the Lotus Feet of the Lord. They began to pray to Him.

Saraswati said – "Nath! Please save me from the curse. Otherwise I will forever be in turmoil. If You abandon us how can we survive. I will go to Bharatvarsh, perform penance, and renounce this body."

Ganga said – "Lord of the Universe! What is my mistake for which You are banishing me. I will not be able to live.

Lakshmi said – "Nath! You are the embodiment of truth. It is surprising to see You angry. Please pacify these two Devis and make them happy. Because, for a virtuous husband, forgiveness is the greatest dharma. I will accept the curse of Saraswati and incarnate in Bharatvarsh. But Prabho! When can I return and have darshan of our Lotus Feet. Sinners will bathe in my waters and perform all kinds of ablutions; and they will offload on me all their sins. Please tell me what I must do to cleanse myself and return to Your Lotus Feet. By my powers I also accept that I shall assume the form of the Tulasi plant. I will become the daughter of Dharmadhwaj. But O Eternal and Imperishable One! After enduring all this, when will I attain Your Lotus Feet. O Compassionate One.

Acknowledging You as the presiding deity, I will stay in Bharatvarsh in the form of a plant, but please tell Me when You will release me.

If this Ganga accepts the curse of Saraswati and descends on Bharatvarsh; then when will she be freed of all the sins loaded on her, so that she can attain Your Lotus Feet.

And if Saraswati goes to Bharatvarsh as per the curse of Ganga, then when will You release her from the curse and give her Your darshan.

Prabho! You have ordered Saraswati to go to the kingdom of Brahma, and Ganga to go to the abode of Shiva. For these commands of Yours, I ask Your forgiveness.

Narad! Saying this, Bhagawati Lakshmi caught hold of the Lotus Feet of Her Swami Shri Hari. She enveloped His Lotus Feet with Her hair and began to weep. Bhagwan Shri Hari is always keen to show benevolence to His bhaktas. Hearing the prayer of Lakshmi, His face beamed with a smile of happiness. He held Lakshmi close to His chest and said –

Bhagwan Vishnu said – Sureshwari! Kamalekshane! Whatever I do, it must coincide with the utterances that three of you have made. Therefore, listen and I will try to strike a balance among you. By Her powers, let Saraswati turn one part of herself into a river and go to Bharatvarsh. One half should go to the abode of Brahma. And in Her entirety let Her reside with Me.

In the same way, to fulfil the efforts of Bhagirath, and to purify Triloki, Ganga should turn a part of herself into a river. The entire being of herself can reside here with Me. There she will have the rare and unique privilege of residing in

the locks of Shankar. She is already clean by nature, but after going there Her purity will be enhanced.

O Lotus Eyed One! By Your power, a small part of You must go to Bharatvarsh. There you must abide as the river Padmavati, and the sacred Tulasi Plant. After five thousand years of Kali, you will be released from your river forms. Then you will return to My abode. O Padmabhave! Whatever prosperity and adversity comes to anyone, there is always a hidden purpose. Without going through trials and tribulations, many cannot get honour and glory.

Now I will tell you how to get purified. Many saints and holy men who chant my mantras, will also come to bathe in your waters. By having a darshan of them, and by the power of their purity, you will get cleansed of all the sins that others unload on you. O Beautiful One! This is not all. The countless Holy Places of Pilgrimage on earth also become purified and holy when any of My Bhaktas visit them. The soil of Bharatvarsh is exceedingly holy and pure, because My countless devotees who sing My mantras reside there. Their primary purpose is to purify and sanctify any place that they walk upon. Wherever My bhaktas wash their feet, that place becomes sacred and a holy place of pilgrimage. This is the absolute truth. Even a great sinner can get released from the bondage of sin, just by a darshan of My bhakta and the pure vibrations that flow through him. Even atheists and heretics can be transformed by the influence of My Bhaktas.

Those who wear a sword on the waist and earn their livelihood as doorkeepers; those who maintain account books (munims); those who act as delivery-boys for letters and papers; and those who go from place to place and collect alms and donations; and those who drive bullocks – such a Brahmin is considered base and inferior. But a darshan of My bhakti can purify and

transform him. A traitor, an unfaithful friend, one who bears false witness, or one who misappropriates the property of another – can also get purified after a darshan of My bhakti. My bhaktas possess so much power of cleansing and purifying. Those who do not make arrangements for looking after their mother, father, wife, younger brother, son, daughter, sister, gurukul, blind friend, father-in-law or mother-in-law, are considered despicable sinners. But a darshan of My bhaktas, and their cleansing influence, can purify them. Those who cut down the Peepal tree, those who oppose and trouble My bhaktas, and the fallen Brahmins, can also be purified by the darshan of My bhaktas.

Shree Mahalakshmi said – O Prabho Who is always eager to give benevolence to Bhaktas! Please describe the characteristics and distinguishing qualities of Your bhaktas – by whose darshan the egoistical people; the non-believers of Shri Hari; those who brag about themselves; the deceitful, the dishonest, the torturers of saints, and the atheists can become purified; and by whose bathing and washing, the waters of the rivers get purified and holy; by the dust of whose feet the earth gets relieved of all filth and impurities. And whose presence in countless numbers makes Bharatvarsh Punya Bhoomi.

Holy rivers are not holy, nor are devatas of stone, devatas. Because they only purify at prescribed times and in prescribed places I think that all Vishnu-bhakts should be honoured even by the gods, because they spontaneously purify anything and anyone who comes into their vicinity.

CHAPTER 9 episode 8

8 Descriptions of the period of Kaliyuga; the wheel of time; and in Golok – Krishna Leela.

Bhagwan Narayan says - By Her powers, Saraswati partially incarnated as a river and went to a holy place in Bharatvarsh, while Her entire being was privileged to stay in Vaikunth. In Bharat She got the title Bharati. Being the beloved of Brahma, She was called Brahmi. And being the presiding deity of speech She was called Vani. Shri Hari always manifests in the water of lakes and ponds, and therefore He is called Sarasvaan; and because She is dear to Him, She is called Saraswati. Incarnating as a river, She is most holy and sacred. In order to burn to ashes the sins of all those who bathe in Her, She is the embodiment of flaming fire.

Narad! After this, Ganga descended on to Bharatvarsh. Her advent was in answer to the prayers of Bhagirath. As She was descending, Shankar received Her in the locks of His hair, - because only Shankar can bear the force of Her descent. He did this because Prithvi requested him.

Then Padma, who is Lakshmi, came to Bharatvarsh in the form of a river. It was called Padmavati. Her entire being remained in Vaikunth, beside the Lord. By another one of Her powers, She took birth in the house of Raja Dharmadhwaj. She was called Tulasi. As commanded by Shri Hari, She accepted the form of a plant. After five thousand years of Kali, all these devis will renounce their forms and go back to Vaikunth. Kashi and Vrindavan; as

also all the other holy places, in accordance with the command of Shri Hari, will all accompany the Devis to Vaikunth. Shalgram, Shiv, Shakti and Purushottam, after staying ten thousand years of Kali, in Bharatvarsh, will return to their respective abodes. With them will also go all the sadhus, purans, shankh, shradh, tarpan (libation of water to the ancestors), and all rites and rituals enjoined in the Vedas. Dev-puja; names of Devas; Kirtans singing the praises of the gods; vedas; shastras; purans; saints; truth; dharma; graam-devatas (deity of the village); renunciation; fasting and tapasya – all these will also leave Bharat and go away.

Almost all people will drink alcohol and eat meat. No one will shun lies and deceit. After the Devis and Devatas leave Bharatvarsh, dishonesty, brutality, pride, ego, robbery and murder – all these will grow and flourish. There will be no distinction or classification among men, or among women. There will be only gender classification of male and female. A man from any class will marry a woman of any class. There would be no exchange of material gifts. All men will be dominated by women. Adulteresses and harlots will become the mistresses of homes. These licentious women will constantly fret, and scold their husbands. The more the wife harasses the more despicable and degenerate the dominated husbands will become. In the house, the one with more power will be acknowledged as the master. Friends and relations will be confined to the wife's family. There will be no friendship even among those who study or work together. Men will behave like strangers with their own family members. The four classes – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras – will discard and disregard all the maryadas of their class. Sandhya-vandan (prayers to be made by a dwija or twice born, morning, noon and night), and yagyas will cease completely. All castes and communities will become mleccha

(enjoying everything that is filthy and adharmic). People will stop reading holy books and scriptures; and will read trash and immoral books. All classes will earn their livelihood by servile jobs. All living beings will be devoid of truth. Grains will not germinate in the earth any more. All trees will become barren. Cows will lose their capacity to yield milk. People will consume milk without butter content in it. There will be no love between man and woman. Householders will speak untruths. There will no longer exist royal kings and queens. Ordinary citizens will reel under the burden of heavy taxes. Dharma and punyas will cease to exist. Even out of lakhs of people there will not be one man who is virtuous and holy. Language will become foul and abusive. Hamlets and villages will become jungles. There will be a shortage of human beings. Even those living in the forests will be burdened with taxes. Crops will only grow along rivers and lakes. Due to failure of rains, people will be forced to carry on cultivation near rivers and lakes. There will be retrogression and deterioration of the human species, and confused and stupefied beings will be born.

Narad! The people of Kaliyug will be vulgar, indecent, obscene, cunning, wily, fraudulent, wicked and dishonest, and untruthful. Even fields which have been well tended, will fail to produce crops. Inferior men will become wealthy, and will be given honor and fame. God fearing and spiritually inclined men will suddenly become atheists, sceptics and heretics. Citizens will become murderers, homicidal and sadists. During Kalyug, men and women will be overcome with disease and illness, will have short life span, and will never look youthful. Their hair will start turning grey from the age of sixteen itself. By the age of twenty they will become senile. Girls will mature at the eighth year of life, and will become mothers by the time they are ten years of age. In Kaliyug

people will make money in the name of God. There will be false and spurious acts of charity. People for the sake of name and fame, will announce large donations and immediately take back the money. The subsistence money of temples, Brahmins and gurukuls will be snatched away by people of Kaliyug. Men and women will have no hesitation about illicit relationships. There will be no harmony or understanding between husband and wife. Citizens will not be able to establish their right and ownership over their wealth or property. All will speak harsh and hurtful language to each other. There will be greed and lust, and dishonesty. There will be widespread murder and treachery. Sin will enter all classes and families. People will trade in shellac, iron, liquid extracts and salt. The practice of calling realized souls to perform panchyagyas will be discontinued, The sacred thread will become a burden. They will not observe sandhya-vandan (prayers to be said three times), nor any cleansing practices. Women of low morals will cook food in the house of Brahmins. There will be no discipline or morals. All will become mlecchas (those who desire and enjoy immoral and filthy things.)

During the darkest days of Kaliyuga, when the world is filled with wicked and evil people – then in the house of a Brahmin called Vishnjyasha Bhagwan Kalki will take birth as his son. This mighty and powerful Kalki will be a partial avatar of Bhagwan Narayan. He will be seated on a very high horse, and with his sword he will demolish all the evil and wicked people; and in this way he will cleanse the entire earth. In this way he will free Vasudha (mother earth) of her burden of mlecchas; and then he will withdraw. Then again there will be disorder and chaos. Dacoits will loot and kill. Then there will be a deluge of heavy rain without ceasing. It will rain continuously for six days and six nights. As far as the eye can see, only water will be visible. Earth will become devoid

of all life forms, trees and dwellings. Mune! After all this, twelve suns will rise and by their heat the earth will get dry.

This will mark the end of Kaliyug. Then Dharma will be re-established complete with truth devotion and fervour. Prithvi will be ornamented with Brahmins, realized souls, tapasvis and dharamatmas. All married ladies will be chaste, virtuous and faithful. The reins of government will be in the hands of able administrators of high morals and principles. They will honour Brahmins, tapasvis and dharamatmas; and will engage in virtuous deeds. Traders will do honest business. Sudras will lead dharmic lives and serve others faithfully. Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas will worship Bhagawati Jagaddamba. There will be continuous chanting of Her mantras. All will meditate upon the Devi. Men will lead disciplined lives according to traditions and codes of conduct revealed in the scriptures. They will have full knowledge of the Vedas and Purans. This is what is called as Satya Yuga. In this Yuga only Dharma will exist. In Treta (the second yuga known as the silver age of Hindu mythology), Dharma will be supported by three legs; in Dwapar (the third age) it will stand on two legs; and in Kali it will have only one leg to support it. When Ghor Kaliyug comes, it becomes devoid of all legs.

O Brahmin! There are seven days. Lunar days are sixteen. There are twelve months and six seasons. There are two fortnights – Shukla (bright) and Krishna (the dark). Then there are two solstices – Uttarayan or summer solstice, when the sun is north of the equator; and Dakshinayan or winter solstice, when the sun moves to the south of the equator. A day is divided into four quarters of

three hours each; and a night is also divided into four quarters of three hours each. Thirty days make a month. There are five kinds of years. These are the divisions of Time. Just as the days come and go, so also Yugas come and go. When one human year is complete, it is equal to one day and one night of the gods Men, learned in the calculation of Time say, that one Divine Yuga is equal to three hundred and sixty yugas of human beings. Seventy one Divya Yugas makes one Manavantar. One Indra reigns for the duration of one manavantar. Twenty eight manavantars constitute one day and night of Brahma. By this calculation Brahma reigns for one hundred and eight years. This should be understood to be the completion of a cycle and time for annihilation of creation. At that time Prithvi cannot be seen. The whole Brahmand, including Prithvi becomes dissolved and absorbed into the water. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and all enter into the Sat Chit Anand Brahm – the Primordial Being. Into that Brahm also dissolves Prakriti. That is, Prakriti and Purush unite as one being. Mune! This is what is called as Prakrit Pralay. Final dissolution of the material cause of the universe. When this happens, the span of Brahma comes to an end.

Munivar! This immense passage of time is equal to one blink of the Eye of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. So just by one blink of the eye of the Devi, the earth and the entire creation gets destroyed. Then the blinking of an eye of Bhagawati can create countless Brahmands. In this way, the cycle of creation and dissolution continues. Who can tell how many such Kalpas have come and gone. Narad! Is there anyone who can accurately know the number of creations, destructions, Brahmands and species living in Brahmand?

The one Supreme Lord God of all is called Paramatma. His form is Sat Chit Anand. Brahma and all the gods, Mahavirat and Swalpavirat – all are fractions of Param Prabhu Paramatma. That Paramatma is verily Para Shakti. The same is manifested in the Ardhanarishwar form of Shri Krishna. His form gets divided into two – one bearing two arms, and the other bearing four arms. The Chaturbhuj (four armed) Shri Hari presides in Vaikunth; and the Dwibhuj (two armed) Shri Krishna lives in Go-lok. Everything from Brahma to a blade of grass, is natural. They are destructible and perishable. All things that are created out of Nature or Prakriti, will ultimately end up in dissolution and annihilation. In the same way, the causal of creation, Parabrahma Paramatma, is eternal, truth, constant, free, attributeless; and beyond Prakriti. Paramatma has neither worldly designation or denomination; nor material or physical structure or form. He is always present to grant grace and favours to the bhaktas. It is by His benevolence that the most knowledgeable Brahma, born in the lotus, is able to carry out the procedure of creation.

Shiva is called as Mrittunjay (conqueror of death) and Sarvasattwavitt (consciousness bliss). He is the greatest tapasvi. Being conscious of Parabrahma, and by the power of His tapasya, He is able to carry out the dissolution.

By His shraddha and worship of Parabrahma, the Great Preserver, Shriman Vishnu, became filled with majesty, dignity, prosperity, omniscient, all perceiving, all pervading, protector of all, giver of peace, giver of strength, and Ishwar of all.

Prakriti is called as Sarva Shakti Swaroopini (embodiment of all energy); Mahamaya, and Sarveshwari (the Supreme Goddess). It is this same Bhagawati who is also Sat Chit Ananda Swaroopini (essence of pure truth; pure attention and pure joy). By recognizing and worshipping Her, the mother of the gods, Savithri, became the goddess of the Vedas. This Devi, who is endowed with full knowledge of the Vedas, is worshipped by Brahmins. It is by the grace of this Satchitananda Swaroopini Bhagawati Prakriti, that Saraswati was endowed with the complete Vidyas. All wise and learned ones worship Her. By worshipping this Primordial Prakriti, Lakshmi became most worshipful Herself. By becoming the devotee of Devi Bhagawati, Durga attained a status of being worshipped and of granting boons to Her bhaktas.

Shree Radha enhances the glory of Shri Krishna and presides on His left side. This all-knowing Devi removes all sorrows and grants peace. She is known as the presiding deity of the heart of Shri Krishna. Shree Radha is Herself Shri Krishna Swaroopa. This makes Her exceedingly dear to Shri Krishna – more than life itself. And for this reason She has been endowed with ex ceedingly beautiful form, auspiciousness and honour. For this reason She has got the privilege of being the wife of Shri Krishna, and residing on His vaksh sthal – (chest). Bhagawati Radha performed tapasya on Shatshring mountains. In Her tapasya She prayed that Bhagwan Shri Krishna should be Her husband. Shri Krishna immediately appeared before Her. When He beheld Her, as beautiful and radiant as the moon, He held Her to His heart and said - Dear One! You will always reign over the throne on my vaksh-sthal. Your love for Me is eternal and immortal. You will be constantly surrounded by

auspiciousness, honour, dignity, love, majesty and grandeur. You will abide by My side as the principal, most superior and most entitled to My love. You will be most worshipful for all devotees. O One Who is dearer to Me than life! I am Yours and will abide by Your every wish.

After making these declarations, Shri Krishna enthroned Shree Radha in His Heart. There is no other beside Shree Radha. Mune! In the same way, all those Devis who have worshipped Bhagawati Moolaprakriti, have all become objects of worship. Mune! Bhagawati Durga did tapasya on the Himalaya mountain. She constantly meditated on the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. After that She was worshipped by all. Saraswati went to Gandhamadan mountain and did tapasya. After that She was adored and venerated by all. After meditating in the Pushkar region, Lakshmi was endowed with the power to grant wealth and generosity to Her bhaktas. Savithri did tapasya on Mallaya Giri mountain. Now people sing Her praises.

Narad! In this way all the Devatas, Munis, Manavs, kings and Brahmins – have worshipped and meditated upon Adi Devi and have been endowed with wisdom, honour and respect.

Now, what else do you wish to hear.

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Chapter 9 episodes 9-10

9-10 Birth of Prithvi. Different kinds of Dhyan and Pujas, and Stutis. And a description of sins against Prithvi that cast one into Hell.

Naradji said – Bhagwan! You have mentioned that in the blinking of the eye of the Devi, Brahma's existence comes to an end. That will also cause prakrityi pralay (dissolution of creation). At that time Prithvi subsides into the water. Everything gets absorbed into Parabrahma Paramatma. Where does Prithvi go, and at the time of creation how does she appear. How is she endowed anew with wealth, honour, respect, victory and the capacity to give shelter and sustenance to all. Prabho! Please tell me about the auspicious manifestation of Prithvi.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The Revelations say that the entire creation takes birth from Adi Shakti Bhagawati Jagaddamba – as She is the matrix of the Universe. And at the time of pralaya or dissolution, it is She who devours the Universe.

Now listen to the story of the birth of Prithvi. Some say that this most revered Prithvi was formed out of the meda (marrow) of the Daityas Madhu and Kaitabh. The reason is because when they existed Prithvi was not clearly visible. After they died the marrow that flowed out of their bodies got dried by the sun. Therefore Prithvi got the name Medini. I will explain this. In the beginning only water could be seen everywhere. Prithvi was completely submerged. The marrow only touched her. And for this people began to call her Medini. Now listen to her actual birth. This story gives many blessings and auspiciousness.

I was in the region of Pushkar. There I had the privilege of hearing this story from the most fortunate Dharm.

The Maha Viraat Purush, the Supreme and Almighty Being, from Infinity has existed in water. From time to time, His All Pervading Desire manifests from every pore. Mune! It is from one of these pores of His Iccha Shakti, that Prithvi manifests. In this way, from every pore, one waterborne Prithvi emerges, hides, and re-enters the pore. During Srishti (creation) she emerges from the water and fixes herself in her place; and during dissolution she re-enters the water and gets absorbed into the pore. This is her nature. She presides over the whole Brahmand (created universe). Forests and mountains are her adornment. She is surrounded by seven oceans. Seven islands are her limbs. Himalay, Sumeru and other mountains; the Sun, Moon and Planets; are her ornaments. As per the command of Maha Viraat, the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva manifest, and all life forms inhabit the earth. She is blessed with holy places like Bharatvarsh, and other places of pilgrimage. This earth is golden. There are seven heavens on it. Below it are seven Pataals (nether worlds). Above it is Brahma Lok; and higher than that is Dhruv Lok.

Narad! This is how the creation has been structured on Prithvi. The entire fabric of the whole world is destructible. So much so, that at the time of dissolution, even Brahma goes away. Then only exists the Mahaviraat Purush. The cycle of creation and dissolution is a constant and continuous happening. From time to time, according to the laws created by Her, they come under the command of the secret and unseen Shakti. In this sequence, Prithvi is a constant factor. During Varaha-kalp (the Boar incarnation of Shri Vishnu), She had appeared in a personified form, and was worshipped by all the gods, munis, manu, gandharvas and Brahmins. According to the Shrutis, Prithvidevi

reigned as the wife of Varaha-avatar. Out of this, Mangal (Mars) was born, and from Mangal came Ghatesh.

Narad said – Prabho! During Varaha-kalp, in what form did the gods worship Prithvi. This source of the material cause of the universe, herself manifested from the five causal elements. Bhagwan! Please tell me the various ways in which She is worshipped in the Lokas above and below; and also the auspicious story of the birth of Mangal.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! This happened a long time ago, during the Varaha-kalp. Because of the stutis performed by Brahma, Bhagwan Shri Hari killed Hiranyaksh and rescued Prithvi from Rasataal (the sixth lower world). He placed her on the water as if she was a lotus leaf. Brahma presided here and carried out the work of creation. The governing deity of Prithvi was a goddess of extreme beauty. Bhagwan Shri Hari was struck by her beauty. He assumed the form of a Boar, which was radiant like a crore of suns. This impressed the devi, and she stayed with Him for one year. Then He suddenly left. He assumed His original form and began to perform puja and meditation to Devi Prithvi. During the puja He offered her fragrant incense, burning lamps, prescribed oblations, sindoor, chandan, clothes, flowers and sacrifice. Then He said –

Shubhe! Become the refuge and shelter of all. By becoming the object of worship for Munis, Manu, Devatas and Danavas, you will enjoy great happiness. Excepting the days when you are ambuvachi (in cycle), you will be worshipped by My command, on occasions like grihapravesh; griha-arambh; digging of ponds and tanks; and other household extensions and constructions. Those foolish and ignorant persons who have no desire to worship you, will certainly go to hell.

At that time Prithvi was already with child. That child was the glorious Mars. By the command of the Lord, all living beings began to worship Prithvi. All the mantras contained in the writings of rishi Kanva, were used for Stutis and meditation. Moolamantras were chanted, and prescribed offerings were made. In all the three lokas, Prithvi Devi began to be worshipped.

Naradji said – Bhagwan! Please tell me the right way to meditate on Prithvidevi; the puja procedure; and the Moola-mantra. All this knowledge is concealed in the Purans, and I have a great desire to know. Please tell me all this.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Mune! Bhagwan Varaha was the first one to perform Puja to Prithvi Devi. After him, Brahmaji performed the puja. And then pujas were performed by Munis, Manu and human beings. Narad! I will now tell you the procedures for meditation and puja; and the Moola mantra. Listen carefully.

"Om Hrim Srim Vasudha-yai Svaha" - By this mantra Bhagwan Vishnu performed puja. The procedure for meditation is ---- The form of Prithvidevi is clear and pure like a newly bloomed lotus. Her face resembles the brilliant full moon of Ashwin (Sharad Purnima). Her whole body is covered with sandal paste. She is bedecked with precious jewels. All gemstones adorn Her, within and without. She is a treasure house of precious stones. Her garments are divine and spotless. She has a smile on her face. She is worshipped by all. To that Bhagawati Prithvi I offer my pranaams.

This is how all sages and saints meditate. Now I will tell you the stutis written in Kanvashakha.

Shri Narayan says : Bhagawati Jaye! You are the support of water. It is your nature to contain water. You provide water to all. Bhagwan Shri Had incarnated as a Boar, and you became His wife. You are possessed of victory and triumph; you are auspicious; you are the support of auspiciousness; and you are the bestower of auspiciousness. O Devi! Give me victory over evil, and your benediction. Give me auspiciousness. O Devi! You give protection and refuge to all. You are all knowing and ever powerful. O Bhagawati! You grant all desires. Obeisance to you. Please grant success to all my endeavours. Your form is holy. You are the seed of virtues. You are called Bhagawati Sanatani (ancient; everlasting). O Beautiful One! You are the receptacle of auspiciousness; the support of virtues and the bestower of punyas. O Devi who causes good harvests! All grasses, grains and fruits germinate, sprout and grow at your command. Flourishing and blooming fields are one of your forms. Ultimately these get absorbed into you. All growing vegetation are your limbs. O Mother Earth! You are the wealth and property that kings possess. Kings worship you. O Bhagawati Bhoomi! Please permit me to live upon you.

Narad! This stotra is very holy. He who recites it, from his heart, every morning gets the blessing of becoming a king for many lives. By reading this, a man reaps the benevolence of Prithvi. This stotra washes away the sins that are committed by - plundering and stealing the gifts of the earth; digging wells without permission of the owner of the property; digging the earth during rainfall; and misappropriating another's land. Mune! Also the sins of spilling sperm on the bhoomi, or vomiting on bhoomi can be cleansed by singing this stotra.

Naradji said - Please explain in greater detail the punyas that one gets by donating land; and the sins that are committed by disrespecting Bhoomi Devi.

O foremost knower of the Vedas. Besides what I have asked; if there are any other actions which are counted as sins against Prithvi, please tell me about that also.

Bhagwan Narayan says - Any one who gives to a twice-born Brahmin, even a microscopic piece of land, he gets the same blessings as a man who builds a temple to Bhagwan Shiva. One who donates a standing field full of crops for the Brahmins, becomes entitled to stay in the abode of Bhagwan Vishnu for as many years as there are particles of dust on that land. The one who donates land, villages and grain to Brahmins, by his punyas his dependents and members of his household will get released from their sins and get a place in the abode of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. At the time of Bhoomi-daan (giving of land), the kind and beneficient person who offers hospitality, and inspires and encourages his dependents, he merits a passage to Vaikunth for himself, his friends and his clan.

But, the man who grabs the land given to a Brahmin, either by himself or another, he goes to a hell called Kaalsutra, and stays there for as long as the sun and the moon exist. Not only this, but even his sons and grandsons can never own land. They never have wealth or prosperity; never have children; suffer misfortunes; and end up in a hell called Raurav. Those who convert grazing pastures into agricultural land; and then try to give that grain to twice-born Brahmins, they suffer for this scorn and insult by being banished to a hell called Kumbhipak for a period equivalent to hundred years of the devas. Those who cultivate grain in cow-sheds, their pathways, or their drinking water pools, and then do charity with that grain, will suffer in a hell called Asipatra for the length of life of fourteen Indras.

He who secretly spills his seed on Prithvi, will go to a hell called Raurav for as many years as there are dust particles in that land. A man who digs land which is pledged to ambuvachi (water) is thrown into a hell called Krimidansh for four yugas. He who takes clean water from another's pool and uses it for bath, is rewarded for cleansing the pool by getting a place in Brahmalok. He who performs shradh (offering of oblations to the ancestors) without first honouring the ancestors of Bhoomipati, he will suffer banishment to hell.

Shiv-ling, image of Bhagawati, conch, sacred objects, Shalgram (Vishnu's idol of black stone), flowers, twigs of tulasi, rosary, garland of flowers, sacred books and sacred thread – he who disrespectfully throws these on the ground, is sent to hell. Those who are twice-born must worship the sacred thread. It is a great sin to dig the earth during earthquake and eclipse. Those who disregard and disobey this law, are born in the next birth, without limbs (anga-heen). The earth is called Bhoomi because she supports the dwelling places of all beings. She is also called Kashyapi because she is the daughter of Kashyap. Because she is firm and stable, she is called Sthira. Being the support of the world she is called Vishwambhara. Because she is everlasting, she is called Ananta. And being the daughter of Prithu, she is also called Prithvi.

Chapter 9 episode 11

11 Story of the birth of Ganga.

Naradji said – O Great and all-knowing Bhagwan! I am grateful for this information about Prithvi. Now please tell me everything about Ganga. She who is known by the names Sureshwari, Vishnuswaroopa and Vishnupadi, -- by the curse of Saraswati how and in what yuga did she come to Bharatvarsh. I desire to hear this story which destroys all sin and which is very holy.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Shriman Saggar was a renowned king of the Surya dynasty. He had two beautiful queens, Vaidarbhi and Shaibya. Shaibya gave birth to a son who became famous by the name of Asamanjas. The other wife Vaidharbhi desired to have a daughter, and prayed to Bhagwan Shankar. He granted her wish, and she became with child. But after one hundred years she gave birth to a round mass of flesh. When she saw this she was greatly perturbed and distressed, and she meditated on Bhagwan Shankar. He came in the guise of a Brahmin and divided the lump into sixty thousand pieces. Each piece became a son. They were full of strength and valour. They shone with a brilliance that challenged the sun. But all of them turned to ashes by the curse of Muni Kapil. When Raja Saggar heard this tragic news, tears of sorrow flowed continuously from his eyes. He retired into the dense forest. His son Asamanjas began a severe tapasya to bring Ganga down from the heavens. He continued his tapasya for a very long time, till he died. The tapasya was continued by his son Anshuman, who also died in meditation.

Anshuman had a son Bhagirath. Bhagirath was a great devotee of Shri Hari, and a man of the highest moral character and virtues. He also performed severe penance to bring Ganga to the earth. One day Shri Krishna gave him a

darshan. The light emanating from the Lord was like a thousand suns. He had two arms. He held a Murali (flute) in His hand; and He appeared as a young boy. He was dressed as a cowherd. The Lord also manifests as Gop-sundari (Radha) to please His devotees. Mune! Bhagwan Shri Krishna is verily Parabrahma. He can appear in whatever form He chooses. All the gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were singing His stutis; and rishis and munis stood with bowed heads. The eternal, detached witness; beyond prakriti; the most benevolent God, had a smile on His radiant face. He wore radiant garments and divine ornaments. Beholding this Divine Form, Bhagirath adored Him again and again; and sang stutis. In the form of a Divine Leela, Bhagirath got his wish fulfilled, that his ancestors should get drenched. In humble gratitude he again sang stutis.

Bhagwan Shri Hari said to Ganga – Sureshwari! To fulfill the curse of Saraswati, you must now go to Bharatvarsh; and purify all the sons of Saggar. After getting purified by you, and with the help of Vayu, (wind god), all those princes will get released and come to My abode. They will assume divine forms and will be seated in divine chariots They will have the privilege of being my courtiers. They will be forever free from mental agony and disease. They will be released from the accumulation of sins of all previous births. It is mentioned in the Shrutis, that the sins of all previous births get neutralized by the purity of just the Vayu which skims over the Ganga. Those who enter the waters of the Ganga with the pure desire of getting cleansed, and having her darshan, and who take dips without flailing arms and legs; they get blessings that are tenfold. Even on ordinary days, those who take holy dips in the Ganga, get absolved of sins of many births. The blessings that come when this is done on festivals and special days, are also described. In comparison with bathing on ordinary days, those who take holy baths on lunar eclipse, get one crore more blessings. On solar eclipse it increases to ten crore blessings. And

a hundred times this blessing, is given if it is done during Ardh-uday (dawn; Brahma Muhurth). Narad! After speaking thus to Ganga in the presence of Bhagirath; Bhagwan Shri Hari fell silent. Ganga, full of bhakti and humility said ---

Ganga said – Nath! This curse of Saraswati is already upon my head. You are giving the command, and this Maharaj Bhagirath is still in tapasya. As per your command I will go to Bharatvarsh. But Prabho! After I reach there all kinds of sinners will come and unburden their present and past sins upon me. In these circumstances how will I ever become cleansed. Please tell me the solution before I leave. Devesh! How long must I stay in Bharatvarsh. When will I be worthy again to come back to Your abode. Prabho! You are omniscient. Nothing is hidden from You. Whatever is troubling my conscience and innermost thoughts, please soothe me and give me some assurance.

Shri Bhagwan said – Sureshwari! Gange! I am aware of all your intentions and desires. You will descend to Bharatvarsh in the form of a river; and a part of Me will be the ocean and become your husband. Of all the rivers that flow in Bharatvarsh, You will be the most important one for the ocean. Deveshi! According to the curse, you will remain in Bharatvarsh for the five thousand years of Kaliyug. Devi! You will preside as Lakshmi-roopa – the great beauty - and I as the ocean will be the admirer of your beauty. We will merge in the Sangam (confluence). All who live in Bharat will worship you by singing the stutis composed by Bhagirath, and by their bhakti and worship you will be cleansed and purified. People will meditate upon you as prescribed in Kanvashakha. He who sings your stutis and offer pranaams to you, will get the same boons as are given for Ashwamedh Yagya. No matter how many yojans away from you they are – if devotees chant “Ganga! Ganga!” and take a bath, they get released from all sins, past and present, and gain a place in Vishnu

Lok. Even if thousands of sinners burden you with their sins, just a contact with a devotee of Bhagawati Jagaddamba will neutralize the entire effect. All the bodies of sinners, which are immersed in your waters, will undoubtedly contaminate and defile you. But there will also be punya-atmas who will bathe in you while chanting mantras of the Devi. By their presence in your waters, all the impurities and sins will get cleansed and purified. Shubhe! You will stay in the holy land of Bharatvarsh, which grants liberation from sins. You will be helped by the presence of Saraswati and others.

Wherever songs are sung in your praise, that place will become holy. Even on the days when you are in cycle, people can bathe and get cleansed, and they become entitled to live in Devi-lok for many years.

Devi! Those who take Samadhi after years of tapasya and meditation, in My name, come straight to My abode. There they stay as courtiers and witness innumerable dissolutions of creation. Only the very fortunate, and authorized people, can get their bodies immersed in your waters. And as long as their bones lie in your water, for that many years they can stay in Vaikunth. In ignorance, if anyone drowns in your water, then he too gets salvation by My compassion. No matter where a man dies, if he says your name with his last breath, he too gets salvation by My grace. Whether he dies in a teerthsthan (holy place) or away from it, the effect of taking your name will make him entitled to salvation, and will give him the power of purifying even the Triloki. Those whose friends are My devotees; be they human or animal; they will ride in jewel studded chariots and go to Go-lok.

Munivar! After speaking thus to Ganga, Shri Hari turned to Bhagirath and said – Rajan! Now you continue to sing stutis to Ganga and offer puja to her.

So Bhagirath resumed his worship of Ganga, by stutis and pujas. He observed all the rules as told in Kauthumishakha regarding meditation, stotras and pujas. Then he paid obeisance, again and again, to Param Prabhu Paramatma Bhagwan Shri Krishna. Then Bhagirath and Ganga began their journey to the appointed place, and the Lord removed Himself from their sight.

Narad asked – O Prime Knower of the Vedas! Prabho! I desire to know which stotra and which form of meditation Bhagirath Raja performed to Ganga.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! At the commencement, Raja Bhagirath took his ritual bath. He wore new clothes. Then, bringing all his senses under control, and detaching his attention from everything, he worshipped six gods. They are – Ganesh, Surya, Agni, Vishnu, Shiv and Bhagawati Shiva. This authorized him to perform the puja to Gangaji. Narad! To remove obstacles it is necessary to worship Shri Ganesh. For good health – Surya; for holiness and purity – Agni. For dignity and prosperity – Vishnu; for knowledge – Gyaneshwar Shiv; and for Mukti one has to worship Bhagawati Shiv. Wise and learned ones have had the experience that only after worshipping these gods, a puja becomes effective . Now hear how Bhagirath performed his meditation on Ganga.

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Chapter 9 episode 12

12 Procedure for Dhyan and Stutis to Ganga. Manifestation of Ganga from Shri Radha Krishna.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! This meditation dissolves all sins. –

Ganga is clean and pure like a white lotus. She destroys all sins. She has manifested from the all pervading Parabrahma Bhagwan Shri Krishna, and is most worthy and virtuous. She wears pure shining raiments, and is adorned with divine jewellery. She has absorbed the radiance of hundreds of Sharad Purnimas (full moons). She is always smiling. There is no waning of her youth. She is ever young. This devi who is the embodiment of peace, is dear to Bhagwan Narayan. She is Sat-sowbhagya (the essence of auspiciousness and prosperity). Her thick hair is in curls and ringlets. Garlands of malathi flowers enhance her beauty. On her forehead rests the half moon in sandal paste, and below that is her bindi of sindoor. Her temples are decorated with kasturi and other fragrant pastes, in pleasing designs. Her lips are redder than the bimba fruit. Her sparkling white teeth make a string of pearls seem worthless. Her beautiful eyes with their benevolent glances, adorn her face. Her breasts resemble Shreephal (coconut). Her lotus feet are divinely beautiful. They are coloured with mahavar (alta) and decorated with gem-studded anklets, and toe rings. The celestial mandaar flowers on the crown of Indra, have rubbed their pollen on her lotus feet, and covered it with red dust. Devatas, Siddhas and Munindras are always ready with precious and valuable gifts fit for adoration and presentation. The bumble bees which live in the matted locks of the tapasvis, hover around her lotus feet. Her lotus feet grant moksha to all those who seek it; and fulfill the pure desires of all. This most worshipful devi is always keen to fulfill the desires of those who worship her. She grants

proximity to the lotus feet of Bhagwan Vishnu and is also called Vishnupadi. I worship this most pure and virtuous Ganga Devi.

Brahman! This is the form in which one must meditate on Ganga who flows through three nadis. She must be worshipped in the heart. Then in sixteen ways, puja has to be performed -- offering aasan (seat); washing feet; water for rinsing mouth; water for bath; anulepan (anointing with fragrant substances; incense; lamp; Naivedya; betel leaf and nut; cool water; clothes; jewels; garland; chandan; sipping of water; beautiful shayya (couch). - These are worthy of being offered in a puja. After offering all this to Bhagawati Ganga, one should do pranaam and sing stutis with folded hands. Those who have the good fortune to perform such a puja, get the blessings equivalent to an Ashwamedh Yagya.

Naradji says – Devesh! Lakshmikant! Jagat-patey! I now desire to know that stotra of Bhagawati Ganga which destroys all sins and grants punyas.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Listen with full attention. I am going to recite the powerful stotra of Bhagawati Ganga, who is the Charan-sangini (abides at the Lotus Feet) of Bhagwan Vishnu.

I offer pranaams to that Gangaji, who was so enamoured by the sangeet of Bhagwan Shiva, that she manifested from the body of Shri Krishna, and is endowed with the fluidity of compassion of Shri Radha. I offer pranaams to that Bhagawati Ganga who manifested in Go-lok at the time of creation, in the Raasmandal; and who presides over the abode of Bhagwan Shankar. On the auspicious occasion of Kartik Purnima, Radha maha-utsav was being celebrated. Large numbers of Gopas and Gopikas were present. I offer

pranaams to that Bhagawati Ganga who had a place of honour there. I offer pranaams to that Bhagawati Ganga, who is one crore yojans in length, and one lakh yojans in breadth (one yojan is sixteen miles); and who guards Go-lok. I worship that Bhagawati Ganga who presides over Vaikunt in proportions of thirty lakh yojans wide and five times that in length. I worship that Bhagawati Ganga who flows in Brahmalok for a width of thirty lakh yojans and a length of five times that. I worship that Bhagawati Ganga who adds to the magnificence of Shivlok, by flowing thirty lakh yojans wide and four times that in length. I worship that Bhagawati Ganga who is reflected in Dhruvlok for a length of one lakh yojans and a breadth of seven times that. I worship that Devi Ganga who is spread over Chandralok for an expanse of one lakh yojans in length and five times that in width. She who is enveloped in Suryalok over an area of sixty thousand yojans length and ten times that in width, to that Devi Ganga I offer my pranaams. I worship that Devi Ganga who is enveloped in tapolok for a distance of one lakh yojans and a width ten times that. I worship that Devi Ganga who is spread over Janlok for a length of one thousand yojans and a breadth of ten times that. I worship Devi Ganga who resides in Maherlok for a length of ten lakh yojans and breadth five times that. I worship that Bhagawati Ganga, who flows in Kailash at one-one thousand yojans length and hundred yojans wide. I offer pranaams to that Bhagawati Ganga who is known as Mandakini in Chandralok, and whose length is hundred yojans and width ten yojans. I worship that Devi Ganga who flows in Pataal for a length of ten yojans and ten times that in width, and is known as Bhogwati. I worship that Devi Ganga who is two miles long and of varied width, who flows in Prithvi, and is known as Alaknanda. I worship that Bhagawati Ganga who flows like milk in Satyayug; like Chandrama in Tretayug; like Chandan in Dwapar; and like water in Kaliyug. I worship that Bhagawati Ganga whose water purifies those who come into contact with it, and who destroys even the greatest crimes like Brahmin-hatya.

Brahmin! There are twenty-one verses of Ganga-stuti. If these are read with respect and devotion, all sins can be destroyed. He who worships the eternal Sureshwari Ganga with puja and this stuti; he undoubtedly becomes entitled to the fruits of an Ashwamedha sacrifice. By the power of this stotra, childless couples beget children; men get virtuous wives; the sick get relieved of their illness; and those who are in bondage, get freedom. Not only this, but the deserving get honour and fame; and the ignorant and foolish get knowledge and intelligence. Those who arise early in the morning and recite this most holy Ganga Stuti, are never troubled by bad dreams. They also get the same blessings as if they have taken a holy dip in the Ganga.

Bhagwan Narayan says - Narad! Raja Bhagirath sang these stutis to Devi Ganga, and brought Her with him to the place where the sixty thousand sons of King Saggar had been burned to ashes. As soon as the Vayu, which had skimmed over the Ganga, passed over them, all the princes attained Vaikunth.

It is by the devotion and worship of Ganga, by Raja Bhagirath, that Ganga entered Prithvi. Therefore Ganga is also called as Bhagirathi. I have just completed the narration of the manifestation of Ganga. It gives moksha to those who hear it. Now, what other things do you desire to know.

Naradji said – Bhagwan! This most holy Ganga, who is possessed of the three qualities (Tripath-ga) purifies and cleanses this Bhoomandal. Please tell me how and where she manifested. I am so keen to know this.

Bhagwan Narayan said – Narad! It happened a long time ago. It was Kartik Purnima. Radha Mahotsav was being celebrated with great joy. Bhagwan Shri Krishna after performing puja to Bhagawati Radha, was presiding over the Raas-mandal. Then Brahma and all the gods, Shounak and all the rishis; and

all divine personalities also offered Puja to Bhagawati Radha, and took their places. Just then Devi Saraswati, the goddess of music, came with a veena in Her hands and began to sing beautiful melodies, full of taal and swar (rhythm and tune). Brahma was so impressed that He presented Her a gem-studded necklace. From Shiva She got a rare and unique jewel which was most excellent in the whole Brahmand. Bhagwan Shri Krishna presented Her the Kaustubh-mani (which Shri Vishnu wears on His breast). Radhaji gave her a precious necklace. Bhagwan Narayan gave Her a garland of heavenly flowers; and Lakshmi gave Her a pair of gem-studded rings for her ears. Bhagawati Moolprakriti, who is also Vishnumaya, Ishwari, Durga, Narayani and Eeshana; gave Her the most precious gift of Paramatma Bhakti manifesting in Her consciousness. Dharm gave Her Dharmic Buddhi, and fame and recognition in this vast creation. Agni Devata gave divine garments, and Pavan presented nupur – jeweled ornaments for Her ankles.

Then, on the instigation of Brahma, Bhagwan Shankar began to sing a composition on Shri Krishna. Every word had the power to increase the sentiment and joy, and He kept singing it again and again. Hearing this all the gods nearly fainted with emotions. They all looked like a collection of puppets. With great difficulty they regained consciousness. They saw that the whole raasmandal area was flooded with water. There was no sign of Shree Radha and Shri Krishna. All the gopas and gopis, gods and Brahmins, began to lament loudly. Brahmaji was also present. He went into meditation and understood the pure intention of Shri Krishna. He got the realization that verily Shri Krishna and Shree Radha had become this water. Then all those fortunate and blessed gods, rishis and Brahmins began to sing stutis to Parabrahma Paramatma Shri Krishna. Everyone offered prayers –

Vibho! We have only one fervent prayer – that you again manifest to us in your original Shri Murthy.

Then a voice was heard in the heavens, sweet and loud, and clear. Each and every one heard it.

"I, the Universal Being, Shri Krishna, and My Shakti Radha – both of us, for the benevolence of our bhaktas, have assumed this form of water. O Sureshwars! What is your purpose in wanting to see us in bodily form. Manu, Munis, Manavs and all devotees of Vishnu, will purify themselves by My Mantras and come to see Me in My abode. If you also wish to have a pure darshan, then you must make every effort. Shambhu will remain and carry out My commands. Vidhaata! Brahman! You should personally convey to Jagadguru Shankar that he should constitute and structure the most superb and sublime Vedas in Tantra Shastra. It should contain as quotations, all the unique and unparalleled mantras with their respective fruits. This Tantra Shastra should be replete with all stotras, meditation techniques, puja procedures, mantras and kavach. It should not include mantras which might cause sinners to become hostile or averse to Me. But of course, in a thousand, if there is one true devotee of Mine, you can disclose this most secret mantra also. By the effect of My mantra, devotees will become punya atmas and reach My abode. If My Tantra Shastras are not disclosed, then no one will be able to gain entry into Go-lok. If this happens, the entire brahmand will become useless and fruitless. But this will not be good or desirable. Therefore in every creation, you must create five kinds of people. In this way it can be assured that even if most people remain on earth, many will attain a place in heaven. If Shiva in the Dev-sabha (assembly of Gods) expresses a strong desire for this, then He will immediately have a darshan of Me".

After speaking in this heavenly vani, Shri Hari became silent. The creator of the entire universe, Shri Brahma heard all this and became very joyful and pleased, and he immediately conveyed it to Shri Shankar. The foremost of the wise, and the master of all knowledge, Bhagwan Shankar, listened to Brahma. Then He took Gangajal (water of the Ganga) in His hands and made a solemn promise to carry out the command of Shri Hari. Then He started the Tantra Shastra which is filled with the great mantras of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. "In obedience to My promise I will create and compile the essential Tantra Shastra from the Vedas"… these words kept echoing in the heart of Bhagwan Shankar. He expressed a verdict that if anyone takes Gangajal in his hand and makes a promise, and then does not fulfill it, he will go to a hell called Kaalsutra and stay there for the duration of a lifespan of Brahma.

Brahman! All the gods had assembled in Go-lok. As soon as Bhagwan Shankar made this pronouncement, immediately there appeared in their midst, Bhagwan Parabrahma Shri Krishna and Bhagawati Radha. Having this darshan of Purushottam Bhagwan Shri Hari the joy of the gods knew no bounds. They began to sing stutis in praise of the lord.

All the gods were so happy that they again started celebrating. After that, at an auspicious time, Shri Shankar Bhagwan created the Sattwic Tantra Shastra which sheds light on Mukti.

Narad! I have just told you a great secret, which is inaccessible to most. It was Poornabrahma Bhagwan Shri Krishna Himself, who assumed the form of water and became the Ganga. This is the mystery of how Ganga manifested in Go-lok. This is how Bhagwan Shri Radhakrishna manifested as Ganga.

The Ganga which manifested from the bodies of Shri Krishna and Shree Radha, has the power to grant both Bhukti and Mukti. Bhagwan Shri Krishna has made arrangements for her to flow wherever she desires. This Gangadevi, who is Shri Krishna-swaroopa, is worshipped in the entire brahmand.

Chapter 9 episodes 13-14

13-14 Wrath of Shree Radha on Ganga. Ganga takes refuge in the Lotus Feet of Shri Krishna. Deprived of water, the gods sing Brahma Stuti to please Shree Radha. How Ganga became Vishnupatni.

Naradji said – Sureshwar! After five thousand years of Kali, where will Ganga go. Mahabhag! Please tell me this story.

Bhagwan Narayan said – Narad! Due to the curse of Saraswati, Ganga came to Bharatvarsh. When the duration of the curse ends, by the command of Bhagwan Shri Hari. When the curse ends, Lakshmi will also return to the Lord. Narad! These same Ganga, Saraswati and Lakshmi are the beloved wives of Shri Hari. Together with Tulsi, four wives are mentioned in the Vedas.

Narad said – Bhagwan! Please tell me how Ganga, who manifested from the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Hari, stayed in the kamandelu of Parabrahma, and how she had the privilege of becoming the beloved of Bhagwan Shri Shankar. Munivar! Ganga has also presided as the wife of Bhagwan Narayan. How did all this come to pass. Please explain this mystery to me.

Bhagwan Narayan says - In ancient times, Ganga in the form of water, presided in Go-lok. Having manifested from Radha and Shri Krishna Ganga was a part of them and also their swaroopa. The presiding Devi of the (watery) Ganga, assumed a most beautiful form and descended on Earth. Her body was ever youthful. She was wearing divine ornaments. Her face was like the lotus which blooms in the middle of Sharadritu (autumn); and she had a most pleasing smile. Her complexion was like molten gold. In effulgence she was brighter than the full moon of autumn. She was in pure sattwic form. Two

large eyes added beauty to her face. She was casting side-long glances. Rows of curls framed her face. She wore a garland of fragrant malathi flowers. On her forehead was a crescent moon drawn with sandal paste, and over that was a sindoor bindi. Both her temples had designs made out of kasturi (musk). Her lips were as red as the dopahariya flower. Her teeth shone like grains of pomegranate. She was dressed in divine garments. With bashful modesty the goddess Ganga took her seat near Shri Krishna. She looked at Shri Krishna without blinking, and drank the nectar of His Divine Form. Her face wore a smile of joy. The sight of the Lord thrilled her and made her thoughtless.

Just then Bhagawati Radha arrived and took Her seat. She was accompanied by a large retinue of gopikas. Radha shone with the lustre of a crore of moons, all shining together. She was playing the leela of showing wrath. So Her eyes resembled red lotuses. Her complexion was as yellow as the champak flower, and Her gait was like an enraged elephant. Most precious ornaments adorned Her divine form. She wore pitamber (yellow silk clothes) studded with gemstones. She bore in Her heart the adorable, most worshipful, Lotus Feet of Shri Krishna She had come in an ornamented, jeweled conveyance. All the rishis were engaged in Her worship. A snow-white whisk was being waved over Her. Her forehead was decorated with bindu of Kasturi (musk), paste of chandan, and a bindi of glowing red sindoor. The parting of her hair was clean and straight. A beautiful garland of Parijat flowers adorned Her neck. Her curly hair was quivering, and Her body was trembling. She was wrathful, and Her lips were trembling. She went and sat on the jewel studded throne beside Shri Krishna. Bhagwan Shri Krishna rose, and welcomed Her with a smile and sweet words.

The gopas were filled with fear. With bowed head and shoulders they offered pranaams to Bhagawati Shri Radha and began to sing stutis. Parabrahma Shri

Krishna also sang stutis. Ganga also rose and offered pranaams and praises. Her heart was filled with fear. With great humility and decorum she made inquiries of Shree Radha. Through fear she stepped down and stood below. She fixed her attention on the divine Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. Seeing Ganga, anchored in the lotus in Her heart, Bhagwan Shri Krishna granted her Abhaydaan (protection to those who take refuge in the Lotus Feet). On receiving this promise of protection Ganga could stabilize her attention. She opened her eyes and beheld Devi Radhika seated on a high singhasan. Her form was most pleasing. Just beholding Her grants immense joy. Her Divine Form was radiating Brahma-tej (divine brilliance). This ancient and eternal Devi creates innumerable Brahmas. She is ever young, and perpetually twelve years of age. The freshness of youth enhanced Her beauty. In the whole universe there is no one and nothing, to compare with Her beauty of form and attributes. She is the embodiment of peace, beauty, virtue and She is eternal, without beginning and without end. She is called Subhadra, Shubha and Subhaga. She is always possessed of the auspiciousness of Her swamy. She is the best among women, and is endowed with great beauty. She is called the Ardhangani (half body) of Bhagwan Shri Krishna.

In effulgence, state and lustre, She was equal to Shri Krishna. Lakshmipati Bhagwan Vishnu, together with Lakshmi has worshipped this Mahalakshmi. She envelops the assembly of Paramatma Shri Krishna with Her splendor and radiance. The rare and excellent betel leaf offered by Her attendants, added colour to Her lips. She is Herself unborn; and is the One who gives birth to the universe. She is renowned and celebrated with honour and glory throughout the world. She rules over the supreme soul of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. To Him, She is dearer than life.

Narad! This beautiful vision of Raseshwari Shree Radha made Ganga thirst for more. She kept drinking in Her beauty with eyes that would not blink. Mune! Just then Shree Radha began to speak in a most pleasing voice to Jagadishwar Shri Krishna. Her form was most peaceful, and there was a divine smile on Her face.

Shree Radha said – Pranesh! Who is this most fortunate one who has caused such a pleasing smile on Your face. She is casting slanting glances and showing a desire to meet You. Your form has made her thoughtless, and her whole being is vibrating. She is hiding her face behind a cloth and looking at You again and again. You are also looking in her direction and smiling occasionally. As she is of the female species who is sensitive, I forgive her.

You have loved Virja (the devi who is devoid of Rajoguna). She then renounced her body and became a great river. She still exists as a river. She has given birth to seven seas.

Pran-nath! You loved Shobha (radiance). She also renounced her body and went to Chandramandal (Lunar System). She became extremely effulgent. You broke up the lustre and distributed it to gems, gold, precious stones, faces of women, kings, buds of flowers, ripe fruits, undulating fields of ripe grain, palaces of kings, new leaves, and milk. All these glisten and shine with that lustre.

I saw You in the company of Prabha (light). She renounced her body and went to Suryamandal (Solar System). At that time her body shone with bright light. You divided that light and distributed it to fire, yakshas, emperors, devatas, devotees of Vishnu, Nagas, Brahmins, munis, tapasvis, auspicious and virtuous women, and renowned and glorious men.

Once I saw You with Shanti (peace and tranquility) in Raasmandal. She renounced her body and got absorbed into Your being. At that time her body became saturated with all excellent qualities. You divided it and distributed it to the world. Some part of it You gave to Me. Some You gave to this place; and some went to the Brahmins. Some You gave to Sattwa-swaroopa Lakshmi; some to those who chant mantras to You; some to Devi bhaktas; some to tapasvis, devatas and pundits. Prabho! I have only been able to say this much. There are so many more qualities within You.

Radha, with eyes as red as lotuses, spoke thus to Bhagwan Shri Krishna. Then She turned to Ganga. Ganga was in deep meditation and she divined what Radha had in Her mind. She iummediately vanished and entered her water form. Shree Radha, who is sakshat siddha-yogini (proficient in yoga), knew the secret of the disappearance of Ganga. She picked up the waters of the Ganga in Anjali (cupped hands) and began to drink. Ganga realized the intentions of Shree Radha, and went and took refuge in the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Krishna and got absorbed.

Radha looked everywhere – Go-lok, Vaikunth, Brahmalok, but could not find Ganga. By that time all the water in the universe was finished. There was not even slush or wet clay anywhere. This brought Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar, Anant, Dharm, Indra, Chandrama, Suryas, Manugan, all the munis, devatas, siddhas and tapasvis, to Go-lok. Their throats, lips and taloos (fontanelle bone area) were dry and parched. They offered pranaams to Bhagwan Shri Krishna, who is beyond Prakriti, and who is supreme. It is His nature to grant boons. He is the originator of all boons. He is verily Nirichh (not desiring anything); Nirakara (formless); Nirlipth (unconnected); Nirashraya (needing no basis); Nirguna (devoid of attributes); Nirutsaha (without enthusiasm); Nirvikara (changeless); and Niranjan (unstrained by limitations). To fulfill the desires of

His bhaktas, He incarnates in various forms as per His will. He is the embodiment of truth; virtues; the witness; and the eternal Purush. In this whole universe there is none greater than Hi. Therefore, to this Poornabrahma, Parameshwar, Bhagwan Shri Krishna, Brahma and all the gods offered pranaams and began to sing stutis. Out of bhakti their heads and shoulders were bowed. Their voices were tremulous with adoration. Their eyes were filled with tears of joy. Their bodies were vibrating with the Divine Grace. The form of the Lord was brilliant and lustrous. He is the cause of all causes. He was seated on a jewel-studded throne. Gopas (keepers of cows) were waving snow white whisks and the dance of the Gopikas brought a smile of appreciation to His face. Dearer than life, Shree Radha presided on His chest. He was chewing the fragrant paan that She had offered. Devadhidev! The most supreme Bhagwan Shri Krishna, presided over Raasmandal.

It was here that Munis, men, siddhas and tapasvis, by virtue of their meditation, got a darshan of the Divine Lord. Everyone was amazed and overjoyed. Then they expressed their prayer to Jagatprabhu Chaturanan Brahma. Brahmaji took their prayer, and keeping Vishnu on his right, and Mahadev on his left, they proceeded near the throne of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. He was seated on the throne, and beside him sat Ananda-swaroopini Shree Radha.

Just then Brahma saw that the whole of Raasmandal was pervaded by Shri Krishna. Every single person there resembled Shri Krishna in form and dress. All sat on similar thrones. Transformed into the two-handed figure of Shri Krishna, all held muralis (flutes), and all wore vanmalas (garlands of wild flowers). All had peacock feathers in their crowns. The Kaustubhmani (jewel

worn by Shri Vishnu) was visible on every breast. Every single one was of the same characteristics, dress, form, lustre and effulgence, and all were serenity personified. All were perfect, and complete with all the powers. Brahma was unable to identify who was the server and who was the served.

One moment Shri Krishna would appear to Brahma in His most effulgent form, sitting on the throne; the next moment He would change from form to formless. Then suddenly Brahma would see that He was all alone. Again in a moment Brahma would see one Shri Krishna, and one Shree Radha, seated on every singhasan. Then Brahma saw that Shri Krishna assumed the form of Shree Radha; and Shree Radha became the form of Shri Krishna. Brahma could not solve the mystery as to who was the male and who was female. Then the Creator Shri Brahma meditated upon Bhagwan Shri Krishna sitting in the lotus of his own heart. By the power of his meditation he saw where the Lord was, and he worshipped Him by singing stutis. Then on the command of Bhagwan Shri Krisna, he closed his eyes. Then he saw Bhagwan Shri Krishna with Radha in His heart, seated on the throne alone. He was surrounded by courtiers. There were clusters of gopis all over. Then all the gods who had accompanied Brahma, offered pranaams and began to sing stutis.

Then the all-knowing, benevolent, most pleasing, and most merciful Lakshmipati Parabrahma Bhagwan Shri Krishna understood the prayer in their hearts and spoke to them:

Bhagwan Shri Krishna said – Brahman! May you be happy and prosperous. I have understood All of you have come to take the glorious Ganga. But at the present moment she has taken refuge in My Lotus Feet and she is hiding in

them. The reason is that she was sitting with Me. Radhaji saw her and decided to consume her. So she came into My Feet. I will give her to you with pleasure; but first you must try to calm her fears.

Narad! Hearing these words of Shri Krishna, Brahma became happy and smiled. Then he and all the devatas began to worship that Devi Bhagawati Radha who is venerated even by Bhagwan Shri Krishna. They all became engaged in singing stutis. Out of bhakti, Brahmaji became meek and humble, and all his four faces sang stutis to Radhaji. The creator of the four Vedas, Chaturanan Brahma, worshipped Bhagawati Radha in this way.

Brahmaji said – Devi! This Ganga was produced entirely out of the bodies of Bhagwan Shri Krishna and Your Divine Self when both of you presided over Raasmandal. The divine music of Bhagwan Shankar had enamoured You, and Ganga flowed out of both of You in the form of water. This makes her like Your daughter; and she is worshipping You by chanting Your mantras. It is fitting that she should worship You. As a fruit of this worship she will be privileged to have Vaikunth-adipati Chaturbhuj (four armed) Bhagwan Shri Hari as her husband. Also by one of Your powers, she will descend on earth, and the ocean, which is a partial embodiment of Shri Hari, will become her husband. Mother! May Ganga always be in the form as she is in Go-lok. You are her divine mother, and forever she is Your child.

Narad! Hearing these prayers of Brahma, Bhagawati Radha smiled. She accepted the prayer. Then Ganga emerged from the toe-nails of the Lotus Feet of Shri Krishna. All paid her respect and honour. Then from out of the water came the presiding Devi Ganga, and her form was most tranquil and peaceful. Brahma filled his kamandelu with this water. Bhagwan Shankar gave her a place on his head. Then Brahma born from a lotus, gave Ganga the

precious Radha Mantra. He also taught her the Radha Kavach, and mantras and puja procedures and meditation. These are all contained in the Sama Veda. Ganga observed all these procedures and performed puja to Bhagawati Radha; and then left for Vaikunth.

Mune! Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganga and purifier of the earth Tulsi – all these four devis are consorts of Bhagwan Narayan. Then Paramatma Bhagwan Shri Krishna smiled, and imparted to Brahma, the hitherto unknown and difficult to understand facts about the present times.

Bhagwan Shri Krishna said – Brahman! You must accept Ganga. Vishno! Maheshwar! Vidhaata! I am going to tell you about the present situation. Listen carefully. All of you who are here present – devatas, munis, manu, siddhas and yashasvis – should understand that only you exist. As Go-lok is completely beyond the influence and effects of Kaal chakra (wheel of time), nothing happened to you. Right now because the time of dissolution has come, everything has perished under water. All the gods of all the universes, starting with Brahma, have all been absorbed within Me. Brahman! Excepting Vaikunth, everything else is inundated in the deluge. You must now go and start the creation of Brahmalok and all the Brahmands (universes). After that Ganga will come. Now you and all the gods must leave immediately. Already a lot of time has passed. Many Brahmas and gods like you have been dissolved and many will be created.

Mune! After saying this, the most supreme and worshipful, beloved of Radha, Bhagwan Shri Krishna, removed Himself from their sight. Brahma and all the gods left and engaged themselves in the creation of the world. Then Ganga started her journey to all the places commanded by Parabrahma Paramatma Bhagwan Shri Krishna – Go-lok, Vaikunth, Shivlok, Brahmalok and other places.

As Ganga originated from the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Hari, she is also called Vishnupadi. Brahman! I have told you the story of Ganga. By listening to this one gets happiness and moksha. Now what else do you wish to hear.

Narad said – Bhagwan! You have told me that Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganga and the one who purifies the earth, Tulsi, were the wives of Bhagwan Narayan. You have also told me how Ganga went to Vaikunth. But how did Ganga become the wife of Vishnu Bhagwan. I have not had the good fortune of knowing this. Please tell me this story.

Bhagwan Narayan says – When Ganga reached Vaikunth, a little later the creator Brahma also arrived. He offered pranaams to Jagatprabhu Bhagwan Shri Hari, and said –

Brahmaji said – Bhagwan! Ganga who emerged from the lotus feet of Shree Radha and Shri Krishna in Brahmadhrav-roopini (form of water), now presides in a most pleasing Devi roop. Divine youthfulness has made her form beautiful to behold. She is totally devoid of anger and ego. Having manifested from the body of Shri Krishna, she does not wish anyone else as a husband. But the glorious and lustrous Radha does not wish this. Radha wanted to drink her up completely, but Ganga cleverly entered the Lotus Feet of Paramatma Shri Krishna and took refuge. When the entire Brahmand became dry and parched, I went to Go-lok. The all-knowing Bhagwan Shri Krishna presided in witness state. He knew the difficult drought being experienced by all, and He released her from His toes. I taught her mantras to please and appease Shree Radha. Her water-form spread throughout Brahmand-Go-lok, Then after offering pranaams to Shree Radha, and Shri Krishna, I brought her here with me. Prabho! It is my earnest prayer that You make this holy Sureshwari Ganga Your wife. Devesh! You are the most precious gem among men. This Devi is

also considered a gem among women. Those who have knowledge of Sat-asat (truth and untruth), those pandits never disrespect Ganga. All men are born of Prakriti, and women are also Her creation. Only You, O Prabhu! Bhagwan Shri Hari! Are beyond Prakriti and beyond the effects of the gunas. Paripurnatam (the most complete) Shri Krishna divided Himself into two. One half manifested as the four-armed (Chaturbhuj) Shri Hari. In the same way, from the left half of His body manifested Shree Radha, who again, divided into two. The right half remained as Herself, and the left half manifested as Shree Lakshmi. Therefore, because she also manifested from You, Ganga wishes to be Your wife. Like Prakriti and Purush, man and wife are two halves of one and the same body.

Saying this, Brahma installed Ganga beside Bhagwan Shri Hari and left. Then Shri Hari Himself went through the ceremony of marriage and accepted Ganga, who was decorated with flowers and chandan, as His wife. Ganga, in water form, who had gone to Prithvi, also returned shortly to the Devi. In this way Ganga who manifested from the bodies of Shri Krishna and Shree Radha, attained Vishnupad, and got the name Vishnupadi. Saraswati continued to bear malice towards Ganga. But Ganga had no bad feeling towards Saraswati. However in the end, Ganga was forced to curse Saraswati to descend to Bharatvarsh. In this way, Lakshmipati Shri Hari had three wives including Ganga. Later Tulsi also got the privilege of becoming His wife. So including Tulsi, there were four wives.

Chapter 9 episode 15

15 The episode of Raja Vrishdhwaj in the story of Tulsi.

Naradji asked – Prabho! How did the pious Tulsi become the wife of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Where was she born, and what was she in her previous birth. Whose clan did she purify and who were her parents. By what tapasya was she granted the great boon of receiving Bhagwan Shri Hari as her husband, because the Divine Lord is desireless. Also please tell me what caused her to take the form of a plant, and how did she get caught in the web of an asura. O You Who remove all doubts! Please explain all this to me.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! There was once a great punya atma manu called Daksh Savarni. He was a partial incarnation of Bhagwan Vishnu and he was very holy, renowned and glorious. He was a staunch devotee of Shri Hari. He had a son called Brahma Savarni. He had a very pure attention. He always had dharmic thoughts, and was a bhakta of Bhagwan Shri Hari. He had a son, Dharma Savarni. He had mastered all his senses, and was devoted to Shri Hari. He had a son, Rudra Savarni, and he had a son Deva Savarni. He was also a great Vaishnav. He had a son Indra Savarni. This great devotee of Vishnu, had a son Vrishdhwaj.

This Vrishdhwaj had great devotion to Bhagwan Shankar. The Great Lord Himself stayed for a long time in his kingdom. He was as dear to Bhagwan Shankar as his own son. Raja Vrishdhwaj had no belief in Bhagwan Vishnu, Lakshmi or Saraswati. He had stopped doing puja to any other deity beside Bhagwan Shankar. In ego and arrogance, he began to disturb and cause obstacles in the Mahalakshmi Pujas during Bhadramas (sixth month of the Hindu calendar). On Shukla Panchmi day, in the month of Magh (eleventh

month), all the devatas used to perform a puja to Shree Saraswati. The king never participated. It had become his nature and inclination to cast aspersions and insults, at yagyas and Vishnu Pujas. He was totally devoted, only to Bhagwan Shankar. Seeing his pride and arrogance, Surya put a curse on him - May your Shree be destroyed (fame, fortune, brilliance and reputation).

Seeing his devotee in trouble, Bhagwan Shankar, Ashutosh Bholenath, Mahadeva, picked up His Trishul and attacked Surya. Surya, along with his father Kashyapji, went to Brahmaji for protection. Bhagwan Shankar reached Brahmalok. Brahma was also in awe of Shri Shankar, so he took Surya and went to Vaikunth. They took refuge at the Lotus Feet of the Lord of all, Bhagwan Shri Hari. They offered obeisance again and again, and told the Lord the reason for their fear. Then Bhagwan Narayan offered them Abhay (protection) and said – Do not be afraid. While I am here there is no danger to you. If My bhaktas remember Me in times of distress, no matter where they are, I go immediately to their aid. Devas! I am Karta-bharta (sustainer and protector) of the entire universe. It is I, in the form of Brahma, who creates; and I in the form of Shankar who dissolves. I am verily Shiva. You are Me, and Shankar is also not separate from Me. I assume different forms to carry out creation, and protection, and dissolution. Devatas! Go in peace. No harm will come to you. I promise you. From today you will have nothing to fear from Shankar. He is the swamy of honest, pure men. He is called Bhakta-atma and Bhakta-vatsala, and always submits to His devotees. Brahman! Sudarshan Chakra and Bhagwan Shankar are both dearer than life to Me. In the whole brahmand there is no one of greater tejas (brilliance, effulgence). If Shankar so wishes, He can create by His leela, crores of suns. He has also the power to create crores of Brahmas. For this Trishuldhari, nothing is impossible. Negating all outside knowledge, He is absorbed, day and night, in My meditation. It has become His nature to chant My mantras from all His five

faces, and to sing My praises with complete devotion. I in turn, am always concerned with His success and well being, because it is My principle to look after My devotees with the same degree of concern and compassion, as they have bhakti and shraddha for Me.

By this time Bhagwan Shankar reached Vaikunth. He bore the trishul in His hand. He was mounted on Rishabh, and His eyes were the colour of a red lotus. He dismounted from His conveyance, and with humble stance and peaceful air, He offered pranaams to Lakshmikant Bhagwan Narayan. At that time Bhagwan Shri Hari was seated on His jewel-studded throne. He was adorned with precious ornaments. He wore a crown, earrings on His ears, chakra in His hand, and a garland on His neck. His complexion was like a new, rainfilled cloud. He had four arms. His courtiers were waving white whisks around Him. Narad! His entire body was anointed with sandal paste, and He wore Pitamber. The betel leaf offered by Shree Lakshmi was in His mouth. Seeing this beautiful and awesome form, Shri Shankar bowed His head at the Lotus Feet. Brahma offered pranaams to Shri Shankar; and Surya, shaking with fear, also offered pranaams to Shri Shankar. Kashyap bowed before Shri Shankar and sang His stutis. Then Shri Shankar sat on the throne offered to Him by Shri Hari. The courtiers began to serve Him also with the white whisk waving around Him. After He got refreshed, Bhagwan Shri Hari spoke to Him in sweet and gentle tones.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – Mahadev! What has caused You to come here. Please tell me the reason for Your anger.

Mahadev said – Bhagwan! Raja Vrishdhwaj is my great devotee. I love him more than life. Surya has cursed him, and this is the cause of My anger. I went to the aid of my dearest son, and wanted to kill Surya. But he ran to Brahma,

and now he has come here with Brahma, to take refuge at Your Feet. Any devotee who surrenders at Your Lotus Feet, cannot get affected by any danger or adversity. They are even immune to death and old age. Bhagwan! The fruits of devotion and surrender are evident. So what can I say. No sooner a person becomes Your devotee, he becomes auspicious and entitled to Your protection. But Jagatprabhu! Tell Me what is to happen to My devotee, How will he continue to live. After the curse of Surya, he has lost all his honour and wealth. He has even lost his powers of thinking and discretion.

Bhagwan Vishnu said – Shambho! By the instigation of fate and destiny a lot of time has passed. Twenty-one yugas have elapsed, although here in Vaikunth only half an hour has passed. Therefore You must return to Your abode now. Time, which cannot be stopped or pushed back by anyone; has already consumed Vrishdhwaj. Not only this, but his son Rathdhwaj is also dead. At present, the two sons of Rathdhwaj are living. Their names are Dharmdhwaj and Kushdhwaj. They are still suffering the curse of Surya. They have no fame and fortune, nor do they have their kingdom. They now spend all their time worshipping Lakshmi. As a consequence, Lakshmi will manifest from the stomach of their wives. Then they will be blessed with Lakshmi. Shambho! Your devotee Vrishdhwaj no longer exists. Therefore You may return to Your abode. Devatas, you may also leave.

Narad! After saying this, Bhagwan Shri Hari, together with Lakshmi, removed themselves from sight. All the Devatas were pleased, and also left. The most complete and self contained Shankar also left with the intention of doing tapasya.

Chapter 9 episode 16

16 Story of Vedvati with a reference to Shri Ramcharitra. Narration of incidents from previous births of Bhagawati Sita and Draupadi.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Mune! Dharmdhwaj and Kushdhwaj performed severe tapasya to Bhagawati Lakshmi and got as boons, all their desires fulfilled. By the blessings of Mahalakshmi they got back their kingdom. They became dharmic. They were blessed with children. The virtuous wife of Kushdhwaj was called Malavati. The baby girl who was born to her was an ansh (fractional manifestation) of Lakshmi. She was born with divine knowledge, and at birth in clear tones, she chanted the Vedas. She walked out of the birth chamber. For this reason she is called Vedvati. Soon after her birth she took a bath and went towards the forest to do tapasya. Many tried to stop her, but with her attention firmly fixed on Bhagwan Narayan she left. She performed tapasya for one manvantar (fourteenth part of a day of Brahma) in the region of Pushkar. Her tapasya continued as a leela. Inspite of severe renunciation, her body remained youthful and healthy. She heard a voice from heaven - O Beautiful One! Bhagwan Shri Hari will be your husband in your next birth. That Lord, whom even Brahma and the devatas find very difficult to attain with their worship; that same Param Prabhu will be your lord and master.

Mune! After hearing this divine akashvani, the maiden Vedvati went to the Gandhamadan mountain and performed even more severe tapasya. It was there that she saw Ravan, who could not be moved in any way. According to the atithi-dharma, she offered him water to wash the feet, sweet fruits, and clear cool water to drink. Ravan was vile and wicked. After eating the fruits he

went very close to Vedvati and asked – " Kalyani! Who are you, and what are you doing alone in this place". That Devi was most beautiful and there was a smile on her face. Seeing her, the lustful Ravan swooned. His heart became burning hot with agitation and impure thoughts. He wanted to pull her hand and decorate her hair with flowers and ornaments. Seeing his evil intentions, Vedvati was filled with anger. With her tapobal (power of tapasya) she caused him to become rooted to the ground, senseless and immovable. He could neither speak, nor move. In this condition he began to sing stutis in his mind, to this lotus-eyed devi. Worship of the Shakti does no go unrewarded. Therefore, devi Vedvati, pleased with his worship, promised him the fruits of his worship in Parlok. At the same time she also pronounced a curse upon him – O wretched rascal! For my sake you and your friends and family will perish – because you cast lustful eyes on me. Now you will see my power.

Then devi Vedvati, by her yogic powers, renounced her body. Ravan offered the body to the Ganga, and made his way home, thinking - What wondrous incident have I just witnessed. This devi has done an impossible thing! And he began to cry loudly. Mune! It was this devi, who later manifested as the daughter of Raja Janaka, and was named Sita. She became the cause of the death of Ravan. Because of her punyas, she married Shri Rama, who was verily Bhagwan Shri Hari. It is not easily accessible to worship Jagatpati. By her severe tapasya as devi Vedvati, that she was able to attain the Lord. In the form of Sita, the devi spent many happy days with Shri Rama. She had memory of her previous tapasyas, but she did not recall them. In the present she renounced all memory of the past.

Chapter 9 - Episode 17

17 The manifestation of Bhagawati Tulsi.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The wife of Dharmdhwaj was called Madhavi. She used to accompany her husband to the beautiful forests of Gandhamadan Parvat. They spent many years there and lost count of time. Then one day the king got enlightenment and ended this life of aimless pleasure. Madhavi gave birth to a beautiful baby girl on the day of Karthik Purnima. It was a day which was most holy; most auspicious; when the stars were most favourable; and it was a Friday. The child was as beautiful as the full moon on Sharad Purnima. Her eyes were like the lotus which blooms in autumn. Her lips were rosy like the bimba fruit, and the soles of her feet and the palms of her hands were red. She had a deep nabhi. Her body remained warm in winter, and cool in summer. Her complexion was shyam (blue-black). Her hair was dark and dense like the roots hanging around a banyan tree. She shone like the yellow champak. She was verily a fractional manifestation of Shree Lakshmi. She was incomparable. Learned and wise people called her Tulsi. She gave beauty to the earth like sakshat Prakriti Devi.

Even though everyone tried to prevent her, she left to do tapasya in Badri-van. She continued her tapasya for a very long time. Her one and only desire was that she should attain Bhagwan Narayan as her husband. During summer she would perform penance amidst panchagni (a collection of five fires); and in the winter she would sit in the cold water and do tapasya. And in the rainy season she would sit outside, unprotected from the rain. For thousands of years she lived on fruits and water. Then for another thousand years she chewed leaves. And for another thousand years she just lived on air. By this time her body became weak. She continued her tapasya standing on one leg.

Brahma hastened to Badarikashram to grant her a boon. The God with four faces came, seated on a swan. Tulsi offered pranaams, and the creator of the world said to her – Tulsi! You may ask for your dearest wish. If you desire to become a bhakt of Bhagwan Shri Hari; or you want to be His servant; or you want eternal youth or eternal life; ask for it and I shall grant it to you.

Tulsi said – Pitamah! You are all knowing. Even then I will tell you. In my last life I was a Gopi and my name was Tulsi. Go-lok was my home. I had the great fortune of being the favourite playmate of Shri Krishna. I was His ardhangini (wife) and with my Prabhu I spent many beautiful times. But I was not satisfied. Then one day, before the whole raas-mandal, Devi Bhagawati Radha, pronounced a curse on me – You go and take birth in Manav-yoni (human birth).

Just then Bhagwan Govind said to me – Devi! Do tapasya in Bharatvarsh. Brahma will grant you a boon whereby you will attain Shri Vishnu, who is My manifestation, as your husband. Saying this Bhagwan Shri Krishna removed himself from my sight.

O Guro! I renounced that body and now I am here in Bharatvarsh. That beautiful embodiment of peace, Bhagwan Narayan, was my husband once. I desire that I get him as my husband again. Please grant me this boon and fulfil my desire.

Brahmaji said – A partial manifestation of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, a Gop by the name of Sudama, is also in Bharatvarsh due to a curse of Radhika. This Gop is considered sakshat ansh (fractional manifestation) of Shri Krishna. He has taken birth in the clan of Danu, and is famous by the name of Shankachud. There is no one who can compare with him. At the present moment he is

beside the ocean. Being the partial manifestation of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, he remembers his past clearly. O beautiful One! You also know everything of your past. In this life Shankachud will be your husband. Then in Divine Play, that same Bhagwan Narayan will pronounce a curse on you. You will get the privilege of purifying the world by manifesting in Bharatvarsh as a plant. You will be the foremost of all flowers. Bhagwan Vishnu will consider you dearer than life. Without you, pujas will be incomplete. You will grow profusely in Brindavan and will be called Brindavani. Your leaves will be used by Gops and Gopis to perform puja to Bhagwan Madhav. You will be the goddess of all plants and will enjoy the company of Bhagwan Shri Krishna in his manifestation as a Gop.

Narad! After Shri Brahma spoke, a smile shone on the face of Tulsi. Her heart -was joyful, and she spoke to Shri Brahmadev .

Tulsi said – Pitamah! I will speak the truth. The devotion and longing that I felt for the two-armed Shyam Sunder Bhagwan Shri Krishna, I do not feel for Chaturbhuj Shri Vishnu. But in obedience to the will of Govind, I will pray for Chaturbhuj Shri Hari. Oh! Govind has become inaccessible to me. Bhagwan! Please make it possible for me to attain that Govind in the future. Please also release me of the fear of Radha.

Brahmaji said – Devi! For your sake I am teaching you the Shodash-akshar mantra (of sixteen syllables). Enthrone it in your heart. By the boon that I give you, you will become very dear to Shree Radha. O Fortunate One! You will also become as dear to Bhagwan Govind as Radha.

Mune! Then Jagatdhata (father of the world) Brahma, gave to Tulsi, the Shodashakshar Mantra of Bhagawati Radha. He also advised her to sing

stotras, recite Kavach, and taught her puja procedures and protocols. Tulsi started her worship of Bhagawati Radha, and by Her grace acquired all Her qualities. As promised by Brahmaji, she got all the fruits of her worship. Whatever hardships she underwent during the tapasya, all got transformed into instruments of happiness.

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Chapter 9 - episode 18

18 Tulsi sees Shankachud in her dream. On the command of Brahmadev they get married.

Bhagwan Narayan says – One day the daughter of Vrishdhwaj, Tulsi, was sleeping. She saw in her dream, a young man of very pleasing form. He was in the prime of youth. His body was anointed with sandal paste. He wore ornaments and a garland. His eyes were drinking in the beauty of Tulsi. In her dream itself she enjoyed the courtship of this youth.

Mune! When she awoke, Tulsi began to lament and feel sorry for herself. Narad! At that very same time the great yogi Shankachud entered Badrivan. The muni Jaigeeshavya had given him the most pleasing mantra of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. He had sat on the holy land of Pushkar and awakened the mantra. He was protected by the auspicious kavach. He had received a boon from Shri Brahma, and on his instructions he had come to Badrivan. As he entered, Tulsi saw him. He was as white and beautiful as a white champa flower. He wore jewels and ornaments. His face was like the full moon of Sharad Purnima. His eyes were like autumn lotus petals. Two earrings adorned his temples. He wore a mala of parijat, and there was a smile on his face. His body was anointed with sandal paste mixed with kasturi and kumkum. This most pleasing figure of Shankachud was enthroned on a jewelled conveyance.

Seeing him, Tulsi hid her face with a silken cloth. Her head was bowed in bashful modesty; her face outshone the full moon of Sharadpurnima. Jewelled anklets adorned her feet. There were blue lotuses in her hair. The golden chain around her waist tinkled with tiny bells. She wore a garland of malathi

flowers, and the ornaments on her hair enhanced her beauty. On her ears she wore delicately crafted earrings studded with precious gems. She wore a heavy necklace of gold and gems. On her hands were armlets, bangles, bracelets and rings. Shankachud was struck by her beauty. He approached and sat down beside her. He spoke in soft gentle tones.

Shankachud said – Devi! Who are you? What is your father's name? Verily you are the object of great admiration and respect. O You who possess all auspicious qualities. Who are you in reality? Please tell me.

Narad! Hearing these words of praise, Tulsi bowed her head and spoke shyly - Mahashay! I am the daughter of Raja Dharmdhwaj. I am here in this forest to perform tapasya. Who are you? You should leave as soon as possible, because I have heard in the Shrutis, that it is improper for a maiden to be alone in the company of a man. It is only that person who has never had the spiritual instructions or the good fortune to hear the Shrutis, who develops bad intentions towards a maiden, alone and unattended. There is no substance in the sweet tones that a woman uses. She is always vain and conceited. In fact a woman is like a pot of poison, though her face and voice drips with honey. She is like a chain which binds one to the material world. A woman is likened to Indrajaal (trickery and illusion), and as unreal as a dream. From the outside a woman appears beautiful, but within she harbours wicked and despicable intentions. Her body and mind are both unclean. During creation Brahma made this illusive woman for cheats and fraudulent persons. She is poisonous for those men who seek moksha. Therefore the man who desires moksha should not even look at a woman.

Shankachud said - Devi! Whatever you have said is not untrue. But pray listen to my words, which are a blend of truth and untruth.

The creator made two kinds of women – genuine and false. Both are pleasing to behold. But one has dignity, and one has not. Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, Savitri and Radhika – these five devis are Shrishti-sutra (the root causal of creation). The main purpose of their manifestation was creation. Their partial manifestations as Ganga and other devis are their material or substantial forms. They are important. These most glorious and splendid devis are the mothers of all auspiciousness, prosperity and blessings. Shatroopa, Devhuti, Swadha, Swaha, Dakshina, Chhayawati, Rohini, Varunani, Shachi, Kuber-patni, Aditi, Diti, Lopamudra, Ansuya, Kotivi, Tulsi, Ahalya, Arundhati, Mena, Tara, Mandodari, Damyanti, Vedvati, Ganga, Mansa, Pushti, Tushti, Smriti, Medha, Kalika, Vasundhara, Shasti, Mangalchandi, Dharmpatni, Murthi, Swasti, Shraddha, Shanti, Kanti, Kshema, Nidra, Tandra, Kshuddha, Pipasa, Sandhya, Diva, Ratri, Sampati, Dhriti, Keerti, Kriya, Shobha, Prabha and Shiva – are all woman manifestations of these Devis, who appeared in every yuga and were honoured and respected.

A part, of a fraction of Jagaddamba, which became apsaras in heaven, have been called as ordinary. In the world they are considered women of low moral character. A woman who is virtuous, honest and truthful, is honoured and respected in the world. Wise and learned men call such women vastav-roopa (embodiment of genuine womanhood).

Those women who are of Rajogun temperament are of medium quality, because there is no end to their desires and requirements. They succumb to pleasures and comforts and get overpowered by them; and spend all their lives searching for more. Guile, hypocrisy, attachment and spiritual ignorance, dwell within them. They can never be sincere and obedient to the laws and statutes of dharma. Therefore a woman in whom Rajoguna predominates can

never have the qualities of goodness, virtue and chastity. Learned men call them as Madhyamroopa.

Women of Tamoroop are inferior and degenerate. Wise men call them Adham (miserable, despicable, low and sinful.)

Devi! You have rightly said that a man of decent lineage should not hold conversation with an unknown, unchaperoned lady in a lonely place. I also support this view. But, I have and make you my bride. I am Shankachud. I belong to the clan of Danu. And the most important thing is that in my previous birth I was a partial manifestation of Shri Hari as a Gop called Sudama. I was one of the famous eight attendants of Shri Krishna. Due to the curse of Devi Radhika, I had to become a Danavendra. The mantra of Shri Krishna is my favourite. I am able to know all about my past. You were also with Shri Krishna in your previous birth. You were Tulsi. Of course you can also look into your past. The cause of your taking birth in Bharatvarsh is also the wrath of Shree Radha.

Munivar! Tulsi was pleased to hear what Shankachud said. With a smile she replied --- Tulsi said – Kanth! It is men of such pure nature and disposition who are always praised in this world. A woman should always desire to have such a husband. You are such a one, and I have been vanquished by you. A man who is conquered by a woman becomes an object of ridicule and unholy. A man who is dominated by a woman, who has succumbed to a woman, becomes despicable to his elders, friends and gods. Even his parents, brothers and sisters condemn him in their minds. It takes ten days for a Brahmin to get cleansed from the impurities of birth and death; twelve days for Kshatriyas and fifteen days for a Vyshya. For a Shudra the time required for cleansing is one month. Similarly, the children born out of a Gandharva-vivaha will get

cleansed in the prescribed time. There will be no stigma on them. This is clearly stated in the shastras. But for a man who is under submission to a woman, there is no cleansing for his entire life. Only when he is burning on the funeral pyre he gets released from this sin. The ancestors of such a man do not accept obsequies that he offers for them. Even the devatas do not accept oblations, flowers and water offered by such a man. A man whose heart has been captivated and conquered by a woman – for such a man there is no purpose in his performing Tap, Jap, Gyan, Dhyan, Homa Pujan; or in acquiring knowledge or fame. I put you to a test to see how much Pure Knowledge you possess. It is necessary for a woman to know this before she agrees to accept one as her husband.

The father who gives his daughter in marriage to a man who is devoid of good qualities; who is aged; ignorant in spirituality; impoverished; stupid; diseased; disfigured; ill-tempered; ugly; crippled; disabled; blind; dumb; deaf; or one of neuter gender; such a father commits a sin equal to Brahmin-hatya (murder of a Brahmin).

The father who gives his daughter in marriage to a peaceful; virtuous; youthful; spiritually intelligent and simple natured groom, gets the benefits equal to performing ten ashwamedha yagyas.

The father who sells his daughter to get wealth, suffers in a hell called Kumbhipaak. There he has to consume all dirty things. His body is attacked by worms and crows. He has to stay there for a long time. In his next birth he suffers disease and illness.

O Narad! After saying this, devi Tulsi kept silent. Just then Brahmaji came there, and said – Shankachud! What have you been speaking to this devi.

Don't waste time. According to the rites of Gandharva-vivaha you must marry her and accept her as your wife; because you are considered a gem among men; and she is a gem among maidens. Then Brahmaji spoke to Tulsi. - O faithful One! Why are you taking a test of this youth. He has the Shakti to crush devatas, danavas and asuras. Just accept him and reside with him as Lakshmi with Narayan; Radhika with Shri Krishna; Savithri with Me; Devi Prithvi with Bhagwan Varaha; Dakshina with Yagya; Ansuya with Atri; Damyanti with Nal; Rohini with Chandrama; Rati with Kamdev; Aditi with Kashyap; Arundhati with Vasisht; Ahalya with Gautam; Devhuti with Kardam; Tara with Brihaspati; Shatrupa with Manu; Swaha with Agni; Shachi with Indra; Pushtih with Ganesh; Devsena with Skanda; and Sadhvi with Dharam. Just like them you also abide with Shankachud as his sowbhagyawati (beloved). Ultimately you will go back to Shri Krishna in Go-lok, and Shankachud will renounce this body, return to Vaikunth, and get absorbed into the four armed Bhagwan Shri Vishnu.

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Chapter 9 - Episode 19

19 Gandharva Marriage of Tulsi to Shankachud. Story of their previous birth told to the Devatas.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! After bestowing His blessings on them, Brahmaji left. Shankachud married Tulsi in the Gandharva tradition. Drums sounded in heaven, and flowers rained down from the skies. With his beautiful wife always beside him, the emperor Shankachud ruled for many years. During his reign there was peace among Devatas, Danavas, Asuras, Gandharvas, Kinnars and Rakshasas. Having lost their supremacy the devatas were reduced to pauperism. They went to Brahmaji and began to lament about their poverty and distress. The creator Brahmaji took them with Him to the abode of Shri Shankar. The Lord Shiva, who bears the moon on His head, listened to them patiently. Then He accompanied all of them to Vaikunth. Vaikunth is most supreme and sacred. It is the most difficult place to reach. Old age and death cannot touch anyone there. The entrance to the abode of Bhagwan Shri Hari is most imposing. Even the guards sat on jewelled thrones at the gate. This sight filled everyone with awe. They all wore Pitamber, and were decorated with ornaments. All wore garlands, and their complexion was like a rain filled cloud. They all had four arms holding shankh, chakra, gada and Padma. Their faces were smiling, and their eyes were like lotus petals.

After getting permission from these resplendent guards, Brahma and all the gods passed through sixteen doors, before they came into the presence of Bhagwan Shri Hari. The room was lined with Devrishis and courtiers. All attendants had four arms. They all resembled Bhagwan Narayan, and all bore the Kaustubh jewel on their chest. The whole aspect resembled a lunar

assembly. All four sides of the bhavan were similar in form and décor. They were inlaid with precious stones. It had been built completely as per the wishes of Shri Hari. There was intricate trellis and lattice work wrought with rows of gemstones. Curtains of pearl strings added beauty to the décor. Crores of tiny round mirrors were embedded in the walls, and reflected the beauty. Exquisite paintings and pictures adorned the walls. Pillars and arches formed fantastic lines. There were lotuses everywhere, crafted from the finest and reddest rubies. There was a most beautiful staircase of one hundred steps, covered with the precious syamantak gemstones. The bannisters were made of divine chandan wood laced with silk. The pillars were made of sapphires. There were cuppolas and domes encrusted with precious stones. Garlands of Parijat flowers hung all over. There were sandalwood trees anointed with kasturi and kumkum, and the air was filled with fragrance. This wonderful place covered one thousand yojans. Attendants stood all around. Everything was divine, and all who saw it were speechless with wonder and awe.

Narad! Bhagwan Shri Hari presided over that magnificent setting like the moon amidst the planets and stars. Brahmaji, Bhagwan Shankar and all the devatas, had a sakshat darshan of Bhagwan Shri Hari seated on an exquisite gem studded throne. He was decorated with crown, ear-studs; and flower garland. His body was anointed with divine Chandan. In one hand a lotus rested. The Divine Form of the Lord was extremely peaceful and tranquil. Shree Lakshmi was engaged in worship of His Lotus Feet. He was chewing the fragrant roll of betel leaf offered to Him by the lotus hands of Shree Lakshmi. Devi Ganga, with great devotion and respect, was waving a white whisk. The assembly of worshippers was bowed with humility and worship, and were singing stutis and songs and praise.

Mune! After getting this wonderful and profound darshan of Paripurnatam Bhagwan Shri Hari, Brahma and all the gods began to sing stutis. They were so filled with vibrations, that tears welled up in their eyes, and their voices were choked with emotion. Then with great shraddha, the creator of the universe, Brahmaji, placed before Shri Hari, the plight of the devatas. Shri Hari is omniscient and completely aware of everything. His face shone with a smile, and He began a most illuminating elucidation.

Bhagwan Shri Hari said – Brahman! This glorious and lustrous Shankachud was a Gop in his previous birth. He is a fractional manifestation of My Self. He was greatly devoted to Me. I know everything about his past. It is now a part of ancient history. All those who had connection with Go-lok, may now listen. –

Shankachud was a famous Gop called Sudama. He was My prime courtier. The curse of Shree Radha caused him to be born in the Danava yoni. Radha is completely kind and compassionate. It was on the condemnation of Her handmaidens that She pronounced the curse on Sudama But when Sudama came and offered pranaams to Me and left weeping, She felt gratified, and Her eyes filled with tears. She called him back and said –" Vats! Do not leave. Where are you going." But I pacified Her and said – "All of you must have patience and fortitude. This Sudama will endure the curse, and return in half a second. Sudama! You must come back to this very place." Saying this I calmed Radha. O guardian of the universe Brahman! Half a second in Go-lok is equal to one manavantar on earth. Brahman! Whatever is happening was ordained long ago. Therefore, this valiant yogesh Shankachud, the knower of all languages, will ultimately return to Go-lok. Take this Trishul of Mine and return quickly to Bharatvarsh. Shankar must use the Trishul to destroy the Danava. Danava Shankachud wears round his neck, My all protecting, auspicious, Kavach. That is why he is undefeatable and invincible, and

victorious over the whole world. As long as the kavach is around his neck no one can touch him. Therefore I will come as a Brahmin and request him for the Kavach. Another boon I have given is that when the virtue and chastity of his wife ends, only then he will die. To create this eventuality, I will cause her to become pregnant. I have decided this. Actually Tulsi is My eternal companion, so in effect there will be no blame or blemish. At that same time Shankachud will die. Then his wife will renounce her body, and come back to Me as My beloved wife."

Narad! Saying this, Jagatprabhu Shri Hari handed the Trishul to Bhagwan Shankar. Taking the Trishul, Rudra, Brahma and all the devatas returned to Bharatvarsh.

Chapter 9 - Episode 20

20 Pushpadant goes to Shankachud as the emissary of Shiva. Shankachud gives counsel on Pure Knowledge to Tulsi.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Brahmaji entrusted the job of destroying Shankachud to Bhagwan Shankar and immediately left for His abode. The devatas also returned to their places. Shri Mahadev chose a place under a banyan tree on the banks of a Chandrabhaga river, and settled there to carry out His task of destroying Shankachud. Gandharvaraj Chitrarath also called Pushpadanth, was a great devotee of Shri Shankar. He made him his messenger and sent him to Shankachud. The kingdom of the Danavraj was more beautiful than Amravati, and more lavish than the kingdom of Kuber. It was ten yojans long, and five yojans wide. It was made of crystal and gemstones. All around there were mounted guards. It was protected by seven moats and seven forts. The crores of gems embedded in the walls blazed like fire. There were hundreds of roads, and ornamental altars. Prosperous traders had built lavish mansions, and market places were filled with rich merchandise. Temples and ashrams were decorated with red gemstones, the colour of sindoor.

Mune! After passing all this, Pushpadanth reached the bhavan of Shankachud, in the centre of the kingdom. The city was laid in a circular pattern, like the lunar system. Like tongues of fire, four moats encircled it. Enemies would find it impossible to enter. But well wishers, and those seeking benevolence, could go in freely. The bhavan had ornamented parapets and towers. There were twelve imposing entrances, and each was guarded by door keepers. There lakhs of small temples; ornamental pillars, and many staircases. When Pushpadant reached the second door, he saw a guard with a trishul in his hand and a smile on his face. His eyes were yellow, and his skin shone like copper.

He got permission to enter. Once everyone knew he was carrying a message of war, no one stopped him. When he crossed the last door, he came to a room where a radiant Shankachud presided over an assembly of kings. He was seated on a golden throne. The legs were made of precious stones; and the throne was decorated with flowers made of coloured gems. Overhead was a canopy of gold. Attendants were waving white and coloured whisks. Shankachud was resplendent in rich robes and shining ornaments. He wore a garland round his neck, and his body was anointed with sandal paste. He was surrounded by great Danava kings. Armed Danavas were pacing up and down. Seeing all this, Pushpadanth was greatly impressed. Then as per the command of Bhagwan Shankar he began to deliver the message.

Narad! After hearing the words of the messenger Pushpadanth, Shankachud began to smile. He said – "Doot! I will come tomorrow morning. You may leave now". Pushpadanth went back to Bhagwan Shankar under the banyan tree, and repeated the words of Shankachud. At that moment, Kartikeya arrived. In addition, there also came Veerbhadra, Nandishwar, Mahakaal, Subhadra, Vishalaksh, Pingalaksh, Baasasur, Vikampan, Viroop, Vikriti, Manibhadra, Baashkal, Kapilakhya, Dirgadanshtra, Vikat, Taamralochan, Kaalkanth, Balibhadra, Kaaljivha, Kutichar, Balonmath, Rannshlaghi, Durjay, Durgam, eight Bhairavas, eleven Rudras, eight Vasus, Indra, twelve Suns, Agni, Chandrama, Vishvakarma, the two Ashwini Kumars, Kuber, Yamraj, Jayant, Nalkoobar, Vayu, Varun, Buddh, Mangal, Dharm, Shani, Ishan and Kaamdev.

Also among the arrivals were the sharp toothed Ugradanshtra, Kotra, Kaitab hi and the goddess with eight arms, Bhagawati Bhadrakali. She came on a jewel studded conveyance. She was dressed in red robes, and around her neck was a garland of red flowers. Her body was anointed with red chandan paste. It was the spontaneous quality of this Devi Bhagawati Bhadrakali to dance, laugh,

sing, grant protection to Her devotees, and instil fear into Her enemies. Her long and fearful tongue lolled out of Her mouth. This Bhagawati Bhadrakali came, accompanied by countless yoginis, and bore in Her hands the most fearful and efficient weapons, like shankh, chakra, gada, padma, sword, shield, bow and arrows; a large headed staff); a shining shield; drinking cup as large as a yojan; a trishul which touched the sky; a sword as long as a yojan; a mace; a musal (pestle); vajra (thunderbolt); paash (noose); khetak (large headed staff); a shining shield; Vaishnav-astra; Varun-astra; Gandharv; Garud; Brahma; weapons of Indra and Pashupati Shankar; Jrimbhan-astra (yawning); Parvat-astra; Maheshwar-astra (a missile); the pole of Vayu; Sammohan-astra (beguiling weapon); Divine weapon mentioned in Atharva Veda; and the hundred divine weapons. Accompanying her was a horde of the most fierce Dakinis (sorceresses); bhoots; prets; pishachis (demonesses); Kooshmanda (an ancient sage); Brahmarakshas; Betal; Rakshas, Yaksh, and Kinnars. Together with all of them, Kartikeya offered pranaams to his father Chandrashekhar Shiva, and got permission from Him to join the war.

After the messenger left, Shankachud went into the inner apartments of his bhavan, and told his wife Tulsi about the message of war. Her lips and taloo went dry with fear. Her heart began to beat faster. But she spoke in a calm, soft, way.

Tulsi said – Friend of my life. Nath! You are the deity of my life. Wait here for a while. Let me have a darshan of you for as long as possible. My heart is fluttering with agitation. When the night was about to end I saw a bad dream.

Maharaj Shankachud was a wise man. He accepted what Tulsi said, and ate his food. He drank water. Then he spoke to Tulsi, profound words of truth and benevolence.

Shankachud said – Priye! The fruits of our karmas are woven into the threads of Kaal (time) Auspiciousness, happiness, joy, sorrow, fear, grief and prosperity – all these are under the authority of Fate or Destiny. At the proper time trees grow, spread their branches, and lay down their roots. Then come flowers, and at the proper time the fruits. It is Kaal which ripens the fruits. Then in accordance with Kaal, the trees wither and die. Sundari! At the proper time trees are born, and at the proper time they reach the end of their existence. It is after accepting these conditions that Brahma started the creation, and Vishnu nurtures and protects it. The destruction and dissolution by Shiva is also by Kaal. The ruler of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva is Bhagwati Prakriti. It is She who is called Srashta, Paata and Sanharta. It is only She, and She alone, who can make Kaal dance to Her whim. She is the one who is called Parabrahma Paramatma. It is She, who, at Her own free will, causes the movable and immovable universe to manifest. Sarvesh, Sarvaroop, Sarvatma and Parameshwar, are only some of Her attributes. The one who creates, protects and dissolves - that is the Param Prabhu you should worship. It is by Her permission that wind gets its velocity; the sun gets its heat; Indra gives rain; death stalks living things; Agni gives heat and flame; and the cool Chandrama circles the lunar orbit. Priya! Come to the Lotus Feet of that Paramatma, who is the death of death; the Kaal of Kaal; the chief of Yamraj; the Swamy of Brahma; the mother of all mothers; and the destroyer of the destroyer.

Kante! You go to the friend of all friends. Brahma has tied both of us with one string. By this I was caught in worldly bonds with you. Now, if we are to be separated, it is in the hands of fate. A wise man does not lament this. By the movement of Kaal-chakra, joys and sorrows keep following one another. Now it is certain that you will attain Sakshat Bhagwan Narayan as your husband, for which you performed severe penance in Badri ashram. By tapasya and a boon

from Brahma I had the privilege of marrying you. Kamini! Now you will get Bhagwan Shri Hari as your husband. In Go-lok there is Brindavan. It is there that Govind will make you His loved one. I will also renounce this Danava body! and go to Divya lok. You will see me there. My coming to this great Bharatvarsh was only because of the curse of Shree Radhaji. Priye! Listen! My going back to Go-lok is a pre-destined fact. Therefore there is no need to be sad. You will also renounce this body very soon and regain your divya roop. Then you will attain Shri Hari as your husband. Therefore there is no need at all to get anxious or perturbed.

Shankachud spoke these beautiful words to Tulsi. Dusk had fallen, and the jewelled bed was decorated with flowers and fragrant sandalwood. He lay down on it. Great and glorious thoughts passed his mind. A golden lamp was burning, and Tulsi was ministering to him. He kept encouraging Tulsi to be calm and surrendered; and gave to her that supreme knowledge that had been given to him by Bhagwan Shri Krishna in the divine Bhandir-van. Tulsi became peaceful and serene. She accepted that all creation is transient and destructible. Then they both slept.

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Chapter 9 - Episode 21

21 Shankachud goes to Pushpabhadra; has darshan; and beautiful clear dialogue with Bhagwan Shankar.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Shankachud was a devotee of Shri Krishna. He meditated upon Shri Krishna in Brahma-muhurtham and got out of his bed. He took a bath, wore freshly washed clothes, put a shining tilak on his forehead, and completed his morning puja using curds, ghee, honey, parched rice (laja) and other auspicious ingredients. As per his daily practice, he offered to Brahmins gold, precious gems and clothes. For an auspicious and safe journey he offered diamonds, pearls, emeralds and rubies to his Guru. He distributed among needy Brahmins, elephants, horses and untold wealth. At that time he also gave away to Brahmins, houses, villages and hamlets. Then he coronated his son as King of all the Danavas, and gave into his keeping, his wife tulsi, his kingdom, and all his worldly possessions. He put on his kavach, picked up his bow and arrow, and assembled his army of three lakh horses, one lakh elephants, ten thousand chariots and three-crore infantry armed with bows, arrows and trishuls, and wearing armour. He appointed an experienced and knowledgeable warrior as the chief, and gave him full command. This Chief was capable of saving his army from enemies three times their size. Then, putting all his attention on Bhagwan Shri Krishna, he left. Seated on a jewelled chariot, he put his gurus before him and went to do seva and darshan of Bhagwan Shankar.

Narad! On the banks of the river Pushpabhadra there is a beautiful Akshayvat (undecaying Banyan Tree). Many rishis practising siddhas have their ashrams there. It is also called Siddha-kshetra. This sacred place is in Bharatvarsh. It is also called Tapobhoomi of Muni Kapil. It is situated on the eastern side of the

western ocean, on the west of Malay-parvat; north of Shri-shail parvat, and the southern part of Gandhamadan Parvat. It is five yojans wide and five hundred yojans long. In that part of Bharat flows a river which bestows auspiciousness. The water is pure and crystal clear, and it never dries. It is called Pushpabhadra. She presides as the wife of the ocean, and is always sowbhagyawati (never becomes a widow). Her source is in the Himalayas. A little distance from the source, she is joined by the Sharawati river. The river Gomti flows to her left. At the end, she joins the ocean (sangam) on the west. When he reached this place, Shankachud had a darshan of Bhagwan Shankar.

Bhagwan Shankar was sitting in Yogasan mudra under the Akshayvat. His form was shining like a crore of suns. There was a smile on His face, which was luminous and brilliant like a clear gem, sparkling in the light. In His hand He held a Trishul, and His body was draped in tiger skin. Verily, the dear husband of Gauri, Bhagwan Shankar, is beautiful to behold. The air of peace and tranquillity that surrounds Him, removes all fear of death from His bhaktas. It is His nature to grant fruits of all tapasyas; and maintain the overflowing bounty of all the wealth in the world. He is very easily pleased. His face is never shadowed by sorrow. He is always eager to grant favours to His bhaktas. He is also called Vishwanath; Vishwabeej; Vishwaroop; Vishwaj; Vishwambhar; Vishwavar; and Vishwasanharak. He is the causal of all causes, and very proficient in delivering His bhaktas from hell. He is the eternal Prabhu who granted knowledge; who is the seed of knowledge, and who is gyan-anand (joy of knowledge). Danavraj Shankachud beheld him and immediately got down from his chariot. Then with all his followers, he bowed humbly and offered pranaams to Bhagwan Shankar. At that time, on the left side of Bhagwan Shankar, presided bhadrakali, and in front of Him Swami Kartikeya. The three great powers blessed Shankachud. All those present, including Nandishwar, stood up respectfully. Everyone spoke to everyone.

Then Shankachud accepted a seat beside Bhagwan Shankar. Prasannatma Bhagwan Mahadev began to speak

Mahadevji said – Rajan! Brahma is the creator of the entire universe. He has a son called Dharam. The son of Dharam is Mareechi, who has complete and total devotion to Shri Hari. Mareechi had a most dharmic son Kashyap. Prajapati Daksh happily gave his thirteen daughters to Kashyap in marriage. One of these daughters was a chaste and virtuous lady, who was called Danu. She had forty sons who are known as the splendid and glorious Danavas. The most brilliant and powerful Danava was Viprachittih. He had a son Dambh who was a dharamatma; chaste and virtuous, and also a great devotee of Bhagwan Vishnu. He appointed Shukracharya as his guru, and went to Pushkar-kshetra, and chanted the great mantra of Bhagwan Shri Krishna for a period of one lakh years. Then he was blessed to have you as his son. In your previous birth you were the main courtier of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. You were the most famous of all the gopas In this birth you have come as a Danava king because of a curse you received from Shree Radhika. The Vaishnavas (devotees of Shri Vishnu) consider as insignificant and of no consequence, any other god from Brahma downwards. They only recognise and worship Bhagwan Shri Hari. They even refuse to accept the four kinds of salvation offered to them – salokya, sarshti, sayujya and samipya. They have no faith or reverence for Brahmatva (knowledge of the Supreme Self) or Amaratva (immortality). They totally discount the state of godhood or manhood. You are one of the foremost Vaishnavs, as bhakta of Shri Krishna. Then why is your mind entangled with this worthless and meaningless kingdom of gods. Rajan! Return the kingdom of the gods to the gods, and protect My qualities of love and forgiveness within you. Be happy and satisfied with your own kingdom, and let the devas be happy in theirs. There should be no hostility or rivalry between you, because you are all descendants of Kashyap. If one measures

the sins arising out of Brahma-hatya, with the sins arising out of hatred of ones kith and kin, then the proportion is more than 1:16.

Rajendra! If you are worried about danger and loss of your wealth and possessions, just think - - is there anyone or anything in this universe that is permanent and indestructible. When the time comes for dissolution of creation, even Brahma goes out of existence. By the power of Parabrahma, He again manifests. His memory and recollection is concealed. By the Iccha of Ishwar, He does tapasya and gets the Supreme Knowledge. This is the absolute truth. Then, with this Nirmal Vidya He gradually accomplishes His job of Creation. And He gets the title of Creator. Rajan! In Satya Yuga no one speaks untruth. That is why in that yuga Dharm reigns in its complete form. That same Dharm reduced to three parts in Treta, two parts in Dwapar; and one part in Kali Yugas. Like the waning moon of Amavasya, by the end of Kaliyug, Dharm remains only in name. The heat of the sun is intense in summer season, but it does not shine with the same intensity in winter season. Even in the span of one day, the sun cannot shine equally in the morning, noon, and evening. According to the degrees of Kaal it takes on the appearance of a new-born sun; and by noon it is in its prime, shining warm and brilliant. Then by evening it becomes weak and sinks. And sometimes Kaal causes darkness even when the sun is reigning in the sky. It trembles when it is eclipsed by Rahu, and then becomes brilliant again.

Rajan! The moon which reaches to complete glory during purnima, cannot remain luminous forever. It keeps reducing day by day. Then again, it waxes. From Amavasya it starts increasing in degrees once again. The moon of Shuklapaksh is bright and luminous; and during Krishnapaksh it is faded and weak. During an eclipse the beauty of the moon is completely hidden; and when the sky is full of rainclouds, it cannot shine through. With the passage of

time, the moon is sometimes full and sometimes dark. Bali is the king of Sutal-lok (one of the nether worlds), but at this time his kingdom has been snatched away from him. At the appointed time the world is dissolved, and then by the influence of Kaal, it is again created. By the instigation and impetus of Kaal, creation and dissolution constantly takes place. Kaal can only be compared to Parabrahma Paramatma because that is verily Parameshwar. It is by the grace of Parameshwar that I am Mrityunjay. Therefore that which no one sees, I witness that Prakrit Pralay again and again. That same Parameshwar is at the same time both Prakriti and Purush. He is the eternal spirit, and he is the living creation. He assumes multifarious forms and actions. By virtue of the action, it gets a name and attribute. It is from that Parameshwar that Srishtikarta Brahma; Paalankarta Vishnu; and Sanharkarta Myself, Mahadev, have manifested. It is by His grace that we are Creator- Protector-Destroyer. Rajan! At present I have commissioned the fierce and blazing Rudra to perform the work of dissolution; and Myself am engaged in singing continuously the praises of Parameshwar. It is because of this that Mrityu (Death and Destruction) cannot touch Me. Even Mrityu fears Mrityu like snakes fear Garud (the condor).

Narad! Sarvcesh Bhagwan Shankar was presiding in the middle of the assembly. After this profound discourse, expressing the magnitude of His knowledge and sentiments; Bhagwan Shankar became silent. Danavraj most humbly thanked Bhagwan Shankar again and again. Then he spoke -

Shankachud said - Bhagwan! Whatever you have said can never be denied or misconstrued. I have a genuine prayer. Be pleased to hear me. You have just condemned Jaati-droha (enmity within the clan) as a great sin. I have come here with all the wealth and possessions of Bali. Therefore it belongs to me. At that time Bhagwan Shri Hari was protecting Bali, so I could not bring him

along with me. Parabrahma Paramatma is verily Prakriti-swaroop. This entire creation is just a venture for His entertainment. At whatever time, whatever wealth He grants to any person, belongs to that person. It is this wealth and power that has been the cause of contention and dispute between the Devas and the Danavas. It has been going on since the beginning of time, and there does not seem to be an end. According to the dictates of time, sometimes they are victorious, and sometimes they lose; and sometimes we are victorious and sometimes we lose. Therefore You cannot take sides. You are verily Friend, God and Paramatma, equally for both sides. If we now go to war with You, it will be highly improper for You. For us, if we win, we will achieve great honour and fame; but if we lose, not much harm will come to our reputation.

Mune! Hearing these words of Shankachud, Bhagwan Trilochan (three-eyed) began to laugh. Then He began to reply –

Mahadevji said – Rajan! All of you belong to the clan of Brahma. Then there is no shame in My fighting a war with you; nor will I lose any honour if you are victorious. Before this, did not Shri Hari fight a war with Madhu and Kaitabh.

Rajan! He also fought with Hiranyakashipu, and once with Hiranyaksh. I Myself have fought a war with a Daitya called Tripur. And, this is not all. Sarveshwari, Prakriti Bhagawati Jagaddamba Herself fought a war with Shumbh and other Asuras.

You are verily a partial manifestation of Paramaatma Shri Hari, and also His foremost attendant. Whatever Daityas have been killed so far, none was as strong and powerful as you. Then Rajan! Why should I feel ashamed to confront you. The gods went to Shri Hari's charan for protection. It is He who

sent them to Me. Therefore you must return the kingdom to the Devatas. That is all. Either you return the kingdom or prepare to engage in war with Me. Now there is no point in further debate.

Narad! When Bhagwan Shankar finished speaking, Shankachud arose and left with his ministers.

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Chapter 9 - Episodes 22-23

22-23 Fierce and dreadful battle between Bhagwan Shankar and Shankachud. The Trishul of the Lord reduces Shankachud to ashes. Return of Sudama to Go-lok.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! After bowing before Mahadevji and offering pranaam, Shankachud left with his ministers. At the same time Bhagwan Shankar gave the order for battle. Shankachud was also ready with his army. Fierce fighting began and the two sides fought against each other. Mahendra fought with Vishparva; Bhaskar with Viprachitti; Chandrama with Dambh; Kaal with Kaalasva; Agnidev with Gokarn; Kuber with Kaalkeya; Vishwakarma with May; Mrityu with Bhayankar; Yama with Sanhar; Varun with Vikank; Sameeran with Chanchal; Budh with Dhritpright; Shanaishchar with Raktaaksh; Jayanti with Ratnasaar; Vasuganas with Varchasweeganas; The Ashwinikumars with Deeptiman; Nalkoobar with Dhumra; Dharm with Dhurandar; Mangal with Ushaaksh; Bhanu with Shobhakar; Manmath with Pithar; the Adityas against Godhamukh, Churn, Khadga, Dhwaj, Kanchimukh, Pind, Dhum, Naandi, Vishwa and Palash. The eleven Rudras fought against eleven dangerous rakshasas; Mahamari against Ugrachanda and others. With the Danavis all the Nandishwaris fought. The situation compared with Pralaykaal. Bhagwan Shankar was seated under the Vatvriksh (banyan tree) with Swami Kartikeya. Mune! The battle was fearsome and ferocious. Shankachud was seated on a jewelled throne and surrounded by Danavas.

Many warriors of the army of Bhagwan Shankar had been killed by the Danavas. Their bodies were riddled with holes. Swamy Kartikeya became furious. He granted Abhay (protection) to all the devatas. The ganas felt their strength enhanced. Then he himself, entered the battlefield and single-

handed defeated one hundred Akshauhini armies (each consisting of 109,350 foot soldiers, 65,610 horses, 21,870 chariots and 21,870 elephants). Innumerable asuras were slain by the lotus-eyed Bhagawati Bhadrakali. When the Danava army began to falter, Shankachud entered and began to rain arrows all over. They were so fast and numerous, they looked like a rainstorm. When this created darkness, he made use of Agneyastra (fire emitting missile). The Deva army was in disarray. Only Shri Kartikeya continued fighting. Then Shankachud caused all kinds of mountains, snakes, stones and trees to fall on him. No one could control the avalanche. Then that powerful Danava broke the heavy bow and the divine chariot of Shri Kartikeya; and also seriously injured his Peacock. Then he aimed his blazing weapon Pran-ghatini Shakti (life-taking) at the chest of Shri Kartikeya. For a moment Shri Kartikeya fainted. Then, as soon as he regained consciousness, Shri Kartikeya picked up his divine bow. This bow had been given to him a long time ago by Shri Vishnu. His chariot was equipped with special weapons. He took them and began a fierce attack. But Shankachud could not be defeated. He was proficient in the art of maya, and he created an illusion of a web of arrows which trapped Shri Kartikeya. Danavraj also possessed a weapon which always returned to him after hitting the target. It shone like a hundred suns, and glowed like blazing fire. It was enveloped in the power of Vishnu-tej. He used this against Shri Kartikeya who fell down unconscious. Then Bhadrakali carried him, and took him to Bhagwan Shankar. The lord revived him and endowed him with additional Shakti. Shri Kartikeya got up; and Bhadrakali entered the battlefield. Along with Her went Nandishwar and all the other warriors.

Seeing Bhadrakali, Shankachud advanced. The other danavas were overcome with fear, but Shankachud gave them courage. Bhadrakali shot Her blazing Agni-baan, but the Danava laughed and cut it with his Paarjanya-astra. In the same way he destroyed the effect of Her Varun-astra and Maheshwar-astra,

with his Gandharv-astra and Vaishnav-astra. After this the Narayan-astra together with a mantra was used by Kali. This weapon had its effect. As soon as Shankachud saw it coming he got down from his chariot with folded hands. The Narayan-astra came like blazing doom. But it rose upwards; and Shankachud prostrated before it and offered pranaam. Then the Devi used Her mantra and Brahma-astra but Shankachud fended it off with his Brahma-astra. The Devi sent one more Divine Weapon but Shankachud enveloped it in a web of arrows. Then the Devi picked up Her Pashupat-astra which had been energised with mantras; when suddenly there was Akashvani (Divine sound from Heaven) - "This king is a noble soul, and his wife is chaste and virtuous. Pashupat-astra does not have the power to kill him. As long as he wears the kavach (protection) of the mantra of Bhagwan Shri Hari around his neck; and as long as his wife protects her virtue and chastity, old age and death cannot even come near him. This is the word of Shri Brahma".

Hearing this Devi Bhadrakali stopped using weapons. She ravenously began to devour all the danavas, in a divine play. She rushed at Shankachud to swallow him. He only got injured, but She could not devour him. She continued to consume the danava army and was helped by Her attendant yoginis. Then Bhadrakali went to Bhagwan Shankar and told Him, from beginning to end, all that had happened on the battlefield. Bhagwan Shankar laughed.

Bhadrakali also said - There are still one lakh danava warriors on the battlefield. These are the ones who fell out of My mouth. When I got ready to fire the Pashupat-astra, there was this akashvani which said the danava king is invincible, and cannot be killed by You. After that, this wise and brave king stopped fighting. He only used weapons to fend off My divine weapons.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Bhagwan Shiv is most competent and skilful in the handling of elements and principles. After listening to the description of the battlefield from Devi Bhadrakali, He descended on the battlefield with His ganas. When Shankachud saw Him, he got down from his chariot, and with great humility and bhakti, prostrated before Him, and offered pranaam. After that he mounted his chariot and began battle with Bhagwan Shiv. The fighting lasted for a very long time, and there was neither victory nor defeat for anyone. Sometimes Shankachud would put down arms and rest in his chariot; and sometimes Bhagwan Shankar would rest on Rishabh. Countless Danavas were killed by Shri Shankar's army. Also, any devas who were killed by the danavas, were brought back to life by Shri Shiva. At that time Bhagwan Shri Hari came, disguised as an old Brahmin, and spoke to Danavraj Shankachud. Shri Hari, in the form of a wise old Brahmin said – Rajendra! Kindly give me some alms. At this time you are the only one who can give all the shaktis. Therefore please grant my desire. I am old, thirsty and needy. After you promise to grant my request, I will tell you.

Rajendra! Shankachud readily promised to give the Brahmin whatever he wanted. Then the Brahmin covered him with maya and said "I desire to have your Krishna Kavach". Shankachud immediately removed the kavach and gave it; and the Brahmin took it. Then the same Shri Hari assumed the form of Shankachud and went near Tulsi. He tricked her into believing that He was Shankachud, and had relations with her. This broke her claim to virtue and chastity. (Actually in principle she was verily the beloved wife of Shri Hari). At exactly the same time, Shri Shankar picked up His Trishul, which had been given by Shri Hari, and got ready to use it on Shankachud. That Trishul shone like the mid-day sun in summer, and was as hot as the destroying fire of Pralaykaal. That Trishul was Durnivarya (invincible); Durdharsh (difficult to be caught); Avyarth (never fruitless); and Shatru-sanharak (accurate and

guaranteed to kill the enemy). That Trishul compared in brilliance and efficiency with the Chakra itself. That formidable Trishul could only be wielded by Shiva or Keshav. No one else. It is Sajeev Brahm (living divinity). It never changes; and not everyone can see it. Narad! That Trishul has the power to destroy the entire universe. In divine play, Bhagwan Shankar picked it up and threw it at Shankachud. The wise king understood what had happened. He immediately threw down his bow; sat in yoga-asan position, and with ananya-chitta (where the attention of the devotee merges into the attention of God); meditated upon the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. The Trishul hovered for some time. Then it fell on Shankachud, and instantly turned him to ashes.

As soon as his danava body was destroyed, he assumed the divine form of a Gop. He was just a young boy of fifteen or sixteen. He had two arms. He held a murali (flute) in one hand. He was decorated with divine ornaments. Then suddenly a jewelled conveyance arrived from Go-lok. Many Gopis were seated inside. Shankachud sat in the divine vehicle, and was carried away towards Go-lok.

Mune! At that time Raasmandal was in progress, and Bhagwan Shri Krishna and Bhagawati Radha presided. As soon as Shankachud reached, he prostrated and offered pranaam. Seeing their beloved Sudama, both were very pleased. They embraced him and put him on their lap. Then the Trishul came back to Bhagwan Shri Krishna. The conch was born out of the bones of Shankachud. That same shankh is used as a sacred article during pujas. The water from the shankh is very pleasing to the gods, as it is considered Teerth Jal (holy water). Only for Shankar it holds no reverence. Wherever there is Shankha-dhwani (sound of the conch), there presides Bhagawati Lakshmi. Anyone who bathes with water from a conch, receives the fruits of bathing in all the holy places. The Shankh is verily the dwelling place of Bhagwan Shri

Hari. Wherever a Shankh is kept there will preside Bhagwan Shri Hari, together with Bhagawati Lakshmi. Anything inauspicious cannot exist there.

After killing Shankachud, Bhagwan Shiv returned to His abode. He mounted Vrishabh and went, accompanied by His ganas. The gods were very joyous at getting their kingdom back. The heavens resounded with divine drum beats, and the Gandharvas and Kinnars sang divine songs. Flowers rained down from heaven, on Bhagwan Shankar. The gods and the Munis praised Him, again and again.

Chapter 9 Episode 24

24 Shri Hari, disguised as Shankachud, breaks Tulsi's vow of chastity. Shankachud goes to Go-lok. Tulsi and Shri Hari remain on Bharatvarsh in the form of plant and black stone. The importance of Tulsi and qualities of Shalgram.

Naradji said – Prabho! What form did Bhagwan Narayan assume when He went to Tulsi. Please tell me about this incident.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Bhagwan Shri Hari is always alert to fulfil the desires of the devas. He used His Vaishnavi powers of delusion to trick the kavach out of Shankachud. Then He assumed the form of Shankachud himself, and went to the house of Tulsi. Breaking her virtue and chastity was the only way to ensure the killing of Shankachud.

Seeing her husband returning from the war, she celebrated with joy and welcomed him with her whole heart. They spoke about the war, and then Jagadprabhu Bhagwan Shri Hari, disguised as Shankachud, went to bed. Tulsi also slept with Him, but later she realised that something was not right. She immediately asked - Tulsi said – Mayesh! (One who deceives) Tell me who you are. You have destroyed my chastity through deception. I am no longer virtuous, and for this I am going to pronounce a curse on you.

Brahman! Out of fear of being cursed, Bhagwan Shri Hari manifested in His most pleasing form. Tulsi beheld that eternal Prabhu, Deveshwar Shri Hari. The Lord was of the colour of a dark, new, raincloud. His eyes were like the petals of a full blown lotus. He was as beautiful as Kamdev. He wore divine jewels and ornaments. There was a smile on His face. He wore pitamber robes. Tulsi fainted. Then when she revived, she spoke.

Tulsi said – Nath! Your heart is as hard as a stone-cutter's chisel. That is how You could be so cruel. You used guile and deception to destroy my chastity, so that my husband could be killed. Prabho! You have no mercy, and You are hard-hearted. For no fault of his Your bhakta has been killed. Tulsi began to weep inconsolably. Then the ocean of mercy and benevolence, Kamalapati Bhagwan Shri Hari, with great compassion, began to explain to Tulsi.

Bhagwan Shri Hari said – Bhadre! To attain Me, you spent many years in Bharatvarsh, in tapasya. At the same time, Shankahchud (who is a partial incarnation of Me) also did tapasya to attain you. He received you as his wife and happily went to Go-lok. I consider this the proper time to grant you the fruits of your tapasya.

Rame! Renounce this body; assume a divine form, and stay by Me. Like Lakshmi you also must stay with Me forever. This body of yours will become the famous river Gandaki. This holy river will purify the people of Bharatvarsh. Your abundant locks of hair will become a plant which will be known by your name – Tulsi. At every puja Tulsi will occupy the highest place among leaves and flowers. Whether it is Swarglok, Martyalok, Pataal or Go-lok, you will always be by My side. Your abodes will be in Go-lok, the banks of the Virja river; Raas Mandal; Vrindavan; Bhandirvan; Champakvan; Manohar Chandanvan; and the forests of Madhavi; Ketaki, Kund and Mallika. The earth below a Tulsi plant will be as holy and blessed, as all the Teerth-sthans (places of pilgrimage). In order to collect the fallen leaves of the Tulsi, the gods will reside under her shade, and so will I. Anyone who gets a sprinkling of Tulsi-jal, can consider that he has taken a dip in all the holy rivers and lakes, and has been purified at all yagyas. The satisfaction that Bhagwan Shri Hari gets from thousands of pots of amrut; He gets the same degree of satisfaction from one, single Tulsi leaf that is offered. The fruits one gets by free

distribution of ten thousand milch cows; can be obtained by performing Tulsi-patra daan in the month of Karthik. At the time of death, if a person receives the water of Tulsi patra in his mouth, he becomes entitled to a place in the abode of Bhagwan Vishnu. The person who daily receives Tulsi-jal with great reverence, gets the fruits of one lakh Ashwamedh yagyas. The person who holds Tulsi leaves in his hand and surrenders his life at holy places, he goes straight to Vishnu-lok. He who wears a mala of beads made of Tulsi-wood, gets the fruits of Ashwamedha with every step that he takes. There is no doubt in this.

The person who makes a promise with Tulsi in his hands as witness; and then does not fulfil his promise – he goes to a hell called Kaalsutra, for a period equal to the life-span of the sun and the moon. He who makes a false promise in the vicinity of Tulsi, goes to a hell called Kumbhipaak, and stays there for ages.

Purnima, Amavasya, and dawn and dusk; ashouch (religious uncleanliness caused by the birth of a child, or death of a near relative); after retiring at night, or before bath -- during these times, or when oil has been applied to the body -- if one breaks Tulsi leaves, it is equivalent to cutting the head of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Sadhavi! During Shradh; fast; bestowal of alms; making vows, and during archana; if the Tulsi leaves wilt it does not matter because it retains its holiness for three nights. Tulsi leaves which have fallen on earth, or in the water, or the leaves which were offered to Shri Vishnu, can be washed and used for any other purpose.

Go-lok is an auspicious dham. You will become the presiding devi of Tulsi, and stay by the side of Me – Krishna. The river which was born out of your mortal remains, will be a most holy river of Bharatvarsh, and will become the wife of

the ocean. That ocean is a part of Myself. You will abide beside Me in Vaikunth in the same way as Lakshmi.

To honour your curse, I will descend to Bharatvarsh in the form of a black stone called Shalgram. I will live on the banks of the river Gandaki. Crores of insects will use their jaws to carve out My Chakra on these Shalgrams. The stone which has one vent, will have four chakras. And the one which has a vanmala, and is the colour of a raincloud, will be the indicator of Lakshmi-Narayan. The stone with one opening and four chakras, but the vanmala is not visible, and yet is the colour of a raincloud – such a stone should be considered a pratima (idol or image) of Lakshmi and Vishnu. The stone which has two openings, four chakras and has the cloven hoof of a cow, plus etching of a vanmala, should be honoured as the form of Bhagwan Raghavendra.

The stone which has the faint impression of two chakras, but does not have the lines of vanmala, that rain-cloud coloured stone should be considered to be the image of Bhagwan Shreedhar. This stone grants auspiciousness and well-being to a grahasti (householder). The stone which is spherical like a ball, which does not have the vanmala, but which has, very clearly etched, two chakras on it, that is the announcer of Shri Damodar. A stone which is round, which has two chakras plus a bow and arrow etched on it, should be recognised as the image of Shri Rama. The stone which has seven chakras and a canopy on it, is the image of Bhagwan Rajrajeshwar. Adoration of this stone gives royal wealth. The spherical stone of the colour of a rain cloud, which bears fourteen chakras, should be recognised as the image of Bhagwan Anant. Worship of this, grants Dharm, Arth, Kaam and Moksh. The stone which is shaped like a chakra, and has on it two chakras, Shree and the cloven hoof of a cow; this stone of dark colour should be recognised as Bhagwan Madhusudan. The stone which has only one, indistinct chakra, is Bhagwan Gada-dhar, and

the one which has two chakras and the face of a horse, should be recognised as the image of Bhagwan Hygreev. Sadhavi! The stone which has a wide face, two chakras on it, and which looks intricate and formidable, is the form of Shri Narasimha. It grants freedom from worldly desires. The shalgram which has a wide face, two chakras, and a vanmala etched on it, is very auspicious for householders, as it represents Bhagwan Shri Lakshminarayan. The stone of Bhagwan Vasudev. By performing archana to this, all desires get fulfilled. The stone which has a subtle chakra on it, and which is full of small holes, is the form of Pradyumna. It gives happiness to the household. The stone which has two chakras joined together, and which is wide at the back, is the form of Bhagwan Shankarshan and gives joy to householders. The stone which is a perfect sphere, and yellow in colour, is identified by the wise as Bhagwan Aniruddh who blesses householders.

Wherever there is a Shalgram rock, there resides Bhagwan Shri Hari, and Shri Lakshmi with all the holy teerths around them. Sins including Brahm-hatya (murder of a Brahmin) get washed away by performing puja to a Shalgram. The shalgram shaped like a canopy gives a kingdom, and a spherical stone gives wealth. A shalgram that is shaped like a cart causes grief, while a sharp pointed stone, like a dart, can be a messenger of death. Any fast, act of charity, vow or shraddh, performed in the vicinity of a shalgram, is special. A person who lives near a shalgram gets the boons of bathing and visiting all the holy places, and also participating in all yagyas. Sadhavi! Whatever punyas one gets from reading the four Vedas and from tapasya, can all be obtained by worshipping the shalgram. He who uses the water of the shalgram rock for abhishekh gets the blessings that come from works of charity and pradakshina of Prithvi. The one who drinks daily, the water of Shalgram Shila, gets the Prasad that even the gods pray for. There is no doubt in this. All the holy places desire to purify such a person. Then he becomes entitled to a place

near the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Hari; and he lives there for many pralays. As soon as he reaches, Bhagwan Shri Hari appoints him as His attendant. Just in the presence of such a soul all the great sins like brahm-hatya run away like snakes from Garuda. The dust of his feet purifies the earth. His birth grants release to thousands of ancestors.

At the time of death, if a person sips shalgram water, he gets released from all his sins, and goes to Vishnulok. There is no doubt in this. The person who holds a shalgram in his hands and makes a false promise, goes to a hell called Kumbhipak and stays there for a lifespan of Brahma. The one who bears a shalgram and does not keep his promise, goes to a hell called Asipatra for a period of one lakh manvantars. Kaante! The one who separates Tulsi leaves from the shalgram, in his next life will not have a wife. The one who crushes or breaks Tulsi leaves with a shankh, does not have a wife; and for seven births remains ill and infirm. The person who respectfully and lovingly keeps shalgram, tulsi and shankh, becomes dear to Shri Hari.

Narad! After saying all these things to Devi Tulsi Bhagwan Shri Hari became silent. Tulsi renounced her body, assumed a divine form, and took her place on the chest of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Kamalapati Bhagwan Shri Hari took her and left for Vaikunth. Narad! Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganga and Tulsi – these four devis are the wives of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Then Tulsi turned into the Gandaki river, and Bhagwan Shri Hari presided on her banks as the Shalgram Rock. Mune! The microscopic creatures that live there, use their jaws to create various types of shalgram. These stones fall into the water and bestow blessings. The stones which fall on the ground get heated by the sun and turn yellow. These are not to be used in puja as they are Pingala in quality.

Narad! I have told you the full story. Now what else would you like to hear.

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Chapter 9 Episode 25

25 Description of Tulsi puja; dhyan, naamaashtak (eight names) and praises.

Narada asked – Prabho! When Bhagwan Narayan performed puja to Tulsi, what was the procedure, and what stutis were sung. Please tell me all this. Also, who was the first to perform this puja, and how this devi came to be worshipped. I desire to hear all this from you.

Sootji says – Munivars! Bhagwan Narayan was extremely pleased with the questions put by Narada. He began the purifying story, that grants punyas to those who listen to it.

Bhagwan Narayan said – Bhagwan Shri Hari gave Tulsi a place of honour and love, equal to that of Lakshmi; and also made her His wife. Lakshmi and Ganga tolerated the new status given to Tulsi. But Saraswati could not accept it. After being insulted by Saraswati, Tulsi became invisible. She was accomplished in all the siddhis. She removed herself completely from the sight of Bhagwan Shri Hari. When Shri Hari did not see Tulsi, He clarified and explained everything to Saraswati and left for Tulsi-van. He uttered a mantra using – Lakshmi-beej (Shrim); Mayabeej (Hrim); Kaambeej (Klim) and Vanibeej (Aiim), and then added Vrindavanjyai and Swaha – to make a Dashaakshar Mantra (of ten syllables) -- Shrim Hrim Klim Aiim Vrindavanjyai Swaha. Narad! This is Mantraraj Kalpataru. Whoever chants this mantra and performs puja to Tulsi, gets all the siddhis. The puja was performed by Bhagwan Shri Hari, using a ghee deepa, dhoop (incense); sindoor, chandan, nine types of offerings and flowers; and by singing stotras. Tulsi was very pleased and immediately emerged from the plant. She offered pranaams to

Bhagwan Shri Hari, and dissolved herself into His Lotus Feet. Then the Lord gave her a boon –" Devi! May you be worshipped by all. I will bear you on My forehead and on My chest. Not only this but all the gods will bear you on their foreheads." Then the Lord left for His abode.

Bhagwan Narayan says – When Tulsi removed herself from His sight, Bhagwan Shri Hari was very sad at the separation. He went to Brindavan and sang stutis to Tulsi.

Shri Bhagwan said – When the form of Vrinda and the plant become one, then the wise call it as Vrinda. She who is known by this name, and she who is Tulsi, is dear to Me, and I worship her. That Devi who manifested in Vrindavan, and who is known as Vrindavani, to that sowbhagyawati Devi I offer worship. She who resides in all the plants and receives worship and is called Vriksh-pujita, I worship that Devi. Devi, you have purified and made holy, innumerable trees and plants. Being separated from such Devi Vrikshpavani, I offer worship to her. Without Devi Tulsi, any amount of flowers offered to the gods does not please them. That devi is sad, and I am anxious and full of fear. I desire to have a darshan of that crowning glory of all flowers, and the great purifier Devi Tulsi. That Devi who gives joy to those who attain her, and who is called Nandini, may that Devi Tulsi be pleased with Me. That Devi who is incomparable, and who is called Tulsi, may please accept My worship. That sadhavi Devi Tulsi, who is eternally dear to Shri Krishna and is therefore called Krishnajeevani, may that Devi protect Me.

Singing stutis in this way Lakshmikant Bhagwan Shri Hari remained in Vridavan. Then there appeared before Him, sakshat Tulsi, and offered pranaams at His Lotus Feet. Her eyes were wet with tears because of the insult she had received. Shri Hari embraced her close to His heart. With the

consent of Saraswati, He took Tulsi to His abode and re-established the love between Saraswati and Tulsi. Bhagwan Shri Hari also pronounced a boon – Devi! May you be venerated and worshipped by all. This boon from Bhagwan Vishnu greatly pleased Devi Tulsi. Saraswati offered her a seat beside her. Lakshmi and Ganga were smiling, and they took her hands and led her into the bhavan.

There are eight names of Devi Tulsi - Vrinda; Vrindavani; Vishwapujita; Vishwapavani; Pushpasara; Nandini; Tulsi and Krishnajeevani. The person who performs puja, and sings the stotras containing this Naamaasthak, he gets the fruits of an ashwamedha yagya.

During the Kartik Purnima, Tulsi manifested herself; and the first puja was performed by Bhagwan Shri Hari. Since then it has become important to perform puja to Vishwapavini Tulsi on Kartik Purnima day. It grants release from all sins and entitles one to a place in Vishnulok. He who worships Bhagwan Vishnu with Tulsi-patra during the month of Kartik, gets the fruits of performing go-daan of ten thousand cows. The chanting of Tulsi-naamaashtak grants children to the barren; gives the blessing of a good wife; and gives the blessings of good, sincere friends. The sick get rid of their illness; people get rid of bondages; those who are overcome by fear become fearless; and all sins get washed away.

Narad! I have told you the Tulsi-stotra. Now I will tell you the procedures for puja and meditation. You already know about meditation. It is written in the Kanva Sakha of the Vedas. Meditation has the Shakti to destroy the greatest of sins. After meditation one must worship the Tulsi plant with Shodshopchar (sixteen methods of worship) - Avahan; Aasan; Ardhya; Padya; Aachman;

Madhupark; Snan; Vastrabharan; Yagyopvit; Gandh; Pushp; Deep; Naivedya; Tambool; Parikrama and Vandana.

The param sadhavi Tulsi, is the essence of all the flowers. All parts of the plant are holy. She can turn to ashes, all sins, just like the flames of fire. There is no flower that can compare to her. Her greatness is described in the Vedas. In any situation she is a purifier. Bhagwan bears her on His forehead. Everyone wishes to attain her. She is eternally free (Nityamukt). It is her nature to grant mukti and bhakti to Bhagwan Shri Hari. Wise and learned persons perform meditation, puja and stutis and offer worship to Devi Tulsi. Narad! This is the story of Tulsi. What would you like to hear next.

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Chapter - Episode 26

26 Procedure for Puja and Stuti to Savitri Devi

Narad said - I am fortunate to hear the story of Tulsi, which compares with Amrut. Now please tell me the story of Savitri. It is she who gave birth to the Vedas. How did this devi manifest; and who was the first to offer puja to her.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Mune! The first to worship Savitri was Brahmadev. Later she was worshipped by all the devas. Then all learned people worshipped her. Then in Bharatvarsh Raja Ashwapati performed her puja then she was worshipped by all four classes of people.

Naradji asked – Brahman! Who was Raja Ashwapati and what was the purpose of his worship.

Bhagwan Narayan said – Mune! Raja Ashwapati was king of Madradesh. It was his nature to destroy the strength of his enemies, and protect the well-being of his friends and subjects. His queen was called Malati. She was chaste and dharmic and presided beside the king like Lakshmi beside Bhagwan Vishnu. Narad, they had no children. As directed by Vasishtji, she began to worship Bhagawati Savitri. But she did not get any token, nor did she get a darshan of the devi. She returned home very sad and disappointed. Raja Ashwapati comforted her, and himself left for Pushkar to perform tapasya to Devi Savitri. He stayed there, gained control of all his senses, and performed tapasya. He did not get a darshan of the devi, but he got a directive. He heard a voice from heaven which said - "Rajan! You must chant Gayatri ten lakh times". Just then Muni Parashar arrived. The king offered pranaams.

Muni said – Rajan! Just uttering Gayatri once, destroys the sins of one day. By saying it ten times, the sins of one day and one night get destroyed. One hundred times destroys sins of a whole month. One thousand times burns to ashes the sins of many years. One lakh times releases one from the sins of this lifetime; and one crore times destroys the sins of all future births. Ten crores of recitation of Gayatri gives freedom to Brahmins. The Brahmin should sit facing east, and form his hands like the hood of a snake. Then he should count the mantras on the joints of his fingers, from below upwards. This method of counting mantras is called Karmaala. Rajan! It is also necessary to have a mala of sandalwood or crystal beads. These should be smeared with go-rochan (yellow liquid from a cow's mouth) and then washed. If not then it can also be purified by smearing it with panchagavya (mixture of cow's milk, curd, boiled butter, cow-dung and cow's urine) and washed in Gangajal. After this purification this mala can be used for counting hundred mantras of Gayatri.

Rajrishi! In this way you must chant Gayatri ten lakh times. By this you can wash away the sins of three births. After this you will get sakshat darshan of Devi Savitri. Rajan! You should also perform daily, three times, (in the morning, afternoon and evening) sandhya prayers, because the one who does not do this remains impure and is not entitled to any fruits. The Brahmin who regularly performs the three sandhyas throughout his life, becomes lustrous, and effulgent like the sun. Such a Brahmin is never affected by sin and is verily twice born (a realised soul). Just by his presence, places of worship become holier. At the sight of him, negative forces run away like snakes running from garud. If a Brahmin who neglects his daily sandhyas, offers obsequies for his dead ancestors, they decline it, and even the gods to not accept his offerings.

Mune! In this way Muni Parashar taught Raja Ashwapati the protocols of worshipping Savitri. He returned to his ashram, and the king began his tapasya. He was blessed with a darshan, and also many boons.

Narada asked – Bhagwan! Please tell me all the protocols that Muni Parashar taught the king regarding meditation, puja, stotras, and mantras. And what boons were received by him. Knowledge of Devi Savitri is highly secret and inaccessible. Please enlighten me.

Bhagwan Narayan says - On Jyesht Krishna Trayodashi (the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight of the third month of the hindu calendar) one should observe sobriety and abstinence. Then on the fourteenth day one should observe fast; and after due purifications one should start the puja to Devi Savitri. This is to be repeated for fourteen years. It grants fourteen fruits; and fourteen kinds of Naivedya are to be offered. Also to be offered are flowers and dhoop (incense). Prepare a mangal-kalash and place a branch in it. First offer puja to Shri Ganesh, Surya, Agni, Vishnu, Shiva and Parvati; and then meditate on the invited deity Shree Savitri. This has been described in Madhyandini Shakha (a branch of Yajur Veda). I will also tell you the stotras, puja procedure and effective mantras.

This is the meditation. - The colour of Savitri is like molten gold. She is always lustrous and illuminated with Brahma-tej. Her radiance is like a thousand summer suns shining at mid-day. She has a smile on her face. She is adorned with jewelled ornaments. She wears two divine garments. She has manifested to grant benevolence to her bhaktas. She is the beloved of the creator. She is also called Sukhada, Muktida, Shanta, Sarvasampat Swaroopa, and Sarvasampat Pradarthri. She is the presiding deity of the Vedas.

Ved Shastras are her form. I worship the Vedbeej-swaroopa, Vedmata Bhagawati Savitri. After meditating in this way, one should offer the naivediyas. Then with great respect, one should do kalash puja and invite the goddess. While chanting mantras from the Vedas, puja should be performed, using sixteen types of ingredients. When this is complete, one should offer pranaams to Deveshree Savitri. The sixteen offerings for a puja are - Aasan; Padya; Arghya; Snan; Anulepan; Dhoop; Deep; Naivediya; Tambool; Sheetal Jal; Vastra; Bhooshan; Mala; Chandan; Aachman; and pleasing Shaiyya.

1. Mantra – when offering the Aasan or seat. - O Devi! This Aasan is made of superior wood and covered with gold. The gods reside in this and it is worthy to be offered to You.

2. Padya (water for washing feet) - Devi! I offer you this holy teerth water for washing Your Lotus Feet. This procedure creates love and affection, and is a very important part of the puja.

3. Arghya (precious articles) - Devi! I have decorated this offering with doob grass, flowers, tulsi and shankh-jal. May it please You to accept this humble offering.

4. Snaan (Water for Bath) - Devi! I have mixed sandalwood in this water to make it fragrant. With it I have kept scented oils. I pray that these offerings are worthy to be put before you.

5. Anu-lepan (pastes and unguents) - Ambike! This holy mixture of sweet smelling ingredients, which has been made into a paste with sandal-water, I humbly place before You for anointing.

6. Dhoop (incense) - Parameshwari! This superior incense gives auspiciousness and inclination for worship. Kindly accept.

7. Deep (lamp) - Devi! This is the light which will enlighten the universe. It contains the seed for dispelling all darkness and spiritual ignorance.

8. Naivediya (Offerings of sweets and delicacies. - Devi! This tasty and delicious offering satisfies hunger and thirst, and gives love and punyas. Be pleased to accept it.

9. Sheetal Jal (Cool, pure water) - This water which was created to quench the thirst of the world, and which is life giving, is placed before you.

10. Vastra (Clothes) - Parameshwari! Please accept this cloth, woven from pure cotton and silk. It will become pure and dignified when it is draped on You. The assembly will be blessed to see You wearing this.

11. Bhooshan (Ornaments) - Devi! Please accept these ornaments of gold and precious stones.

12. Fruits - These are fruits produced by different trees. They are of different colours, forms and flavours, and can produce more fruits like themselves. Please be kind to accept them.

13. Mala (Garlands) - Devi! This garland made of fragrant and beautiful flowers is the embodiment of all auspiciousness. This pushp-mala grants many boons. We pray that you accept it.

14. Chandan (sandalwood) - O Devi! We are pleased to offer You this most sweet-smelling sandalwood. Kindly accept it.

15. Sindhoor - This sindhoor is considered the foremost item of Sringar, as it adorns the forehead with beauty. Please accept this.

16. Yagyopvit (Sacred Thread) - This sacred thread is extremely pure. It has been made from holy yarn and has been purified by holy mantras from the Vedas. Be pleased to accept it.

Wise and learned men should recite the Mool-mantras and make these offerings to Bhagawati Savitri. Then dakshina must be given to the Brahmins. After uttering the name Savitri, one must add Swaha. Then utter the mantras of Lakshmi, Maya and Kaambeej. This is the ashtaakshar mantra - Om Hrim Klim Srim Savitriyai Swaha.

This mantra, which is most pleasing to Bhagawati Savitri, is mentioned in Madhyandini Shakha For Brahmins this is the embodiment of life. I will elucidate for you. Listen carefully.

It happened in ancient times. Bhagwan Shri Krishna was in residence in Go-lok dham. He had directed Savitri to go with Brahma. But Savitri did not go to Brahmalok. Then on the advice of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, Brahmaji began to sing stutis to Vedmata Savitri. Then Savitri accepted Brahmaji as her husband. This is how Brahmaji sang stutis –

Brahmaji said – Sundari! You are Satchitanand swaroopa, and Moolprakritimayi (material cause of the universe). Your divine form is like golden nectar. In your benevolence be pleased with me. Devi! You are the embodiment of light and lustre. Your being is most joy giving. You are the lineage for realised souls. Sundari! Be pleased with me. You are Nitya, Nityapriya and Nityanand swaroopa. You are the complete auspiciousness. I desire that you should be pleased with me. Shobhaney! For Brahmins you are

everything. You are above all, and you are the essence e of all mantras. By worshipping you one gets moksha and all happiness. Be pleased with me. Sundari! You are blazing doom for all the sins. It is your nature to bestow Brahma-tej (the glow of self-realisation). Be pleased with me. Whatever sins a man commits by thought, word, or deed; if he just remembers your holy name, he gets release.

After singing these stutis, Jagatdata Brahmaji took his seat in the Sabha-bhavan. Then Savitri agreed to accompany him to Brahmalok. Mune! It was this stotra-raj (king of stotras that Raja Ashwapati sang to please Bhagawati Savitri. The devi was pleased, and gave a darshan to Raja Ashwapati, and he received the desired boon from Her. This is a most holy stotra, and if one sings this after daily prayers, the fruits are equal to that which one gets by reading all the four Vedas.

Chapter 9 - Episodes 27-28

27-28 Raja Ashwapati gets boon of a daughter called Savitri. Her marriage to Satyavaan. Death of Satyavaan; and dialogue between Savitri and Yamraj.

Bhagwan Narayan says - When King Ashwaati performed puja to Devi Savitri, and sang this stuti, the Devi was pleased and gave him a sakshat darshan. Her Shree Vigraha (Divine form) shone like a thousand rising suns. She laughed and spoke to Raja Ashwapati, as a mother to a son. At that time all four directions were illuminated with Her effulgence.

Devi Savitri said - Maharaj! Ask Me for whatever you desire. The desires of your wife are also not hidden from Me. I am here only to grant your wishes. Rajan! Your wife desires a daughter, and you wish for a son. One by one, both your desires will be fulfilled.

After this Bhagawati Savitri returned to Brahmalok, and the king went back to his kingdom. First a daughter was born, whom the king named Savitri. She was so beautiful that she resembled Lakshmi. She grew like the waxing moon, more and more beautiful each day. When she attained marriageable age, the king gave her in marriage to Satyavaan, son of king Dyumatsen. The prince was endowed with all gracious qualities. He was very honoured to marry Savitri, and happily took her to his kingdom. One year after his marriage his father sent him to the forest to bring fruits and wood. Behind him went Savitri. As was destined, Satyavaan fell from a tree and died. Yamraj came and took away his subtle body and started for Yampuri. Then Savitri began to follow him. This greatest of hermits, and lord of Yampuri, saw the beautiful Savitri following him. He spoke to her in kind, gentle tones.

Dharmraj said – O Savitri! Where are you going with this human body? If your intention is to accompany your husband, you must first renounce this body. Those who live in the mortal world cannot enter my abode with their body which is made of five elements. Mortals are only entitled to live in the mortal world. Sadhvi! Your husband Satyavaan took birth in Bharatvarsh. His lifespan is over, and now he has to come to my kingdom to receive the fruits of his actions. It is a person's actions which decide his type of birth, and mode of death. Happiness, pain, fear and sorrow come to a person according to his actions. Some karmas can result in a person even becoming Indra. Meritorious actions can even cause a person to become Brahmaputra. By virtuous actions a person can attain the lotus feet of Shri Hari and get released from the cycle of birth and death. Auspicious actions can give the fruits of all siddhis, immortality, salvation, and a place in the vicinity of Shri Hari. A man merits, by his action, birth in various yonis (strata) like devata, manu, rajendra, Shiv, Ganesh, Munindra (Buddha), tapasvi, kshatriya, vaishya, mlecch, sthavar (immovable) jangam (moveable), parvat, rakshas, kinnar, adhipati (king), vriksh (plant), pashu (animal), kirath (savage), germs, virus, worms, insects, daitya, danava or asura. According to a person's karmas, he takes birth in any of these yonis or classes, which number eighty-four lakhs. There should be no doubt in this fact. After saying this to Savitri, Dharmraj became silent.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Mune! After hearing this the chaste and faithful wife Savitri began to sing hymns of praise. Then she spoke.

Savitri said – Bhagwan! I know nothing. Please be benevolent, and tell me what is karma. What are the fruits of actions. Who is the body, and who is the soul (deha and dehi); and on whose instigation are actions performed. What is gyan, buddhi, pran and senses; and what are their characteristics. Also, who are the devatas, the bhoktas (enjoyers), the bhojyeta-bhoj (communion; action

and involvement in action); and jeev (living creature); and paramatma. Please tell me about all these things.

Dharmraj said - Sadahvi Savitri! Actions are of two kinds – shubh and ashubh (auspicious and inauspicious). Actions which conform to the statutes of the Vedas, are auspicious; and have the effect of granting blessings. Those whose actions are contrary, and go against the commandments, and cause them to go to hell. Those who worship the gods with firm dedication, and without any expectations – that form of worship is karm-nirmool-roopa (the most perfect). This gives utmost bhakti and union.

Who is the enjoyer and who is Nirlep (untouched by karmas and dualism) – the answer is this. It is promised by Shruti that worship of Brahma gives mukti. Birth, death, old age, sickness, sorrow and fear – none of these can affect him.

Sadhavi! In the Shrutis bhakti is also divided into two categories, but which are not against each other. One gives Nirvana – liberation; and the other gives Saaroopya (oneness, where there is not the other.) Man is entitled to both. Realised souls desire the bhakti which gives Saaroopya; while yogis with brahmagyan desire Nirvana.

Action is beej-roop (seed), and its nature is to produce fruit. It is none other than the manifestation of Bhagwan Shri Hari and Bhagawati Prakriti. Devi Prakriti is Brahmaswaroopa with Maya predominant. Actions are born from her. The Spirit does nothing (non-doer). Earth, Fire, Water, Air and Ether are five elements which are the formula which is used by the Creator for creation. The living creature which does the actions is the body which houses the soul. So, he is the one to whom the fruits accrue; and the spirit which pervades the body, makes him the enjoyer. So, the experiencing of joy and sorrow, is called

bhog. When actions are non-actions (I am not the doer), then only there is mukti (no fruits to be experienced). The causal of wisdom and discretion is Knowledge. This knowledge or gyan is of many kinds, because of the various issues. That Shakti which gives discretion is intelligence. The Shrutis call this gyan-beej. The various life forms are a manifestation of Vayu. It is through Vayu that Shakti penetrates and permeates the being. That which is foremost among senses; a minute part (ansh) of Paramatma, instigator of doubts and scepticism; which is very difficult to control; formless; invisible; and opposing buddhi – is called The Mind. It is associated with the gross body, and is the instigator of actions. It guides the senses into situations which cause sorrow and suffering, and works as an enemy. Also it can be a friend; by causing one to do actions which give joy. The organs of senses are eyes, nose, ears, skin and tongue. The gods governing the senses are Surya, Vayu, Prithvi, Brahma and others. He that takes on a body and soul, is endowed with consciousness. He who is beyond Prakriti; who is all pervading; and who is the attribute-less Brahma; is called Paramatma.

Vatsey! Whatever you wanted to know, I have told you, according to the Shastras. This knowledge is most precious. Now you may return to your home.

Savitri said – Prabho! You are the ocean of knowledge. How can I leave this husband, who is dearer than life; and how can I leave Your vicinity? Where will I go? Whatever I ask, please keep giving me the answers. Which are the different yonis that a person merits by his karmas. O Most Revered One! Which action merits heaven and which actions merit hell. What must he do to attain mukti; and what is the causal for bhakti in a gurudev. Which action gives the fruit of making one a yogi and which makes him a rogi (sick man). What causes longevity and what causes short life span. By which action does

man gain happiness; and which action gives sorrow. What karmas cause a person to lose his limbs; lose one eye; become deaf; blind; crippled; become insane; mad; and extremely greedy; and a thief. And, what are those actions which give siddhis; proximity to God; and mukti. Which actions make a person realised; and which make him a tapasvi. What actions have the effect of making one a Brahmin, and what actions make him a tapasvi. Which actions bear the fruit of heaven. Which actions give him a place in Vaikunth. Go-lok is the best of all lokas. Which actions merit a place in Go-lok. How many kinds of hell are there. How many do they number. Who is sent to which hell, and what is the time he must spend there. What karmas cause disease. Bhagwan! Please be compassionate and give answers to all my questions.

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Chapter 9 - Episode 29

29 Dharmraj answers Savitri. Gives her a boon.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Dharmraj was greatly amazed at the questions asked by Savitri. He laughed and settled down to tell her about karmas, and their fruits.

Dharmraj said – Vatsey! You are but a very young girl, and yet you have more wisdom and knowledge than yogis and other learned men. Daughter! Your birth was due to a blessing from Devi Savitri. You are Her creation. Your father performed tapasya to receive this boon of a daughter. In the same way that the goddesses enjoy sowbhagyawati status – Lakshmi with Bhagwan Vishnu; Bhavani with Bhagwan Shankar; Aditi with Kashyap; Ahalya with Gautam; Shachi with Indra; Rohini with Chandrama; Rati with Kamdev; Swaha with Agni; Swadha with the ancestors; Sangya with Surya; Varunani with Varun; Dakshina with Yagya; Prithvi with Varaha; and Sowbhagyawati with Devsena Kartikeya -- I bless you that you also become the beloved of Satyavaan. This is my boon to you. Mahabhage! In addition to this, if there is something you desire with all your heart, tell me. I am prepared to grant it to you.

Savitri said - Mahabhag! May I become the mother of one hundred sons of Satyavaan This is my dearest wish. Also, may my father beget hundred sons; may my father-in-law regain his lost sight, and get back his kingdom. I also desire to live a long time with Satyavaan, and finally go to the abode of Shri Hari. Be pleased to grant me all these boons.

Prabho! I am very eager to know about the consequences of actions, and how to become free from worldly bonds.

Dharmraj said – Mahasadhavi! All your desires will be fulfilled. Now I will tell you about karmas and fruits. Listen carefully.

Due to good and bad deeds, a person gets birth in Bharatvarsh. This is punya-kshetra (holy place). O Virtuous wife! Devatas, Daityas, Danavas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas and Humans - they all come under the rule of karma phal - "fruits of action". Only Pashus (animals under the pasha of God) are not answerable for their actions. According to actions a person takes birth in any of these yonis. The reward and punishment for good and bad deeds is heaven and hell. According to the deeds of the previous life, they get good or bad fruits. Good deeds take one to heaven, and bad deeds cause one to roam in hell. When the karmas cease – non-doer – then bhakti is born in the heart. Sadhavi! Bhakti is of two kinds – Nirguna (attributeless), and the other is that which one has for Mayavishisht, Brahmaswaroopini Bhagawati Prakriti. The bad deeds of a previous life, make one a sick person, and good deeds make him healthy. Also, according to the actions, he either enjoys long life or dies young; is either happy or sad; is blind or crippled. Virtuous deeds of a previous life give siddhis in the next.

Devi! Now listen to something very important. This rare and precious knowledge is given in the Puranas and Shastras. This should not be told to any and every one. For all the classes it is extremely difficult to merit a birth in Bharatvarsh. Of all the classes of people, a Brahmin is the highest. He is the one who has felt the Brahma on his central nervous system. He is the one who has reverence and veneration for Brahma. Brahmins are of two kinds – Sakami (actions done for reward) and Nish-kami (free from any wish). The Sakami Brahmin who performs actions for rewards, gets fame, honour and glory on this earth. The Nish-kami Brahmin becomes a bhakta of the Supreme God. The Sakami becomes involved in enjoying the fruits. The Nish-kami,

untouched by obstacles or badhas, spends all his time in devotion and singing praises of God.

Sadhavi! Such a Brahmin renounces his body and becomes entitled to a place at the Lotus Feet of God. Such a Nishkaami (non-doer) does not come under the cycle of birth and rebirth. The two-armed Bhagwan Shri Krishna is Poornabrahma Parameshwar. Those who worship Him, finally assume a divine body and go to Go-lok. The Sakami person, goes to Vaishnav Lok for the time due to him; and then takes a rebirth in Bharatvarsh, in the family of realised souls. Gradually they become Nish-kaam, and by My grace they attain Nirmal Bhakti. One thing is certain, that many Sakaam Brahmins and Vaishnavs, do not succeed in getting Nirmal Vidya. Sadhavi! Those who reside in holy places, and are constantly in tapasya, they go to Brahmalok. Then again, they take birth in Bharatvarsh. Those who live in other places, and still do their duty to ascend spiritually, they go to Satya Lok after death. Then they get reborn in Bharatvarsh. The sun worshippers go to Surya Lok and then return to Bharatvarsh. Those holy souls who worship Moolprakriti Bhagawati Jagaddamba, they go to the most holy Manidweep. They get released from the cycle of birth and rebirth. Those who worship Shiv, Shakti, and Ganapati, go to the abode of the gods. Then they take a rebirth in Bharatvarsh.

Sadhavi! Those brahmins who worship the other gods, get sent to other divine lokas, and when their tenure ends, they take birth in Bharatvarsh. Those who worship Bhagwan Shri Hari, by their unswerving devotion and Nishkaam (non-doer) performance, get a place in the abode of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Those who do not live by the Dharmas, such irreligious and immoral beings, will most certainly go to hell. In all the four classes, those who are resolved in their spiritual ascent, and perform good actions, get good fruits as rewards. Those who do not perform religious duties and good deeds will definitely go to hell;

and when they take a rebirth, it is never in Bharatvarsh. Therefore it is extremely important for all four classes of human beings to live a dharmic life.

Dharmic Brahmins who give their daughters in marriage to dharmic young men, merit as fruits, entry into Chandralok. Sadhavi! If the girl is adorned and given away as a gift, then the fruit is doubled. If they perform this action as a non-doer then they reach the Param-dham of Bhagwan Shri Vishnu. Generous and pious men, who give to Brahmins gifts of milk, silver, gold, clothes, ghee, fruits and water, go straight to Chandralok. They can live there happily for a period of one manavantar. By virtue of their charitable act, they get this fruit. Pativratey! Those who give holy Brahmins gifts of cows, gold, copper and other valuable items, go to Suryalok. They become pure and can live in Suryalok for a long time. He who gives to Brahmins, gifts of land and other costly things, goes to the pure and holy abode of Bhagwan Shri Vishnu, and stays there for a long time. Those who donate houses to Brahmins, also gain entry into Vishnulok and stay there for the same number of years as there are grains of sand in the building. The man who does acts of charity to please a particular deity; when he dies he goes to the abode of that God. Instead of giving charity in his house, if a person goes and gives charity at a palace, he gets four times the reward; in a teerth sthan (holy place) he gets hundred times; and from any other holy place he gets double the reward – that is the promise of Brahmadeva.

He who donates a lake with the purpose of getting released from his sins; goes to Janlok (one of the seven divisions of the universe) for as many years as there are dust particles. He who donates a well, gets ten times the reward. The prescribed measurements of a lake are four thousand dhanush (one dhanush is four hands long), and the same width. Anything less than this is called a vaapi (tank).

The person who gives his daughter in marriage to a virtuous and dharmic man, merits the rewards of donating ten tanks. If he adorns his daughter with ornaments, then the fruits get doubled. He who undertakes the repairs of a lake, gets the same merits as one who donates it. The person who cleans and dredges a tank gets the same fruit as one who donates it. O Virtuous One! The man who plants a Peepul sapling (holy fig tree), and nurtures it into a tree, goes to Vishnulok for thousands of years. The person who donates a garden for all to use, goes to Dhruvlok for ten thousand years. One who donates a conveyance to please Vishnu, goes to Vishnulok for one manavantar. If the vehicle is decorated and spacious then the reward is fourfold. He who donates a palanquin gets half of the fruits. He who donates a temple to please Bhagwan Shri Hari, goes to Vishnulok for a very long time. He who builds a road up to Raj Bhavan (the royal palace) merits a place in Indralok for a thousand years. The fruits are the sae for offering gifts to Brahmins, and to the gods. Only when good deeds are performed in the previous life, one gets the fruit in the present life. If no good deeds were done, how can any fruits result. The man who does punyas enjoys the fruit, and then again takes birth in Bharatvarsh. He has the good fortune to be born in a Brahmin family. A good Brahmin also gets reborn in a Brahmin family. This same rule applies to Kshatriyas and Vaishyas also. By their pious works they merit a birth in a Brahmin family. This can be heard in the Shrutis. No matter how much time elapses, a person has to receive or make payment for his actions. Time does not decrease the calculation. With the help of the gods and the holy places of pilgrimage, a person can cleanse himself.

Sadhavi! Whatever you have asked, I have explained. Now what else to you wish to know.

Chapter 9 - Episodes 30-31

30-31 Further questions from Savitri, and answers from Dharmraj.

Savitri said – Dharmraj! Please tell me the various actions which send a person to heaven or to some other Lokas.

Dharmraj said – Pativratey! He who gives gifts of grains to a god or a Brahmin, he merits as to Shiva-lok and enjoys his stay there for that many years as there are grains in the gift. There is no greater gift of charity than anna-daan, and there will never be in the future. There is no formality of time, place or procedure for this.

Sadhavi! If one gives an aasan (throne) as a gift to a god or a brahmin, he merits a place in Vishnulok for thousands of years. The one who gives milch cows as gifts to Brahmins, goes to Go-lok for as many years as the cow has pores in its skin. This Go-daan, if done on a festival day gives four times the reward; in a place of pilgrimage, hundred fold reward; and in the holy Narayan kshetra, it gives countless rewards. A man of Bharatvarsh, if he donates with great devotion, cows to a Brahmin, he becomes entitled to a place in Chandralok. He who presents a clean, white umbrella to a Brahmin goes to Varunlok for thousands of years. He who gives clothes to a Brahmin in distress, goes to Vayulok for ten thousand years. If one gives a shalgram and clothes to a Brahmin, he goes to Vaikunth for a very long time. He who gives a silken shaiyya (couch) to a Brahmin, goes to Chandralok for many, many years. He who offers lamps to the gods and Brahmins, shares the throne of Indra for as long as Indra lives. The Bharatvarshi who presents a horse to a Brahmin, enjoys a place in Varunlok; also, he who gives a palanquin. He who gifts a

garden to a Brahmin gets a place in Vayulok. The one who gives to a Brahmin, a fan and a white whisk, is honoured in Vayulok. The person who gives away wealth and jewels, is blessed with wisdom and long life. The giver and the receiver, both go to Vaikunth lok.

He who is born in Bharatvarsh and continuously sings praises of Bhagwan Shri Hari, the very sight of that person makes death run away. The person who hosts the Dolotsav (a festival of Swinging observed on the full moon day of Phalgun) gets mukti. The same fruit is merited by celebrating Uttara Phalguni. The Bharatvarshi who gives til (sesame seeds) to Brahmins, receives honour in Shiv Dham. If the til is put into a copper vessel and offered, then the fruit is doubled, and he takes birth in a spiritually evolved family. He who gives his chaste daughter in marriage, duly decorated with ornaments and clothes, to a Brahmin, he goes to Chandralok for many years. Later he goes to Gandharvalok and enjoys great happiness. Then in every birth, for a thousand births, he gets for a wife, a chaste, pleasing, obedient and sweet voiced woman. The one who gives a Brahmin sweet, ripe fruits goes to Indralok. Then he takes birth in a spiritually evolved family and has obedient sons. The one who gives fruit-bearing trees as gifts, receives thousand times these merits. He lives in heaven for many years, and then takes birth in Bharatvarsh.

The one who lives in Bharatvarsh, and gives as gifts to Brahmins, big houses with rich furnishings, lives for many years in heaven, among the gods. Then he takes birth in a highly evolved spiritual family and becomes wealthy. The punyatma Bharatvarshi who gives green fields full of crops to brahmins, most definitely gains a place in Vaikunth. So also the person who gives a cow-shed full of cows; or a village; to Brahmins, also goes to Vaikunth. The man who owns faithful servants, flourishing ripe fields with lakes full of water; and gardens full of fruit-bearing trees and flowering plants and creepers --- and

then gives them all away to Brahmins, gets a place in Kailash for many years. Then he takes birth in Bharatvarsh and becomes a king. He rules over lakhs of towns and villages. There is no doubt in this. All the wealth and honour, and auspiciousness surround him. One who gives one hundred flourishing or medium villages, complete with lakes, ponds and trees, goes to Vaikunth. Then he presides over Swarglok in royal surroundings like Indra . Then for ten million births he comes as an emperor on Prithvi. The one who surrenders all his possessions to Brahmins, gets these blessings fourfold. There is no doubt in this Those who give Jambudweep (one of the seven divisions of the Universe) to Brahmins; those who live in holy places of pilgrimage; those who are accomplished in the siddhis; and all those who worship Bhagawati Jagaddamba; they get release and never have to take birth again. They witness the coming and going of countless Brahmas but they remain permanently in Manidweep in the vicinity of Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

Those who worship Bhagawati Jagaddamba with Her mantras, when they renounce their human body, they assume a divine form which is majestic and glorious, and beyond birth, death, old age and disease. They spend all their days in Manidweep in the service of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. The gods, the siddhas and the whole world gets destroyed according to Time; but Devi bhaktas are eternal. Nothing can touch them.

The person who offers Tulsi to Shri Hari during the month of Kartik, goes to the abode of the Lord for three yugas. Then he takes birth in a spiritually evolved family, and remains a devotee of Bhagwan Shri Hari. He lives in Bharatvarsh and is counted among the highly disciplined who have conquered their senses. The person who bathes in the waters of the Ganga before sunrise can enjoy the vibrations in the temple of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Then he takes birth in a highly evolved family and spends his days praising Shri Hari by chanting

mantras. Then he renounces his human body and goes to Bhagwandham and does not take a birth again. He takes on a divine body and spends all his time in the service of the Lord.

The person who always bathes in the Ganga is considered as holy as the Sun. At every step he gets the blessings of ashwamedha yagya. The earth gets purified by the dust of his feet. He enjoys a place in Vaikunth and is considered released from the bondage of birth and rebirth. He is held in high respect by all tapasvis. The man of Bharatvarsh who donates fragrant water, gets entry into Kailash for many days Then he takes birth in Bharatvarsh and becomes a Shiv bhakt and a scholar of the Vedas and scriptures. The one who gives Satoo (channa powder) to brahmins in the month of Vaishakh gains entry into the temple of Shiva. The one who lives in Bharatvarsh and observes the fast of Krishna-janmashtami (birth of Shri Krishna) gets freed from the sins of a hundred lifetimes. There is no doubt in this. He stays in Vaikunth for many years. Then he takes birth in Bharatvarsh and becomes a devotee of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. In this same Bharatvarsh, the one who observes Shivratri, goes to Shivlok for a very long time. The one who worships Bhagwan Shankar by offering bilva-patra lives in Kailash for many yugas. Then he takes birth in Bharatvarsh and becomes a devotee of Bhagwan Shiv. He gets wisdom, wealth, sons, faithful servants, and land.

The one who worships Shankar during the month of Chaitra and Magh, and who holds a cane and dances in the name of the Lord – whether for a full month, a half month, ten days, one week, two days or even one day – gains entry into the abode of Bhagwan Shiv.

Sadhvi! The one who worships Bhagawati in Sharadkaal (autumn); and celebrates by singing, dancing, music and other festivities – that person goes

straight to Shivlok. Then he takes birth in Bharatvarsh and becomes king of kings. He gets blessed with Nirmal Buddhi, enormous wealth, good sons and grandsons, elephants, horses and other conveyances. There is no doubt in this. The one who lives in the holy land of Bharatvarsh and performs Mahalaxmi Puja during Shukla-ashtami (bright half of a lunar month); who offers sixteen kinds of precious ingredients, he becomes entitled to live in Go-lok.

In Bharatvarsh it is the custom to celebrate Raasmandal during Kartik-purnima. On that day stone images of Shree Radha and Shri Krishna are anointed with sixteen kinds of fragrant ingredients and worshipped. The one who hosts this puja goes to Go-lok and becomes a great bhakta of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. He assumes the form of Shri Krishna and becomes his foremost courtier. He conquers death, and never takes a rebirth.

The man who observes the fast of Shukla and Krishna paksh (bright and dark fortnights) Ekadashi, he gets entitled to stay in Vaikunth. Then he takes birth in Bharatvarsh and becomes a devotee of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, and his devotion grows and grows. After he renounces his body, he goes to Go-lok, assumes a form of Shri Krishna, and becomes a courtier. He does not return to earth. The one who performs puja to Indra on the Dwadashi day of Shuklapaksh (twelfth day of the bright fortnight) in the month of Bhadrapad received honour and respect. The one who worships the Sun on a Sunday of Sankranti on the seventh day of the bright fortnight, and eats the sacrificial food; he gets a place in the abode of Surya. Then he takes birth in Bharatvarsh as a wealthy man, free from all illness and disease. The one who does puja to goddess Savitri on the Krishna Chaturdashi (fourteenth day of the dark fortnight in the month of Jyesht), he goes to Brahmalok. Then he takes birth as a wealthy and famous man. He also has a long life, is full of wisdom,

and is glorious. During the month of Magh (eleventh month) on the fifth day of the bright fortnight, he who performs a puja complete with sixteen methods of worship, to Bhagawati Saraswati, he is assured of a place in Manidweep. He who lives in Bharatvarsh, and regularly makes gifts of cows and gold to Brahmins; he enjoys the blessings of Vaikunth. The one who lives in Bharatvarsh and gives sweets to Brahmins, goes to Vishnulok. The Bharatvasi who worships Bhagwan Shri Hari and makes others also worship Him, he is entitled to stay in Vaikunth for one full yuga. If the holy names of the lord are uttered in the sacred Narayan kshetra, then the fruits are increased to crores of times. In the sacred place dedicated to Narayan if one utters the holy names of Bhagwan Shri Hari one crore times, then he gets released from all his sins and gets mukti. This is the absolute truth. He never takes another birth, and lives forever in Vaikunth. He assumes a Divine form. He can never fall. His nature becomes bhakti.

The one who makes an earthen image of the Shivaling and worships it every day of his life, he goes to the abode of Bhagwan Shiv, and lives in Shivlok for a very long time. Then he takes birth in Bharatvarsh, and decorates a royal throne. He who daily worships the Shalgram with panchamrit and drinks it, goes to Vaikunth for a long time. He attains the bhakti which is unavailable to the common man. He gets freed from the cycle of rebirth. The one who does tapasya, and observes all the renunciations gets the fruit of living in Vaikunth. He does not take a birth again. The one who bathes in all the holy places, and does perambulation of Prithvi, attains Nirvana. He does not take birth again. The one who lives in the holy land of Bharat and performs Ashwamedha yagya is entitled to sit on half of Indra's throne. The one who performs Rajsuya yagya, gets four times this fruit.

Of all the yagyas, the paramount one is yagya of Bhagawati. From the beginning of time Brahma and Vishnu have been worshipping the Devi. Before killing Tripurasur, the great Bhagwan Shankar prayed to the Devi for Shakti. O Sundari! Among all the Devi yagyas, the yagya to Devi Bhuvaneshwari is the most important. There is none equal to it in all the three lokas. O Faithful One! I happened a long time ago. There was a difference of opinion between Daksh Prajapati and Bhagwan Shankar. In that situation Daksh Prajapati offered puja and worshipped Bhagawati Jagaddamba The Brahmins, in their fury, pronounced a curse upon Nandi. In retaliation Bhagwan Shankar demolished the yagya of Daksh. Then Daksh started the Devi Yagya, and got completely involved into it. The yagya of Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari has already been performed in the past by Dharam, Kashyap, Seshnag, Kardam Muni, Swayambhuv Manu, his son Priyavrat, Shiv, Sanatkumar, Kapil and Dhruv. The one who does this Devi Yagya, gets the fruits of thousands of Rajsuya yagyas. A Devi bhakt lives for more than a hundred years, and in the end gets moksha. There is no doubt in this.

Bhamini! Just as Vishnu is the principal god; Narad the most superior of Vaishnavs; of all the Shastras the Vedas; of all the castes the Brahmins, the best of all teerth sthanas the Ganga; among the punyatmas Shiva; among austerities Ekadasha; out of all flowers, Tulsi; among the Nakshatras the Moon; among the birds Garud; the most superior among women Mool Prakriti Bhagawati Radha, Saraswati and Vasundhara; among all the senses, the Mind; of all the Prajapatis Brahma; the grandest in a kingdom a king; among all gardens the best is Brindavan; among all continents the most auspicious Bharatvarsh; among the glorious and splendid Lakshmi; among the learned Saraswati; among pativratas (faithful wives) Bhagawati Durga; and sowbhagyawati among Shri Krishna's wives, Shree Radha; in the same way the most superior of all yagyas is the Devi Yagya. After bathing in all the holy

places, after performing all yagyas, after observing all fasts and austerities; after reading all the Vedas, and after perambulation of Prithvi; the fruits that one gets is this – that one gets the privilege of performing Devi Yagya and attains moksha. In all the Purans, in all the Vedas, and in historical scriptures, the worship of Charan Kamal, (Lotus Feet) of Bhagawati Jagaddamba is considered supremely paramount. Description of the great goddess, meditation upon Her Lotus Feet; uttering of Her Holy Names and Divine qualities; singing of Stotras; obeisance; reciting of mantras; sipping of charan-amrit, partaking of Prasad; should be the constant occupation of the universe. Sadhavi! This is the Pure Desire.

Vatsay! Now you meditate on, and worship the Mool Prakriti Nirgun Parabrahma. I will give you back your husband. Take him home and live happily. I have just told you all the fruits that one receives from auspicious actions This is the highest Truth, all encompassing; and the giver of Tattwagyan (Knowledge of the Essences).

Bhagwan Narayan says - Narad! Hearing all this from Dharmraj, Savitri's eyes filled with tears of joy and gratitude. She was overwhelmed with vibrations She spokel

Savitri said – Dharmraj! O Foremost Knower of the Vedas! I am ignorant. Please tell me the procedure for worshipping Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. Bhagwan! You have told me the rewards that human beings get for their good and auspicious deeds. Now please tell me what befalls those who commit evil deeds.

Brahman! Sati Savitri offered obeisance to Dharmraj, and began to sing Stutis. Savitri said – It happened in ancient times that Mahabhag Surya performed

tapasya in Pushkar and worshipped Dharmraj. Then Dharm offered himself as a son to Surya – I worship that Dharm. The one who moves among the spirits, who is the witness; and who grants shaman (forgiveness) – I worship that Bhagwan Shaman. The one who causes the end of living things on earth – I worship that Bhagwan Antak. I offer obeisance to that Bhagwan Dandadhar who uses the Pole of Chastisement to correct humanbeings and maintain the laws that he makes. I offer obeisance to that Bhagwan Kaal who grants Time to all living things, and who is unfathomable. I worship that Bhagwan Yama who computes the karmaphal of all beings. I offer obeisance to Punyamitra; that form of Bhagwan Dharmraj; who enjoys his own atma; who is complete knowledge; who is a friend for holy souls and who is doom for sinners. I offer pranaams to Bhagwan Dharmraj in his form of Ish who was born from Brahma and who always glows with the lustre and effulgence of Brahma.

Mune! This Savitri offered pranaams to Dharmraj. Then Dharmraj taught her the mantra of Bhagawati Moolprakriti. Whoever gets up early in the morning and recites Yama Ashtak, he gets rid of the fear of Yamraj, and he gets liberated from his sins. Even if a great sinner does this Yama Ashtak, he is cleansed by the strategy of Dharmraj.

Chapter 9 - Episodes 32-35

32-35 Description of hell. Enumeration of sins.

Bhagwan Narayan says - Narad! Ravinandan Dharmraj taught Savitri the Mahamantra of Moolprakriti Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, and the protocol and procedure for worship. Then he began to enumerate the sins and their consequences.

Dharmraj said – Pativratey! A man can never go to hell as a result of good actions. The causes for going to hell are evil and inauspicious deeds. I will describe them to you. Listen! The different kinds of heaven are described in the Purans, and according to his good deeds, a person is sent to any of them. No being desires to go to hell. But their wicked actions become the cause of taking them to hell. There are various pits in hell. Their purpose is to carry out punishments. These pits are fearful and horrible. There are innumerable pits, of which eighty-six are most frightening. They are Vanhikund, Tatpkund, huge Kshaarkund, Vitkund, Mootrakund, Shleshmakund, venomous Garkund, Dooshikakund, Vasakund, Shukrakund, Aasrikkund, Ashrukund, Gatramalkund, Karnakund, Mavitkund, Maaskund, Nakrakund, Lomkund, Keshkund, Ashtikund, Tamrakund, anguish filled Lohkund, Charmakund, Taptasurakind, Teekshankantak-kund, the expansive Vishkund, Tailpratapt-kund, Kundkund, Krimikund, Puyakund, Sarpakund, Mashakkund, Danshkund, the poisonous Garalkund. O You who observe all the holy vows! There is a kund full of ferocious animals with sword like teeth, Sharkund, Shoolkund, Khadgakund, Golkund, Nakrakund, Kaakkunddd, Manthaankund Beejkund, Vajrakund, Pashaankund, Lalakund, Masikund, Churnakund, Chakrakund, Vakrakund, Karmakund, the intolerable Jwalakund, Bhasmakund, Dagdkund, Taptsuchikund, Asipatrakund, Kshurdharkund, Suchimukhkund,

Nakramukhkund, Gokamukhkund, Gajdanshkund, Gomukhkund, Kumbhipak, Kaalsutra, Matsyod, Krimikund, Panshubhojya, Pashvesht, Shoolproty, Prakampan, Ulkamukh, Andhkup, Vedhan and Tandan, Jwalrandhra, Dehachurn, Dalan, Shoshanak, Shoorpajwalamukh, Dhumaandh, and Naagveshtan kund.

Savitri! All these are for giving punishment for sins. Ten lakh attendants are in charge, and each carries a pole, sword and mace. They are always angry, and show no mercy. No one can stop them or put obstacles in their way. Their eyes are the colour of copper. They are endowed with yoga, and are fearless warriors. At the time of death, they are visible to the sinner. They do not go near those who worship Devi, Surya and Ganapati, nor do they go near the virtuous and punya atmas. They are never seen by those who live a dharmic life, those who have a large and loving heart, those who are free from worldly attachments, and those who have seen God in their dreams.

Sadhavi! I have named the different kinds of hell. Now I will tell you which sins merit which hell. Listen! Those punya atmas, yogis, siddhis, vratis, tapasvis and brahmacharis (detached souls) who worship Bhagwan Shri Hari, never go to hell. This is the absolute truth.

The strong man who gets into ego and aggresses his relations and friends, he goes to the fiery hell called Agnikund, and suffers for as many years as he has pores in his body. Then he takes birth three times, in Pashu yoni (animal class).

The foolish man who refuses to give food and water to tired and hungry Brahmins who come to his house, goes to Taptkund (boiling water). After that he takes birth seven times in Pakshi yoni (bird class).

The one who washes his clothes in soda on Sundays, Sankranti, Amavasya or Shraddh days, goes to Ksharkund (pit of soda and corrosive substances).

The degenerate and contemptible man who insults, and does not respect Moolprakriti Bhagawati Jagaddamba; the Vedas, Shastras, Purans; Brahma; Vishnu; Shiva; Gauri; Saraswati and other gods, goes into a pit of endless sufferings. There is no pit which is worse than this one. After suffering there for ages, they get birth in the reptile class as snakes.

He who snatches the livelihood of another, goes into a hell called Vitkund (excreta). Then he gets birth as a worm in the dung heap.

The one who usurps the pond of another, or answers nature's call in the pond, goes to a hell filled with urine. He later takes birth as an ox.

The one who selfishly consumes all the sweets of Prasad, goes to a pit filled with phlegm. Then he roams the earth as a goblin.

The one who does not provide food for mother, father, guru, wife, sons, daughters, and orphans, goes to a hell called Garal (poison). Then he goes to the Bhoot yoni.

The inhospitable man who glares with anger at guests who come to his house; the water and oblations offered by him are unacceptable to the ancestors as well as the gods.

The one who commits brahma hatya or its equivalent, goes to a hell called Dooshikakund (corrupted and contaminated substances). Then after spending time in Bhoot yoni, he gets reprieve.

After giving a gift to a Brahmin, if one takes it back and gives it to another, then he goes to Vasakund (grease and marrow). Then for seven births he lives as a chameleon.

A man or woman, having illicit relations with another, goes to Shukrakund (semen). Then he is born as a worm. After that he gets purified.

The one who sheds the blood of his guru, or of a Brahmin, goes to Aasrikkund (surgical). There he has to drink blood. Then for seven births he lives as a tiger. After that he gets a human birth.

The one who experiences grief and tears of melancholia, when he sees bhaktas singing the praises of Bhagawati; or who ridicules and laughs when songs of praise are sung to Bhagwan Shri Krishna, he goes for one hundred years to a hell called Ashrukund (tears). After that he takes birth three times in Chandal-yoni. Then he becomes eligible for human birth.

A man who deceives his friend goes to a hell called Gaatramal kund (body secretions). Then he takes birth three times as a donkey.

The one who ridicules or laughs at a deaf person, goes to a hell called Karnvit (wax from the ears). Then he is born into poverty and wretchedness. He is also born deaf.

For personal gain, and for accumulating wealth, if one kills living things, he goes to a hell called Majja-kund (marrow). After this he is born as a rabbit. Then he takes birth seven times as a fish; three births as a pig; and seven births as a cock. Then according to his deeds he gets a birth as a deer. Only after that he gets a human birth.

The one who sells his own daughter – that greedy and despicable man goes to a hell called Maans-kund (flesh). My attendants beat him with rods. He has to bear loads of flesh and blood on his head. Later he is born as a worm in the dirtiest places. He takes birth seven times as an executioner. Then three births as a pig; and seven births as a fowl. Then he takes birth as a frog, a leech and a crow. Only then he gets purified to take a human birth again.

The one who has a tonsure (head shave) done during shraddh, fasts or other occasions of austerity, is considered unclean and impure for any ceremonies. He goes to a pit called Nakh kund (claws and nails and talons).

The one who goes to a teerth called Vishnupadh, and does not offer obsequies for his forefathers, goes to a hell called Asthikund (ashes). In his next birth he is born lame. He suffers great misfortune and ill luck.

The man who demands relations with his pregnant wife, goes to a burning hell called Tamra kund (molten copper).

He who touches hides and skins, and then tries to do puja without washing and bathing, goes to a hell called Charmkund (hide and skin).

The Brahmin who goes uninvited to a Shudra's house and eats food, goes to a hell called Taptsur (boiling water).

The one who uses harsh and cruel language and causes emotional upsetting, goes to a hell called Teekshan kantak (sharp thorns and needles). My attendants beat him with rods.

The heartless man who gives poison and kills another, suffers for a thousand years in a hell called Vishkund (poison). Then for seven births he becomes an

executioner and for seven births he suffers from leprosy. After that he is cleansed.

The one who is fortunate to be born in the holy land of Bharatvarsh, who is a farmer and beats the bulls, and makes his servant kill the bull, he goes to a pit called Tapt-tail (boiling oil). Then he takes birth as a bull, for as many years as there are pores on the skin of the bull.

The cruel and merciless man who kills a living being with a spear or a red hot iron, goes for many yugas to a hell called Kunth kund (spears and daggers). Then he takes birth as a human and constantly suffers stomach problems.

The one who eats before offering the food to his deity, he goes to a hell called Krimi kund (worms). Then he is born as a Mlecch (of low birth with inclination to sin) for three births.

He who kills a snake goes to Sarpkund (serpents). Then he takes a human birth with a very short life span. He suffers from eczema and other skin ailments.

He who punishes an innocent person or a Brahmin, goes to a hell called Vajradanshtra which is full of biting and stinging insects. Then he is born seven times as a pig, and three times as a crow.

The avaricious man who troubles his subjects for the sake of money, goes to a hell called Vrikshik kund. Then for seven births he is born as a scorpion. After that he is born as a human, but without limbs, and full of disease.

The Brahmin who becomes very busy doing the work of others, and neglects his sandhya and other religious activities, goes to the hell called Shar, Shool and Khadga. His body is constantly pierced by arrows, spears and darts.

The proud man blinded by power and ego, who throws people into dark dungeons and kills them, is thrown into a hell called Golkund. That is a most fearful hell. It is dark and full of boiling water. Sharp fanged insects keep biting him. He suffers horrible pangs. Then when he gets a human birth, he comes as a slave of his subjects.

Those who kill marine animals for sport or profit, go to a hell called Nakrakund (alligators and crocodiles).

He who has the good fortune to be born in Bharatvarsh – if he casts adulterous eyes on women and their bodies, goes to a hell called Kaak kund (crows).

The dull and ignorant person who steals gold from temples and Brahmins, is thrown into a hell called Manthaan kund. There my attendants blindfold him and beat him with rods. After that for three births he is born blind, and for seven births a wretched and unfortunate human being.

Devi! Those who steal iron and copper go to a hell called Beejkund (germs).

After the privilege of being born in Bharatvarsh if a man steals idols and articles of worship, he goes to a hell called Vajrakund, and his body is pierced with sharp spears.

He who steals from gods and Brahmins items like silver and gold; their dairy items like milk and curds; their pet parrots; goes to a hell called Taptashaan (boiling water). Then for three births he comes as an earthworm; then for

three births as a tortoise. Then for three births he is afflicted with leucoderma; one birth leprosy. Then he is born as a bird, and then as a human being with a short life span. He suffers continuously from diseases of the blood and colic in the abdomen.

He who steals from the gods and the Brahmins – brass, bell-metal, and bronze articles, goes to a hell called Teekshan Paashankund (sharp stones and flint), and lives there for as many years as he has pores in his skin.

The one who eats food from a person who earns money from prostitution, goes to a hell called Lalakund (sputum). Then he takes human birth, but always suffers from eye diseases, colic and rheumatism.

Sadhavi! He who steals from the gods or Brahmins – their fields filled with crops, betel leaves, seat or couch, goes to a hell called Churn-kund (Powdered and pulverised substances).

The one who steals from a brahmin – his chakra or his wealth goes to a hell called Chakra kund. He is beaten with rods.

The one who is cruel to cows and Brahmins, goes for a very long time to a hell called Vakrakund. When he takes birth his body is crooked, and he is limbless for seven births. He is always surrounded by misfortune.

The one who steals ghee and oil is thrown into a hell called Jwalakund and then into Bhasma kund.

The person who steals fragrant oils, amla and other perfumed substances, burns day and night in a hell called Dagdhkund (scorching heat).

Sadhavi! The powerful person who uses fraud and deception to cheat one out of his ancestral property, or even kills him and snatches away the inherited property, is thrown into a hell called Taptsuchi (burning). His body burns continuously, as if immersed in boiling oil, but the body does not get destroyed. Then he is born as a worm in the sewage. Then he is born as an unfortunate man without any land or property.

Sadhavi! He who is extremely cruel and merciless, and kills with his sword for the sake of wealth goes to a hell called Asipatra (cutting edge of a sword). My attendants keep cutting his limbs with sharp swords. When he cries out in hunger, they beat him again and again. Then for seven births he is born as a carnivorous animal like boar, cock, jackal, lion and tiger. Then for three births he is born as a wolf, and for seven births a frog. Then he takes birth in Bharatvarsh as a buffalo-bull.

O Faithful One! The one who commits arson (sets fire) in villages and cities, merits a hell called Kshurdhar (keen, sharp point). He suffers there for three yugas, and my yamdoots keep slashing and cutting his body. Then he enters the strata of Prets (evil spirits) and roams about with fire coming out of his mouth. Then for seven births he is born as a scavenger feeding on sewage; pigeon; a sufferer of colic and rheumatism and leprosy.

The one who criticises others; who enjoys listening to gossip about others; and who speaks against gods and Brahmins, he gets thrown into a hell called Soochimukh (needle) for three yugas. There all his limbs are pierced with needles. Then for seven births he roams about as a scorpion, snake and fiery insect.

The one who breaks a hole and enters a household and commits burglary; and who steals cows, goats and sheep, goes to a hell called Gokhamukh (thorns), and gets beaten up by my attendants for three yugas.

The ordinary thief goes to a hell called Nakramukh (sting), and there he suffers beating from my attendants. Then he gets cleansed.

The one who kills elephants, horses and cows; and who cuts down trees – this most sinful man goes to a hell called Gajjdansh (tusk) for a very long time. My attendants beat him with the same elephant tusks. Then for three births each, he comes as an elephant, a horse, a cow and a mlecch (one who has sinful tendencies).

The one who disturbs a thirsty cow, and prevents it from drinking water, he goes to a hell called Go-mukh. This is full of boiling water and all kinds of insects and worms. He burns there continuously. Then he takes a human birth full of misfortune and chronic ailments.

He who misinterprets the shastras to suit his convenience, and murders cows, Brahmins, women, beggars and pregnant women; and who has relations with women of low morals – that despicable man goes to a hell called Kumbhipak (crocodiles and venomous snakes). My attendants continuously beat him to shreds. He keeps falling into different pits containing blazing fire; thorns; boiling oil; red hot iron and molten copper. Then he takes birth as a pig, vulture, and crow, and snake. Then he is born as a worm in sewage; an ox; and a human with leprosy. Misfortune never leaves him.

Sadhavi! The one who differentiates between Shri Krishna and His image; other gods and their forms; Shiva and Shivalingam; and Surya and Suryakant mani (gemstone) is guilty of the crime equivalent to Brahma-hatya (murder of

a Brahmin). The same crime is attributed to one who differentiates between Guru, Isht Devata and mother. Similarly the one who differentiates between Vishnu-bhaktas and other Deva-bhaktas; and between Brahmins and brahmanetras (shalgram) is also guilty of brahma-hatya. The water in which a Brahmin's feet are washed, and the water in which a shalgram is washed, are both holy. The one who differentiates is guilty of brahma-hatya. The one who differentiates between the Naivedya of Bhagwan Shiva and Bhagwan Shri Hari, is also guilty of brahma-hatya.

The all-encompassing Bhagwan Shri Krishna is Sarveshwar-Ishwar. He is the causal of all causes. He is the Almighty, Supreme Being who pervades the internal parts of the Universe (Antaryami), and is worshipped by all. He has innumerable forms which are Maya-may (illusive). Verily He is Nirgun Brahma. The one who differentiates between Him and Bhagwan Shankar, commits the same sin as one who does brahma-hatya. The one who worships Bhagawati, but is hostile and indifferent to Her Shastras, is also guilty of the crime of Brahma-hatya. The one who renounces the pujas prescribed in the Vedas, and performs unholy deeds, is guilty of brahma-hatya. The one who does not acknowledge Bhagwan Hrishikesh, who is the most supreme being, who does not offer puja to that beloved deity Bhagwan Shri Hari, is guilty of the sin of brahma-hatya. Because all the gods are part and parcel of Brahmaswaroopini Moolprakriti Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. – She is the Mahadevi, the Universal Divine Mother. She is to be worshipped continuously, and by all. The one who disrespects the causal of all causes, Bhagawati Jagaddamba, is guilty of brahma-hatya.

The celebration of Shri Krishna Janmashtami; Ramnavami; Ekadashi; Shivaratri; and Sundays, grant great punyas. Those who do not observe these days are considered lower than chandaals; and are guilty of brahma-hatya.

The man who is born in Bharatvarsh, and who digs and disturbs the earth during Ardhra Nakshatra (sixth lunar mansion); or who relieves himself in a water body; is guilty of brahma-hatya. The one who is prosperous, and yet does not support his guru; his mother; brother; wife; son and daughter, gets the same punishment as one who commits brahma-hatya. The one who has no bhakti towards Bhagwan Shri Hari, is guilty of brahma-hatya. The one who eats without first offering food to Bhagwan Shri Hari, is also guilty of brahma-hatya.

Now I will tell you about Go-hatya (cow). If one sees another torturing a cow, and does not prevent him, he is guilty of killing a cow. The foolish man who beats a bull with a rod, or rides a bull, is guilty of killing a cow. The one who offers a bull left-over, half-eaten food; or eats food from one who rides a bull, he is definitely guilty of Go-hatya. The Brahmin who eats food from a coward or a woman of low morals; and does not practice the prescribed sandhyas (prayers), is guilty of Go-hatya. The woman who differentiates between her husband and gods, and who causes emotional upsetting by her temper and tantrums, is guilty of Go-hatya. The one who cultivates land where the cows graze; and uses up the drinking water meant for cows, is guilty of Go-hatya. He who does not try to save cows from tyranny of the royal class, or from some physical distress, is guilty of Go-hatya. He who shows disrespect to images of god, to sat-gurus and Brahmins; and does not offer pranaams, is guilty of Go-hatya. The Brahmin who, in anger, does not bestow blessings on those who offer pranaams; and who does not impart shudh-vidya (pure knowledge) to his shishyas (students), is guilty of Go-hatya.

Guru-patni (wife of the guru); Rajpatni (queen); mother; daughter; mother-in-law; pregnant woman; brother's daugthter; chaste married lady; friend's wife; brother's wife; sister; father's sister; sister's mother-in-law; girl

student; wife of student; nephew's wife --- all these have been pronounced by Shri Brahma as Agamya (women with whom conjugal connection is forbidden). The man who casts adulterous eyes on these ladies, is considered degenerate and contemptible. In the Vedas he is called as Matr-gaami. He gets the fruit of the sin of brahma-hatya. He can never be included in auspicious functions. His great sin takes him to the hell called Kumbhipak. Bhadre! I have told you about the different kinds of hell where sinners go. There are many other hells, and I will tell you the sins which merit those sufferings.

Sadhavi! The Brahmin who eats the food of an immoral woman and has relations with her; goes to a hell called Kaalsutra. After that, he comes as a human afflicted with disease. A woman who is faithful to one husband, is called Pativrata. The one who has two men, is called Punshli. A woman with five lovers is called Veshya. The one who has six husbands is called Pungi. The one who has more than seven, is called Mahaveshya. The realised soul who has relations with any of these women, goes to a hell called Matsyod, for periods ranging from one hundred years to ten thousand years. The servants of Yama beat him constantly. Then they take birth as partridge, crow, cuckoo, jackal, pig, silk-cotton tree, for seven years.

The ignorant man who eats food during solar or lunar eclipse, goes to a hell called Arunthud. He suffers for as many years as the grains of food he ate. And when he takes a birth, he suffers from stomach ailments. Then, in the following births he suffers enlargement of the skin; squint eyes; and toothless-ness. The one who betroths his daughter to one man, and gets her married to another, gets thrown into a hell called Paansu-kund (dirt and dust). Sadhavi! He who takes wealth in exchange for his daughter, suffers in a hell called

Paansu-vesht. He has to sleep on a bed of arrows, and my attendants beat him.

The one who silences a Brahmin with false reasoning or allegations, and who causes a Brahmin to cower in fear, he goes to a hell called Prakampan. The wife who glares at her husband with hatred, and who speaks to him disrespectfully, goes to a hell called Alkamukh. My servants beat her on the head with rods. When she takes birth she becomes a widow, and a sick person.

Veshyas go to Vedhankund; Pungis to Dandathadan-kund; Mahaveshyas go to Jalrandhra-kund; Kultas to Dehachurn-kund; Svairinis (adulteresses) to Dalankund; and wicked, wanton women go to Soshankund. They have to suffer great misery in dirty, filthy, pits.

The one who breaks the promise he made when holding Tulsi leaves; and the one who swears false oaths; he goes to Jwalamukh-kund. Also, he who takes an oath holding Gangajal or Shalgram, and does not fulfil it, goes to the same hell – Jwalamukh-kund. The one who swears by holding up his right hand, or by touching a Brahmin or a cow, and does not honour his oath, also goes to Jwalamukh-kund. Those who betray a friend; who are ungrateful; and who bear false witness; all go to Jwalamukh-kund. There they have to eat fire, and are beaten by Yamdoots. Then, for seven births they come as chandaals. The one who breaks the oath made with Gangajal, takes five births as a mlecch (whose icchas are foul). The one who breaks a promise made with a Shalgram, takes seven births as a worm in sewers. The one who takes an oath with his right hand, and breaks it, takes seven births as a snake. Then he gets purified, and gets a birth as a Brahmin. The one who speaks lies in a place of worship is born as a servant in that place, for seven births. The one who swears an oath

in the presence of a Brahmin and does not honour it, takes birth as a tiger. Then for three births he comes as a human who is deaf and dumb. The one who attacks a friend, is born as a mongoose; and the one who breaks trust, comes as a hunter. The one who bears false witness, comes as a frog.

All these sinners cause their ancestors and their progeny (seven levels on each side); to fall into hell. The foolish one who does not perform his daily spiritual practices; who condemns the Vedas and the scriptures; and who does not renounce evil, goes to a hell called Dhoomrakund. Then he takes birth as fish and other aquatic animals. The one who misappropriates the property of god and Brahmins, goes to the darkest hell called Dhoonrandh, where he experiences suffocation. Then he is born seven times as a rat. Then he is born as various types of worms, insects, birds, trees and animals. Only after that he is purified.

Pativratey! These are the various kinds of hells. Besides these, there are smaller, insignificant hells. They are all overflowing with sinners. According to their karma-phals (fruits of actions); beings keep roaming the different yonis (stratas). There is no end to this traffic.

Chapter 9 - Episodes 36-37

36-37 Preventive measures and precautions to avoid going to Hell. Description of eighty-six kinds of hell.

Savitri said - Mahabhag Dharmraj! You are the complete knowledge of the Vedas. Tell me about those Sat-karmas (virtuous deeds) which are most essential; most effective; universal; which destroy the evil effects of karma; most superior; which is most joy-giving; which grants all wishes, which confers auspiciousness; which releases one from fear and pain; by the grace of which one does not fall into temptations; which releases one from worldly bondage and rebirth; and which grants peace. Please also describe the other kinds of hell, and the conditions which prevail there. After the body is cremated, what form does the dead person take in order to enjoy or suffer the fruits of his action. And how is it, that in spite of the sufferings and tribulations, he still continues to exist. O Lord! Please tell me all these things.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Upon hearing Savitri's request, Dharmraj invoked Bhagwan Shri Hari and began his description of those virtuous deeds which neutralise karmas.

Dharmraj said – Vatsey! Pativratey! Suvratey! (most holy, chaste and pious one!), The Four Vedas; The Dharam Shastras; the Testaments; the Purans; Historical Scriptures; and the Vedaang (six subordinate branches of the Vedas); have all praised and recommended the Panchadevopasana – Worship of Five Gods as the supreme form of worship. This has the power to neutralise birth, death, old age, sickness and sorrow. It is the source of great auspiciousness and joy. It grants siddhis. It saves one from falling into hell. On the tree of devotion it creates new sprouts and branches; and it is the axe which cuts the

tree of Karma. This is the boat which takes one across the road, to Moksha. It is the means by which one attains salvation; Saaroopya (identification with God); Samipya (proximity to God); indestructibility; and the Lotus Feet of the Divine. Shubhe! My attendants guard the gates of Hell. The people who do Panchadev-upasana do not see these hells, even in their dreams.

Those who do not worship Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari , end up in my domain. Those who observe the disciplines of Ekadashi, go to Vishnulok. Those who continuously worship Bhagwan Shri Hari, and offer puja to His image, they also escape seeing my fearsome domain. My attendants fear the devotees of Bhagwan Shankar in the same way that snakes fear Garud. When they mistakenly go towards them with their noose, I prevent them. My attendants roam everywhere; but they have no entry into the ashrams of the bhaktas of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Also, the bhaktas who worship Shri Krishna with mantras, are greatly feared by my attendants. When the devotees of Bhagawati Jagaddamba die, my attendant Chitragupt (recording angel of Yama), welcomes them with Madhupark (mixture of curds, ghee, water, and honey) and directs them to Brahmalok. Sadhavi! After that they gain entry into Manidweep Lok. Devi bhaktas are so powerful and auspicious, that the very sight of them destroys bad karmas. When these great, realised souls are born, great blessings are bestowed upon their clan – the sins of all the ancestors get burnt to ashes, like dry twigs in a furnace. In the presence of a Devi Bhakt, spiritual ignorance dissolves; and shuddh iccha takes it place (thirst for divine knowledge). Sadhavi! Lust, anger, greed, death, sickness, old age, sorrow, fear, fate, evil deeds, indulgence and sense pleasures – all these fail to have their negative influences in the vicinity of a Devi Bhakta (devotee of Shree Adi Shakti).

Sadhavi! I have named the various categories of people who never see hell. Now I will explain what the Shastras say about what happens to the body after death. The five elements already exist – earth, water, fire, air and ether. In the process of creation, the creator produces a "deha-beej", or nucleus, or seed. The body which is built up from the earth and other four elements; is called transient and destructible. It burns in the funeral pyre and turns to ashes. The Jeeva or soul, which is left, takes on the aspect of a finger bound by a ring. It assumes a subtle body which has to experience the fruits which it has merited. That soul does not turn to ashes. Rather it comes into my jurisdiction (Sayyamani-puri). The gross body can be destroyed by fire, or by the ravages of Time. But the subtle body can never be destroyed. The sharpest blade; the hottest boiling oil; and the heaviest iron cannot destroy it. It continues burning and suffering forever. Such is the awesome suffering. Sadhavi! I have told you what happens to a body after death. Now I will tell you about the description of hell.

Pativratey! Narak-kund (Hell) is built exactly like the Lunar System, and has a vast orbit. It is built up of various kinds of flint stones, implements and tools. They are everlasting and indestructible. They last till Pralaykaal (the dissolution). As per the desire of Shri Hari, these have been created for punishing sinners.

Agnikund is a blazing pit of fire, many miles long and broad, with flames rising hundred feet into the air. It is always filled with screaming and shrieking sufferers, and my servants stand guard over them.

A pit filled with fierce and dangerous beasts which devour sinners is called Tapt-kund.

A pit called Tapt-ksharod-kund filled with brackish salty water, which is continuously boiling. It is constantly burning sinners, and is also crowded with crows.

There is a mile long, and a mile broad Vit kund, where souls suffer from hunger pangs, whose taloos (fontanelle area) dry and shrivel continuously and for ever. The pit is filled with filthy substance, and worms that gnaw holes in the body. There is no relief. It goes on forever.

Then there is Mootra kund which is filled with urine; foul smell; and horrible worms. Criminals and evil doers suffer in this boiling filth.

A pit filled with mucous, pus and every unholy thing, is called Shleshma-kund, and is the place where heinous sinners are thrown.

Those who have poisoned others, are thrown into a pit called Gar-kund. This is teeming with beasts with fangs; and poisonous, biting insects.

Dooshika-kund is filled with tears; and sinners are constantly crying out with the pain inflicted by stinging and biting insects.

Vasakund is filled with marrow and greasy fat. Shukrakund is filled with bodily excretions and horrible worms, which attack the sinners who are thrown there.

Bloodsucking and biting insects and worms infest Raktakund.

Gaatramalkund is filled with foul smelling excreta. Karnavat-kund is filled with wax from the ears. The sinners who are banished to this place, suffer the pain of biting and stinging insects and worms.

Great sinners are put into Majja-kund (filled with marrow). Maaskund is full of decaying and decomposed meat. Those who have sold their daughters are sent here, and made to eat the flesh of their daughters. When the maggots and worms bite them, they scream in pain.

Tamrakund is filled with molten copper, and burning copper plates. Sinners are burned in this continuously. Louh kund is a pit where sinners are burned with molten iron. It is surrounded by darkness; and cries of "Save me! Save me!" can be heard at all times.

Those who eat skin, and drink spurious drinks, are sent to Charma-kund and Taptasurakund.

Shalmalikund is surrounded by thick thorny and prickly plants. It is full of suffering and sorrow. It is vast, and can hold lakhs of sinners. Silk-cotton trees with thorns more than four spans long, and as sharp as needles, have fallen inside this pit. Those who are thrown in get pierced, and scream in pain. The agony is endless. Their throats and taloos dry up with screaming, and they beg for water, which they never get.

There is a hell which is one mile long and one mile broad, and filled with snake venom. Those who are thrown in, jump about as if they are in boiling oil. It is called Vishod kund.

The pit which contains oil which is constantly boiling, is called Pratapt-tail-kund. Because of its extreme heat nothing lives in it, but sinners who are thrown in by my assistants, have to endure the sufferings forever.

Angaarkund is full of burning flames. It is dark and most fearsome, and sinners burn in it forever.

The hell called Kuntalkund is filled with razor sharp iron pieces in the shape of trishuls. It is eight miles long, and a veritable bed of nails. The sinners who fall in get pierced, and their throats, lips and taloos dry up.

Sadhavi! One pit contains mutated worms with fangs like serpents. These unnatural creatures bite and sting. The hell is called Kirmikund. It is enveloped in darkness.

Puyakund is spread over eight miles and filled with pus and purulent matter.

The pit which is as deep as a palm tree and filled with venomous snakes and serpents, is called Sarp-kund. The snakes coil themselves around the sinners and bite them.

Mashak-kund, Danshak kund and Golkund are infested with mosquitoes, gnats and other stinging insects. Sinners suffer great agony and their hands are shackled, and their bodies burn and bleed with the bites and stings.

Vajrakund and Vrishchak-kund are full of scorpions.

Sharkund, Shoolkund and Khadgakund are filled with weapons. The bodies which fall into these hells, get pierced and cut with the sharp, pointed weapons. These pits get filled with the blood which pours out.

Golkund is full of boiling water and enveloped in black and inky darkness. Worms with thorny bodies and sharp teeth inflict endless pain on those who are thrown into this hell.

Nakrakund is pervaded by foul and rotten odours. Sinners who are thrown into this hell are attacked and bitten by fearsome crocodiles and alligators.

Countless sinners languish eternally in Kaak-kund, which is filled with urine, excreta, phregm, mucous and other filth. Huge black crows keep pecking and clawing those unfortunate beings, who are already suffering great distress.

Manthankund and Beejkund are filled with slime, maggots and germs. It is a pit full of anguish and distress.

Vajrakund has all varieties of creatures with sharp, pointed teeth, which inflict painful bites. The darkness that surrounds this hell is impenetrable.

The fires in Taptpashaan-kund are fierce and furious. Those who burn here eternally shriek and run hither and thither.

Teekshan Pashaan kund is filled with pointed razor sharp flint and rocks. Those who have committed grievous sins are thrown into this pit.

There is a deep pit filled with blood; called Laalakund; and my assistants push sinners deep into this.

Masikund is filled with soot and black stones. Churnakund is filled with burning sand.

Chakrakund spins continuously like a potter's wheel. It is fitted with sixteen sharp spokes which keep cutting into the flesh of sinners who are thrown in. It is a long, winding pit, and very very deep. It is also fitted with boiling water. The air is filled with piteous wailing and lamenting.

Koormakund has turtles which bite and claw the sinners incessantly.

Criminals and evil doers are thrown into an ever burning volcanic pit called Jwalakund.

Bhasmakund is filled with hot ashes. Eating and breathing these hot ashes causes extreme distress to the sinners who are inside.

In Dagdhkund the limbs of sinners are constantly being branded with burning irons. This causes drying up of their taloos.

Prataptsuchi-kund gives unbearable pains; is filled with pungent burning oil; and noisy fierce animals. The sinners are constantly being burned and bitten; and also get blind.

Asipatrakund has tall palm trees with razor sharp leaves. Sinners who are thrown on to the leaves sustain deep gashes, and the pit gets filled with their blood. There are constantly cries of “Save me! Save me”.

Kshurdharkund is filled with sharp weapons, with points like needles. Soochimukh is filled with fine pins and needles.

Gokamukh-kund is filled with creatures with a face like a mule. Nakrakund has creatures like crocodiles which inflict painful bites. Gajdanshkund is a vast pit. Gomukh-kund is filled with creatures with heads of cows.

There is a pit like a cauldron called Kumbhipak, which is enveloped in darkness. Sinners are constantly bitten by creatures with sharp fangs and keep groping blindly. They keep fainting and reviving, and suffering endlessly.

Pativratey! Sinners suffer in each and every pit and pay dearly for their sins. In addition my assistants keep beating and flogging them without mercy.

The hell which lies in Kumbhipaak is considered the one with the maximum pain and suffering. Inspite of all the torture, the body continues to exist and suffer eternally. It is the severest of all the hells.

In Kaalsutra, sinners are chained by the bonds of eternity. They are constantly immersed in a pit of boiling liquid, and in turns they rise to the surface, sink to the bottom, faint, revive; and repeat the cycle. Avatkund and Matsyodkund are filled with thicker, glutinous liquid, which is constantly boiling. It engulfs all who are thrown in.

Asantudkund gets its name from the stinging and biting worms which are constantly looking for victims. The sinners cry desperately for release, which never comes.

Paansukund is filled with dust, which chokes and blinds the sinners. A hell which is filled with chains, fetters, snares and traps is called Pashveshtan kund. Shoolproth-kund is filled with pikes, darts and tridents which pierce those who fall in. Even as they are falling in, sinners tremble with fear.

As soon as sinners reach Ulkamukh-kund, burning torches and flaming wood is pushed into their mouths and throat.

There is a vast hell called Andhakoop-narak. It is filled with deadly worms and insects, and is enveloped in inky darkness. The sinners become so wretched, that they start biting each other. They are given boiling hot water to drink. So the biting and the boiling misery goes on endlessly.

Sinners who are thrown into Vedhan-kund get pierced with sharp weapons. In Dand-thadan kund, sinners are beaten with iron rods and scream in pain.

Jaalarandhra-kund is like a vast fishing net where everything gets trapped. In Deha-churn kund, all the bodies are crushed. Their legs are put into iron fetters and their broken bodies lie inert but alive. Dalankund is the place where my assistants constantly beat and whip and flog sinners.

In Shoshankund the continuously heated sand and dust causes the throat, lips and taloo to dry up.

Kashkund is filled with blood and skin, and pervaded by the foul smell of decomposing flesh. The suffering is unbearable.

Shoorpa kund is full of burning sand and sharp arrows Jwalamukh kund is eternally blazing. Sinners are dropped into this volcano to burn forever.

Jihmkund is filled with burning bricks, and those who fall in, swoon with the heat. Dhumrandh-kund is filled with acrid, thick smoke, which chokes and blinds all those who fall in.

In Nagveshtan kund cobras entwine the sinners and keep injecting venom with their sharp fangs.

In all these hells, my assistants constantly inflict punishment on sinners, by beating, burning and frightening them.

Savitri! I have described to you eighty-six kinds of hell. Is there any other thing you would like to know.

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Chapter 9 - Episode 38

38 An attempt to describe the form, significance and attributes of Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari.

Savitri said – Prabho! Please bestow upon me the supreme knowledge of Bhakti to Devi Bhagawati, the Almighty Goddess. This is the only path to mukti (freedom). It is by this mukti that one can avoid falling into hell. It contains the power to destroy the greatest of sins. It has the capacity to cut the roots of the tree of Karma-vriksh (tree of action and reaction). Bhagwan! What is called as Mukti? How many kinds of Mukti are there? How does one recognise their characteristics. What does bhakti embody. How many kinds of bhakti are there; and which destroys which effect of karma. O Prabho! I most respectfully request you to tell me all these things. O Foremost Knower of the Vedas. Please give me a concise knowledge of this great secret. Giving Nirmal Gyan and Nirmal Vidya to the spiritually ignorant, merits Punyas which are sixteen times more than those earned by yagyas, pilgrimages, holy baths, charitable works, fasting and tapasya. A mother's importance is hundred times more than a father's -- this is the absolute truth. But Prabho! A guru who imparts Nirmal Vidya is hundred times more venerable than that mother.

Dharmraj said – Vatsey! The knowledge that you desire, I have already given to you. Now the bhakti to Bhagawati Jagaddamba, that you desire, is already contained in the boon that I granted you. You also desire to hear the attributes and interpretations of the qualities of Moolprakriti Bhagawati Jagaddamba, Who is the cause of this material universe. This knowledge is profound and awesome; and those who ask, those who tell, and those who listen; earn salvation and redemption for their clans. But it is rare and difficult to come by. Even Sesh with a thousand faces, could not successfully complete

the description. If Mritunjay Shiva (he who has conquered death) with his five heads; starts describing the Devi; He too will not be able to complete it. Brahmaji is the creator of the four Vedas and the entire Universe. He is adorned with four faces. Bhagwan Vishnu is omniscient. But even these two gods have not been able to completely describe Devi Bhagawati. If Swami Kartikeya starts describing the Devi, his six faces will not be adequate to complete Her attributes. The most auspicious Shri Ganesha is the Guru of all the yogi-gurus; but even he has not been able to fully describe the qualities and attributes of the Devi. The four Vedas contain the essence of all existing scriptures. The Vedas; as well as the scholars who have mastered the Vedas, have not succeeded in describing even a fraction of the qualities of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Sakshat Saraswati becomes inert and expresses inability to complete Devi Mahima (description of the Goddess). When Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatan, Sanatkumar, Dharm, Kapil, Surya, and all other illustrious sons of Brahma could not succeed in adequately and completely describing the attributes of the Devi; how can one expect such a feat from lesser beings. If yogis and munis have not been able to fully describe Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba, then there is no one who can do it. Not even I can hope to achieve this impossible feat.

Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and all the gods worship and meditate upon the Lotus Feet of Devi Bhagawati. This Devi is as accessible to Her devotees, as She is distant and unattainable to those who have no bhakti and recognition of Her. The description of the Devi is extremely sacred. Some have only a partial glimpse of it. The knower of Brahmagyan, Shri Brahma, has knowledge of some aspects. The guru of the wise and learned, Shri Ganesha, has knowledge of other aspects. But Bhagwan Shankar has the most profound knowledge because He received this from Parabrahma Bhagwan Shri Krishna.

It happened long ago – Bhagwan Shankar once visited Go-lok. Raas-mandal was in progress in a secluded forest. It was there that Bhagwan Shri Krishna had elucidated on some divine aspects of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. After this Shri Shiva returned to His abode and recited it to Dharm. Then Dharm repeated it to the auspicious Surya. Sadhavi! My father Bhagwan Surya had performed worship to Devi, and got this knowledge as a gift. Long ago my father wanted to give me the kingdom of Yampuri. But I did not want it. Suvrate! I was inclined towards asceticism, and I wanted to do tapasya. It was then that my father recited before me, all that he knew of the qualities and attributes of Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba. All that rare and precious knowledge, I place before you. Listen!

O Beautiful One! The qualities and attributes of Moolprakriti Bhagawati Jagaddamba are so myriad and so vast, that She, Herself, is not aware of all of them. Then how can anyone else do justice. Just Akash is not fully aware of all the bodies within his ambit, so also Bhagawati is not aware of Her limitless qualities and attributes. The first form of this Brahmaswaroopini Bhagawati is Sarva-Atma – the all-pervading Supreme Spirit. She, who is the causal of all the gods, Who is the causal of all causes; Whose various names are Sarveshwar (Lord of all); Sarvadya (the first, the Primordial); Sarvavith (all-knowing); Sarvaparipalak (Who protects and nourishes all); Who is Nityaswaroop (constant, perpetual, unchanging); Nityavigraha (eternal form); Paramanand Paripoorn (complete divine bliss); Who is devoid of material, physical or elemental construction – (Bhowlik Aakar); and Who is Nirankush (Who cannot be obstructed). Who is Nishankh (fearless, dauntless); Nirgun (attributeless – beyond the three gunas and the three nadis, ida, pingala and sushumna. She is consciousness devoid of the qualities and attributes of the mind); Niramay (salubrious, free from disease); Nirlipt (unengrossed, unattached); Sarvasakshi (silent witness of the action of the universe); Sarva-

adhar (support of the universe. She is pure consciousness, unformulated, undifferentiated); and Who is Paratpar (the most excellent). That same Almighty, by Her Maya (supreme creator of illusion and confusion even to the greatest of gods) She assumes the aspect of Moolprakriti (the material cause of the universe). Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari (giver of life to the universe); She is the origin of everything that has manifested or taken birth. It is only by union with Her that Paramatma Himself becomes Prakriti (the manifested material universe). Prakriti and Purush are as undivided and inseparable as sun and sunlight; moon and moonlight; and fire and combustion. The energy manifested in every particle as well as the Primordial vibration, is She – Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroopini, Bhagawati Jagaddamba or Mahamaya. She is formless. But when She emerges for a divine purpose, in response to the prayers of Her devotees, She assumes various forms. She first manifested as Gopalsundari. Which is to say that Parabrahma Bhagwan Shri Krishna was verily a manifestation of Her Self. It was a form of indescribable beauty. The body was pleasing. He was the embodiment of gentle graciousness. He was adorable, and had a honey-like spring of sweetness. His nature was auspiciousness, like a beautiful garden of nectar-giving trees. His eyes were like fresh lotus petals, big and joy-giving. His skin was blue, like the colour of a rain-filled cloud. He wore garments of pitambar (yellow garb liquidating samsara). He is both Madhuri and Samhara Shakti. He bears the ring of Saturn on His right finger. He is the Axis of the whirling universes. His Face is so full of Sahaja Brahmajyoti, that even a crore of full moons pale before His brilliance. He wore many garlands of the suns, moons and stars. His splendour pervades beyond the firmament. He is charming in His darshan, speech, action and mind. His entire person is adorned with ornaments and precious jewels. He is the lord of wealth, whose Navel is auspicious like gold. The brilliant Kaustubh Mani rests on His expansive chest. Garlands of fragrant Champa and Malathi hang to His knees. His body is anointed with precious paste of kasturi,

kesar, aguru and divine sandalwood. In the crest of His diadem shines the sacred gem Chudamani. A beautiful charming smile plays on His face. In both His hands He holds a Murali (flute) and plays divine music. He was verily the abode of Leela – the Divine Play. He was the most peaceful and serene; fountain of endless madhurya; most glorious and splendrous Lord of Shree Radharani; and dearer to Her than life. He was seated on a gem-studded singhasan in the centre of the Raasmandal. Shree Gopaanganas (ladies of the Gopa clan) gazed at Him in total adoration, and sang His praises, which flowed as a constant stream of ambrosia).

That Shri Krishna was the beloved, revered, and almighty God of all. Acknowledging Him as the Supreme Power, Brahma the creator, framed the ordinance, regulating the laws governing Fate and Destiny, which is Karmas. It is within these parameters that the gods' karmaphal or fruits of tapasya and actions are governed. It is by His command, that Bhagwan Vishnu is known as the Preserver; and is constantly engaged in the protection and preservation of the three worlds. And when it is time for dissolution; it is He who directs Kaalaghni Rudra (the fire of final destruction) to annihilate the creation. Bhagwan Shiva Who is the Guru of all the Gurus, Who is known as Mritunjay (He who has conquered death); Gyanvaan (possessor of knowledge); Yogeesh (the chief among ascetics); Prabhu; Paramanand (the supreme blissful soul), manifests because of Him. Sadhavi! In obedience to Him the swift Pavan moves, and the Sun shines. It is only by His command that Indra rains; Death overcomes life; Agni burns; and water gets its coolness and liquidity. Holding Him in awe, the Digpals (guardian deities of the quarters), guard all the directions; and the planets rotate and revolve in their respective orbits. The trees put out their flowers and fruit, in accordance with His will. And out of reverence and obedience, Kaal (Time) dissolves the Creation. Without His will nothing can exist, either in the water, the earth, or the air. And without His

will, Death cannot touch anyone whether free, captive, or on the battlefield. It is at His command that air supports water; water supports the tortoise; the tortoise supports Seshnaag; and Seshnaag supports Prithvi (earth); and Prithvi supports the mountains and the oceans. This same Prithvi, who is forgiving and enduring by nature, also at His command, produces priceless gems. And by His command, all creatures on this earth take birth, and finally die.

Pativratey! The life span of Indra is seventy-one Deva Yugas. The span of twenty-eight Indras, constitutes one day and one night of Brahma. Thirty such days make a month; two months make a season; and six seasons make a year. Hundred such years form the life span of Brahma. When Brahma ceases to exist, Maya-vishisht Prakriti-Brahm Paramatma, drops one eyelid. When this eye closes, it causes Prakriti Pralaya. During this Prakriti Pralaya – when this happens, there is total dissolution of devatas, movable and immovable life forms; the creator and the created; and all gets absorbed into the Nabhi Kamal of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. Shri Vishnu, Who reclines in the Bhavasagar; as well as His four-armed manifestation in Vaikunth, gets absorbed into the left side of Parabrahma Paramatma Shri Krishna. Bhagwan Shiva; the eternal one; the presiding deity of Gyan; merges into the Gyan of Paramatma Shri Krishna. All the Shaktis dissolve into Vishnumaya Durga. Vishnumaya Durga takes Her place in the Buddhi of Bhagwan Shri Krishna; as She is the ruler of His Buddhi. Swami Kartikeya, Who is an ansh (part) of Narayan, gets absorbed into His chest. Suvratey! (One who observes vows) The Lord of the Ganas, Deveshwar Shri Ganesh, is a part of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. He gets absorbed into His two arms. The manifestations of Goddess Lakshmi merge into Lakshmi; and Lakshmi merges into Shree Radha. All the gopis and the Devpatnis (wives of the gods), also merge into Shree Radha; and Shree Radha, most beloved of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, gets absorbed into His prana. Savitri, the Vedas and the entire scriptures enter Shree Saraswati. Saraswati merges

into the tongue of the Paramatma, Bhagwan Shri Krishna. All the gopas of Go-lok, get absorbed into the pores of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. The Pran-vayu (life's breath) of all living things, dissolves into His Prana; all fires merge into His Jathraagni (the fire in the stomach which digests food); and all gets absorbed into the tip of His tongue. Devotees of Vishnu – Vaishnav purush – joyfully merge into the Charan Kamal (Lotus Feet) of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. The most excellent, and the most essential devotees who have lived only on the nectar of devotion and surrender, enter the Being of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, because they are already a part and parcel of Him. He is called the Maha Virat Purush, into whose pores the entire creation enters; upon Whose closing of the eye there is dissolution of universes; and upon opening of the eye, Creation takes place. When one hundred years of Brahma are completed, the Creation gets dissolved. Suvratey! There is no count of the number of times, creation and dissolution takes place; just as one cannot count the particles of dust in the earth. When dissolution is imminent, that all pervading Paramatma merges with Mool Prakriti Paratparswaroopa (Almighty) Shakti to become One; and only One Parashakti remains. And that is called Nirgun. It is this Being which is mentioned in the Vedas as Sadeved-Magr Aasit -- The Being Who was the Beginning. Bhagawati Prakriti, even though formless; is known as the Energy which manifested. But She is Pure Consciousess, undifferentiated and indivisible. Therefore, at the time of Pralaykaal (dissolution); She also, completely untouched and unchanged; continues to BE. There is no one in this entire creation, who can succeed in adequately describing the qualities and attributes of this most Supreme, most Sublime, Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

The four Vedas have revealed four ways of attaining Mukti. In all of them, Bhakti and surrender to god has been mentioned as the most superior; as it causes everything else to become insignificant and trivial. One mukti grants Salokya (salvation); the second gives Saaroopya (identity or similarity); the

third gives Saamipya (proximity to God); and the fourth gives Nirvaana (emancipation). Bhaktpurush (devotees of God) do not leave their bhakti in pursuit of these muktis. They even disregard Shivattwa (bliss); Amarattwa (immortality); and Brahmattwa (true knowledge of the Supreme Self). Mukti is devoid of seva (servitude); while Bhakti has intense and continuous seva. This is the difference between Mukti and Bhakti. Now listen to the revocation or neutralising of destiny. Learned men say that birth is dictated by past karmas. The surest way to neutralise this, is by complete devotion and servitude to Moolprakriti Bhagawati Shree Devi. Sadhavi! This Tattwagyan (essential truth) stands firm and immutable in the Vedas and in the world. Therefore Vats! You must take to this auspicious, obstacle-free path.

After saying all these things, Suryaputra Dharmraj granted life to Satyavan, and gave him to Savitri with Divine blessings. Then he prepared to leave. Seeing him go, Savitri fell at his feet and began to cry. She became sad that the most benevolent and generous Dharmraj was leaving. Dharmraj was pleased to see this. Tears of compassion filled his eyes. He said to Savitri –

Savitri! After spending many happy years in the auspicious Bharatvarsh, you will go to the place where sakshat Bhagawati presides. Bhadrey! You go home now, and perform worship to Bhagawati Savitri. On completion of fourteen years of this vow, a woman gets moksha. This vow should be observed from the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight of Jyesht (third month). The Mahalakshmi Vrat is to be observed on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of Bhadrapad (sixth month). O Pure and Virtuous One! This vrat should be observed for sixteen years. The lady who faithfully observes this, attains the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. On every Tuesday Bhagawati Mangal Chandika should be worshipped. On the sixth day of the bright fortnight of every month, the auspicious Bhagawati Shashti should be worshipped.

Bhagawati Manasa is to be worshipped on Sankranti day of Aashad (fourth month). During Kartik Purnima, Shree Radha is to be worshipped. Married ladies with children; virtuous and faithful wives, who regularly worship Bhagawati Vishnumaya, Durgatinashini Durga (destroyer of misfortune); and Prakriti-swaroopini Bhagawati Jagaddamba, are blessed with good fortune and happiness in this life; and finally attain the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Shree Devi. Devotees should worship all these aspects of Devi. You must also worship Sarvaroopa Mool Prakriti Shree Bhuvaneshwari. There is nothing else in any world which compares with seva of Parameshwari.

Then Dharmraj left for his abode. Savitri took her husband and returned home Narad! After reaching home Savitri told everyone the story of Savitri and Satyavan. Then as per the boons, the father of Savitri begot sons; and her father-in-law regained his lost sight and his kingdom. Savitri herself gave birth to many sons. After a long happy life, Savitri and Satyavan entered the abode of Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. Because She was the ruler of Savita (the sun) and the presiding deity of Gayatri mantra, she got the name of Savitri. And because She is the Mother of all the Vedas, She is known in the world as Savitri.

Vats! This is the complete story of Savitri, and of Karmvipak (consequences of all actions, good or bad) of all living things. Now what else do you wish to know.

Chapter 9 episodes 39-40

39-40 Manifestation of Bhagawati Mahalakshmi. Curse of Durvasa causes Her to leave Devlok. Indra becomes sad and goes to Brihaspati.

Naradji says: Bhagwan! I have heard from your auspicious mouth the stories of Dharmraj and Savitri; Moolprakriti Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari and Nirgun Swaroopa Gayatri. I now wish to hear everything about Bhagawati Lakshmi. O! Foremost among the knowers of the Vedas, Please describe to me Her form and the different ways of worshipping Her. Please describe to me all Her qualities and attributes.

Bhagwan Narayan says: - Brahman! This happened in ancient times. At the beginning of creation, during Raasmandal, Shree Radha manifested from the vaambhag (left side) of Prabrahma Paramatma Bhagwan Shri Krishna. On all four sides were huge banyan trees. She was as youthful as a twelve year old girl. Her complexion was as white as the champak flower (magnolia). Her countenance was most joy giving. When She smiled, Her face shone like a crore of full moons during Sharadpurnima. Her large eyes caused the full blooming lotuses to pale into insignificance. By the desire of Parabrahma Paramatma Bhagwan Shri Krishna, She manifested a second form which was identical in dress, state, tejas (lustre), yash (splendour), kanti (beauty), vastra (dress), aabhushan (decoration and ornaments), gun (qualities), tritya (deeds) , smile, countenance, love and compassion. From the left side manifested Shree Lakshmi, and the right side remained Shree Radha. Shree Radha took as Her husband, the two armed, most supreme Bhagwan Shri Krishna. Mahalakshmi also expressed the desire to have Bhagwan Shri Krishna as Her husband. In order to preserve Her prestige and dignity, Shri Krishna Himself manifested in

two forms. His right side remained the two armed Shri Krishna, and from His left side emerged the four armed form of Shri Vishnu. He presented Shree Mahalakshmi to Shri Vishnu as His wife. That Devi, who always lovingly looks after the world and bestows wealth and wellbeing, is known as Shree Mahalakshmi. In this way the two armed Shri Krishna became the husband of Shree Radha, and the four armed Shri Vishnu became the husband of Shree Mahalakshmi. Surrounded by gopas and gopikas, Shuddhaswaroopini Bhagawati Shree Radha grew in glory and splendour. Chaturbhuj (four armed) Bhagwan Shri Vishnu, accompanied by Bhagawati Shree Lakshmi, retired to His abode Vaikunth. The two gods Shri Krishna and Shri Vishnu are identical in every way.

Bhagawati Shree Mahalakshmi by Her yoga siddhis, manifested in many forms. Endowed with all auspicious and prosperous qualities, She settled in Vaikunth as Mahalakshmi. And because of Her benevolence and compassion She was revered and worshipped by women. In heaven She assumed the form of Indra's wealth and was known as Swarg Lakshmi. In Pataal She was worshipped as Naga Lakshmi, and in the palaces of kings as Rajya Lakshmi. And for householders She is honoured as Griha Lakshmi. All these forms are partial manifestations of this Devi Mahalakshmi. She reigns eternally in Her entirety in Vaikunth. She bestows success and auspiciousness to householders, and dwells among them as good fortune. Among cows She dwells as Surabhi (excellence and fragrance); and in yagyas She presides as Dakshina. In the house of Ksheersagar (ocean of milk) She took birth as a daughter. In the beauty of lotuses She is Shree, and for the moon She took the form of Shobha (radiance and lustre). It is from Her that the solar system got its light. In all things – ornaments, jewels, gemstones, fruits, water, kings, queens, goddesses, planets, stars, all grains, clothes, holy places, images of the

gods, mangal kalash, rubies, pearl strings, diamonds, sandalwood, new shoots of trees, and new rainclouds – a part of Bhagawati Shree Lakshmi exists.

Mune! The first person to worship Shree Mahalakshmi was Bhagwan Narayan in Vaikunth. The second was Brahmaji, who performed archana. The third one to worship Her was Shri Shiva. Bhagwan Vishnu performed puja to Her in Ksheersagar. After that, She was worshipped on earth by Swayambhu Manu (primal man, son of Brahma), Maanvendra (a king), rishishwar, munishwar and genteel householders. Gandharvas and Nagaas worshipped Her in Pataal. On the eighth day of the bright fortnight of Bhadramaas (sixth month) She was worshipped by Brahma. Narad! The celebrations lasted throughout the month in all the three lokas. On the holy day of Tuesday during Chaitra, Paush and Bhadra, Her puja began to be celebrated. Because Shri Vishnu worshipped Her, all Triloki began to worship Her with great bhakti. During the Sankranti of Paush (10th month) Manu installed an image of this Devi on a Mangal Kalash and invited the Devi. Then he offered puja. After that, in all the three lokas this Mahadevi began to be worshipped. Indra also became Her devotee. And Raja Mangal worshipped Her in the form of Mangala. Following this She was worshipped by Raja Kedar, Neel, Bal, Subal, Dhruv, Uttanpad, Shukra, Bali, Kashyap, Daksh, Kardam, Vivaswaan, Priyavrat, Chandrama, Kuber, Vayu, Yama, Agni and Varun. In this way, Bhagawati Mahalakshmi was worshipped by all. She is the supreme ruler of aishwarya. She is called the embodiment of wealth and fortune.

Naradji asked: Shree Mahalakshmi is the beloved of Bhagwan Shri Narayan and eternally presides over Vaikunth. This ancient Devi is called the ruler of Vaikunth. A long time ago, in order to honour the word of Bhagwan Shri Narayan, She agreed to come on earth as the daughter of Samudra Devata. How did that happen. Please tell me in detail.

Bhagwan Narayan says: Narad! This is an ancient story. Due to the curse pronounced by sage Durvasa, the Devi Shree departed from Indra. All the Devas began to wander in Martyalok (mortal world). Lakshmi abandoned heaven and sadly returned to Vaikunth. Narad! She went there and merged into the form of Shree Mahalakshmi. The gods were grief stricken. In great distress they came to the lotus feet of Shri Brahma. Making Him their leader they all proceeded to Vaikunth and surrendered themselves to the lotus feet of Shri Vishnu for refuge. Their plight was really sad. Their throats, lips and taloos had dried up. Then, in obedience to the will of Puranpurush Bhagwan Shri Hari, Sarva Sampati Swaroopa (the embodiment of all the wealth and fortune in existence), by Her own power, manifested as the daughter of the Ocean. The Devata and Daityas combined and began Manthan (churning) of the Ksheersagar (ocean of milk). Mahalakshmi manifested from that ocean. Bhagwan Vishnu Himself went there to receive Her. This pleased the Devi, and She placed a Varmara (garlanding the bridegroom) on Shri Vishnu who was reclining on the ocean, and took Her place beside Him. Narad! By Her blessings, the Kingdom of Heaven, which the Asuras had snatched away, was restored to the Devas. They sang stutis in thanksgiving, and regularly worshipped Her with pujas.

Naradji asked: Brahman! When, why and for what mistake did Brahmnisht (one possessing knowledge of the Immortal Self) and Tattwagya (possessing knowledge of Divine Philosophy) Munivar Durvasa pronounce a curse on Indra. Please describe the Manthan done by the Devas. Which stotras so pleased the Devi that She gave a darshan to Indra. What brought about reconciliation between Indra and Durvasa. In your great kindness please tell me all these things.

Bhagwan Narayan says: - A long time ago, sage Durvasaji was going from Vaikunth to the mountain peak of Kailash. Indra saw him. The body of the muni was glowing with Brahmatej. He was shining with the brilliance of thousand rays of the summer sun. His matted and braided locks shone like molten gold. He wore a white Yagyopveeth (sacred thread) and carried the skin of an antelope, a rod, and a kamandelu in his hands. He was accompanied by countless students, all well versed in the Vedas and scriptures. As they approached, Indra lowered his head and offered pranaams. Saga Durvasa blessed him and also gave him divine parijat flowers which had been given to him by Shri Vishnu. Vain and conceited with rajshree (kingship), Indra casually placed on the head of his elephant Airawat, the divine flowers which had the capacity of destroying death, old age and sorrow, and even granting moksha. As soon as the flowers touched Airawat, he became filled with the same lustre, qualities and brilliance as Shri Vishnu. Then he left Indra and went into the dense forest. Indra could not mount that elephant, nor could he control him. This disrespectful handling of the sacred flowers caused Sage Durvasa to become very angry. In extreme rage he pronounced a curse on Indra.

Munivar Durvasa said:- Arrey! Puffed up in the pride of kingship why do you insult me? I gave you these divine parijat flowers. Instead of honouring them yourself, you put them on the head of your elephant! The protocol demands, that if you ever receive naivedya, fruits or water that have been first offered to Shri Vishnu, you must most respectfully and reverently consume and enjoy it yourself; and consider yourself blessed and fortunate. If you disrespect it, and give it away, you have committed a sin equal to Brahmahatya. Those who have the sowbhagya (great good fortune) to receive naivedya and offerings from Shri Vishnu, and then throw it away, lose their Shree and Buddhi. The one who receives offerings which are made to Shri Vishnu, gets release for one hundred ancestors and gets mukti for himself. The one who respectfully

consumes naivedya out of the offerings made to Shri Hari, and continuously worships Him with pujas, becomes divine like him. When he visits holy places, they get blessed by the cool breeze that blows past him. The dust from his feet purifies the earth. Food which is not first offered to Bhagwan Shri Vishnu, is just the same as the food in the house of an adultress, coward or shudra.

Food which is offered to Shivaling; Shudra sacrifice, a temple; the food prepared by one who sells his dauighter, a prostitute, waste or stale food; left overs, food cooked for a cremation; food in the house of a woman who is condemned by the shastras; one who is on bad terms with his relations; a traitor; an ungrateful person, and a dishonest brahmin; are all considered extremely impure. But even if this food is first offered to Bhagwan Shri Vishnu (vibrated), it gets purified. Even if a chandaal (lowest and most miserable human being) regularly worships Bhagwan Vishnu, he gets blessed with the shakti to merit salvation for one crore human beings. A person who has no bhakti for Shri Hari, can not even maintain himself. Even unknowingly, if one receives and honours naivedya that has been offered to Bhagwan Vishnu, he gets released from the sins of innumerable past lives. And those who know and receive the naivedya with utmost re verence and respect, all their past sins are burnt to ashes. Indra! In arrogance and vanity you have disrespected the sacred flowers parijat, which are equal to an offering; and placed it on the head of your elephant! As a fruit of this action, Shree Lakshmi will abandon you and return to Bhagwan Shri Hari. I am a devotee of Bhagwan Narayan; and I have no fear of Brahma or any of the Devas. I am not afraid of Time, Death or Old Age. In fact I fear no one. Your father Prajapati Kashyap can do nothing to me. Devraj! Your guru Brihaspati is ineffective against my fearless nature. Look! Only the one who wears these flowers is worthy of being offered puja.

On hearing all this, Indra fell at the feet of Muni Durvasa. He was trembling with fear. Full of repentance and shame he cried loudly. Indra said: Prabho! It is right that you have put a curse on me to destroy all this maya. I do not regret the loss of my wealth. Please give me counsel and advice on wisdom and divine knowledge. Money is the root of all evil. Aiswarya sows the seeds of discontent and misfortune. It covers pure knowledge and wisdom. It is for this reason that it is called the biggest hurdle and obstacle on the path of mukti. It causes disturbance and temptation at every step.

The Muni said: Devraj! Wealth is the ankur (germ) of birth, death, old age, grief and sickness. A man gets blinded by wealth, and cannot see the path to mukti. It makes one foolish, and is more intoxicating than spirituous liquor. False friends and relations will stick to him like parasites. A man who is drunk with riches and power gets confused; his senses get dulled and perverted, he is overcome by vices, passion and anger. He loses sight of the path of spiritual ascent; and becomes unfit and unsuitable for any spiritual practices. This blindness is also of two kinds – Rajasic and Tamasic. The one who is completely ignorant of the shastras is called Tamasic; and one who is acquainted with the scriptures and institutes of religion is called Rajasic. The shastras throw light on two kinds of paths – pravriti (attachment to worldly objects); and nivriti (salvation). The first part is fraught with suffering and sorrow, but human beings step on to it freely, happily and without any hesitation, just like a bumble bee getting trapped in a pot of honey. This pravriti marg is the root cause of birth, death, old age and destruction. A being, by his own actions, merits degrees of births in different yonis (class into which animate beings are divided, which are eightyfour lakhs). After that, by the grace of God he gets a human birth, with opportunities to associate with pious and saintly men. This satsang is the most precious vehicle for crossing the ocean of illusion and the flame which illuminates all the tattwa. Among

hundreds and even thousands, it is rare to find one pious and virtuous man who can guide humanity to the path of mukti. Only after this a person gets the desire in his heart and the strength to break the bondage of attachments and attractions. He still has to pass through many births doing punyas, tapasyas and renunciation. Then he comes on to the path of Self Realization. This path is free of impediments and obstructions, and is very joy giving. Purandara! This knowledge that you wanted was given to me by my respected guru.

Brahman! Upon hearing this discourse of Muni Durvasa, Indra felt the stirrings of detachment. Every day the desire for freedom from worldly attachments grew within him. He left the place and headed for his palace. Upon reaching his kingdom Amravati, he found that it was overrun by Asuras and Daityas. All the devas were in distress. The situation was full of confusion and chaos. Families had been separated, and near and dear ones were missing There were enemies everywhere. Seeing this, Indra rushed to find Guru Brihaspati. He found him on the banks of Mandakini, sitting in meditation upon Parabrahma Paramatma. When he looked again he was standing facing the sun and paying obeisance with ganga jal. Tears of joy were falling from his eyes, his body was shining and blissful. That great dharamatma; full of gravity, honoured by all men, respected by his peers, most superior of his race; ominous and forbidding to his enemies; Guruva Brihaspati, was chanting mantras. Devraj Indra watched him for three hours; and as soon as he got up from his meditation, he offered pranaams. When the guru acknowledged him he fell at his feet and began to weep. He told him everything, including the curse that had been pronounced on him by sage Durvasa. Guru Brihaspati, the greatest and wisest of gurus replied:

Brihaspati said: Purandar! Do not despair. Listen to me. A statesman does not panic when calamity strikes. Because adversity and good fortune are fruits

of actions, they are transient. Fortune and misfortune are the fruits of actions of previous births. And this rule governs all beings. There is not use in becoming disturbed and anxious. It is for experiencing these joys and sorrows that one assumes a gross body. It may take even a crore of years, but every action bears a fruit which has to be experienced. This is an absolute and unchangeable law which was given to Shri Brahma by Paramatma Bhagwan Shri Krishna, and which is contained in the Sama Veda. After all the fruits of all the actions are completely discharged, only then a being gets the privilege of a birth in Bharatvansh. A person is always followed by the consequences of crores of actions in crores of births. Purandar! They stick on like shadows and never leave till all the payment is made. The different kinds of time, place and persons do have an influence on Karmas. But, just as a skilled potter uses pole, wheel, plate and rotation to mould his clay into a beautiful pot; so also God almighty uses Karm Sutra (rules governing fate or destiny in dispensing fruits of actions). Therefore Devraj! Worship that Bhagwan Narayan at whose command the universe was created. In all the three worlds He is the God of all gods; the Master of all masters; the Protector of all protectors, Creator of the creators; the Destroying Power of the destroyer; and the Ruler of Time. If a person who suffers a calamity or a misfortune, just remembers Bhagwan Madhusudan; he sees only good in his situation and that becomes his good fortune. This advice has been given by none less than Bhagwan Shankar Himself. Narad, saying this, the great tattwa gyani Brihaspatiji embraced Indra. He blessed him and advised him.

Chapter 9 Episodes 41-42

41–42 Bhagawati Lakshmi manifests from the ocean. Indra sings stutis and meditates on Devi Mahalakshmi.

Bhagwan Narayan says: Narad! Devraj Indra meditated upon Bhagwan Shri Hari; and then making Brihaspatiji their leader, he took all the devas and proceeded to the assembly hall of Shri Brahmaji. They reached Brahmalok, had a darshan of Shri Brahma and offered obeisance. Then Devguru Brihaspatiji apprised Brahma of the situation in heaven.

Brahmaji laughed and said: Vats! You belong to my clan. You have been endowed with great wisdom. You are my great-grandson. You have a great guru like Brihaspati and you are the King of the Devas. The great Vishnu bhakt Daksh Prajapati is your maternal grandfather. How can a person with such a pedigree get into ego? Because, it is only if there is some flaw in father, maternal grandfather or guru; that that flaw has an influence and makes one a possible rebel against Bhagwan Shri Hari. This is a fact. The all pervading Bhagwan Shri Hari resides in the body of all living things. The very instant that He departs the body dies. He is the Lord God and we are His dependents. I reside within all living beings as mind – the controller of senses. Shankar assumes the form of knowledge and resides within all beings. Bhagawati Shri Radha, beloved of Vishnu, presides as Prakriti. Buddhi (wisdom) is the form in which Durga resides within a being. Prakriti Devi resides within as hunger, sleep and other forms. The reflection of the Spirit is the soul. It is this soul which assumes a gross body. When atma (spirit) who is the ruler of the body, gets ready to leave, then these others also prepare to leave, just like those accompanying a bridegroom.

I Myself, Sesh Nag, Vishnu, Dharm, Mahavirat and all of you – are all parts and devotees of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. And you have insulted and disrespected the flowers that were offered to that same Lord, Bhagwan Shri Krishna. The flowers that were used by Bhagwan Shiv, to perform puja to the Lotus Feet of Shri Hari; by some great good fortune came to be in the possession of Muni Durvasa; and he in his benevolence, gave it to you. But you did not give due honour and respect to it. Any person who bears on his head, flowers that have dropped from the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, is considered more superior than the gods, and is worshipped first at any puja. The most powerful misfortune has played a trick on you. Because of your casual and disrespectful treatment of the puja flowers of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, Bhagawati Shree Devi has become upset, and has abandoned you. Now you must come with Brihaspati and Me to Vaikunth. I give you a boon – that if you faithfully serve and worship Lakshmikant Bhagwan Shri Hari, you will again attain Devi Lakshmi.

Narad! Saying this Brahmaji took all the gods with him and proceeded to Vaikunth. There he got a darshan of the eternal Parabrahma Bhagwan Shri Hari. The most effulgent Lord was ablaze with His own brilliance, brighter than a thousand mid-day suns. He who has no beginning, middle or end, was sitting in Peace and Glory. The four-armed Bhagwan Shri Hari was surrounded by His attendants, and Bhagawati Saraswati. Bhagawati Ganga, complete with the Four Vedas was present, in complete adoration and worship. Brahma and all the gods bowed in obeisance. They were filled with vibrations and feelings of awe and devotion. With tears of joy they began to sing stutis in praise of Param Prabhu Bhagwan Shri Hari. Brahma with bowed head and folded hands narrated the situation, and the gods who had been deprived of their kingdom, wept. They were overcome with fear and insecurity. They wore no ornaments, and were minus even their vahanas (conveyances). Shree had

already departed from them, and now they were dull and listless. Seeing their sad plight, Bhagwn Shri Hari spoke to them.

Bhagwan Shri Hari said – Brahman and all you gods! Have no fear. As long as I am, nothing can happen to you. I will give you the most auspicious Devi Lakshmi who will endow you with aiswarya. But I want to first tell you some relevant facts, upon which you must meditate. My words are the truth; for your benevolence; full of wisdom; and will bear good results. Just as the entire universe and all living things are under my control, so also I am under the control of My devotees. I can do nothing out of My own desire. If any faithful and sincere devotee of Mine gets displeased with someone, then Lakshmi and I cannot abide near him. This is the absolute truth. The great and auspicious Muni Durvasa is an ansh (partial manifestation) of Shankar, and a Vishnu-bhakt. He has boundless devotion to Me. He has cursed you. Therefore I have withdrawn, with Lakshmi, from your house – because, where there is no sound of the conch; where Tulsi does not dwell; where Shankar is not worshipped; and where realised souls are not fed; there Lakshmi does not reside. Brahman and devas! Wherever My devotees are insulted or aggressed; there Mahalakshmi is filled with anger and rage. And She withdraws Herself from that place. The person who does not worship Me, and who does not observe as holy the days of Ekadashi and Janmashtmi, from the house of that foolish man, Lakshmi goes away. Where My name is sold; or the daughter of the house is sold; and where a realised soul is not fed; from that house My beloved Lakshmi gets up and leaves. A person who is born of an adultress, or is the husband of an adultress is called a great sinner. Lakshmi can never live in that house.

The brahmin who harnesses bulls can never be dear to Bhagawati Lakshmi. He who has an impure and unchaste heart; who is cruel; who criticises and

defames; and who is a murderer – Lakshmi is afraid to even drink water from his house. So She leaves that house. He who invites shudras to his house to perform pujas; who eats the food of cowards; who unnecessarily uproots fragrant grass; who scratches and scrapes the earth with his nails; who is a pessimist; who eats his dinner at sunrise; who sleeps by day; who has sexual activities by day; who is devoid of morals and virtues – in such a foolish man's house, My beloved Lakshmi cannot abide, and She leaves.

The ignorant and disgusting man who goes to bed with wet feet; or who goes to bed naked; who chatters incoherently and senselessly – from his house also Devi Lakshmi goes away. The one who rubs the oil of his head on the body of others; who keeps a musical instrument on his lap and plays it; causes Lakshmi to get angry and leave his house. The one who does not observe fasts, who does not pray at the prescribed times, and who does not worship Vishnu; from the house of such an unholy man, Devi Lakshmi definitely leaves. The man who insults realised souls, who aggresses them, and who indulges in killing; causes Jagatjanani Lakshmi to leave his house.

But where the praises of Bhagwan Shri Hari are sung, where He is worshipped, - there resides the bestower of auspiciousness and aiswariya, the Devi Bhagawati Lakshmi. Pitamah! In the places where Bhagwan Shri Krishna and His bhaktas are honoured and praised, there presides His beloved Bhagawati Lakshmi. Where resounds the conch, and where ever reside Shankh, Shaligram and Tulsi – there will reside Bhagawati Lakshmi. Wherever puja is offered to Shivaling; and where Durga Puja is performed; there resides the goddess Lakshmi. Where realised souls are honoured and given food; where the gods are worshipped; there resides the lotus-eyed goddess Lakshmi.

Narad! Bhagwan Shri Hari then spoke to Shree Lakshmi. He said – Devi! May it please You to use your powers and manifest as the daughter of Ksheersamudra (Ocean of Milk).

Then Jagatprabhu spoke to Brahma – Padmaj! You must churn the Ocean. Lakshmi will manifest, and then you can give Her to the devatas.

Mune! After this, Kamalakant Bhagwan Shri Hari removed Himself from their presence. The gods began their journey to Ksheersagar. All the devas and the daityas had gathered for the churning. They used the mountain Mandarachal as the churning stick; Kacchap (tortoise) as the vessel, and Seshnag as the rope; and began to churn the Ksheersagar. As the fruits of their action they received from the ocean Dhanwantari (Divine Physician); Amrut (ambrosia); Ucchai Shrava (the white horse of the Sun); countless gems; Airawat (the most excellent elephant); Lakshmi; Sudarshan Chakra, and Vanmala (garland of wild flowers) as the most priceless gifts. Mune! Then the greatest devotee of Bhagwan Vishnu, Sadhvi Shree Lakshmi, placed the vanmala on the neck of Sarveshwar Shri Hari. Then after puja was performed by the devas, Brahma and Shankar, She just spread Her glance over the abode of the gods; In that instant, the devas got released from the curse of Muni Durvasa, and regained possession of Devlok from the Daityas. The devas became happy and prosperous again.

Just by hearing this story one can receive all the joys and happiness in life. Now, what else would you like to hear.

Naradji said:- Prabho! You have told me the most auspicious and joy giving description of the qualities of Bhagwan Shri Hari; the highest spiritual

knowledge and the story of Bhagawati Lakshmi. Now please teach me about Meditation and Stotras.

Bhagwan Narayan says: Narad! It happened a long time ago. Devraj Indra took a holy bath on the shores of Ksheersagar. He wore two new clothes, installed a kalash, and performed puja to six gods. They were – Ganesh, Surya, Agni, Vishnu, Shiv and Durga. After worshipping them with perfumes, flowers and other precious substances; Indra respectfully recited the Avahan, inviting Aiswarya Swaroopini Bhagawati Mahalakshmi. Then he performed the puja as taught to him by his purohit Brihaspati, and guided by Brahmaji. Mune! At that time, in that sacred place, presided Munis, Brahmans, Gurudev, Shri Hari, Dev Vrind (assembly of gods) and the embodiment of knowledge and bliss, Bhagwan Shankar. Narad! For the worship of Bhagwati Mahalakshmi, Indra offered parijat flowers dipped in sandalwood paste. He meditated upon Her in the way that was taight to Brahmaji by Bhagwan Shri Hari. I am going to tell you that Dhyan. Listen carefully!

“Parampujya Bhagawati Mahalakshmi presides and reigns over the thousand petalled lotus of Sahasrara. Her Supreme Brilliance is more dazzling than, and overshadows, the light of a crore of Sharad Purnimas. This supremely chaste and virtuous Devi is illuminated by Her own lustre and glory. Her darshan grants boundless joy and bliss. When She manifests, She is of the form of glowing, molten gold. Gem studded jewels and ornaments adort Her. She is robed in golden yellow. This most pleasing Bhagawati Mahalakshmi has a most beautiful smile on Her face. She is eternally youthful. She graciously grants wealth and well being. I worship Kalyan Swaroopini Bhagawati Mahalakshmi.

Narad! After meditating thus, Indra performed puja of the goddess Bhagawati Mahalakshmi; and as taught by Brahma, he offered sixteen kinds of percious materials. For each substance that he offered, he chanted the appropriate mantra with the deepest bhakti and shraddha. All ingredients were offered in abundance.

The Puja Mantras are like this –

Bhagawati Mahalakshmi! Be pleased to accept this gem studded asan, which has been crafted by the master, Vishvakarma. O Kamalalaya! This is pure and holy gangajal, which all desire to pour on their heads. Everyone desires to have it. It is blazing fire for burning the wood of sins. Please accept this sacred water for washing Your Lotus Feet. Padma Vasini! Be pleased to sip this Arghya – Gangajal on a tray decorated with conch, flowers, chandan and durva grass.

O! Beloved of Hari! Please accept this fragrant oil perfumed with flowers; and this sweet smelling amlaki powder. These garments are woven from the finest cotton and silk. Be pleased to accept them.

O! Devi! These golden ornaments, studded with precious gemstones are being offered to adorn You.

Shri Krishna Kante! The resin from the trees have been dried and mixed with fragrant ingredients. Please accept this holy dhoop. This pleasing and most exquisitely perfumed sandalwood is offered at Your Lotus Feet. Be pleased to accept it.

Sureshwari! Kindly accept this burning Deep, which is benevolent to the eyes of the world, and which dispels darkness.

Devi! This Naivedya has been prepared with tasty and delicious ingredients. It is rich and sweet. Be pleased to accept it.

Devi! These foodgrains are believed to be Brahmaswaroop. It is the sustenance of the world. It satiates hunger and thirst. Be pleased to accept this.

Mahalakshmi! This sweet delicacy has been prepared from sugar, ghee and Agahani rice (harvested in the ninth month). Be pleased to accept it. There is a most delicious sweet called Swastik made from ghee and sugar. Be pleased to accept it.

O! Eternal Devi! Be pleased to accept these ripe fruits, and this sweet milk from the sacred cow Surabhi.

O! Devi! This is jaggery made by cooking sugarcane juice over the fire. Be pleased to accept it.

Devi! The powder of jowar and wheat has been mixed with jaggery and ghee and cooked over fire. Be pleased to accept it.

O! Kamaley! Be pleased to accept this fan and this pure white whisk, to disperse Divine Cool Breeze.

Be pleased to accept this betel leaf, rolled with camphor and fragrant ingredients.

Devi! Be pleased to accept this sheetal jal which quenches the thirst and wets the parched lips of the world.

O! Devi! This garland has been threaded with the most beautiful and most fragrant flowers of all seasons. Be pleased to accept it.

Krishnakantey! This most odiferous and exquisitely perfumed; auspicious sandal-paste is offered at Your Lotus Feet. Be pleased to accept it.

This holy teerth-jal, which is itself pure; and which purifies all that it touches, is offered as Aachman. Be pleased to accept it.

O! Devi! This seat, studded with precious gems, covered in rich cloths and decorated with flowers and sandalwood garlands is offered at Your Lotus Feet. Be pleased to accept it.

Not only these; but every precious ingredient in the world is placed at Your lotus Feet. Be pleased O! Devi, to accept it.

Mune! Devraj Indra chanted all these prescribed Puja Mantras and offered all precious ingredients to Bhagawati Mahalakshmi. Then with great bhakti and shraddha (innocent joy), he recited the great Moola mantra ten lakh times, and obtained the fruit of Mantra Siddhi (where mantras become effective) This Moola Mantra is like a Kalpavriksh for everyone (a tree which yields everything desired). This had been given to him by the grace of Brahmaji. The mantra is to be said in the following way –

First the seed of Shree, which is “Shrim”’ seed of Maya “Hrim”; seed of Kaam “Klim” and seed of Vani “Aiim”. Then add “Kamalavasinyai”, and last “Swaha”. –

“Om Shrim Hrim Klim Aiim Kamalavasinyai Swaha”

This is mantraraj, which was used by Kuber to praise and worship Bhagawati Mahalakshmi. As a fruit he received

Aishwarya. It was by the efficacy of this mantra that Daksh savarni, the eighth Manu, got the title of emperor; and Mangal became the ruler of the seven islands. It also granted for Priyavrat, sage Uttanpad and Raja Kedar, the title of Rajendra (Emperor)'

When Indra succeeded in getting mantra siddhi, Bhagawti Mahalakshmi gave him a darshan. Vardayini (bestower of boons) Devi Mahalakshmi, was seated in a vehicle encrusted with precious gems. Prithvi, with Her seven islands was pervaded by Her brilliance. Her Shree Vigraha (Divine Form) was as white as the champa flower. Precious jewels and ornaments increased Her beauty. She had a smile on Her Face, and was waiting to grant boons to Her devotees.

The necklace of diamonds got added lustre by being on Her Divine Neck. She glowed like countless moons. Seeing and beholding this tranquil and peaceful aspect of the Creatrix of the Universe, Indra started singing stutis. His whole being was thrilled with vibrations; his eyes were filled with tears of joy, and his hands were folded in obeisance. By the grace of Brahmaji, he knew the crowning glory of stutis, and with these he began to praise the Great Goddess.

Devraj Indra said:- Obeisance to Bhagawati Kamalavasini. Salutations, again and again, to Devi Narayani. A thousand pranaams to Krishnapriya Bhagawati Mahalakshmi. Obeisance to the Devi Bhagawati Mahalakshmi, whose face is like a lotus, and whose eyes are like lotus petals. Salutations again and again, to Bhagawati Mahalakshmi, Who is also called as Padmaasana, Padmini and Vaishnavi. Obeisance to Sarvasampatswaroopini (embodiment of wealth) and Sarva-aradhya (most worshipful) Devi. Salutations again and again to the Devi

who inspires bhakti to Bhagwan Shri Hari; and who grants joy to Her devotees. O bejewelled Lotus! O Shobhane! You dwell on the Vaksh-Sthal (breast) of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, and become the cause of all actions. Your form is as the beautiful moon. I offer You pranaams again and again. I offer pranaams to the greatest of Goddesses, Mahadevi. I offer pranaams to to Vridhiswaroopa (wisdom) Bhagawati, who bestows wisdom on Her devotees. O Devi! You preside as Mahalakshmi in Vaikunth; as Lakshmi in Ksheersagar (Ocean of Milk); as Rajyalakshmi in the palaces of Kings; as Swargalakshmi in Heaven; as Grihalakshmi in households; as Surabhi in the seas; and as Dakshina in yagyas. You are Aditi, mother of the Devatas; You are called Kamala and Kamalalaya. The "Swaha", which is uttered during Havya, and "Swadha" uttered during oblations to ancestors; are but Your divine names. It is You who supports and sustains and creation in the form of Prithvi. O Devi! Who are constantly engaged in the worship of Bhagwan Narayan; Your form is pure and pleasing. There is not even an iota of anger or violence within You. You are called as Varada, Sharada, Shubha, Paramarthada and Haridasyaprada (the giver of boons, pure knowledge, auspiciousness, salvation and a place in the service of Shri Hari). When You withdraw Your presence, the earth and the whole creation loses its essences, and becomes as worthless as ashes. In Your absence, all living things become lifeless and limp. You are the universal Mother of all life forms; and their bonding is a sign of Your presence. It is only by Your grace that one gets dharm, arth, kaam and moksh. Just as a baby depends on its mother for nourishment; so also the whole creation is dependent on You for the fulfilment of their desires. A child may survive without his mother; but without You, O Devi, the universe cannot exist. This is the absolute truth. O Ambike! It is Your nature to be easily pleased. Therefore, be pleased with me. My kingdom is in the hands of my enemies. By Your grace, I desire that it is restored to me. O! Haripriye! Till I had the good fortune to have Your darshan, I was devoid of friends and relations; a beggar,

and minus my kingdom and possessions. But now, I know that I will receive pure knowledge, dharm, auspiciousness, dignity, power, majesty, aishwarya, valour and victory over enemies.

Narad! After this prayer Devraj Indra and all the gods bowed in obeisance to Bhagawati Mahalakshmi. Their eyes were filled with tears of joy and love. Then, even the Deities, Brahma, Shankar, Seshnaag, Dharm and Keshav interceded for them. This pleased the Devi and She granted a boon to the Devas, and offered a garland of divine flowers to Shri Krishna. All the devatas returned to their abodes; and Shree Mahalakshmi took Her place beside Bhagwan Shri Hari. Mune! Brahma and Shankar also blessed the devas and returned to their respective abodes. This stotra is most sacred and powerful. If recited three times a day, it can grant auspiciousness and royal dignity of an emperor, like Kuber. For human beings it has to be sung five lakh times to become effective. One who sings it continuously for a month receives great aishwary and blessings. There is no doubt in this.

CHAPTER 9 Episodes 43 – 44

43-44 Description of Swaha and Swadha; meditation, puja procedure and stotras.

Naradji said: Prabho! Narayan! As you are completely endowed with form, attributes, glory, splendour and effulgence; for me You are sakshat Bhagwan Narayan. Mune! You are verily the greatest among the learned, the saints, the yogis, the tapasvis and the scholars of the vedas. By your grace I have received the knowledge of the story of Mahalakshmi. If you consider me worthy, please describe to me Bhagawati Swaha, Bhagawati Swaddha and Bhagawati Dakshina; and also tell me their importance.

Sootji says – O Munis! Hearing Narad, Munivar Narayan smiled; and began his narration of an ancient story.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Mune! This happened during the Creation. The devatas were not receiving any food or nourishment. So they went first to the abode of Brahma and prayed to him for sustenance. Brahma assured them that arrangements would be made for them to receive a share of all offerings made by Brahmins during their havans. And for this entitlement Brahma began to sing stutis to Bhagwan Shri Vishnu.

Naradji asked: Mune! By His powers, Bhagwan Shri Hari has manifested as Yagya. What happens to the Havi (offerings) that are put into the yagya.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Munivar! The offerings that were made by the brahmins and kshatriyas, were not passing on to the devatas. It is for this reason that they became sad and went to Brahma Sabha to complain that they were starving. Hearing this, Brahmaji meditated with his attention on the

Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. He advised Brahma to worship Bhagawati Moolaprakriti. By Her power of Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, She manifested as the Sarva Shakti Swaroopini Bhagawati Swaha. Her form was dusky, and She had a smile on Her beautiful face. In Her great compassion She appeared before Brahma and said:

“Padmayone! Ask for a boon”.

Brahmaji was astounded. Then He said - O beautiful Devi! Be pleased to become the consuming property of Agni. Without this Agni is unable to reduce to ashes the ahutis (offerings) which are put into the havan. With Your grace, when the person making the offering, utters “Swaha” it will immediately be received by the devatas. O Ambike! Please accept to become the Griha Swamini of Agni. The Devatas and humans will forever worship You. Bhagawati Swaha became sad.

Bhagawati Swaha said : - Brahman! I desire to do tapasya and worship to Bhagwan Shri Krishna for eternity. Everything that is separate from Bhagwan Shri Krishna is as transient and unreal as a dream. You take care of the creation; Shankar has gained victory over death; Seshnag supports the universe; wise and holy men have attained Pure Knowledge; Ganesh has the distinction of being worshipped first at all Pujas; and Prakriti Devi is universally worshipped. All these are fruits of worshipping Bhagwan Shri Krishna. It is my sole desire to meditate upon, and worship the Lotus Feet of Param Prabhu Bhagwan Shri Krishna.

Saying this the lotus-faced Devi Swaha left. She performed tapasya and meditation upon Bhagwan Shri Krishna for many years, standing on one foot. Then She got a darshan of Parabrahma Shri Krishna. She swooned at the

radiance of the Lord, because She had not had a darshan for a very long time, and Her tapasya had made Her weak. The all knowing Bhagwan Shri Krishna lifted Her up and made Her sit near Him.

Bhagwan Shri Krishna said – Kante! You will become My beloved in My Varahakalp (Boar incarnation). You will be born as the daughter of Raja Nagnajith and You will be called Nagnajithi. But for the present, manifest your Dahika Shakti (energy which burns and consumes) and become the wife of Agni. By My grace you will become the essence of the mantras and accept the pujas. Agnidev will make you his Grihaswamini, and offer pujas to You.

Narad! After this, Bhagwan Shri Krishna removed Himself from that place.

Then, as per His command, Agnidev came to that place and began to meditate upon Jagatjanani Bhagawati (Mother of the Universe). He sang stutis and performed puja. Then amidst chanting of mantras the marriage ceremony was performed between Bhagawati Swaha and Agnidev. They lived happily in a secluded place for one hundred years. During this time Devi Swaha became with child, which She carried for twelve years. Then five sons were born to Her – Dakshinagni, Gahrpatyagni, Avahaniyagni and others. Then the Rishis, Munis, Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and all other classes began to chant mantras ending with “Swaha” when putting offerings into the Havans, and the Devatas began receiving their nourishment. Even the mere chanting of “Swaha” at the end of a mantra began to yield the desired fruits. Just as one despises a snake without venom; a brahmin ignorant of the Vedas; a woman who dishonours her husband; a man who has no spiritual knowledge; and a barren tree; so also a mantra without the power of “Swaha” is scorned. If such mantras are used during Havan, it does not bear fruit. All the brahmins were happy and the devatas began to get their sustenance.

Mune! I have told you everything which concerns Bhagawati Swaha. This is a secret story which grants joy and moksha to those who are fortunate to hear it. Now, what else would you like to know.

Naradji said – Prabho! Muneeshwar! Please tell me about the Puja, Meditation and Stotras with which Agni Devata worshipped Bhagawati Swaha.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Brahmin! Munivar! I will tell you the Meditation, Stotras and Pujas to Bhagawati Swaha as written in the Sama Veda. Be attentive, and listen carefully.

In order to get the fruits of a Havan, the proper procedure should be followed. First of all the Shalgram should be worshipped, and Kalash Puja should be performed to Bhagawati Swaha. One should meditate thus –

Devi Swaha is the embodiment of all mantras. Her Divine Form is Mantrasiddhiswaroop (that which makes mantras effective). In Her compassion She gives fulfilment, auspiciousness and desired fruits.

Mune! When one meditates in this way and worships Her Lotus Feet with offerings and stotras; he receives all that he desires. The Moola Mantra is –

Om Hrim Shrim Vanhijaayaye Devyai Swaha

And whoever does Puja to Bhagawati Swaha using this mantra, gets all the fruits that he desires.

These are the sixteen holy names of Bhagawati Swaha as pronounced by Agnidev

Swaha, Vanhipriya, Vanhijaaya, Santoshkarini, Shakti, Kriya, Aaldatri, Paripaak Kari, Dhruva, Gati, Nardaahika, Dahan-kshama, Sansar Saar Roopa, Ghor Sansar Tarini, Devjeevan Roopa, and Devposhan Karini

Meaning – energy which digests; fond of fire; spouse of Agni; cause of satisfaction; energy; action; generous one who assimilates; constancy; movement; ensures burning; the flame of the fire; who embellishes the world; the deliverer; embodiment of divine life; causes nourishment to reach the gods.

Whosoever reads these names, gets all his desires fulfilled, in this world and the next. Nothing will remain unfinished. All his auspicious works will be completed. By the power of these sixteen names, a childless person will beget a child; and a single person will get a faithful husband or wife.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Mune! Now I will tell you everything about Bhagawati Swadha. Listen carefully. This story enhances the benefits which the ancestors receive when offerings are made in their name.

Shri Brahma the Creator, at the time of creation, made offerings for seven generations of ancestors: Four of them presided in corporeal bodies, and three manifested as light. At that time the shraddh procedures were formulated. It is written in the Shrutis that the duties of a brahman enjoin ritual bath; tarpan (offering of water to the manes); shradh (offering of food); Devpujan (puja to the devas) and Trikaalsandhya (praying three times a day). A brahman who neglects to do any of these should be shunned like a serpent. Narad! Any man who avoids worshipping the Devi and who eats food without first offering it to God, remains unholy and impure till the end of his life. He forfeits the right to perform auspicious acts.

Brahmaji laid down all the rules and procedures for propitiating the manes and went away. But nothing was reaching the devas and ancestors. So in great distress they all went to the assembly hall of Brahma and told Him of their plight. Then Brahma mentally created a maiden. She shone with the lustre of a hundred moons and was in the bloom of youth. She was endowed with qualities, knowledge, intelligence and beauty, and a complexion as far as a white champa. She wore dazzling ornaments. This Devi, who was a partial manifestation of Bhagawati Jagaddamba, was smiling. Her name was Swadha. She had all the auspicious qualities of Bhagawati Lakshmi. She was standing on a lotus. Her face and eyes were like a newly bloomed lotus. She was given as a bride to the ancestors because of Her quality of granting satisfaction. Brahma also gave the secret knowledge to the brahmins to add the word Swadha to their mantras while making offerings to appease the ancestors. Thus, when making offerings to the Devas, one must pronounce “Swaha” at the end of the mantras; and when making offerings to the ancestors, one must pronounce “Swadha” at the end of the mantras. At that time, all the Devatas, forefathers, brahmins, munis and human beings, all offered puja and stutis to Shantswaroopini Bhagawati Swaddha. She granted them the boon of appeasement and satisfaction. All their desires were fulfilled.

Mune! I have placed before you the entire story of Bhagawati Swadha, which grants appeasement and satisfaction to all who hear it. Now what would you like to hear.

Naradji said – O! Maha Mune! You are the highest knower of the vedas. Please tell me the correct way to meditate, perform puja, and sing stutis to Bhagawati Swadha.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Brahman! The dhyan and sthavan (meditation and stotras) of Devi Swadha are most auspicious. Worship of Bhagawati Swadha and Shradh, should be performed during Magha Nakshatra (tenth star), on the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight in the month of Ashwin. The egoistical brahmin, who does not perform puja to Devi Swadha before the Shradh, his offerings and performance have no meaning and come to nought. This Devi Swadha is a mentally created daughter of Brahmaji, and presides as satisfaction and appeasement at all times. The forefathers offer puja to Her. It is by Her grace that they get release. I worship Devi Swadha. The Shalgram and the holy kalash should be worshipped and the Devi should be invited for the Puja. Then while uttering the Moola mantra, offerings of water for washing the Feet and other precious offerings should be made during the puja. The Moolamantra is

"Om Hrim Shrim Klim Swadha Devyai Swaha"

O! Brahmaputra, Wise One, Narad! Now hear the stotra. It grants fulfilment of all desires. In ancient times it was sung by Brahmaji Himself.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The mere utterance of Swadha makes one as clean as if he has bathed in a holy place (teerth sthan). He gets clensed of all his sins and becomes entitled to the fruits of the Vajpaye Yagya (the last of the five sacrifices enjoined in the Vedas).

"Swadha!" "Swadha!" "Swadha!" – if one utters this three times he gets the fruits of offering Shradh, Sacrifice and Water. During the shradh, if a person recites stotras with great bhakti, he receives all the fruits. There is no doubt in this. The person who utters "Swadha, Swadha,Swadha" three times in a day, gets blessed with a faithful wife endowed with Grihalakshmi qualities, and

many obedient sons. O Devi! You are the giver of life to the ancestors, and happiness to the brahmins. You are the ruling deity of Shradh. It is only by your grace that one gets the fruits of Shradh and Tarpan. O Virtuous One! Your form is eternal, truth, and auspicious. You manifest at the time of creation, and become concealed during the annihilation. I offer obeisance to You who are verily Pranav, Swasti, Swaha, Swadha and Dakshinamayee (giver of boons). You have taken form to realise the fruits mentioned in the Vedas. For the fulfilment of actions, Your four forms have been created.

Brahmaji gave all these descriptions of Devi Swadha and sat on His throne. Then Devi Swadha manifested in His presence. He gave Her to the ancestors as their wife. They were gratified and filled with joy. This is the pure and chaste stotra of Bhagawati Swadha. The one who cleanses his mind and sings this stotra with full attention is considered to have bathed in all the holy places (teerth sthans). All his desires get fulfilled.

CHAPTER 9 Episode 45

45 Manifestation of Devi Dakshina. Procedures for Puja, Meditation and Stotras. Benefits of listening to this story.

Bhagwan Narayan says:- Mune! I have just told you the divine stories of Bhagawati Swaha and Bhagawati Swadha. Now I am going to tell you about Bhagawati Dakshina. Be alert, and listen carefully. This happened in ancient times. Bhagwan Shri Krishna had a favourite Gopi Susheela in Go Lok. She had the privilege of being the main attendant of Shree Radha. This gopi was very accomplished and beautiful. She was as auspicious as Lakshmi. She had all the qualities of a good wife. She was endowed with the accomplishments of artistry, delicate body, lustre, eyes like lotus petals, narrow waist, shapely breasts, youth and slender ornamented arms. Her happy face was always shining with joy. Her beauty was accentuated with jewelled ornaments. Her complexion was like a freshly bloomed lotus. Her lips were as red as the bimba fruit, and her eyes were like a doe. She had the graceful gait of a swan. She was well versed in the shastras. Bhagwan Shri Krishna loved her and she responded as per His moods.

One day Parameshwari Shree Radha said to Susheela – "From today you must not come to Go Lok." From that moment Shri Krishna could not be seen in Go Lok! The goddess of the gods, Shree Radha, began to call out to the Lord of the Raas Bhagwan Shri Krishna, but He did not give Her His darshan. Every moment of separation seemed like a crore of yugas to Shree Radha. She began to pray –

"Shri Krishna! Shyamsundar! You are My life. I love You more than my life. Please come to me immediately. You are the ruler of my life. Without You this

life cannot exist. A woman desires only her husband's wellbeing. Her happiness lies only in his presence. A woman must be occupied only in the service of her husband. For a virtuous wife, her husband is the embodiment of friend, god, protector, wealth and love. A wife who is faithful to her husband receives from him dharmas, perpetual happiness, love, affection, peace and honour. For a wife her husband is the whole world. By his kindness, relations and friends increase. He is not only a husband but also a friend. He is a provider, protector and fulfils all requirements, and is called by various names, as Bhartav, Pati, Swami and Kanth. For giving companionship he is called Bandhu, for giving affection he is called Priya, for giving status and aishwarya he is called Ish; for being master of her life he is called Praan Nayak; and for giving pleasure he is called Raman. Thus for a chaste woman, her whole world centres around her husband. He is the one who gives her sons. But her husband is dearer to her than a hundred sons. She never swerves from these sentiments. A woman of low class and morals, never understands the implications of this dharma. Great importance is given to ritual baths in holy places; alms giving at yagyas; perambulating the earth; various kinds of tapasya, fasts, acts of charity and serving the gurus, devatas and brahmins. But all these are not one-sixteenth as important as spending life in the service of ones husband. Guru, brahmin and devata – all are important. But for a faithful wife her husband is her guru. Just as a giver of knowledge becomes a guru for a man; a husband becomes a guru for his wife.

Bhagwan! You are the supreme lord for countless gopas and gopis, for all the planetary systems and their life forms. The jurisdiction that I command, from earth to all the creation, to Go Lok, has been granted to me by Your grace. These womanly traits never go. That is why I fail to realise Your Nature and keep lapsing into mistakes. Please forgive me."

In this way Bhagawti Radha began to meditate upon Bhagwan Shri Krishna. Tears of love fell from her eyes. She kept calling Nath! Nath!. The absence of the Lord made her very sad, and she pleaded – "Prabho! Please be kind and give me a darshan soon." Immediately Shri Krishna appeared and calmed her grief.

Mune! That is the time when the Gopi Susheela who had been banned from Go Lok by Shree Radha, left that place and manifested as Devi Dakshina. It happened like this. After doing severe tapasya she got absorbed into the Divine Form of Bhagawati Lakshmi. In ancient times, despite severe penances and tapasya, the fruits were not reaching the devatas from the yagyas. So they took their cause to Brahmaji. After hearing their prayer, Brahmaji meditated on Jagatprabhu Bhagwan Shri Hari. After meditating for a long time He got divine direction. Bhagwan Narayan Himself removed from the Form of Mahalakshmi, the mortal Lakshmi, gave her the name Dakshina, and gave her to Brahmaji. For the successful completion of yagyas, Devi Dakshina was given as a bride to Yagya Purush. This made Yagya Purush very happy. He performed puja and sang stutis to Bhagawati Dakshina. Her complexion was like molten gold. She shone with the lustre of a crore of moons. Her form was most pleasing to behold. Her large eyes were like lotus petals. As she manifested from out of Bhagawati Lakshmi, She ws seated on a lotus. She wore divine garments. Her lips were as red as the bimba fruit. She had braided Her hair with garlands of malati flowers. She wore rich ornaments and had a smile on Her face. On Her forehead was a tilak in the shape of a crescent moon, made out of paste of chandan and kasturi. At the parting of Her hair was a bindi of red sindoor. Then as per the direction from Brahmaji, Yagya Purush married Her with proper rites and ceremonies. After twelve celestial years Devi Dakshina gave birth to a beautiful son. He was endowed with a nature of granting fruits as soon as an action was completed. Wise and learned men say

that when Bhagwan Yagya, Devi Dakshina and their son Phal (fruit) are pleased, then one receives the fruits of his actions.

Narad! In this way everyone began to receive the fruits of their actions by the grace of Yagya Purush, Devi Dakshina and son Phaldata. All the devatas were very pleased and returned to their abodes. I heard this story from Dharm Dev himself. Therefore it is very important that the host of a yagya should immediately on completion of the act of Yagya, give the Dakshina to the brahmins. Only then the fruit is received. This is clearly enjoined in the Vedas. If, due to ignorance, or by some quirk of fate one fails to give dakshina as soon as the yagya is completed, the debt keeps doubling and all the good actions of the host get nullified. One who deprives a brahmin of this right to sustenance, becomes unholy and loses the right to perform auspicious actions. As a fruit he gets misfortune and disease. Lakshmi pronounces a terrifying curse, and leaves his house. Ancestors refuse any offerings made by him. Even the gods do not accept his pujas or offerings made in a havan.

While doing a yagya, if the host only shows the dakshina but does not give it; and the brahmin does not ask for dakshina; then both fall into hell like a pot which falls into a well when the rope breaks. Now I have told you all the secrets. What else would you like to hear.

Naradji said:- Mune! Who pays for the fruits of an action without dakshina. Also tell me how Yagya Purush offered puja to Devi Dakshina.

Bhagwan Narayan says:- Mune! Without dakshina there can be no fruit, because fruits are produced only from acts which include dakshina. Mune! Agyas without dakshina go into the belly of Bali. A long time ago this arrangement for the nourishment for Bali was made by Bhagwn Waman

(dwarf incarnation). Whatever is offered in Shradh by a man who is ignorant of the Vedas, or a man who has no devotion, goes as food for Bali. Puja offerings made by Brahmins who interact with Shudras (lowest caste), impure and unchaste brahmins; men who do not honour Satgurus – all the offerings made by such people becomes the food of Bali. There is no doubt in this.

Mune! The procedures for meditation, puja and stotras to Bhagawati Dakshina are laid out in the Kanvashakha (written by Rishi Kanva who fostered Shakuntala). I am going to tell you all this. Listen with full attention. A long time ago, when Bhagawati Dakshina was given to Yagya Purush he was enchanted by Her Divine Beauty. He began to sing Her praises.

Yagya Purush said – O Most Fortunate One. In ancient times you were a gopi in Go Lok. Among Gopis you were the best. You were companion to Radha. Shri Krishna loved you. On the occasion of Kartik Poornima celebrations were held in honour of Radha. Due to some reason you manifested from the right shoulder of Bhagawati Mahalakshmi. For this reason You are called Dakshina. O Shobhane! Before this event, You were called Susheela because of your amiable nature. Because of a curse pronounced on you by Shree Rdha you had to leave Go Lok. You manifested as Devi Dakshina and I had the good fortune to receive you as my wife. O Virtuous One! Be pleased to accept me as your Swami. You are verily the Devi who can grant fruits of actions. Without you all yagyas performed in the world will be fruitless. In your absence, there is no dignity in good deeds. If you are not present, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, the Digpals and all the devas are unable to grant fruits and boons. Brahma is the Doer. Shankar is said to be the fruit. And I, Vishnu have manifested as the Yagya. In all this You are the essence. The giver of fruit and boons Parabrahma and Nirgun Bhagawati Prakriti, and Bhagwan Shri Krishna Himself

require your cooperation. Kantey! You are My Shakti. O Pious One! Stay by My side in every life, and I will offer My support in all your activities.

This pleased Bhagawati Dakshina and She appeared before Him, and accepted Him as Her husband. This is the stotra to Bhagawati Dakshina. If any person performing a yagya sings this stotra, he receives all the fruits of the yagya. There is no doubt in this. If this stotra is sung at the beginning of any yagya, it removes all obstacles and badhas – this is the absolute truth.

Now listen to the meditation and puja procedure. After installing the Shalgram and Kalash, Devi Dakshina is to be invited – Avahan. The meditation is to be done thus:

This Devi Dakshina, who has manifested from the right shoulder of Bhagawati Lakshmi, is verily a part of Kamala. It is Her nature to grant fruits of all yagyas and sacrifices. She is the embodiment of the Shakti of Bhagwan Vishnu. Everyone has prayed to Her. I worship that Devi Dakshina, who is also called Shubha, Shuddhida, Shuddhiroopa and Susheela.

Narad! After meditating thus, the puja should be performed to Vardayini Devi by uttering the Moolamantra and offering water to wash the Feet, water for sipping, and all other precious materials. The mantra is

"Om Shrim Klim Hrim Dakshinayai Swaha"

Brahman! I have told you the meditation and puja procedure for Bhagawati Dakshina. This grants happiness and fulfilment, and fruits of all auspicious actions. All persons living in Bharatvarsh, who listen to this story with attention and shraddha, will be successful, and nothing will remain incomplete. The childless man will have a virtuous son. One who is single will be blessed with a

wife who has qualities of Devi Susheela. His clan will grow, and his progeny will be wise, endowed with Nirmal Vidya, prosper and have good house and land; and good friends and relations. In troubled times, if one listens to this narration for one month, all his troubles will end. There is no doubt in this.

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CHAPTER 9 Episode 46

46 Meditation, Puja and Stotra to Devi Shashti

Naradji said - Prabho! Bhagawati Shashti Mangalchandika and Devi Mansa are said to be manifestations of Devi Prakriti. Please tell me about their manifestations.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Mune! Because She manifested from the sixth part of Devi Prakriti She is called as Shashti Devi. She presides over children, and is also called Vishnumaya and Baalada. Among the Maatrikas (seven goddesses) She is called Devsena. This most virtuous Devi is the wife of Swami Kartikeya. He loves Her more than life. It is Her nature to give long life to children, protect them and nourish them. This Siddhiyog Devi, by Her powers of yoga, always abides with children. Brahman! In addition to the puja procedure, I will also tell you a most sacred story which grants the boon of getting children. I have heard this from Dharm Dev himself.

There was a king called Priyavrat. His father was Swayambhu Manu. Priyavrat was a yogi and did not want to get married. He enjoyed his tapasya. But as commanded by Brahma he got married. Mune! For many years he had no child. Then Kashyapji made him perform the Putroshti Yagya (for a child). The wife of this king was Malini. Muni Kashyap gave her Charu (oblation) and she consumed it. In due time she gave birth to a son whose body was golden coloured. But unfortunately the child was born dead. All who saw this began to weep. The mother of the child fainted from grief.

Mune! Raja Priyavrat took the body of his child to the cremation ground. He held it close to his chest and tears poured from his eyes. Just then he saw a celestial vehicle, moving in the air. It was made of precious stones and gems,

and draped in rich cloths. It was decorated with artistic pictures, and hung with garlands of flowers. Seated in this celestial chariot was a most beautiful Devi. Her complexion was like the petals of a white champa flower. She was smiling in a compassionate and belevolent manner, ready to grant any desire. She embodied generosity and mercy in Her person. Raja Priyavrat placed his child on the earth and began to worship the Devi with stutis. This greatly pleased the beloved of Skanda, Shashti Devi, and Her form began to shine like the midday sun. Seensing that the Devi was prasanna (pleased) the king said: "Sushobhane! Kante! Suvrate! Vararohe! Who are You? Who is your Lord? And whose daughter are You? You are most worthy of honour and worship.

Narad! This Devi who gives auspiciousness to the earth, and who helps the gods on the battlefield, was Bhagawati Devsena Herself. In ancient times, when the Devas were defeated by the Daityas, this Devi Herself became an army and defeated the Daityas. Since then She is called Devsena. She began to speak.

Bhagawati Devsena said: Rajan! I am the daughter of Brahma, born of His mind. I rule on earth as Devsena. After creating me, Brahmaji gave me to Swami Kartikeya. I am the foremost among the Matrikas. I am the chaste wife of Skanda. Having manifested from the sixth part of Moolaprakriti, I am also called Shashti. By my grace, a childless person gets a child; a lonely person gets a companion; a poor man gets riches; and an illustrious man receives the fruits of his actions. Rajan! Happiness, sorrow, fear, grief, auspiciousness, prosperity and misfortune – are all proportionate to ones actions. By one's own doing, one either has many children, or none at all. Some have children who live long; and some have dead children – this is also the effect of action. The cause of being virtuous, disabled, having many wives, having no wife, goodlooking, diseased, or dharmic – is only due to one's actions. It is actions or karmas

which determine obstacles and hindrances, and also auspiciousness and good health. Therefore Rajan Karma is very powerful. This is also mentioned in the Shrutis.

Mune! After this the Devi lifted the child and playing with it brought it back to life. The king saw his child bright and alive and shining like gold. Then the Devi prepared to leave. But before that She told him some auspicious actions as are enjoined in the Vedas.

Devi said – You are the son of Swayambhuv Manu. You rule the Trilokis. Ensure that pujas are offered to Me, and you yourself also offer puja to Me. Then I will give you a son with a face like a lotus. His name will be Suvrat. He will be possessed of all good qualities and wisdom. He will be a partial incarnation of Bhagwan Narayan and he will be a great yogi. He will have a memory of his past birth. Among Kshatriyas he will be great, and will perform the Ashwamedha Yagya. He will be honoured by all. He will be so full of strength and valour, he will seem like a lion among one lakh elephants. He will be wealthy, virtuous, pure, loved by the learned, and the embodiment of success for yogis, wise men and tapasvis. His fame will spread in the Trilokis. He will have the capacity to grant wishes.

Then the Devi handed the child to Raja Priyavrat. She accepted his puja, granted him a great boon and left for Her abode. The king was filled with happiness and returned to his palace with his ministers. He told everyone about the wonderful miracle. All were overjoyed. Then the king began preparations for the worship of the Devi. He performed the puja, and gave much wealth to the brahmins. Since then, on the sixth day of the bright fortnight of every month, celebrations began to be held in honour of Bhagawati Shashti. Also puja began to be offered whenever a child was born;

on the sixth day after that; and again during annaprashna (when the child first takes solid food).

O! Pious one! Now I will tell you the procedures for meditation, puja and stotras to Bhagawati Devsena. Listen with full attention. This is described in the Kautumshakha. I had the privilege of hearing it from the mouth of Dharm Dev himself. First one should prepare the kalash, instal the shalgram and make an image (putlika) on the trunk of a banyan tree or a wall, and then perform the puja to Shudha Swaroopini Bhagawati Devsena. The meditation should be – "This Devi who grants beautiful children, auspiciousness and mercy, is the Mother of the Universe. Her complexion is fair like a white champa flower, and She is decorated with jewels and ornaments. I worship this embodiment of purity and holiness, Bhagawati Devsena". Then offer pushpanjali and take the moolamantra. Offer water for washing the Feet, for rinsing the mouth; for sipping; perfumes, flowers, lamps and various naivedya and fruits. After this, one must chant the mantra Om Hrim Shashti Devyai Swaha.

After that with peaceful attention one must sing Stutis, and then bow down and offer pranaam to the Devi. This stotra which grants fruits is written in the Saam Ved. Brahmaji has said that the person who chants the eight syllable mantra one lakh times, definitely gets blessed with a child. Munivar. Now listen to the stotra which grants all desires, and which is concealed in the Vedas.

Pranaams to Devi. Pranaams to Maha Devi. Obeisance to Shanth Swaroopini Bhagawati Siddha. Obeisance again and again to Shubha, Devsena and Bhagawati Shashti, Varad, Putrada, Dhanada, Sukhada and Moksh Prada and Bhagawati Shashti, I worship thee again and again. I offer namaskar to Siddha Swaroopini Bhagawati Shashti, O! Devi! Who gives meaning to the names

Maya, Siddha, Yogini, Sara, Sharda and Paradevi – I offer obeisance again and again. To that Devi who is the ruler of children; who grants auspiciousness and who grants fruits of good actions, I offer namaskars again and again. I offer obeisance again and again, to that Devi who gives easy darshan to Her devotees, who acknowledges and accepts pujas, and who is the beloved of Swami Kartikeya. I offer namaskar to that Devi who is always worshipped by human beings; who is ready to protect the devas, and who is the embodiment of Purity and Truth. O Bhagawati Shashti, who is devoid of violence and anger, I offer obeisance again and again. Sureshwari! Please grant me wealth, a good wife, and beautiful children. O! Maheshwari! Please grant me honour, victory over my enemies, and success. I worship the Devi who grants wealth and glory. O Most Worshipped One! Please give land, give subjects, give pure knowledge, give auspiciousness, and give victory. I offer pranaams again and again, to Devi Shashti.

After performing pujas and singing stotras, Maharaj Priyavrat was blessed with a son. Brahman! One who sings or listens to this stotra for one year, gets blessed with a child who will live long. He who performs puja to the Devi for one year, gets rid of all his sins. Women who have no children; who give birth to dead children, or who give birth to only one child, can receive the benevolence of the Devi. By the grace of Bhagawati Devsena they become virtuous, learned, glorious and have a long life. If a child gets sick, the parents should chant these stotras for one month. By the mercy and benevolence of Bhagawati Shashti, the child gets healthy again.

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CHAPTER 9 Episodes 47 – 48

47-48 Story of Bhagawati Mangalchandi, and Manasa Devi

Bhagwan Narayan says – Brahmaputra Narad! I have told you the story of Shashti Devi. Now listen to the story of Bhagawati Mangalchandi, and also the puja procedure. I heard this from Dharm Dev. The Devi who grants glory, majesty and auspiciousness is known as Devi Mangalchandi. She is even worshipped by Bhoomi Putra Mangal, and for this reason also She is Mangalchandi. In the clan of Manu there was a king called Mangal. Prithvi consisting of Seven Dweeps (islands) was in his domain, and he worshipped Her as the presiding deity of his kingdom. She is a form of Moolprakriti Bhagawati Jagadeeshwari Durga. She has assumed the form of benevolence and compassion, and is very dear to women.

This great form of the Devi was first worshipped by Bhagwan Shankar. Brahmin! This story took place during the great destruction of a daitya called Tripur. Bhagwan Shankar was in a state of distress. The daitya had pushed and dropped down the conveyance of Lord Shankar. Then Brahma and Vishnu advised and instigated Him, and He began to worship Bhagawati Durga, who was verily Devi Mangalchandi. Only Her appearance was different. The Devi was pleased, and appeared before Bhagwan Shankar, and said –

“Prabho! You should not fear. The Lord of all, Bhagwan Shri Hari Himself will assume the form of Rishab. O Rider of Rishab! I will assume the form of Yudh Shakti (energy of victory) and fight beside you. Then with the combined energies of Your Self, Shri Hari and Me, You will be able to vanquish the daitya and kill him.”

Munivar! After this the Devi removed Herself from His sight, and immediately the Lord Shankar got filled with the energy of the Devi. Using the weapon given by Shri Hari, Bhagwan Shankar overpowered the daitya and killed him. Then all the devatas and maharishis began to sing stutis to Bhagwan Shankar. Flowers rained down on Bhagwan Shankar, and Brahma and Shri Hari blessed Him. Then Bhagwan Shankar took a ritual bath and began to offer puja to Bhagawati Mangalchandi. He offered water for washing the feet, for rinsing the mouth; water for sipping; rich clothes, flowers; chandan; different kinds of naivedya; sacrifice; ornaments, sringar items, bow and arrow; ground pulses; honey, ambrosia; and variety of fruits. He also arranged bhajans; dancing; music and chanting of names. Then uttering the mantra prescribed in the Shukla Yajurveda, He meditated on Bhagawati Mangalchandi. Narad! While offering the precious ingredients of puja, Bhagwan Shankar uttered the following Moolamantra –

“Om Hrim Shrim Klim Sarvapujyaye Devi Mangalachandike Hun Hun Phad Swaha”

This mantra of twentyone syllables is as effective in granting prayers as Kalpavriksh. This mantra becomes efficacious after repeating it ten lakh times.

Brahman! Now listen to the meditation procedure, which is contained in the vedas.

“The eternally youthful Bhagawati Mangalchandika always appears to be a sixteen year old girl. She is pure and beautiful, and Her lips are as red as the bimba fruit. Her face is as fresh as the lotus which blooms in autumn. Her complexion is fair like the champa flower. Her eyes are like the Krishna Kamal. This Devi is always eager to fulfil all wishes and requirements for nourishment

and sustenance. For all who are floundering in the dark seas of samsara, She is a shining beacon. I worship Her forever and ever". Mune! This is the dhyan procedure. Now listen to the sthavan.

Mahadevji said:- Jaganmata Bhagawati Mangalchandike! You demolish all adversities and obstacles; and You are always ready to grant joy and auspiciousness. Please protect me, protect me. O! Generous and belevolent Devi! You are called Mangaldayika; Shubha; Mangaldaksha; Mangala; Mangalahra, and Sarvamangal mangala! Devi! It is Your nature to grant auspiciousness to simple and holy devotees. You are safe haven for all. Mangalgraha (planet Mars) has made You His ruler and performed puja to you on Mangalvar (Tuesday). King Mangal of the Manu clan worships You. O Mangalaadhishtatri Devi! You are auspiciousness for the auspicious. All the auspiciousness of the world is at your command. You give to all auspiciousness equal to moksha. O Devi! You who are worshipped on Mangalvar always grant the joy of auspiciousness. You are the support of all the auspiciousness of the world and the source.

Using this stotra Bhagwan Shankar worshipped Devi Mangalchandika. He had performed the puja on Mangalvar (Tuesday). In this way, Devi Mangalchandika was first worshipped by Bhagwan Shankar. The second person to worship Her was Mangal graha; the third was Raja Mangal; and the fourth time She was worshipped by ladies on a Tuesday. The fifth time She was worshipped by many who desired auspiciousness. Then gradually, She was worshipped in all the worlds by devatas, Munis, Manu and human beings.

He who sings this stotra, or listens to it with pure attention, gets blessed with auspiciousness. Bad luck and inauspiciousness do not come in his vicinity. He

gets blessed with good children and grandchildren, and sees auspiciousness in everything.

Bhagwan Narayan says: Narad! I have completed the stories of Devi Shashti and Devi Mangalchandika. Now I will tell you the story of Manasa Devi which I heard from Dharma Dev. Having been born out of the manas (mind) of Kashyapji, she got the name Manasa. This Devi, who dwells in the atma, performed tapasya with attention on Parabrahma Bhagwan Shri Krishna for three yugas. Seeing Her garments in a time-worn and ragged condition, Param Prabhu Parameshwar Gopipati Shri Krishna gave Her the name Jarat Karu. He also fulfilled all her desires. He accepted her puja and Himself offered puja to Her. After being worshipped in heaven; She went to Brahmalok and from there to Bhoomandal (earth) and Pataal (nether world). On earth She began to be worshipped as Gauri, and was called as Jagat Gauri. As She imbibed teachings from Bhagwan Shiva, She is also called Shaivi. She continuously worships Bhagwan Vishnu, and is called Vaishnavi. During the Yagya of Raja Janmejay, it was She who arranged protection of the Nagas (serpents), and for this she is called Nageshwari, and Nagbhagini. And because she destroyed the effects of venom, She is called Vish-hari. From Bhagwan Shankar She got Yogasiddhis and is called Siddha Yogini. As She got supreme knowledge and yoga from Bhagwan Shankar, She is called Mrit-Sanjivani and Mahagyanyuta. This great Tapasvini Devi is the mother of Munivar Aastik and is also called Aastikmata.

Munivar Jaratkaru was a mahatma; and a great yogi. The world worshipped him. He married Manasa Devi and She came to be known as Jaratkaru-priya.

She is worshipped in this world by these twelve names – Jaratkaru, Jagatgauri, Manasa, Siddhayogini, Vaishnavi, Nagbhagini, Shaivi, Nageshwari, Jaratkaru-priya, Aastikmata Vishhari, Mahagyanyuta.

The person who chants these names during pujas; and his descendants; conquer their fear of snakes. If one finds snakes in the sleeping quarters; if a house is full of snakes; or if any area becomes dangerous because of poisonous snakes, one has to take these twelve holy names and he will get rid of the fear of snakes. This is the absolute truth. The one who regularly sings these names causes serpents to fear him and run away. If these twelve sacred names are chanted ten lakh times, it becomes siddha (effective). The one who achieves this siddhi can consume venom without being poisoned; can wear serpents as ornaments; and can also ride serpents. He also gets the great and auspicious blessing of being in the company of Bhagwan Vishnu day and night.

Munivar! Now I will tell you the puja procedure for Puja to Devi Manasi; and the Dhyan as given in the Sam Veda. Listen carefully.

"Bhagawati Manasa is as fair and white as the champa flower. Her form is decorated with jewelled ornaments. She is dressed in divine garments and wears a serpent as Her sacred thread. She is endowed with Nirmal Vidya and is the foremost scholar. She is the ruler of those who have acquired siddhas. I worship this Siddha Swaroopini Bhagawati Manasa".

After meditating thus one must utter the Moolamantra and perform the puja. Many varieties of Naivedya; precious oils and pastes for anointing; rare perfumes, and fragrant flowers should be used as offerings. While the offerings are being made, the Moolamantra should be read. If this mantra of twelve syllables becomes siddha, it grants all desires, like the Kalpavriksh. The Moolamantra is –

OM HRIM SHRIM KLIM AIM MANASADEVYAI SWAHA

This mantra becomes siddha after repeating it with pure attention, five lakh times. The person who achieves this siddha can drink venom like nectar. He can be compared to Dhanvantari (the divine physician).

Brahman! On this auspicious day of Sankranti, the person who takes a ritual bath; respectfully invites Bhagawati Manasa with Avahan and performs puja to Her, and on Panchami Day meditates upon Her and offers sacrifice; he most definitely receives wealth, children, and honour. Mahabhag! I have completed the meditation and puja procedures. Now I will tell you an incident, exactly as I heard it from Dharm Dev.

It happened in ancient times. All beings on earth were besieged by snakes. Everyone went to Munivar Kashyap for protection. Kashyapi was also terrified but with the assistance of Brahmaji he used mantras. Brahmaji was his instructor and the seed mantras were as per the Vedas. In addition to this, Brahmaji produced from His mind a beautiful Devi and made Her the presiding deity of this mantra. Her name was Manasa because she was born from the mind of Brahma during tapasya. As a maiden she left for the Dham of Bhagwan Shankar. After reaching Kailash She reverently sang stutis to Bhagwan Chandrashekhar. She continued for one thousand years. Only then was Bhagwan Ashutosh pleased. Mune! Bhagwan Shankar was so pleased that He instructed Her in the highest Nirmal Vidya. He taught Her the Sam Ved, and also the wish-fulfilling Kalpavriksh-roop Ashtakshar mantra of Bhagwan Shri Krishna (the eight syllable mantra). The mantra is like this: Lakshmibeej; Mayabeej and Kaambeej are used in the beginning, then the Holy name Krishna with the nasal sound “angey”, and ending with Namaha.

OM SHRIM HRIM KLIM KRISHNAANGYA NAMAHA

Munikumari Mansa also received from Bhagwan Shankar the Trilokya-mangal Kavach; the process of Puja, procedure for Vedic Purashcharan (performing a sacrifice, or repeating the name of a deity with fixed attention), and the priceless mantra. She then prayed and got permission to go to Pushkar Kshetra and perform tapasya. She went to the sacred Pushkar, and for three yugas She meditated and did tapasya with attention on Parabrahma Bhagwan Shri Krishna. She acquired siddhi. Bhagwan Shri Krishna manifested and gave Her a darshan. The most benevolent lord turned His glance on the young maiden. Then He made others offer puja to Her, and He Himself also worshipped Her. Then He granted this boon – "Devi! Accept pujas that offered to you on earth." Then Bhagwan Shri Krishna removed Himself from Her sight.

In this way Manasa Devi was first worshipped by Bhagwan Shri Krishna. Later She was worshipped by Shankar, Kashyap, the Devatas, Munis, Manu, Nagas, and human beings. Then Kashyapji arranged Her marriage to Muni Jaratkaru, who was a great Yogi. After his marriage he started tapasya. One day, in the holy land of Pushkar, under a banyan tree, he rested his head on the lap of Devi Jaratkaru and fell asleep. He was still asleep when the sun began to set. Devi Manasa was virtuous, as well as a faithful wife. She realised that for a dwija (twice born realised soul) the evening prayers and rituals were very important. If she allowed him to keep on sleeping, his failure to perform sandhya would render him unholy, and a sinner. Reasoning thus, she woke her husband from his deep sleep. Mune! When Muni Jaratkaru awoke, he was filled with anger. The Muni said – "Sadhvi! I was sleeping peacefully. Why did you disturb my sleep. A wife who maltreats her husband loses all the punyas that she may have earned by doing tapasya, fasting and works of charity. She will never enjoy the fruits. If a woman does puja to her husband it is equal to worshipping Bhagwan Shri Krishna. To a virtuous and faithful wife, it is Bhagwan Shri Hari who presides as the husband. All acts of charity, yagyas,

visiting holy places, fasting, tapasya, renunciation, truth and Dev Pujan, cannot compare to even one sixteenth part of honouring and worshipping a husbad. The woman who is fortunate to be living in Bharatvarsh and worshipping her husband, goes with her husband to Vaikunth, and gets a place at the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Hari. Sadhvi! The woman who is born in a low clan, and disrespects and dishonours her husband, and speaks rudely and insultingly to him, goes to a hell called Kumbhipak and stays as long and the sun and moon exist. After that she gets a rebirth in the house of a chandal and is deprived of the happiness of a good husband and sons. After saying these things the muni became silent. The chaste and virtuous Devi Manasa began to tremble with fear. She spoke to her husband:

Manasa Devi said – O fortunate one, who observes the highest moral life. Fearing that you would miss your evening worship I woke you. That is my mistake. Then she fell at his feet and began to weep. The muni was preparing to pronounce a curse on Surya Deva. Seeing this, Surya Deva came there with his wife and pleaded.

Bhagwan Surya said: O! Muni! You are a most powerful Brahmin. This virtuous lady woke you only to ensure that you did not miss your evening puja. I have come here to tell you that you should not curse me. The heart of a brahmin should be as soft as butter. If a brahmin desires, he can even create the world. That is the power he has.

Muni Jaratkaru was pleased. Surya Deva took his blessings and returned to his abode. In order to fulfil his desire,the Muni Jaratkaru renounced his wife. She was grief stricken. She put her attention on her Gurudev Shankar Bhagwan; the Deity of her choice Brahma Deva, Shri Hari and her father Kashyapji. In an instant Bhagwan Shri Krishna, Shankar Bhagwan, Brahma and Kashyap Muni

arrived on the scene. The almighty, attributeless Lord Shri Krishna, was the deity worshipped by Muni Jaratkaru. Beholding Him the muni offered obeisance and bowed in adoration again and again, and sang stutis praising the Lord. Then Muni Jaratkaru offered obeisance to Bhagwan Shankar, Brahma and Kashyap Muni. He humbly inquired – O Great and Auspicious Gods! What has caused You to come to my humble abode.

Shri Brahma, after offering obeisance to the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Krishna said: "Mune! This wife of yours, Manasi, is a saintly and pious lady. If you are thinking of abandoning Her you must first give Her the status of motherhood so that She can fulfil Her dharma. Once a woman begets a son, she can be renounced. The man who renounces his beloved wife, even before she conceives and gives birth to a child, loses all his punyas faster than water flowing through a sieve.

Narad! After hearing these words of Shri Brahma, Munivar Jaratkaru chanted a mantra and awakened his yogic powers. Then he put his hand on the Nabhi of his wife Manasi and said: - "Manase! From this womb you will beget a son. That son will be foremost among men who have conquered their senses; dharmic; replete with Nirmal Vidya, lustrous; tapasvi, successful; victorious; virtuous; foremost among scholars of vedas, yogas and sciences; a Vishnubhakt, and the pride of his clan. When such a child is born, the ancestors dance with joy. The wife who observes dharmas, who speaks kindly, and who is modest and amiable, she is beloved. The wife who is deeply religious, who begets many sons, and who preserves the lineage, is called the protector of the clan. The one who generates devotion to Bhagwan Shri Hari, and who is always eager to give happiness, that is a true friend. If this friend is the one who demonstrates and guides you towards Bhagwan Shri Hari, he can also be called as "Father". True motherhood lies in imparting Nirmal Vidya to

the child while cutting the umbilical cord, and teaching detachment. The one who is compassionate is the one who removes the fear of Yamraj. The guru who can confer the mantra of Bhagwan Shri Hari is the one who himself is steeped in the bhakti of Bhagwan Shri Hari. The guru of meditation is the one who makes you worthy of putting your attention on the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. At the time of dissolution, the whole creation including Brahma, gets destroyed; and then there is the grand re-creation and rebirth.

The essence of the vedas and yagyas is that Bhagwan Shri Hari is to be worshipped. This is the principle of all principles. Outside of this, all else is a mockery and falsehood. I have imparted all this knowledge to you, because that is the duty of a husband. The one who gives knowledge and frees you of all bondages is the ideal husband, while the one who puts you into attachment is actually your enemy. The guru who denies the knowledge of worship of Bhagwan Shri Hari is called Shishyaghaati, or, the one who has betrayed his disciple, because he could not teach his disciple detachment. If one cannot free someone from the anguish and distress of attachment and bondage, how can such a person be called a guru, a mother, or a friend. The ancient and eternal path to Bhagwan Shri Hari is full of bliss and joy. If one cannot guide you to that path, he is no friend or relation. Therefore, O Sadhvi! Take to the path of devotion and worship of the primordial being. It will dissolve all karmas. O beloved! Forgive me for renouncing you. Virtuous women are compassionate and forgiving. Being stationed on Sattwa Guna they have no anger. O Devi! I am going to the sacred Pushkar to perform tapasya. You also may leave. As a person who has renounced everything and is totally detached, my only desire is to become completely absorbed in the meditation of the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Shri Krishna.

Hearing these words of Muni Jaratkaru, Devi Manasi was overcome with sadness. Her eyes filled with tears. With gentleness and decorum she addressed her most beloved husband –

She said – “Prabho! I disturbed your sleep. But it is not a mistake for which you should renounce me. Therefore it is my prayer that whenever and wherever I remember you, you will give me your darshan. For a virtuous wife, a husband is more important than a thousand sons. A husband is dearer than life, and that is how wise people have named the husband as ‘beloved’. Just as the attention of parents are on children, Vaishnav’s on Shri Hari; one-eyed person’s on eyes; thirsty person’s on water; hungry person’s on food; learned person’s on Scriptures; and the trader’s attention is always on money; so also a faithful wife’s attention is always on her husband.” Saying this she fell at the feet of her husband.

Munivar Jaratkaru was an ocean of compassion. Overcome by kindness he embraced her. A flood of tears flowed out of his eyes and drenched her. She did not move, fearing the impending separation. Then some inner enlightenment freed them from the pangs of separation.

Then Muni Jaratkaru convinced Manasi, and left for his tapasya on the Lotus Feet of Paramatma Bhagwan Shri Krishna. Manasi also left for Kailash, where she went to the temple of her guru Bhagwan Shri Shankar. She was distraught with grief. Shree Parvati consoled her. Bhagwan Shankar also blessed her with pure knowledge. It was a Tuesday. All the celestial bodies were in auspicious formation. Manasi gave birth to a child who was a partial incarnation of Bhagwan Narayan; and who would be the Guru of yogis and scholars. Whilst still in the womb, he had received pure knowledge from Bhagwan Shankar. This qualified him to become the guru of yogis and sages. Bhagwan Shankar

performed the naming ceremony and other auspicious functions. The boy was most fortunate to be instructed in the Vedas by Bhagwan Shri Shiva Himself. Precious gems and crowns were distributed to brahmins. Shree Parvati also distributed lakhs of cows, and precious gems to brahmins. Bhagwan Shiva Himself taught him the Four Vedas and other branches of knowledge. In addition Mritunjay also gave him the highest knowledge and this awakened in the boy, a deep respect for his guru. Since the child was born in the absence of a father, his name was Aastik.

Munivar Jaratkaru took permission from Shri Shiva and left for Pushkar to do tapasya on the Lotus Feet of Bhagwan Vishnu. That great tapasvi obtained the Mahamantra from Paramatma Shri Krishna, and continued to do tapasya for many ages. Then, with the intention of offeing obeisance to Bhagwan Shankar, the Muni proceeded to holy Kailash. After paying obeisance, he remained there for some time. It happened that the boy Aastik was also in that area. The most gentle and noble Devi Manasi had come with her son to the ashram of her father Muni Kashyap. Seeing his daughter with a son, the Muni's happiness knew no bounds. He celebrated by distributing precious gems to all the brahmins. For the wellbeing of his grandson he offered food to the brahmins. Even Diti, Aditi, and his other wives were very pleased to see Manasi. She continued to live in her father's ashram for a long time. I am now going to tell you this story. Listen carefully.

Thereafter, Raja Parikshit, son of Abhimanyu, was cursed by a brahmin. By the workings of fate, he committed an action that caused the brahmin to pronounce a curse on him. The curse was, that on the seventh day the king would be bitten by the serpent Takshak. It happened that on the seventh day Takshak bit him and he died. He left his earthly body and went to Parlok. Janmejay performed the last rites for his father. Mune, after this, Maharaj

Janmeyjay started a great sarp-satra – (serpent sacrifice), and snakes in large numbers were killed. A terrified Takshak ran to Indra for protection. The entire brahmin community was preparing to kill Takshak. Indra took the Devas and went to Devi Manasi. They worshipped Her and sang stutis. In answer to their prayer, Munivar Aastik was instructed by his mother to attend the yagya of Raja Janmejay. He prayed to the king to spare the lives of Indra and Takshak. The brahmins agreed, and the king, who was most compassionate, vowed to stop the killings. The closing ceremony of the yagya was performed. The brahmins were given many gifts. After that the brahmins, the Devas, and the munis went to Devi Manasi, and worshipped Her with pujas and stutis. Indra gathered auspicious ingredients and offered Puja to Devi Manasi. He performed Shodshopchar or sixteen methods of worship --- Avahan, Aasan, Ardhya, Paadya, Aachman, Madhupark, Snaan, Vastrabharan, Yagyopvit, Gandh, Pushp, Deep, Naivedya , Tamboor, Parikrama, and Vandana. After thus worshipping the Devi, they took permission from Shri Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and all the Devas and brahmins left for their abodes.

Mune! I have completed all the episodes of this story. Now what would you like to know.

Naradji said:- “Prabho! Please tell me what Stotras were used by Indra to please Devi Manasi. Also tell me the sequence of the puja performed by him.

Bhagwan Narayan says: - “Narad! Devraj Indra took the ceremonial bath, rinsed his mouth as purification, and wore two new clothes. He humbly invited Devi Manasi and offered Her a jewelled Singhasan to sit on.Then with great bhakti he brought the water of the Holy Ganga in golden vessels and performed abhishek of the Devi. Hen he offered two divine silk garments for

Her to wear. He applied fragrant sandal paste on Her divine limbs, and offered water for sipping, and washing Her Lotus Feet.

Then he worshipped the six gods – Shri Ganesha, Surya, Agni, Vishnu, Shiva and Gauri; before worshipping Devi Manasi. Then, uttering the ten syllabled mantra –

Om Hrim Shrim Manasa Devyaii Swaha

He made all the sacred puja offerings to Her. By the support of Shri Vishnu, Indra was able to sustain his attention and bhakti throughout the puja. He also ordered many kinds of instrumental music. Flowers were showered upon Devi Manasi. Then he got permission from Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva; and with tears of joy and bhakti, he sang stutis to Devi Manasi. Indra said ---

“Devi! You are foremost among virtuous and faithful wives, and the most excellent Devi. I desire to sing your praises, but this requires prowess of great magnitude, which I do not possess. O Devi Prakrite! A fitting description of Your Stotras and Your Divine Qualities are given in the Vedas. I am least equipped or worthy to sing Your praises. You are the embodiment of Pure Truth. You are beyond anger and revenge. Munivar Jaratkaru did not succeed in renouncing you even though he sought your help.You are as sacred to me as mother Aditi. You have the compassion of a sister and the forgiving nature of a mother. Sureshwari! By your grace you have protected me and my wife and sons. May my affection and gratitude overflow. Jagadambike! You are the eternal Devi. Even though you are being worshipped every moment in every part of the universe, still I beg permission to worship You. Sureshwari! If a man worships You during the Sankranti of the month of Aashad (a planet’s passage from one sign of the zodiac to another, i.e. fourth month of the year when the

sun enters Gemini), called Naaga Panchami, then he is blessed with many sons, grandsons and wealth. This is the abolute truth! He also becomes successful, victorious, a learned scholar, and a virtuous person. The ignorant and wretched man, who denies himself the privilege of performing your puja, and instead scorns and slanders; in his vicinity Lakshmi does not wait, and he lives in constant fear of snakes. You are verily Sarvalakshmi (the embodiment of all aspects of Lakshmi). In Vaikunth You are called Kamalalaya (goddess of wealth). This muni Jaratkaru is a partial incarnation of Bhagwan Narayan Himself. Out of the power of His tapasya and His lustre, your father created you. You were created for our protection, and that is how you got the name Manasa Devi. Devi, it is Your own shakti that you got yogis powers. Please permit us to worship You. The devas continuously perform pujas to You, and wise and learned men have identified You as Devi Manasa. You are the personification of truth; You are easily obtainable by tapasya and single minded devotion.

Mune! After wholeheartedly singing Her praises and worshipping Devi Manasi, Indra left for his Bhavan, which was elaborately decorated.

Devi Manasi, together with her son, lived in the ashram of her father Muni Kashyapji for many years. The entire fraternity worshipped Her and honoured Her. Bramhan! Then from Go-lok came the sacred cow Surabhi, and bathed Manasi Devi in her sacred milk. While performing this puja, she also disclosed the most precious and secret knowledge. After being worshipped thus by Surabhi and the Devatas, Devi Manasi left for Swarglok.

This stotra is called Punyabeej (the seed for auspiciousness). The person who, with great devotion, reads this stotra and worships Devi Manasi; he and his tribe have nothing to fear from snakes. When this mantra becomes siddh

(effective), even poison turns into nectar. This stotra becomes effective and powerful when it is repeated five lakh times with total attention and devotion. Then such a person can lie on a snake or ride on a snake, without any danger to his life.

CHAPTER 9 Episode 49

49 Story of the Primordial Cow Surabhi-devi.

Naradji asked: Brahmin! Who was that Surabhi Devi who came from Go-Lok? I desire to know how she came into being.

Bhagwan Narayan says: - Narad! Devi Surabhi first manifested in Go Lok. She is the primordial cow, the presiding deity of cows, the mother of all cows; the protectress of cows; and the foremost of all cows. Mune! Of all cows, she was the first to be born in Brindavan. I will tell you the story. Listen carefully.

It happened once that Radhapati, the great sportsman Shri Krishna, and Shree Radha, surrounded by their gopis and gopas went to Brindavan. Shri Krishna feigned thirst for milk and stopped in a lonely part of Brindavan. Then from His Left Side, He created the cow Surahi together with a beautiful calf. The name of the calf was Manorath. The cows udders were heavy with milk. Immediately Sudama, friend of Shri Krishna, got a new pot and drew milk from the cow. That milk was a nectar which neutralises birth and death. Shri Krishna drank the milk. Then the pot fell from his hand and broke. The milk spilled on to the earth. Immediately it formed a lake, sixteen hundred miles long and sixteen hundred miles wide. It is this lake which is known as Ksheer-sarovar in Go Lok. It has become a place of recreation for Shree Radha and the gopis and gopas. The banks of the lake are studded with precious stones. By His desire, Shri Krishna created countless Kamadhenu cows in that place. As many cows were created, that same number of gopas came out of the pores of Surabhi. Those cows had calves, and a countless number of cows came into being. In this way the entire cow population came out of Surabhi devi.

Mune! At that time Shri Krishna did puja to devi Surabhi. After that She was worshipped in Triloki (the three worlds). At the command of Shri Krishna, Devi Surabhi was worshipped on the day after Deepawali. I heard this from my own father Dharm. O fortunate one! Listen. I will tell you the meditation, stotra, moola mantra and sequence of puja performance to Devi Surabhi.

Om Surabhyai Namaha ---- This is the six syllabled mantra of Devi Surabhi.

The chanting of this mantra one lakh times makes it efficacious and it works like a Kalpataru (wish fulfilling tree). The meditation and puja procedures are described in the Yajur Ved –

"To the one who is the bestower of Riddhi (wealth and prosperity), Vriddhi (enhancement), Mukti (liberation) and who fulfils all desires; the one who is verily Lakshmi-swaroopa; the female companion of Shree Radha, the presiding deity of all cows, who grants the prayers of her bhaktas; and who causes the world to become purified; to that Bhagawati Surabhi I offer obeisance. I worship the kalash, the forehead of the cow, the pillar for tying the cow; the Shalgram image; water and fire. This puja is done on the day after Deepawali. He who performs this puja is blessed."

It happened once during the Boar Incarnation, Devi Surabhi stopped giving milk. There was absence of milk in the three lokas. In desperation the gods went to Brahmalok and began to sing stutis to Devi Surabhi. Even Indra took the permission of Brahmadeva, and started singing stutis to Devi Surabhi.

Indra said: I offer namaskars to the Devi. Obeisance to Mahadevi Surabhi, again and again. Jagadambike! You are the primordial cause of cows. Obeisance to you. Namaskar to the one who is dear to Shree Radha. Obeisance

to Devi Padma-ansha (partial incarnation) of Shree Lakshmi. Namaskar to Shri Krishnapriya. Obeisance to the creator of cows. Namaskar to that Devi Surabhi who is always eager to provide milk, wealth, and wisdom to the universe. Obeisance to the Devi who is also decorated by the names Shubha, Subhadra, and Goprada. Obeisance to the Devi who grants success, fame and dharmas.

These praises and stutis so pleased Jagadjannani Bhagawati Surabhi, that she immediately manifested in Brahmalok. That eternal Devi granted a rare boon to Devraj Indra, and left for Go-lok. The devatas also returned to their abodes. Narad! After that there was a flood of milk on earth. Out of the milk came ghee; and this ghee was offered in yagyas; and the Devas received satisfaction from the offerings.

The person who faithfully and devotedly sings this holiest of stotras, gets blessed with possession of cows, wealth, fame and begets many children. As fruits, he gets opportunities in all yagyas. Such a person finally enters and spends a long time in His service. He does not have to re-enter this earth. He becomes the son of Brahmaji and lives in Brahmalok forever.

CHAPTER 9 Episode 50

50 Description of mantras, meditation, puja procedures and songs of praise to Bhagawati Shree Radha and Shree Durga.

Naradji said – Prabho! I desire to know that which is most secret in the shrutis which teaches the different forms of worship to please Bhagawati Shree Radha and Shree Durga. Munishwar! You have beautifully described both these Devis. Is there anyone who can hear these descriptions and not be overcome with awe and delight. Please tell me the procedures for worshipping these Devis from whom the universes have manifested; who preside and rule over the world; and who grant all desires of their devotees.Bhagwan Narayan says: Narad, listen! I am going to tell you the secrets which are contained in the Vedas. This should not be repeated in the presence of unworthy persons who are not seeking spiritual ascent. This is too precious to be wasted.

When Mool-Prakriti-Swaroopini (material cause of the universe) Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari manifested for creation, She came as two shaktis. Shree Radha – who governs and presides over the life of Shri Krishna; and Shree Durga who presides over His Buddhi (brain). It is these two devis who fix up the rules and control them; and who create impulses and instigations. The Viraat and all the manifested creation, are under their control and direction. Therefore it is of utmost importance to please these Devis at all times.

Narad! First I will tell you the mantra of Shri Radha. Listen with full attention and bhakti. This mantra has been honoured by Brahma, Vishnu and all the Gods. A distinct inflexion should be added to Shri Radha + yayii = Shree Radhayaii Swaha. This magnificent mantra of Bhagawati Shree Radha, enlightens Dharm and Arth. And, in front of this, if one uses the beeja mantra

Hrim, then it becomes the priceless mantra – Shree Radha Vanccha Chintamani mantra

Hrim Shree Radhayaii Swaha

Even those possessing countless heads and tongues, have not succeeded in describing the importance and magnitude of this most sacred Mantra. The first person to utter this mantra was Bhagwan Shri Krishna. At that time Bhagwan Shri Krishna was in Go Lok, and Raas had begun. Then Moolaprakriti Shree Radhadevi initiated Bhagwan Shri Krishna into the chanting of this mantra. Shri Krishna gave this to Shri Vishnu. Shri Vishnu to Viraat Brahma. Brahma to Dharmdev, and Dharmdev gave it to me. That is how, traditionally it is passed on. I continuously utter this mantra, and for this reason I am honoured by the Rishis. Brahma and all the gods eternally worship Bhagawati Radha, because if they do not, they are not authorised to worship Shri Krishna. For this reason it is imperative for all Vishnu bhakts, to worship Bhagawati Shree Radha. She presides over the Praan (life) of Shri Krishna, and therefore He is governed by Her. She is the Goddess of Raas. If She withdraws, He cannot exist. As She is the Ra (Energy) + Dha (which sustains) She is called Radha. I am the presiding sage for all mantras to Shree Radha, the metre is Gayatri, and the presiding deity is Shree Radha. The main seed is Tarabeej, and Shaktibeej.

Mune! After this one should meditate on Raaseshwari Bhagawati Shree Radha in the ancient way prescribed in the Samaveda. The complexion of Bhagawati Shree Radha is like the white champa flower, and Her face is more beautiful than the full moon of the month of Ashwin. Her lustre is brighter than countless moons. Her eyes are like a lotus petal. Her lips are as red as the ripe bimba fruit. Her waist and hips are ornamented with fine gold chains. Her teeth are more delicate than jasmine buds. She is robed in fine, divine silk

garments. Her face is wreathed in radiant smiles. She is eternally youthful, like a twelve year old maiden. She is the ocean of love. She is always concerned about Her bhaktas, and eager to grant prayers. Her hair is entwined with garlands of mallika and malathi (fragrant varieties of jasmine), which give Her an ethereal beauty. All Her limbs are beautiful in shape and form. She presides over the Raas dance and grants safe harbour and protection to all. She is eternally young; and as the goddess of the gopis, She sits on a bejewelled throne. This Parameshwari Devi is the ruler of the Life Force of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, and this description of Her is contained in the Vedas.

After meditating on Bhagawati Radha in this way, you must arrange a Shalgram image, instal a Kalash and draw the mystical eight-armed diagram (yantra) and humbly invite Shree Radha and obtain Her permission to perform puja. The procedure is as follows:

First the Avahanam. Then offer Her a seat and a footstool, while chanting the Moolamantra.

Then offer Paadya (pure water) for Her Lotus Feet.

Then precious and valuable ingredients should be placed on the Forehead.

The sacred water for rinsing the mouth should be offered; and three times water should be offered for sipping.

After this the madhupaak (mixture of ghee-honey-curds-sugar and kesar) and a milch cow should be offered to Shree Radha.

Then perform abhishekh – apply oil and fragrant pastes, and wash it away. Rub with soft cloth and then offer costly clothes fit for a goddess. Then decorate

and adorn the beautiful goddess with priceless ornaments and divine perfumes. Offer fragrant and beautiful flowers and garlands and sandalwood garland. Significant flowers like parijat and lotus and tulasi in final surrender is to be offered.

After this one must offer adoration (archana) to the relations and attendants of Parameshwari Shree Radha. In the middle of the East, South East and North West Quarter, the maidens of that region must be honoured. Then the eight branched yantra must be brought forward and worshipped – Malawati in the front, Madhavi on the South East, Ratnamala in the South; Susheela in the South West, Sashikala in the West, Parijata on the North West; Paravati in the North, and in the North East the beautiful Priyakaarini.

The wise and knowledgeable man will worship the Devi in all Her aspects in all these directions. Within the platform, just around the yantra, preside Brahma and all the devatas; on the earth in front of the yantra, the Digpals (guardian deities of all the quarters) should also be worshipped along with spear and other weapons. This is how the puja has to be performed to Bhagawati Radha. This is a protection. This is a protection for the devis and devatas already mentioned.

Then one must offer perfume and other precious fragrant substances; and chant the thousand names of the Devi. This continuous chanting of Her thousand names so pleases the Devi, that the person doing the puja becomes worthy of living forever in Go Lok. The one who celebrates the birthday of Shree Radha with great devotion gets blessed with proximity to Devi Radha.

Bhagawati Shri Radha, whose permanent abode is Go Lok, visited Vrindavan for some reason. Here it is imperative that Her holy names should be chanted

correctly and in the proper sequence. It is known as Purascharan (with fixed attention). A tenth part of this mantra should be chanted for havan, which should be performed with milk, honey, ghee, other tasty offerings and sesame seeds.

Naradji said:- Mune! Now please tell me in detail, those stotras which will please Bhagawati Shree Radha. Bhagwan Narayan started –

O Bhagawati Parameshwari! You preside over the Raasmandali. Namaskar! Raaseshwari! You are dearer to Bhagwan Shri Krishna than life itself. I offer you Pranaam and Namaskar. Karunarnave! You are the ocean of compassion. You are the giver of birth to Triloki! Namaskaar to You. Kindly be pleased with me. Brahma, Vishnu and all the gods worship your charan kamal (Lotus Feet)! Jagaddambe! You rule the universe as Saraswati, Savitri, Shankari, Ganga, Padmavati, Shashti and Mangalchandika! I offer obeisance to You, again and again.

O Tulasi rupe! Obeisance to You. Lakshmi-swaroopini! Namaskaar to You. Bhagawati Durge! Obeisance to you again and again. Sarva roopini Obeisance to you again and again! Janani! Obeisance to you again and again. You are Mool-Prakriti-swaroopa and Ocean of Compassion, and we worship you. Please rescue us from this worldly ocean of illusion. The one who sings this stotra with deep devotion, morning-noon-and evening, gets the blessing that nothing is unattainable for him. When he leaves this earthly body, he gets a place in the most holy Go Lok. This is a most secret knowledge, and should not be divulged to unworthy persons.

O Brahmin! Now hear the procedure for performing Puja to the most Divine Bhagawati Shree Durga. Even hearing this, frightens away all calamities and

adversities. There is no single being alive, who does not worship Bhagawati Durga; because She is the Creator and Mother of all, the Preserver and the Destroyer – a most amazing and fantastic combination. Bhagawati Durga is the deity who controls the Brain (Buddhi) and exists within all beings as the Life Force – Antaryami roop. She can deliver you from the most dreadful and formidable dangers, and for this reason She is Durga. She is worshipped eternally by the followers of Shri Shiva and Shri Vishnu. It is by the energy of this Moolprakriti Shri Durga Devi, that the functions of creation, preservation and destruction take place. Now I will describe the most auspicious Navakshar (nine syllable) mantra.

Saraswati beej “Aim”, Bhuvaneshwari beej “Hreem” and Kaambeej “Kleem”

In front of these the primordial sound “Om”, and at the end “Chamundayii Vicchhe” should be added, and chanted thus ---

OM AIIM HREEM KLEEM CHAMUNDAYYI VICCHHE

For those who utter this with total surrender and devotion, it works like a wish-fulfilling tree. This mantra is said to verily be Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra – they are the presiding sages. The metre is Gayatri, Ushnik and Trishtuv (a vedic measurement where a line contains eleven letters). The presiding deities are Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati. The seed is Raktadantika, Durga and Brahmri. The shaktis are Nanda, Shakhambari and Bhima. This mantra is chanted to obtain Dharm, wealth, desire and Moksha.

Aiim Hreem and Kleem are the three beeja mantras; Chamundayyi of four letters and Vicchhe has two. These are the divisions. Using the co-efficients Namaha, Swaha, Vashhat, Hum, Vowshat and Phat, and with abandonment, so that the mantra permeates the Shikha (top knot), both eyes, both ears,

nostrils, mouth, anus and other parts, one has to chant with deepest worship and devotion.

The procedure for meditation.

Meditation on Mahakali – I worship the Devi Bhagawati Mahakali whose beauty is enhanced by Trinetra (three eyes). She bears in Her Hands Khaaq (sword), Chakra, Gada (mace), Baan (arrow) Danush (bow), Parigh (spear), Shool (trident), Bhushundi (an ancient weapon of war) Mastak (a head) and Shankh (conch). She is fully adorned with rich jewels and ornaments, and Her lustre is like a blue sapphire. Also She has ten faces and ten feet. Kamalaasan (one who sits on a lotus) Shri Brahmaji had appealed to this Devi to destroy Madhu and Kaitabh. This is the meditation on Kaambeej Swaroopini Bhagawati Mahakali.

Meditation on Mahalakshmi – I worship Mahishasura Mardini Bhagawati Mahalakshmi, who bears in Her hands a Rosary (akshmala), Pharsa (axe), Gada (mace), Baan (arrow) Vajra (thunderbolt) Padma (lotus), Dhanush (bow), Kundika (pot), Shakti (sword) Khadga (sword) Dhaal (shield) Ghanta (bell) Madhupatra (pot of honey), Trishul (trident), Paash (noose) and Sudarshan Chakra; whose complexion is Arun (colour of dawn) and who is seated on a red lotus, I sing bhajans to that Bhagawati Mahishasura mardini Mahalakshmi.

Meditation on Mahasaraswati – I worship Bhagawati Mahasaraswati who bears in Her hands bell, shool (trident), Hal (plough), Shankh (conch) Moosal (tap root) Chakra, Dhanush (bow) and Baan (arrow); who complexion is as white as a Kundh (jasmine); who killed Shumbh and other daityas; who is the embodiment of Vaani beej and Satchitanand. I worship you again and again.

O learned and wise one! I will now describe the Yantra (mystical diagram) Listen carefully. It should have six corners formed out of two triangles. It should be surrounded by a lotus of eight petals, and again by twentyfour petals. It should be made on the earth. One should meditate on this yantra, on the Shalgram, Kalash, Image of the Devi, worship Surya and then start the puja with full attention and devotion to the Devi. Offer flowers to the seat which is occupied by Jaya, Vijaya and other shaktis. Then offer puja to Brahma and Saraswati seated in the East of the yantra; Shri Hari and Lakshmi seated in the South-western quarter, and Shri Shambhu and Parvati seated in the North-west quarter. It is customary to offer puja to the Lion in the north, and Mahishasura-mardini on the opposite side. Then on after the other, the gods in the six corners are to be worshipped – Nandaja, Raktadanta, Shakhambari, Shiva, Durga, Bhima and Bhramri. In the eight petals Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Vaarahi, Narsinhi, Aindri and Chamunda are to be worshipped with flowers. After this, in the twentyfour outer petals, puja has to be offered to (starting from the eastern side) –

Vishnumaya, Chetana, Buddhi, Nidra, Kshudha, Shanti, Jaati, Lajja, Kshanti, Shraddha, Kirti, Thushti, Pushti, Mata and Bhranti. Wise men also offer worship to the deities in the four corners of the ground – Ganesha, Kshetrapal, Vatuk and Yogini. Outside this, one must worship Indra holding his thunderbolt, and all the devas wuth their weapons. This is the universal procedure for worshipping the Devi. In order to please the Devi all precious, rare and beautiful articles should be used in Her worship. Then keeping in mind the significance and magnitude of the mantra, one should reverently utter the Navarn Mantra. After this one should read with devotion and awe, the Saptashati Stotra (seven hundred verses in praise of the Almighty Mother) which greatly pleases the Devi. There is no other Stotra in the whole of the Trilokas to compare with Saptashati Stotra. It is advisable for humankind to

recite this Stotra every day to please Shree Durga. Then they become the abode of Dharm, Arth, Kaam and Moksh.

O Sage! I have just completed the most sacred description of puja procedure to Bhagawati Shree Durga. Even listening to this gives one complete blessings and satisfacion. All the gods, Bhagwan Shri Hari, Brahma, the principal Munis and Manus, Yogis in their ashrams, and Shree Lakshmi and all the Devis meditate upon Bhagawati Shree Durga. It gives complete fulfilment to life. The fourteen Manus meditated upon the Lotus Feet of Shree Durga and attained the status of Manu. It is by Her grace that the Gods reign in their respective kingdoms. Mune! This entire narration is most secret. In this the Five Aspects of Devi Prakriti and other manifestations have been described. The man who listens to this most sacred narration, acquires four kinds of Purusharth (objects of a man's creation and existence) – energy, industry, strength and vigor. There is no doubt in this. It is the truth, the absolute truth. This has the power to grant children to the childless, and Pure Knowledge to one who seeks. In fact, all wishes are granted to those who listen to this narration during the Navratras. It is the surest way to please Jagaddatri Bhagawati Jagaddamba. The devotee who daily recites even one verse of Saptashati Stotra, attracts the favour of the Devi because this Saptashati Stotra is the best way to please the Devi.

End of Chapter 9

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CHAPTER 10

Chapter 10 - Episode 1

1 The creation of Swayambhuv Manu, his worship of Bhagawati and receiving a boon.

Naradji said: - O Bhagwan Narayan! You who are always eager to help, accept my pranaams. Please tell me about the various eras in which the Devi manifested; the various forms that the Goddess Maheshwari took, and the events and situations that took place. I also desire to know all the details of the ways in which She was worshipped, what pleased Her, and what boons Devi vatsala bestowed on Her bhaktas. Please describe all these things to me.

Bhagwan Narayan said – Maharishi! Listen to Devi Mahatmya : The Magnificence of the Devi, which destroys all evil. It also awakens within the listener, great waves shraddha (reverence), and endows wealth and well being.

The first to manifest was Cause of the Universe – the Father of Creation, Shri Brahmadev out of the Nabhi (lotus) of Lord of the Discus, God of Gods, Shri Hari. O great soul! Shri Brahmaji was endowed with four lustrous faces. Out of his desire power He created Swayambhuv Manu (created out of the mind). Then, from his mind He created Dharmswaroopini Shatroopa and gave her to Manu as a wife. At that time Manuji went to the holy shores of ksheersagar (ocean of milk) to worship the Devi. He installed the Devi on lotuses and worshipped Her with eloquent mantras. He did not eat; he had all his senses in control, and he observed all the protocols of worship. Then he stood on one

leg and meditated, completely conquering anger and lust. He stood immovable and stationary, meditating on the Lotus Feet of Devi Jagaddamba; for a full hundred years. Devi Jaganmayi Jagaddamba was pleased, and appeared before him. The Devi spoke in beautiful tones. – Rajan! Ask for a boon which is very rare and unique, and which would greatly benefit the gods.

Swayambhuv Manu said – O Devi, with large, beautiful eyes. Praise be to You. O You who reign over the hearts of all living beings, praise be to You. You who support the universe; You who are auspiciousness in all auspicious things, I worship You. Just by the movement of Your eyebrows Brahma goes into Creation mode; Bhagwan Vishnu goes into Preservation mode; and Rudra goes into Destruction mode; It is by your appointment that Indra rules Triloki. At Your command Yamraj takes his staff and chastises beings; Varun presides over all marine life, and Kuber controls the wealth of the universe. Agni, Naihrit (southern quarter), Vayu, Ishan and Seshnag are all parts of You, and our Shakti pervades them. O Devi! If you are pleased with me, and wish to give me a boon, then this is my humble prayer. O Shive! It is my sincere desire that there should be no obstacles or negativities to interfere with the process of Creation. Whoever expresses this desire should also get instant fulfilment. O Devi! Whoever listens to this narration should get liberation. All those who narrate this should be blessed with eloquence and effectiveness. May he get enlightenment, become a karmayogi; and be blessed with children and grandchildren. This is my prayer.

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Chapter 10 Episodes 2 – 7

2-7 Devi Bhagawati goes to the Vindhya mountain. Narada describes the greatness of Sumeru to Vindhya, who then tries to put an obstacle in the path of the Sun.

Shree Devi said – Bhumipal (protector of the world). O Powerful One! O King! I grant all your prayers. It is My nature to destroy the principal daityas. My Shakti never fails. The Vaagbhav mantra that you have chanted, and meditated upon, has greatly pleased Me. Your kingdom will be indestructible. You will have many sons to increase your clan. Vats! You will have deep and unwavering bhakti in Me, and in the end you will atain Param Padh (a place near My Lotus Feet)

After bestowing these boons on Swayambhuv Manu, the Devi removed Herself from his sight and retired to the Vindhya mountains. This is the same Vindhya who began to grow and expand in an effort to reach the sky and restrain the movement of the Sun; till Agasthyaji came and stopped him. Munivar the Devi who gave the boon is verily Bhagawati Vindyavaasini, the younger sister of Bhagwan Shri Krishna. Worshipped by all. She resides on the Vindhya Mountains and enhances their beauty.

The Rishis asked – Sootji! Who is this Vindhyachal? Why did he spread himself over the sky and mischievously try to stop the movement of the Sun. Why was it Agasthyaji who prevented him. Kindly tell us all these things.

Sootji says – O Rishis! Of all the mountains, Vindhyachal was the greatest. It was covered with dense forests. The trees were tall and stately; and flowering creepers and vines formed a canopy. The forests were alive with deer, boar, buffalo, tiger, lion, monkeys, rabbit, bear and jackal – all healthy and lively, and

roaming from one end of the forest to the other. Big and small rivers flowed from all sides. Devatas, Gandharvas, Kinnars, Apsaras and others enjoyed the delicious fruits of that forest. It happened once that Devrishi Naradji on his way to the earth, made a stop at this most perfect Vindhyachal Mountain. Upon seeing him, the wise Vindhyachal went to receive him with due protocols. He offered Naradji a special seat, and ceremonial water for sipping and washing of feet. Once the Rishi was seated, Parvatraj spoke.

Vindhyachal said – Devrishi! From where are you coming. When your feet touch my kingdom we get the same auspiciousness and blessings that the earth gets when the Sun perambulates it. Naradji! Tell me all that is on your mind.

Naradji said – Parvatraj! I have just been to Sumeru-giri. I visited the domains of Indra, Agni, Yama and Varun. I saw the countless bhavans (abodes) of all the Lokpaals. I also met Devatas who served all kinds of delicacies.

After that Naradji paid glowing tributes to Himalay and Sumeru. Hearing these praises Vindhya began to feel envious.

Sootji says – Rishis! Narad departed from Brahmalok, but there was turmoil in the mind of Vindhya. Jealousy and envy gave rise to sinful thoughts. His mind began to plan devious acts. He thought – This Surya together with his Solar System of planets and stars, revolves around Sumeru Parbat, and this has given Sumeru superiority over all mountains. I will expand myself and block the path of the Sun. Then we shall see how Surya does parikrama of Mount Sumeru. This will crush his pride.

With this intention Vindhya raised his summits and peaks and blocked all the routes of the Sun. Then he waited for sunrise. Soon it became dawn, and the

rays of the Sun began to dispel the darkness. Udayachal (the mountain from behind which the Sun rises), blushed with the first rays of the Sun, and the sky began to turn pink. The lotuses began to bloom and the Kumidini (waterlilies) opened their petals. All living things went about their business. After traversing the pre-meridian, meridian and post-meridian domains of the various gods, so that they would receive the nourishments of havya, kavya and other oblations, the Sun proceeded towards the south. Areas which had not yet received sunlight were suffering pangs of separation. But Surya could not proceed further. He discovered that due to some jealous competition against Sumeru, Vindhya parbat was blocking his advance. The Sun was in confusion, but could not proceed. The functions of Swaha and Swadha (words uttered during offering of oblations to the gods and ancestors) were arrested due to the absence of sunrise. All life forms in the South and Westerly directions were still in slumber as it was a long, long night. On the other side, the living things in the North and East were having an excess of heat from the stationary Sun. Some died in the heat, some lost their limbs, and others lost their senses. Doomsday came upon them suddenly and prematurely. The whole world was disturbed, and in the turmoil there were no offerings or oblations to the manes.

Sootji says – O Rishis! The devas were in great distress. Indra and all the Gods took Brahmaji and their chief speaker, and went for protection to Bhagwan Shankar. Then taking Shri Shiva with them, they all went to Vaikunth, the abode of Bhagwan Vishnu.

Sootji says – Rishis! The gods went into the presence of Lakshmikant (beloved of Lakshmi), Devadhidev (God of Gods), Bhagwan Shri Hari. The Lord, with eyes like lotus petals, was seated on His throne with Shree Mahalakshmi beside Him. In voices trembling with awe and joy, the Gods offered obeisance, and

sang stotras in praise of the Lord. The Devas said – Vishno! Ramesh! Victory be to You! You are the Great Primordial Being and You are worshipped by all. You are the Father of Kaamdev. You quickly grant boons and Govind is one of your names. You have assumed the forms of Mahavaraha (the boar) and Mahayagya (the great sacrifice). O Mahavishno! You are Dhruvesh (constancy) and the cause of the Universe. Assuming the form of Matsya (fish) you protected the Vedas. O Ocean of Compassion! You fulfil the requirements of the Devatas. Praise be to You! In your second incarnation as the Tortoise You obained the Nectar. To destroy the demon Hiranakshya, You took the form of a boar. Praise be to You! We also bow to that Avatar of Narasimha, which You assumed, to kill Hiranyakashipu. To destroy the ego of Raja Bali, You came as a dwarf Vamana. We praise You again and again. You took birth from Renuka in the house of Muni Jamadagni. It is Your nature to protect us from our enemies. You destroyed Karthvirya in your Parashuram Avatar. We praise You again and again. We bow to Rama, son of Dashratha in whose form You came to destroy Ravana. The demons Kansa and Duryodhan were oppressing Mother Earth. You took the majestic form of Bhagwan Shri Krishna and rid the world of these two enemies. We bow to that Avatar. To put an end to the contemptible and despicable forms of animal sacrifice, You assumed the form of the Buddha. We bow to You and praise You. The world was deteriorating and sinking into filth and sin. To save them you took the Kalki Avatar. We bow to that almighty manifestation. You, in Your great compassion took these Ten Incarnations to save mankind and destroy evil. Therefore You are known as the remover of all afflictions. For the sake of Your Bhaktas, You have also assumed the form of a lady Mohini; a Swan, and other animals. Is there another who is more compassionate than You. Thus praising the Lord of all the Gods, attired in Pitambar, the senior Devatas prostrated in Sashtaang Pranaam. Hearing these praises, the Lord, holding the mace, Bhagwan Purushottam was pleased. Expressing His pleasure, He spoke to the Devatas.

Shri Bhagwan said – I am pleased with your stutis. Do not be distressed. I will remove all your sorrows and troubles. Devatas! You can ask for the rarest of boons and I shall grant them. Devatas! The person who recites this Stuti upon waking every morning, will develop devotion to Me, and I will protect him from all evil. Misfortune cannot come anywhere near him. No disease or calamity can befall him, and he can never be attacked by evil spirits or malevolent beings, nor can the planetary movements affect him. He will never suffer from gastric troubles, bile or phlegm, and he will not have an untimely death. His progeny will live long. It is a universal, all encompassing instrument for obtaining Divine Grace. For the person who recites this stotra, worldly happiness and mukti are guaranteed. Devatas! Tell Me your difficulties without any hesitation. I am here to remove all your sorrows.

Hearing these Divine assurances, the Devatas became very happy. They began to tell their fears to Shri Hari.

The Devatas said – O Mahavishno! You are the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. At this moment Vindhya Parvat is blocking the path of Surya. He has expanded himself so that the path of Surya is obstructed, and this is depriving us of our share of sacrifices. What shall we do?

Bhagwan Shri Hari said – The Mother of the Universe, Shri Adi Shakti, has a strong devotee Agastya Muni. He alone can control the arrogance of Vindhya Parvat. At this moment he is doing tapasya in Kashi, a place which is most auspicious. Go there and please the Muni, and tell him your difficulties.

Sootji says – O Rishis. The devatas humbly left for Kashi. On the Manikaran Ghat they had a ritual bath in the holy Ganga. Then they approached the

peaceful and serene ashram of Munivar Agasthya. Seeing him in residence, the Devatas prostrated before him, and began to sing his praises.

The Devatas said – O Brahman! The twice born honour you as their guru. You devoured the demon Vatapi. You manifested from a waterpot. Praise be to you. You are the beloved of Lopamudra, the receptacle of all the knowledge which poured out of the Gods Mitra and Varun. You are the fountain spring of the Shastras – We offer you our pranaams. Upon your awakening the waters of the rivers get purified and start gurgling. Be pleased to accept our homage. You are the cause of the blooming of flowers. You are dear to Shri Rama. You have matted locks, and You are surrounded by your shishyas. O great and powerful Agastyaji! Accept our pranaams. Mahamune! All the devatas sing your praises. Jai to you. O possessor of all good qualities, you are worthy of the highest respect. O Swami! Be pleased with us. We have come for your protection. We are suffering due to the heat created by the insurmountable Vindhya Parvat.

Hearing all the praises, and greatly pleased, Agasthya Muni smiled and spoke:

Munivar Agasthya said – Devatas. You are important beings and lokpals (deities who protect different parts of the universe). You dispense rewards and punishment fairly. The God Indra is the one who presides over Amaravati. He bears the thunderbolt as his weapon, and eight Siddhis reside in his court. And the Agni, who is the shining countenance of all, who consumes the havya and kavya (oblations); who is also called Vaishvanar and Krishanu; should have no difficulty in overcoming this problem. Also there should be no problem for Yama, who is the lord of the Rakshas ganas, who has been appointed the witness and arbitrator of all the deeds of all living beings; and who holds the

rod of chastisement in his hands. Therefore O Devatas. If there is anything I can accomplish by my siddhis tell me O Devatas, and I will do my best.

These words of Muni Agasthya filled the Devatas with confidence, and they began to speak. The Devatas said – O Maharishi! The Vindhya Mountain has blocked the path of Surya, and there is great distress and lamentation in the three worlds. All living things have become as if lifeless. O Muni! Please use your powers and halt the advance of Vindhya Parvat. Agasthyaji! Your radiance and nobility will dissolve his ego. This is our prayer.

Sootji says - Rishis! To this prayer, the highest among realised souls – Agasthyaji said – I will undertake your mission and complete it. The Devatas' joy was boundless. With full faith in the promise given by the Muni, the Devatas returned to their respective abodes.

Muni Agasthya did feel sad to leave Kashi, but after taking darshan of Bhagwan Vishvanath, praying to Shri Bhairavanath, and offering namaskar to Shri Sakshivinayak, he came out of Kashi. Sati Lopamudra was accompanying him. By his yogic powers he was transported, along with his wife, in a few minutes. When he looked up, he saw that Vindhya Parvat had increased his height so much that he entangled the sky. When the mountain saw Muni Agasthya he began to tremble. His ego and arrogance melted, and with the humility of the Prithvi (Earth), he desired to salute the Muni. Overcome with devotion he fell to the ground in obeisance, and offered sashtang pranaam to Muni Agasthya. Seeing the mighty mountain Vindhya Parvat at his feet, the Muni smiled with benevolence. He said – Vats (Dear Boy)! Keep lying like this until I return. Son I am unable to climb your peak when you are upright! Then he turned southwards, climbed the mountain, and continued in the same direction. On the way he encountered the Shri Shail mountain. He built his ashram on this

fragrant Malayachal (sandalwood producing mountain in Southern India, South of Mysore, East of Travancore), and decided to live there permanently.

On Vindhya Mountain descended the Devi, who is universally known as Vindhyavasini.

Sootji says – This story of annihilation of enemies is very sacred and powerful. It destroys all sins, and fulfils desires of those who hear it. In the same way, Swayambhuv Muni worshipped the Devi and received the boon of ruling the world. I have now completed this story. Now, which other would you like to hear.

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Chapter 10 Episodes 8 – 9

8-9 Stories of the Manus – Swarochish, Uttam, Tamas, Raivat and Chakshush.

Shaunakji said – Sootji! In the same way tell us about the other important Manus.

Sootji says – After hearing about the first Manu Swayambhuv, Naradji also asked Bhagwan Narayan to tell him about the other Manus. That great and knowledgeable Bhagwan knew all the secret knowledge of Devi Bhagwati.

Naradji said – O Ancient One! Please tell me about the Manus.

Bhagwan Narayan said – Mahamune! You have just heard the story of the first Manu, Swayambhuv. He had two brilliant sons Priyavrat and Uttanpad. Their sons were also famous. The son of Priyavrat was known as the Second Manu. He performed severe tapasya on the banks of the Yamuna, and lived on dry leaves. He was loved by all animals. His name was Swarochish. He made a lotus image of the Devi and worshipped Her for twelve years. Then he got a darshan of the Devi, Her face, shining like a thousand suns. Pleased with his worship and devotion, She granted him rulership of the world for an entire Manavantar (fourteenth part of a day of Brahma). From that time onwards the whole world worshipped Bhagawati Jagaddatri and received Her protection from enemies. This second Manu established Dharmas in the world and protected his subjects like his children. After the end of his term he went to heaven.

The third Manu was Shriman Uttam, son of Priyavrat. He went to the banks of the Ganga, and for three years he did penance and worshipped Bhagawati

Bhuvaneshwari. He sang stotras and uttered mantras and pleased Shree Devi. As a boon he received unhindered rule, and long life for his sons.

The fourth Manu was called Tamas, son of Priyavrat. He meditated on Bhagawati Jagaddamba on the southern banks of the river Narmada. He uttered the seed mantra of Bhagawati Maheshwari, and worshipped Her during the Ashwin and Chaitra Navratras. He also received the boon of unhindered rule, and was blessed with ten brave and noble sons.

Raivat is the fifth Manu. He was the younger brother of Tamas. He did tapasya on the banks of the Yamuna. He ruled his kingdom without obstacles. He established Dharma and protected the subjects.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Now I will tell you a most amazing story of the greatness of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Listen carefully. The eldest son of Raja Ang was Chakshush. He was the sixth Manu. He went and surrendered himself at the feet of Brahmarishi Shriman Pulhaji and said – Swami! Please accept me as your disciple and teach me how to attain Shree. Also how to obtain overlordship of the world, great physical strength, and military prowess. My children should have long life, my own life should be free of obstacles, and I should go to heaven after death. The Muni taught him the highest form of worship of the Devi.

The Muni Pulaha said – Rajan! Hear these words of mine which are most pleasing to the ear. Worship Bhagawati Jagaddamba and all your desires will be fulfilled.

Chakshush Manu asked – Mune! What is the form of worship, and which is the holiest way to perform it. Please tell me.

Muni said – This is a most ancient procedure. The seed mantra (beeja) of Saraswati has to be uttered morning, noon and at dusk. This gives liberation as no other mantra can give. Even the gods got their energy by reciting this mantra.

Chakshush went to the banks of the river Virja to start his tapasya. He continuously recited the Saraswati beeja mantra. For the first year he lived on leaves and berries; the second year only on water; and the third year only on air. Gradually he got inner enlightenment, and realisation that worship of the Devi is the only purpose of one's life. He continued in this way for twelve years. Then the most supreme Devi, Parameshwari Bhagawati Jagaddamba, appeared before him, in a rarest and most difficult-to-behold Darshan. Her radiance was blinding, and Her beauty most enchanting. She spoke to him in the sweetest tones –

Shreedevi said – Whatever desires you have in your mind, tell them all to me. Because I am pleased with your tapasya, I will grant them to you.

Chakshush Manu said – Devdeveshi! Devpujita! You reside within us as Antaryami Swaroopini, and therefore You already know my desires. But now that I am blessed by Your presence, I pray that the world be my kingdom.

Shree Devi said – Rajendra! I have already given you rule over this era. You will also beget many illustrious sons. Your reign will be without obstacles, and after your death, you will come into my abode. That is certain.

After this the Devi removed Herself from his sight. He became the sixth Manu, and he had many strong sons who were devotees of the Devi. He ruled unobstructed for many years, and attained a place in the kingdom of the Devi.

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Chapter 10 Episodes 10 - 13

10-13 Story of the Manus – Vaivasvat, Savarni, Dakshsavarni, Merusavarni, Suryasavarni, Indrasavarni, Rudrasavarni, and Vishnusavarni. The boon of Arundanav and his destruction by Bhramri Devi.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The seventh Manu was the famous Vaivaswat, who was also known as Shradh Dev. By the grace of Param Pujya Bhagawati, he had a successful rule. The eighth Manu was Savarni. In a previous birth he had pleased the Devi by his tapasya and got the boon of ruling the world. He was a scholar, and a great devotee of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Now, I will tell you about the last Manus. Vaivaswat had six illustrious sons. They sat on the banks of the Yamuna and meditated on Devi Bhagawati. They renounced food and lived only on air. Each made an image of the Devi and worshipped it continuously. They achieved a complete state of detachment and got enlightenment. Finally they got self realisation. Then one day they got a darshan of Bhagawati Jagaddishwari. Her face shone like a thousand suns. The princes immediately bowed in worship and began to sing stutis.

The princes sang – O! Maheshwari! You are the most supreme and universal goddess. You are the ocean of compassion. Praise be to You. Devi, You are always pleased with the Vani beej mantra. You are the embodiment of Kleem, and this mantra attracts Your love. O Mahamaya! Kameshwar is enchanted by You and Mahaprabhu is appeased by You. You are the Doer and You are the enjoyer. Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar are verily Your forms. This pleased the Devi and She spoke in benevolent tones.

Shree Devi said – O Princes who have undergone severe penance. You have attained enlightenment and all your sins have been cleansed. Ask for your most cherished desires and I will fulfil them.

The princes said – O Devi! Grant us unobstructed reign over the world, sons with long life, honour, glory, wealth, intelligence and victory. This is our desire.

Shree Devi said – So it will be. Whatever you wish for will all be fulfilled.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The princes sang praises of Bhramri Devi. After that the Devi removed Herself from their sight. After that the princes ruled the world, begot illustrious sons, and enjoyed success, wealth, honour and fame. In their next birth they came as Savarni Manus – Daksh, Meru, Surya, Indra, Rudra and Vishnu. These fourteen Manus were famous, and they worshipped Bhagawati Bhramri.

Naradji asked – Who is Bhramri Devi, how did She manifest, and what is Her form. Bhagwan! Please tell me that story which removes all sorrow and fear.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Listen carefully to this narration which has the power to grant moksha. All stories of the Devi have been for the benevolence of the world. The Devi does for the world the same loving deeds that a mother does for her child.

It happened long ago. There was a very powerful demon called Arun. He was an enemy of the Devas, and he lived in Pataal. It entered his mind that he should defeat the Devas, and drive them out of heaven. So he set out to do severe penance in the Himalayas, in order to please Padmayoni Brahma. He calmed his attention, went into thoughtless awareness, and settled down in meditation. His intentions were tamasic. He remained in tapasya for ten

thousand years, eating only leaves. Then for another ten thousand years he lived on water. And for another ten thousand years he lived on air. His penance was so severe, that the fire that radiated from his body threatened to engulf the world. The devas were overcome with fear, and hastened to Brahmadeva, to tell him. The four armed God took took His Shakti Gayatridevi and set out on his vehicle the swan.

By this time the thousands of nadis of Arun's body were filled with only life force. His stomach had dried and his whole body had shrunk. He was in deep meditation with his eyes closed. He was enveloped in a radiance like agni.

Brahmaji said – Vats! Ask me for whatever you wish.

Arun was instantly calmed on hearing the sweet voice of Brahmadev. He opened his eyes and got a darshan of the Lotus-eyed Brahmaji. Complete with the Four Vedas, Brahmaji was seated on the swam with his Shakti Gayatridevi. With rosary in one hand and waterpot in another, He was chanting the Brahma-pranav jap (the holy monosyllable Om).

Arun stood in obeisance and expressed his desire – may I never die.

Brahmaji patiently explained to him – Whatever is born in this world must die. This is an irreversible law. Therefore you must ask for something else that I can grant.

Arun said – Then grant me this – That I will not die in war; or by any weapon; nor at the hands of any man or woman; nor any living thing which has two legs or four. Also give me such overwhelming strength that I can defeat the Devas.

Brahmaji immediately pronounced Tathastu (so be it), and left for Brahmalok.

Arun gathered all the demons from Pataal, and sent a contingent to Amaravati. While they were still confronting Indra, Arun arrived with a formidable army of demons and defeated the Devas. He took control of the areas governed by Surya, Chandrama, Yama and Agni.

All the displaced Devas ran to Kailash for the protection of Bhagwan Shankar. Knowing the boon that the demon had received from Brahmaji, the demon seemed invincible. All the Gods were in a dilemma. Just then they heard a heavenly voice –

Devatas! Worship Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. Only She can solve your difficulty. If Danavraj Arun can be disengaged from the Gayatri mantra; a situation can be created where he can be destroyed.

Hearing this clear and resounding heavenly voice, the Devatas felt protected. They invited Brihaspati and Indra prayed to him – O Guru! Only you can help us by going to Arun and somehow cause him to forsake Gayatri mantra. We will meditate on Bhagawati Parameshwari so that She will help you in your mission.

The Devatas started their worship of Bhagawati Jamboonadeshwari. They performed Devi Yagya and chanted the Maya beeja mantra. Brihaspati left for his meeting with Arun. When the demon saw him he respectfully asked – Mune! Where have you landed from. What is the purpose of this visit. Tell me at once. I do not belong to your side. In fact I am your enemy always.

Brihaspati replied – Danavendra! The Devi that we worship is indeed the same Devi that you also worship. That makes you one of us. Hearing these words of Brihaspati, and coming under the illusion of Devmaya, the demon proudly denounced and said – Alright. From this moment I give up Gayatri mantra.

In this way he was disengaged, and immediately he began to lose his lustre. Having completed his mission, Brihaspatiji returned to Amaravati, and gave the good tidings to Indra. All the devas began to sing the praises of Bhagawati Parameshwari.

After a long time, at an auspicious moment, the most compassionate Bhagawati Jagaddama appeared. Her radiance was brighter than a thousand suns, and Her beauty greater than countless Kamdevas. Her body was covered with precious unguents, and She was dressed in shining robes. There was an exquisite necklace around Her neck, and her arms were decorated with precious ornaments. In Her fists She held a myriad variety of bumble bees. She also wore a garland of flowers, around which buzzed big, black bees. She was surrounded with all variety of bees. The bees were singing "Hreem!" and the Devi was acknowledging this with a smile. The Devi was ornamented and decorated exactly as described in the Vedas – Sarvatmika, Sarvamayi, Sarvamangalroopini, Sarvagya, Sarvajanani, Sarva, Sarveshwari, and Shiva. Having been blessed with such a complete darshan, all the Devas and Devatas, began to sing the Stutis of Bhagawati Shiva.

The Gods sang – O Mahavidye! You are the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Namaskar to You! O Devi, whose eyes are like lotus petals. You are the support of the whole Universe. Obeisance to You again and again. You are the embodiment of wisdom. Praise be to You again and again! You are constant and everlasting. Obeisance to You again and again! O Bhagawati Durge! You are doom for enemies. You are the Light and You are worshipped by the Pure. Please accept our Namaskar! O Mata Kalike! We worship You. You who are called Neel Saraswati, Ugratara and Mahogra, accept our obeisance! O Devi! Who is called Tripura Sundari, obeisance to You again and again! Devi Pitambari! Namaste! Our obeisance to Devi Bhairavi, Matangi, and Dhumavati.

Chhinamastake! Obeisance to You. Ksheersagar Kanyake! Obeisance to You. Shakhambari! Namastasye! Shive! Our obeisance to You! Raktadantike – obeisance to You. Bhagawati Shive! You destroyed Shumbh Nishumbha! By Your hands the play of Raktabeej was cut short. You killed Vritasur and Dhumralochan. You crushed Chanda Munda. By Your hand many demons became fodder for Kaal. O Lotus-eyed Goddess! You are Ganga, Sharada and Vijaya. Obeisance to You! You are the embodiment of compassion. Earth and Fire are Your forms. Namaskar to You! You are the Supreme Soul (Pranaroopa), Maharoopa (The Great Supreme Form) and Bhootroopa (of the form of Time), we offer obeisance again and again! You, who are the form of the Universe (Vishvamurte), Who are of the form of Compassion (Dayamurte) obeisance to You again and again. O You who are of the form of Gods, of Lustre and Brilliance, and Pure Knowledge, we offer You namaskars! Mother, Gayatri, Varada, Savitri, Saraswati, Swaha, Swadha and Dakshina – all these are Your names. Namaskar to You. O You who reveal to the seekers the ultimate truth of the Vedas, by skilfully teaching them to discard untruth by "Not this, not this", to Your perceivable form we offer obeisance again and again. Because You manifested in a form surrounded by Bhramrees (bumble bees) You are known by the name Bhramridevi. We worship that Form. O Ambike! We worship You above and below, from the front and the back; inside and without. O Devi! Who reigns over Manipurdweep! O Mahadevi! Be pleased with us. O Jagaddambike! You are the creator and ruler of unending crores of universes. O Jaganmata! Obeisance to You. O Almighty Devi! Victory to You. O most compassionate Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari! Victory to You. O Parameshwari! Be pleased with us. Creatrix of the World! Shower Your grace on us.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! The voices of the Devatas were sweet and loving. The Goddess with a voice like a koel (cuckoo) spoke to them –

Shree Devi said – Devatas! I am eternally pleased with you. It is My nature to grant boons. Ask Me for whatever you desire.

The Devatas told the Devi about their fears and described the devastation being caused in the three worlds by the demons. O Mother! The devatas, brahmins and Vedas are being persecuted. All the gods have been chased out of their stations. This demon has received a unique boon from Shri Brahmadeva.

The Goddess opened Her fists and released a great variety of bees. Many more flew out from around Her. The skies were filled with bees, and the whole place became dark. The skies, the forests, the mountains and hills were all filled with bees. It was an astounding sight. The bees began to sting the demons, and bore holes into them as if they were digging for honey. In that situation weapons and prowess were futile. Nor could there be a war, nor negotiations. The demons faced certain death wherever they were, and in whatever form they were. They could not even contact or communicate with each other. Death was so sudden. In a moment the entire demon clan was destroyed. Then all the bees returned to the Devi, and all the Devatas rejoiced and shouted victory slogans. For the Master of Illusion, this was just a play.

Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar and all the Gods bathed in the ocean of joy and sang stutis. They performed elaborate pujas to honour the Devi. They showered petals on the Devi, and the skies resounded with music and drums. The great Munis recited the Vedas. The Gandharvas – divine musicians played on mridangam, muraj (kettle drum), veena, dhak (war trumpet), dumroo, bell and conch. Bhagawati Mahadevi was pleased and gave the Devatas a boon of staunch and unshakeable bhakti.

Narad! I have told you the complete story of Devi Bhagawati Bhramri. Those who read or hear it, get liberation from all their sins. This is truly an amazing incident. It helps the listener to cross the ocean of illusion, and grants auspiciousness and benevolence. After getting cleansed, he attains a place at the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati.

End of Chapter 10.

CHAPTER 11

Chapter 11 Episodes 1 – 16

1-2 Description of righteous etiquette and virtuous conduct.

Naradji asked – Bhagwan! All knowing Narayan! Ancient One! You have told me this wonderful story of how the Devi saved the Devatas. Please tell me the etiquette and procedures for pleasing the Devi and causing Her to be benevolent and generous.

Bhagwan Narayan says – O Narad who has knowledge of the elements (Tattwa gyani)! Listen. I will tell you step by step the sadaachar (procedures). From the moment a realised soul wakes up early in the morning, till he goes to sleep in the night, he should engage himself in righteous acts, and his attention should be pure and detached. Because no one else; neither mother, father, wife nor child, can help in one's spiritual ascent. It is a journey one has to make alone on one's dharmic merits. One must use all one's faculties towards this achievement. Only a dharmic life can help one to overcome the darkness of spiritual ignorance and cross the ocean of worldly illusion. Good moral character and a moral life is the only requirement, and this is laid down clearly in the Shrutis and Smritis. Therefore, a realised soul should be constantly involved in his spiritual ascent. As by products one is blessed with good health, long life, virtuous sons, and abundance of wealth. It removes bad luck and obstacles. A virtuous man enjoys peace and happiness in this life, and eternal joy in heaven. A dharmic life is like a guiding light which shows others the path to mukti. It makes one glorious and honorable. It is considered the highest form of tapasya.

A righteous conduct can be from two sources – the scriptures, or conventional. A true seeker of truth must conform to both. He must observe the laws of country, community, family and religious codes. He should never be branded as a lawbreaker. He should shun anything that is morally and spiritually wrong.

Naradji asked – Mune! In this world there are so many scriptures. Which should one follow. Also there are so many religious paths. Please clarify.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! Shruti and Smriti are the two eyes. The Puran is the heart. The voice of these is Dharma. There is no other. If there is any confusion among the three, then Shruti should be observed; and if there is confusion over Shruti and Smriti, then Smriti is superior. Some Purans do not reflect the Vedas, but have Tantra in them. Only the Dharmas which have been identified by the learned Rishis should be accepted. Also if they differ from the Shrutis, they should be discarded. So it is only the Vedas which carry the right dharmas. He who abandons the Vedas for other codes of conduct, for his education many arrangements have been made in hell. Therefore it is imperative to follow the paths shown in the Vedas. Those false gurus who teach against the Vedas, are hung upside down in hell. So a realised soul has to tread carefully and introspect every day upon his actions-- whether he has been generous and helpful, and whether he has kept his promises.

In the fourth quarter of the night one should wake up and meditate on Brahma. Sit upright with eyes closed. Do not grit the teeth, and tongue should be relaxed against the palate. Attention should be detached from the outside world. After taking a few deep breaths, one should meditate on the Almighty in the heart. At all times one should be aware of the Almighty's presence in the heart. There is a set of six pranayams – Sadhoom, Vidhoom, Sagarbh, Agarbh, Salakshya, Alakshya. These are divided into three groups – Rechak, Poorak and

Kumbhak. As it involves the three energies it is Pranavswaroop (life force). Breath should be drawn from Ida Nadi and stored in the abdomen. Then in sixteen instalments it should be released through Pingala Nadi. This is called Sadhoom Pranayam.

Then one must pay obeisance to the deities seated on the chakras at Mooladhara, Swadistana, Nabhi, Heart, Vishuddhi and Agya. Residing in Mooladhar is the Golden Kundalini Swaroop Bhagawati Jagaddamba, whose essence is the Mayabeej, who shines like a thousand suns, and whose radiance is like the agni and the chandrama. If She can be brought into the attention even once, a man gets his moksha and liberation from worldly bondage. She is verily the state, the movement, the journey, the destination, the stuti and the voice. O Devi! I am the Spirit. I am dissolved in You. There is no other. I am Brahma. I am Sat-Chit-Anand. I worship that Kundalini Devi who resides as radiance and nectar, and who permeates Sushumna. Then one must meditate on the Divine at Brahmarandhra, and with body, mind and spirit, do puja to the Supreme Guru – Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwara. Guru Sakshat Parabrahma. Tasmai Shree Guruve Namaha.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! No matter how learned a man is in the Vedas, if he is not righteous and moral, he is abandoned at the time of death, just like a bird abandons a nest clotted with feathers. An enlightened man should get up and meditate during Brahma-muhurtha, so that he merges with the Brahma. Morning ablutions and evacuations should be performed far from living quarters, and never in water bodies, freshly ploughed earth, burial or cremation grounds, old ruins of temples, green grass, or bills of snakes. It is also undesirable to go for nature’s call in the evenings, during prayers, while eating or brushing the teeth. Also it is objectionable during performance of obsequies, near lakes and ponds, or in the vicinity of a Guru’s samadhi. Before

evacuation the following mantra should be uttered – All devatas, rishis, goblins, crawling creatures and rakshasas, please clear away from this place, as I am about to evacuate. During the day one must face the north, and in the night, the south. Avoid looking at fire, brahmin, sun, water body or cow. On completion one must wash thoroughly with water. Then cleanse the hands with clay – white for brahmins, red for kshatriyas, yellow for trading community, and black for the serving community. Avoid using clay from inside ponds or lakes, from home temples, from anthills, rat holes or old toilets. These five are unacceptable. The correct procedure is to cleanse the hands six times after passing urine, and eleven times after a bowel evacuation. Both feet must also be washed with clay four times. This is for householders. Brahmacharis should do it double the number of times, and Vanprasth (one who has renounced the world) three times. Sanyasis have to observe this fourfold. Women and children need not count the number of times, but should repeat the cleansing till all odours are removed. These are the directives of Bhagwan Manuji. For all cleansing below the Nabhi, the left hand should be used and for all activities above the Nabhi use the right hand. If one neglects to observe these directions due to laziness or carelessness, he must atone by living only on water for three nights and chanting Gayatri Mantra. One last cleansing is to gargle twelve times and then brush the teeth after evacuation. Do not spit within twelve spans of a tree. The tooth brush should be made from a branch as thick as a finger, of a thorny or milk sap tree. The recommended trees are Karanji, fig, mango, cadamb, lodh, champa or ber. Before brushing the teeth one must invoke Raja Som to help in digestion, and to remove all badhas and unclean particles from the mouth. O Vanaspate! You are Raja Som. Please grant me Brahma gyan, strength, health, long life and wealth.

Chapter 11 Episodes 3 – 7

3 – 7 Importance of Rudraksh

Bhagwan Narayan says – Narad! I have told you the six techniques as given in the Shrutis.

After uttering the Gayatri Mantra with Omkar, one must tie the top knot. Then rinse the mouth and cleanse the heart, arms and shoulders. Then cleanse the right ear to get rid of sneezing, spitting, eating impure things, and speaking untruths. Narad! All the gods, including Agni, Jal, Ved, Som, Surya and Pavan, reside in the lower part of the ear. After this one must go to a river, or lake, and take a ritual bath. The body is constantly getting unclean by emissions from the nine orifices of the body. That is why morning bath is of utmost importance. All negativities that are gathered by going to inauspicious places; by receiving charity, and by doing objectionable acts in private, are all washed away by the morning bath. If one does not bathe in the morning, all his rituals become ineffective. He who does not bathe, pray or perform havan regularly, becomes more wretched than a Shudhra.

In all the three worlds there is no greater mantra than Gayatri. It protects those who observe the rituals. The pranava and the three mystic words Bhu, Bhuva, Swaha, should always be together. All the vital breaths should be in balance. Whilst still in the water one should perform offering of jal to the gods and the manes. Then come out of the water, wear clean clothes, and then apply bhasma (sacred ash) and put on the Rudraksh mala. Then the mantras have to be recited in their proper order.

The rudraksh has very great significance. He who adorns his body with the rudraksh – 32 around the neck, 40 on the head; 6 on each ear; 12 on each

hand; 16 on each arm, 1 on the top-knot, and 108 on the chest – is considered Bhagwan Neelkanth Himself. Mune! Rudraksh beads, should be carefully threaded on gold or silver wire, and worn permanently on the topknot or from the ears. It can also be worn along with the sacred thread. Then with great adoration and bhakti say the holy mantra "Om Namaha Shivaye". This is the intrument which gives knowledge of Sakshat Shri Shankar. The rudraksh can be worn by all. The only protocol to be observed is that realised souls (dwijas) should utter the mantra. I have described the significance and importance of the Rudraksh.

Naradji said – You have kindly told us about the significance of Rudraksh. Can you please tell us the reason for its importance.

Bhagwan Narayan said – Mune! This is an ancient story. This same question was put to Bhagwan Shankar by Swamy Kartikeya. I am repeating exactly what Bhagwan Shankar said. O Six Faced One! I will explain the essence of what you wish to know. A long time ago there was a demon called Tripur. No one could defeat him, and he tormented Vishnu, Brahma and all the gods. They came to Me for protection and I began to ponder over this Tripurasura. One of My Divine Weapons is called Aghor. It is beautiful, and also very huge; and blazing fire flashes from it at all times. It has the power to quell all disturbances, turbulence and tyranny. It is this mighty weapon Aghor that I put My Attention on for a long time. My eyes were closed, and a few drops of water fell from My eyes on Dharti. O Brave One! From those tear drops sprang huge Rudraksh trees. On My command, 38 kinds of Rudraksh were produced by the tree, for the benevolence of the Gods. Twelve types of reddish brown rudraksh were produced by the eyes of Surya; sixteen kinds of white rudraksh were produced by the eyes of Chandrama, and ten kinds of blackish rudras came from the eyes of Agni. The white rudraksh are "Brahmins", the red ones

are Kshatriyas, the mixed colours are Vaishyas, and the black ones are Shudras. Peolple should wear the rudras according to their tendencies and traits.

The single faced rudraksh is verily the image of Lord Shankar. The rudraksh with two faces represents Lord Shankar and Parvati; the three faced rudraksh is the image of Agni. The four faced rudraksh is verily Lord Brahma, the fire of the final destruction of the world. The six faced rudraksh represents Lord Kartikeya. The rudraksh with seven faces represents Cupid. The rudraksh with eight faces is verily Lord Ganesha. The one who wears it gets blessed with all good qualities. The nine faced rudraksh is the image of Lord Bhairava. It should be worn on the left arm. The rudraksh with ten faces is verily the form of Lord Janardhan. The eleven faced rudraksh represents Ekadasha Rudra. He who wears the twelve faced rudraksh on his ear is considered to have completed twelve forms of worship to Surya. The one who finds the rare thirteen faced rudraksh, gets bestowed with all siddhis, and is honoured as Swamy Kartikeya. Son! If you ever get a fourteen faced Rudraksh, consider yourself most fortunate and blessed. Wear it on your forehead, because it represents Me!

By wearing any of these sixteen kinds of Rudraksh one gets liberated from sin, and reaps benefits. Mune! The one who wears Rudraksh is respected by the gods. O Six Faced One! He who wears a mala of 108, or two malas of 50 and 27 Rudraksh, gets endless blessings, which come after performing ashwamedhas.

After all this description, and knowledge, Shankar Bhagwan concluded by saying – The single-faced Rudraksh is the one that enlightens. One who wears it gets the Divine Knowledge in the Heart. The two-faced Rudraksh represents Ardhanareeshwar, and the one who wears it pleases the Lord. The three-faced Rudraksh pulverises the sin of brahmahatya (murder of a realised soul). It is

the embodiment of the three agnis. The one who wears the four-faced Rudraksh becomes wealthy, free from sickness, and famous. He also receives abundant divine knowledge which cleanses him completely. When one wears the five-faced Rudraksh, Lord Shankar gets pleased with him. The six faced rudraksh represents Lord Kartikeya. Knowledgeable and wise men say it also represents Shri Ganesh. The seven-faced Rudraksh represents the primordial seven mothers, seven horses and seven sages. The one who wears it gets the blessings of Lakshmi, gets a wealth of divine knowledge, remains disease free; and is respected by all. The eight-faced Rudraksh is holy. It represents the eight Vasus, and makes Ganga happy. The nine-faced Rudraksh is the image of Dharmaraj. The one who wears this has no fear of Yamraj. The ten-faced Rudraksh represents the ten Dikpals (guards of the ten directions), and the wearer receives love from all ten directions. There is no doubt in this. The eleven-faced rudraksh represents the eleven rudras and some say even Indra. The wearer gets all happiness and joy. The twelve-faced Rudraksh is verily the form of Bhagwan Mahavishnu and the twelve suns. Those who wear this are always fulfilled. The thirteen-faced Rudraksh fulfils desires and makes Kamdeva happy. The fourteen-faced Rudraksh was born verily from the eyes of Bhagwan Shankar. It has the effect of quelling all turmoils and frees one from all illness. The one who wears Rudraksh must abstain from alcohol, meat, garlic, onion and glutinous beans. He should wear the Rudraksh especially during eclipse, dark moon, Sankranti and full moon days. All his sins will be washed away, and he will be protected.

CHAPTER 11 Episodes 8 - 16

8 - 16 Bhootshuddhi (cleansing of all parts of the body), the greatness of Bhasm (ashes), and description of morning and evening prayers.

Bhagwan Narayan says – Maha Mune! Now I will tell you about cleansing of the elements in the body.

First of all one must get the attention into a single point and meditate thus – Devi Kundalini rises from Mooladhara, through Sushumna, and arrives at Brahmarandhra. Then utter the mantra “So Aham” (I am That. I am the eternal Brahma. The Supreme Soul”).

Then meditate on the fact that from the feet to the base of the spine, I am the Earth. The seat of the Earth. The emblem is the four-armed symbol, the Swastik. The beeja mantra is “Lam”. The colour is coral red.

The element of Swadishtana is Fire, and the colour is yellow. The emblem is Shatkon or six pointed star (Star of David). The seed mantra is “Vam.

Then comes Nabhi with Water as the element. It is Green in colour, and the emblem is Yin Yang. The seed mantra is “Ram”.

The Heart Chakra contains the Air element. It is Ruby Red in colour and has Flame as the emblem. The beeja mantra is “Yam”.

Vishuddhi chakra governs the element Akash. The colour is Blue and the emblem is the Time-wheel. Beeja mantra is “Hum”.

After this, dissolve the elements, one into the other – earth into fire; fire into water; water into air; air into ether. Then ether into ego and superego at Agya, where it's element is Light. The colour is white, the emblem is the Cross, and the beeja sound is "Om".

These are the sounds that are heard when Kundalini passes through each Chakra. For cleansing the element part of each chakra, one must pronounce the following Beeja Mantras –

Om Bhu – region of earth. Beeja of Mooladhara.

Om Bhur – complete cosmos. The universe that has been created. Beeja of Swadistana.

Om Svaha – consuming --- world of material enjoyment. Beeja of Nabhi.

Om Mana – Love – essence of the Heart. Beeja of Anahat.

Om Jana – is the people. The collectivity. Beeja of Vishuddhi.

Om Tapa – where you come into Tapasya and renunciation and absolute knowledge. Beeja of Agya.

Om Satya – is the Truth. Absolute Truth and bliss. Beeja of Sahasrara.

After cleansing of the elements, place the atma on the lotus of the heart. Then meditate on the golden goddess seated in the triangular bone at Mooladhar. To obtain the fruits of action, one must use vibrations (bhasmam or vibhooti on the body).

Then Bhagwan Narayan enumerated the importance of bhasma, the description, the way of applying bhasma, and the significance of the three horizontal lines of bhasma – Tripundra, and the Urdhvapundra – the three vertical lines of bhasma. Then He told him the blessings that come from praying at prescribed times. He said – Anagh! The three timings are –

Early morning while the stars are still visible. At noon when the Sun is mid-way in the sky. And in the Evening when the sun is setting in the West. O Devrishi! Kaal is of three durations. The first from before sunrise (while the stars are still twinkling). The middle is from the time the stars disappear till mid-day. The third is from mid-day till sunset. Prayers in the morning are given first place. Prayers said in the afternoon, second place. And prayers said after the stars appear are given third place.

A Brahman is a tree. His roots are his prayers, Veds his branches, and dharmic deeds his leaves. Therefore the roots have to be given special care and attention. If the roots die there will be no tree and no branches. The one who has no knowledge of prayers, and who never prays or meditates, he is a Shudra. Even though he is living, he is as good as dead, and in the next birth he becomes a dog. Therefore a twice-born, or realised soul, should pray and meditate daily, three times. Otherwise he can have no part in auspicious deeds. For three hours, from the start of auspicious prayer times, one can perform his prayer and meditation. If he delays beyond that, he must perform penance in atonement. If one oversteps the prescribed time, he must offer water for ablutions four times, and recite Gayatri Mantra 108 times, as atonement.

Prayers, meditation and worship performed in the house is in the “ordinary” category. One that is performed in the Go-shala (cowshed) is “medium”, and

the meditation and prayers performed on the banks of a river are considered of the “highest” quality, equal to performing it in heaven. Those who perform their “sandhya” (prescribed prayer) in the vicinity of Gayatri Devi, they get instant blessings. For brahmins, there is no other duty beside Gayatri. She is the essence of the Vedas. Brahma and all the gods meditate upon Gayatri or Sakshat Adi Shakti.

Narad! Now I will tell you the procedure for Sandhya. After uttering the names of Keshav and others, one should rinse the mouth and do pranayama. The names to be taken are – Keshav, Narayan, Madhav, Govind, Vishnu, Madhusudhan, Trivikram, Vaman, Shreedhar, Hrishikesh, Padmanabh, Damodar, Sankarshan, Vasudev, Pradyumn, Aniruddh, Purushottam, Adhokshyaj, Narasimh, Achyut, Janardhan, Upendra, Hari and Shri Krishna. For each of these 24 names, put Omkar before, and Swaha Namaha at the end. Chant the name and sip water. After that, utter three mantras – Om Keshavayah Namaha; Om Madhavayah Namaha and Om Narayanay Namaha, and sip water three times. Then two mantras Om Govindayah Namaha and Om Madhavaya Namaha, and cleanse hands with water. Then with the names Madhusudhan and Trivikram touch the lips with the thumb with reverence; and with Vaman and Shridhar touch the face with reverence. With the chanting of Hrishikesh, the left hand; with Padmanabh the two feet. With Damodar the forehead; with Sankarshan use the three middle fingers to reverently touch the face; With Vasudev and Pradyumn use thumb and forefinger to touch the nostrils; with Aniruddh and Purushottam use thumb and ring finger to touch both eyes. With Adhyokshaj and Narasimh, touch both ears; with Achyut touch the Nabhi with thumb and little finger. With Janardhan touch the heart with heel of hand; with Upendra touch the head. While chanting Om Hariye Namaha and Om Krishnaya Namaha, respectfully touch right and left arm. So with all the 24 names the limbs have been respected.

A knowledgeable man, while drinking water with his right hand, will also have his left hand in contact. The water will not be considered pure to drink till the left hand holds the right hand. The hand which receives the water should be shaped like the ear of a cow. The thumb and little finger should be separate, while the three middle fingers should be joined.

After this, Pranayam. First invoke pranayam or pranava. Get into Turiya state; and chant Gayatri. Close the right nostril and breathe in through left nostril. Hold breath. This is what learned pandits call Rechak, Poorak and Kumbhak pranayam. While breathing in, press the right nostril with the thumb, then close the left nostril with the little finger and ring finger. It is forbidden to use the forefinger and middle finger. In all shastras, this is the unanimous procedure for pranayama. Breathing out or expelling air is called Rechak. Drawing in breath and filling is called Purak; and suspending breath is called Kumbhak. While performing Purak (drawing in the breath) one must meditate on the blue lotus coloured Lord Vishnu's Nabhi. During Kumbhak, one must meditate on the four-armed Brahmaji's heart. He is seated on the lotus emerging from the Nabhi of Shri Vishnu and his colour is a mixture of the dark red of dawn and the silvery white of the moon. During Rechak one must meditate upon the crystal clear, pure, destroyer of the biggest sins, Shri Mahadev's locks. Those who do Purak benefit from Shri Vishnu, Sayujya (self realisation); Kumbhak gets Brahmapad (final salvation or deliverance) and by doing Rechak he attains the Lotus Feet of the Almighty.

O Revered Devrishi! I have told you about the cleansing as prescribed by the Purans. There is one more negativity-destroying procedure from the revelations. After doing Pranav, one must chant Gayatri mantra. This washes away many kinds of sins and grants great benefits and fruits.

There is another procedure which prescribes mudras during pranayam. Householders and Vaanprasths (who have retired into the forest) should use all five fingers to close the nostril during pranayam. Brahmacharis and sanyasis should press the nostrils with thumb and little finger.

After pranayam, one must offer three cupped-handfuls of water to the Surya (Sun God). I will tell you the reason for this. There were thirty crores of demons called Mandeha. They wanted to consume the Sun. Rishis and Munis began to worship the Goddess Maha Sandhya, who presides over the Sun; and they offered three anjalis of water. The streams of this water acted like thunderbolts and began to pulverise the demons. The Mantra to be uttered while pouring the water is – I am that Surya. I am the light of the Atma. The Shiva within. I am the Pure Spirit. O Bhagawati Gayatri. You are verily the form of Brahma. Come into my heart. Please put Your Lotus Feet into this water. Please give me Darshan.

After that one has to rid the world of the curses of Brahma, Vishvamitra and Vashisht. By meditating on Brahma, the Brahma shrap gets neutralised. By remembering Vishvamitra, his curse gets neutralised, and by remembering Vashisht his curse gets neutralised. Then meditate on Paramatma thus -

This Parabrahma Paramatma presides over the lotus of my heart. The whole universe is His form. He is uncomprehensible, inaccessible; inpenetrable and unattainable. On this Param Prabhu, Almighty God, I meditate eternally.

Then comes Nyaas – (pledge and surrender) – which is the most important part of Sandhya. Before every mantra chant the Omkara. –

Om Bhu – Paadabhyam namah (essence of the beeja of Mooladhara)

Om Bhur – Jaanubhyam Namaha (the universe that has been created. Swadishtana's beeja)

Om Swah – Katibhyam Namaha (beeja of the Nabhi. – consuming)

Om Mana – Hridhaya Namaha (essence of the heart chakra).

Om Jana – Kanthyaya Namaha – is the people, the collectivity (essence of the Vishuddhi).

Om Tapa – Lalatay Namaha – is the one where you come into tapasya, renunciation and hardship. (beeja of the Agya)

Om Satya – is the truth. Is the essence of the Sahasrara. Not the truth that we think as the truth. But the truth that is expressed in our central nervous system. This is discovered at the seventh state of the Sahasrara.

End of Chapter 11

CHAPTER 12

Chapter 12 Episode 1

1 Devi Kavach

Narad asked – Swamin! You are the guru of the earth and well versed in the Vedas and sixty four techniques. Prabho! It has always been my desire to know how, after cleansing the gross body of all impurities and effects of sin; one can attain Brahmaroop (divine state) Please tell me the techniques and mantras. I wish to hear this.

Bhagwan Narayan says: For this there is Devi Kavach. Our Guru is the Great Mother. All Her Shakti and Yogini aspects are available for Her children. By reciting Devi Kavach we mobilise these powers to purify and enlighten our Koshas (our mental, emotional and physical bodies). Thus by the power of the Gurumata, the Atma becomes the Guru of the body. While reciting this Kavach, one must put one's attention on the aspect or part of the body which is protected. One may also utter the corresponding mantra – e.g. Om Twameva Sashat Shri Chandi Namoh Namaha. This Kavach has to be chanted aloud. It washes away all catches and impurities and bathes one in Divine Vibrations (chaitanya) May the wisdom and compassion of our Satguru flow through us and reach the four quarters of the earth.

In the name of Shri Adi Shakti, the merciful, the compassionate, the protection of Shri Chandi. Salutations to Shri Ganesha. Salutations to Shree Saraswati. Salutations to Shri Guru. Salutations to the Deity worshipped in the family. That is Shri Adi Shakti Nirmala Devi. Let there be no obstacle.

Salutations to Narayan. Salutations to Naranarattam, that is Shri Vishnu. Salutations to Goddess Saraswati. Salutations to Ved Vyasa the all knowing.

Now begins the “Kavach of the Devi”.

The presiding sage for Shri Chandi Kavach is Brahma, the metre is Anushtup. The presiding Deity is Chamunda. The main seed is Anganyasakta Matar. The principle is Digbandha Devata.

Obeisance to Chandika. Thus spoke Markandeya –

Amen! O Brahmadeva! Please tell me that which is very secret, and has not been told by anyone to anybody else, and which protects all human beings in this world.

Brahmadeva said – Brahmin! There is Devi Kavach, which is most secret and is most useful to all beings. Please listen to that O Great Sage! The following nine names have been told by the great soul Brahmadeva Himself. Durga is known by these names –

Shailaputri – Daughter of the King of the Himalayas.

Brahmacharini – One who observes the state of celibacy.

Chandraganta – One who bears the Moon around Her neck.

Kooshamanda – Whose Void contains the Universe.

Skandamata – Who gave birth to Kartikeya

Katyayani – Who incarnated to help the Devas

Kalaratri – Who is ever the Destroyer of Kali (the dark night of dissolution akin to apocalypse)

Mahagauri – One who made great penances

Siddhidatri – One who grants Moksha

Those who are frightened, having been surrounded by enemies on the battlefield, or are burning in fire or being at an impassable place, would face no calamity, and would never have grief, sorrow, fear or evil if they surrender to Durga. Those who remember You with great devotion indeed have prosperity. Undoubtedly, O Goddess of the Gods, You protect those who remember You.

The Goddess Chamunda sits on a corpse; Varahi rides on a buffalo; Aindri is mounted on an elephant; and Vaishnavi on a Condor.

Maheshwari is riding on a bull. The vehicle of Kaumari is the peacock. Lakshmi, the beloved of Shri Vishnu lis seated in a lotus, and is also holding a lotus in Her Hand.

The Goddess Ishwari of white complexion is riding on a bull, and Brahmi who is bedecked with all ornaments, is seated on a swan.

All the mothers are endowed with yoga, and are adorned with different ornaments and jewels.

All the goddesses are seen mounted in chariots, and very angry. They are wielding conch, discus, mace, plough, club, javelin, axe, noose, barbed dart, trident, bow and arrows. These goddesses are wielding their weapons for destroying the bodies of demons, for the protection of their devotees, and for the benefit of the gods.

Salutations to You, O Goddess of very dreadful appearance, of frightening valour and of tremendous strength and energy, the destroyer of the worst fears.

O Devi! It is difficult to have even a glance at You. You increase the fears of Your enemies. Please come to my rescue. May Goddess Aindri protect me from the East. Agni Devata, (Goddess of Fire) from the South-East, Varahi (Shakti of Vishnu in the form of the boar) from the South, Khadgadharani (wielder of the sword) from the South West, Varuni (Shakti of Varun the Rain God) from the West, and Mrgavahini (Whose vehicle is the deer) may protect me from the North West.

The Goddess Kaumari (Shakti of Kumar, that is Kartikeya) protect me from the North and Goddess Shooladharini from the North East, Brahmani (The shakti of Brahma) from above and Vishnavi (Shakti to Vishnu) from below, protect me.

Thus Goddess Chamunda, who sits on a corpse, protects me from all the ten directions. May Goddess Jaya protect me from the front and Vijaya from the rear; Ajita from the left and Aparajita from the right. Goddess Dyotini may protect the top-knot and Uma may sit on my head and protect it. May I be protected by Maladhari on the forehead, Yashaswini on the eyebrows, Trinetra between the eyebrows. Yamaghanta on the nose, Shankini on both the eyes,

Dwaravasini on the ears. May Kalika protect my cheeks, and Shankari the roots of the ears.

May I be protected by Sugandha – nose, Charchika – lip, Amrtakala – lower lip, Saraswati – tongue, Kaumari – teeth, Chandika – throat, Chitra-ghanta – sound box. Mahamaya – crown of the head, Kamakshi – chin, Sarvamangala – speech, Bhadrakali – neck, Dhanurdhari – back.

May Neelagreeva protect the outer part of my throat and Nalakoobari – windpipe. May Khadgini protect my shoulders and Vajra-dharini protect my arms.

May Devi Dandini protect both my hands, Ambika – fingers, Shooleshwari my nails, and may Kuleshwari protect my belly. May I be protected by Mahadevi – breast, Shuladharini – abdomen, Lalita Devi – heart, Kamini – navel, Guhyeshwari hidden parts, Pootana-kamika – reproductive organs, Mahishavahini – rectum.

May Goddess Bhagavati protect my waist, Vindhyavasini – knees, and the wish-fulfilling Mahabala may protect my hips.

May Narasinhi protect my ankles. May Taijasi protect my feet, may Shri protect my toes. May Talavasini protect the soles of my feet.

May Danshtrakarali protect my nails, Urdhvakeshini-hair, Kauberi-pores, Vagishwari-skin.

May Goddess Parvati protect blood, marrow of the bones, fat and bone. Goddess Kalaratri – intestines. Mukuteshwari – bile and liver.

May Padmavati protect the Chakras, Choodamani – phlegm (or lungs), Jwalamukhi lustre of the nails, and Abhedya – all the joints.

Brahmani – semen, Chhatreshwari the shadow of my body, Dharmadharini – ego, superego and intellect (buddhi). Vajrahasta – pran, apan, vyan, udan, saman (five vital breaths), Kalyanashobhana – pranas (life force).

May Yogini protect the sense organs, that is the faculties of tasting, seeing, smelling, hearing and touching. May Narayni protect satwa, raja and tamo gunas. Varahi – the life, Vaishnavi – dharma, Lakshmi – success and fame, Chakrini – wealth and knowledge.

Indrani – relatives, Chandika – cattle, Mahalakshmi – children and Bhairavi – spouse.

Supatha may protect my journey and Kshemakari my way. Mahalakshmi may protect me in the king's courts and Vijaya everywhere.

O Goddess Jayanti, any place that has not been mentioned in the Kavach and has thus remained unprotected, may be protected by you.

One should invariably cover oneself with this Kavacha (by reading) wherever one goes, and should not walk even a step without it if one desires auspiciousness. Then one is successful everywhere and all one's desires are fulfilled and that person enjoys great prosperity on the earth.

The person who covers himself with Kavach becomes fearless, is never defeated in the battle, and becomes worthy of being worshipped in the three worlds.

One who reads with faith everyday thrice (morning, afternoon and evening), the “Kavacha of the Devi”, which is inaccessible even to the Gods, receives the Divine arts, is undefeated in the three worlds, lives for a hundred years, and is free from accidental death.

All diseases like boils, scars, etc. are finished. Movable (scorpions and snakes) and immovable (other) poisons, cannot affect him.

All those, who cast magical spells, by mantras or yantras, on others for evil purposes, all bhoots, goblins, malevolent beings moving on the earth and in the sky, all those who mesmerise others, all female goblins, all yakshas and gandharvas, are destroyed just by the sight of the person having Kavach in his heart.

That person receives more and more respect and prowess. On the earth he rises in prosperity and fame by reading the Kavacha and Saptashati.

His progeny would live as long as the earth is rich with mountains and forests. By the grace of Mahamaya, he would attain the highest place, that is inaccessible even to the Gods, and is eternally blissful in the company of Lord Shiva.

Jai Shri Mataji!

SPEAKING ON THE KAVACH SHREE MATAJI SAYS:

So we have made it short now, just take a ‘bandhan’; it is the same thing as Kavacha you see. Realised souls, if they take a bandhan, is the same thing.

Whatever you have said here is done, yesterday's and today's, everything that has been said, all these Raksha Kari is done in one stroke.

But now we should know how many of us take bandhan before going from the house, before sleeping or before doing something very important. How many people take bandhan. Very seldom. You forget it. Very important, going on a journey, going on a road, better take a bandhan. Not that we are alright, Mother is looking after us is not the point. You must take bandhan before doing all these things.

If you get an accident then know that you have done some mistakes, or something. Otherwise, normally there should be not an accident, means there is something still lacking in you.

SPEAKING AGAIN ON THE KAVACH, SHREE MATAJI SAYS:

Which was promised long time back by Markandeya, now you have achieved it. This he had promised 14,000 years back, that when Mahamaya will come, She will do this work, that it will happen. We must realize that we are getting all the promises fulfilled for us. Now we have also certain promises to be made and we have to ask a question – Have we fulfilled our destiny in life or not? This is a question we should ask and we should not roam about in smaller petty things. Think of a bigger vision about yourself.

State of detachment, also with attitudes. Supposing there is turmoil with all kinds of problems going on, but you are not, you are lik a – not at the wheel point but you are the axis. Like giving a bandhan to yourself. This was not so much explained when it was written, as they were not Sahaja Yogis.

Sahaja Yoga has a problem that those who have not done any Devi Puja, Kavacha, anything, worshipping, may not be religious people, may not have worshipped anything else, or may not have done Namaj, prayers and things like that, such people also have come to Sahaja Yoga. People who did not believe in God have come to Sahaja Yoga. All kinds of people are here. Now those who have done all these things with a pure heart, not just to sort of say something – a lip service. They achieve their Realisation and they don't catch so much. Otherwise those who have not done all these things, for them it is important that they should know that they have to become completely detached.

So what happens is they go to the axis and come out. So somebody who is a 'bhakta' of the Devi is wrong. You catch very easily. But in Sahaja Yoga we have done one thing, we have very few people of that kind, of that quality. Today you can say, very very few. I think hardly any. Most of them have gone into this circle of the axis. So in Sahaja Yoga what we do, we first build a top by which you are in the present, and then you build up your past. First the top. That is why you have to go on clearing out your foundations, your conditionings, your this thing, that thing.

Supposing there is somebody like Markandeya, no problem. That is why you have to go on cleansing yourself. There was no way out, you see. How can you go waiting for people to clean their chakras one by one, and to get them to that position, and then give them Realisation? Best thing was to give them Realisation, and let them look after themselves, and then you start feeling it yourself. If I am catching this Chakra, I am catching that chakra, this is happening; then you start cleansing yourself. Much easier for Me and much easier for you also. Then you start getting detached, but sometimes we also catch from other people, that is important.

For in My case I have allowed My body to be very free. I do not protect Myself at all. So any Sahaja Yogi comes to Me, has some problem, I just absorb it and cleanse it. I have to suffer a little bit – doesn't matter, because I see My suffering also as a witness. Not such a problem. But this is what one has to see. Is to understand, to reach such a state that you become barometric. If you find any problems then you are barometric – you know this is the problem with this person. But you do not sort of catch it and suffer, but you catch it and deliberately suffer it, and clear it. But in Sahaja Yoga also, once you get your Self-Realisation, one can get involved into the past again, because the past is not so pleasant, even it looks something harmless, like doing puja.

Now Puja also people do – just Puja of Mine, forgetting that I am there. When you sing also, you are singing praises of Me, and I am sitting before you. Doesn't happen that way. You just sing because it is music. There should be a feeling that you are sitting before Me and singing My praise. So, identification is still there that you are singing praises to Devi. Devi is WHO? That bridge has to be crossed. If you see Me, and then you penetrate through Me, then it is better. Such a big catch on the mind. Religion itself is a big catch. Like Jains are very difficult because their conditioning is very deep. Like Arya Samaj conditioning is very deep, also Buddhiists, they believe in Nirakara, but they don't believe in God. One should see this way - We don't know Buddha, and we don't know Mohammed. We never saw him. We don't know Mahavira, we don't know anyone. Who gave me Realisation? Shree Mataji! So we have to know that through Shree Mataji only.

Anybody we have to know, we have to know through Mother, not Sahaja Yoga. Now if you go other way round, then you do not work out and then it goes back to past. That is the problem. It oscillates from this side to that side – that

side to this side, oscillates, mind. Make it steady, and one has to know. What is the present? Who is before you? Who has given you Realization?

The problem is this, one more is, that I am Mahamaya. Only the Mahamaya will give you that which is written down already Now when Mahamaya gives you that, I am so human that I can recede, you cannot make me out. Everytime you try to come nearer to reality, you just get into the web of Mahamaya. I am so inhuman. This is a problem with you, but is also a solution. Like supposing I was like anyone of these Goddesses that you have heard of, all the time with a sword; nobody will go near them. Sitting on a lion, sitting on a tiger, who will go near them? Who will ask questions? Who will explain? I have to counsel you. I have to do so many things. I have to tell you how, I have to point out your problems. These none of them would do. They just take a …… (Shree Mataji laughs)… no joking, nothing. No entertainment. So it is like a great guru. See a musician for example – if he sees his disciples putting one note in a wrong way he just slaps them. But Mahamaya cant do that. Otherwise nothing is tolerated. They are intolerable to Gods and Goddesses. All of them they are within Me. I know they are there. I control them, because I am Mahamaya, so I control them. I say No see, it will all work out.

Both ways. But I am so close, and the closer I am, worse it is for you. For example My own children wont accept Me, grandchildren wont accept me very fast, My husband wont accept Me, My relations wont accept Me. If they accept Me in the full form, then they are very, very great people. In away it is good also, because supposing you see the whole family is with Me, they will think – I have floated an organization or something. So this looks nice, that they are kept out as long as possible. It is not difficult. I think that the time

has come for all of them to jump. But still now I have established Myself. You all know that I do not favour relations as such …. (Vibrations).

All these books have talked about Sahaja Yoga. But we must bring all religions in their true form, in their pure form. This is the work one has to do, is to bring the religions in their purest form and not to adhere to them, whatever form has been created or done by human beings.

These religions are not created by human beings, but by incarnations. So human beings have made them artificial. They have made all kinds of nonsense with them.

We have to remember that religion, in its true and pure form. We have to respect, that they are all just the same. If you come to the truer form, they are just the same – like the different petals of the flower. One may not look the same as the other, but the whole thing makes a flower.

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Chapter 12 Episode 2

2 SAPTASHATI – Nine Nights of Worship

There are fifteen phases of the moon, and the sixteenth one is the complete moon. As revealed by Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, these are also the sixteen phases or the powers of Shri Krishna. Fifteen phases are the fifteen steps of consciousness at the human level, and the sixteenth is the eternal witness. All the chakras have two phases – left and right. Seven into two is fourteen. Fifteen is the Spirit, and Sixteen is the Absolute God Almighty. This is the phase which is not achieved by human beings so far. When we come into Sahaja Yoga our ascent begins.

In the first and the second phase of evolution, matter was created. At this point Shri Adi Shakti separated from Shri Sadashiva and She created Lord Ganesha to bless Her creation with innocence and auspiciousness.

Hence, the first prayer to the Goddess is addressed to Lord Ganesha in the FIRST NIGHT of the nine phases of the moon in the period of worship called Navaratri or nine nights of worship. Lord Ganesha's power removes all obstacles and also purifies us for undertaking the prayers to the Goddess. The blessings of the moon, which is also on the left side, also arises from the same source. This is the stage of MOOLADHARA CHAKRA in us.

NINE NIGHTS OF WORSHIP

1ST DAY (PRATIPADA) OF NAVRATRI

First day was observed as the day of silence, it being the day of Shri Ganesha. Shri Ganesha is worshipped this day.

2ND DAY – DEVI SOOKTAM

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Vishnumaya iti shabdita – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh namah. (To the Devi who in all beings is called Vishnumaya Salutations to Her, again and again)

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Chetanyata bhidhiyate – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who in all beings is Consciousness) …

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Buddhi Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in all beings as Intelligence

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Nidra Rupena Samstithai – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh Namah (To the Devi who abides in the form of sleep).

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Kshuddha Rupena Samstitha - Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Hunger).

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Chaya Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Reflection)

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Shakti Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, Namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Power)

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Trishna Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Thirst)

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Kshanti Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Forgiveness)

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Jati Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Genes).

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Lajja Rupena Samstitha - - Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Modesty)

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Shanti Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Peace).

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Shraddha Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Faith).

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu – Kanti Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Lustre)

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Lakshmi Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Good Fortune).

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Vritti Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Activity).

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Smriti Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Memory).

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Daya Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Compassion).

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu, - Tushti Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of contentment)

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Matr Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, Namoh Namah. (To the Devi who abides in the form of Mother)

Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu - Bhranti Rupena Samstitha – Namastasyai, Namastasyai, namastasyai Namoh Namah. (to the Devi who abides in the form of illusion)

Indriyanam adhishthatri bhutanam chakhileshu ya, Bhuteshu Satatam Tasye

Vyapti devyai namo namah

Chitiroopena ya kritsnmate dravyapya sthita jagat

Namastasye, namastasye, namastasye namo namah

In the SECOND NIGHT (dwitya) we offer Puja to the different manifestations of the supreme Goddess. – "Ya Devi Sarvabhuteshu"… All these aspects of the Devi also manifest in the qualities of the different chakras. This is the time to cross NABHI and SWADISHTAN CHAKRAS.

During the THIRD and FOURTH nights (tritya and chaturthi) we feel totally secure and blissful in the power of Shri Adi Shakti's love and we worship Her with deep gratitude in our heart. This then, is the crossing of the HEART CHAKRA.

In the FIFTH night (panchami) we pray to the Goddess for our ascent and the destruction of the negative forces weighing us down. When the spirit sings in joy to praise the Devi, we cross the VISHUDDHI CHAKRA.

THE HYMNS OF ARGALA

Of these Argala hymns, Shri Vishnu is the Rishi (Sage); Anushtup is meter, Mahalakshmi is the deity, and it is rec ited for the love of Shree Jagaddamba, as part of Saptashati.

1. O Goddess Jayanti (who wins everyone), Mangala (who gives salvation), Kali, Bhadrakali (who is benevolent to devotees), Kapalini, Durga, Kshama (who tolerates everyone), Shiva, Dhatri, Swaha and Swad – Salutations to You.

2. Victory be to You, O Devi Chamunda (killer of Chanda and Munda) Victory be to you, O remover of miseries of all living beings. Victory be to you O Devi who is present everywhere. – Salutations to You, O Kalaratri (the last night)

3. Salutations to You O Devi, the killer of the demon Madhu and Kaitabha and the bestower of boons on Shri Brahmadeva. Please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies.

4. Salutations to You O Devi, the killer of Mahishasura, and giver of happiness to your devotees. Please give us the spiritual personality, the victory and the glory, and destroy our enemies.

5. O Devi, the killer of Raktabeeja and destroyer of demons Chanda and Munda, please give us the spiritual personality, the victory and the glory, and destroy our enemies.

6. O Devi, the killer of demons shumbha, Nishumba and Dhumraksha. Please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory, and destroy our enemies.

7. O Devi, Whose Lotus Feet are worshipped by the gods, and who gives good fortune, please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies.

8. O Devi, Whose form and character are beyond mind, and who destroys all the enemies, please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies.

9. O Devi Chandika, the destroyer of sufferings, please give those who always humble before You in devotion, the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory, and destroy our enemies.

10. O Devi Chandika, the destroyer of all diseases, please give to the devotees who praise You with devotion, the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies.

11. O Devi Chandika, please give those who always worship you with devotion in this world, the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy their enemies.

12. O Devi, please give us good fortune, health, complete happiness, spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies.

13. O Devi, please destroy those who hate your devotees, give me strength, the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory, and destroy our enemies.

14. O Devi, please confer upon us the benevolence, great wealth, the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory, and destroy our enemies.

15. O Devi Ambika, Your Lotus Feet are rubbed by the gems of the crowns worn by Gods and demons. Please bestow upon us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies.

16. O Devi, please make Your devotees knowledgeable, glorified and wealthy, and give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory, and destroy our enemies.

17. O Devi, destroyer of the ego of ferocious demons. O Chandike! Please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies.

18. O Parameshwari (the Supreme Goddess) having four arms, and who is praised by the four-faced one (Brahmadeva), please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, and glory, and destroy our enemies.

19. O Devi Ambika, who is ever praised with all devotion by Shri Krishna, please give us the spiritual personality, the victory and glory, and destroy our enemies.

20. O Parameshwari (the Supreme Goddess) who is praised by the husband of the daughter of the Himalayas (Shri Shiva), please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies

21. O Parameshwari, Who is worshipped with true feelings by the husband of Indrani, (Indra) please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory, and destroy our enemies.

22. O Devi, the destroyer of pride of demons by Your strong arms, please give us the spiritual personality, the victory, the glory and destroy our enemies.

23. O Devi Ambika, you enlighten the supreme joy (moksha) of your devotees, please give us the spiritual personnalsity, the victory, the glory, and destroy our enemies.

24. O Devi, please give me the wife who is pleasing to mind, who goes according to the mind (obedient) and who can cross the most difficult of worldly ocean and who comes from a good family.

SHREE MATAJI – You are Sahaja Yogis. What is your destiny? Your destiny is to achieve spiritual success (spiritual ascent).

The Devi destroyed Chanda and Munda, that is why She is called Chamunda. They are all back in this Kaliyuga. All of them.

On the SIXTH NIGHT (sashti) we surrender our ego and conditionings at the Lotus Feet of the Goddess

On the SEVENTH NIGHT the Devi revealed Herself. All the Deities asked theAdi Shakti –

1. O Mahadevi! Who are You! (Devi Atharva Veda)

She answered thus:

2. I am of the form of Brahma. The world made of Prakriti and Purusha has emanated from Me. I am the Shunya (nothingness) and beyond the Shunya.

3. I am joy and beyond the joy. I am knowledge and beyond the knowledge. I am the Brahman that everyone should know, and also the illusion. I am the world made of five elements, and also beyond the world. I am this entire visible world.

4. I am the Vedas and beyond the Vedas. I am the pure knowledge and the illusion. I am born and unborn. I am above and below, at the front and back.

5. I move about as Rudras and Vasus (a class of deities who are eight in number). I move about as Aditya and Vishwadeva (a class of deities. Adityas are twelve in number and one of them is the Sun). I am the One who supports Sun, Varun, Indra, Agni and Ashwini Kumars (Divine doctors).

6. I support Soma, Twashta, Poosha and Bhag (a class of deities). It is I who supports Vishnu, Brahmadeva and Prajapati. Whose Feet have pervaded the three lokas.

7. It is I who receives oblations offered in the sacrificial fire (Havana). It is I Who gives wealth to the devotees of God all over the world. I am the chief of all deities to whom are offered oblations in the sacrificial fire. I create all five elements from My Own form. My place is in the intellect that is enlightened with the light of Atma. One who understands this receives divine wealth.

8. The Gods spoke thus – Salutations to the Great Goddess, the bestower of auspiciousness. We all humbly surrender and pay obeisance to the Prakriti (Mother of the entire creation) One who bestows benedictions and rules over the entire world.

9. We all surrender to Devi Durga, Who is having complexion like the flames of burning fire; Who is resplendent with the knowledge; Who rewards the actions. Salutations to the destroyer of demons.

10. May that Goddess, Who resides in all beings as the power of speech, Who is like the wish-fulfilling Kamadhenu cow, be pleased with us and be always with us.

11. Salutations to the Goddess who is the last night, Who is praised by Brahmadeva; Who is the power of Shri Vishnu; the Mother of Shri Kartikeya; Shree Saraswati; Shree Aditi (mother of gods), the daughter of Daksh and the consort of Shri Shiva.

12. We want to know more about Shree Mahalaxmi. We meditate on Shree Saraswati. May the Goddess encourage us to meditate more on Her.

13. O Daksha! Your daughter Aditi has given birth to Gods who are immortal and auspicious.

14. Kaama, Yoni, Kamalaa, Vajrapani (Indra), Guha, Hamsa, Maatarishwa, Abhra, Indra, Punarguha, Sakala, Maya, are the mantras (vidya) of the Mother of the Universe, Who Herself is verily the Brahma.

15. She is the power of Atma. She is the One who is enticing the universe, wielding noose, goad, bow and arrow, the great knowledge (Maha Vidya). One who knows this is liberated of all grief.

16. Salutations to You, O Bhagawati. O Mother! Always look after us.

17. She is the eight Vasus. She is eleven Rudras. She is twelve Adityas. She is the Vishwadevas authorized and unauthorized to have somas (vibrations). She is Yatodhan, Asuras, Rakshasas, Pishachas, Yakshas and Siddhas (all astral beings). She is Sattwa, Rajo and Tamo Gunas. She is Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. She is Prajapati, Indra and Manu. She is stars and planets, and constellations. O Devi, Who is also of the form of Kaala, Kashtha and Kala (small units of time), the dispeller of sin, bestower of fulfilment and liberation unending, victorious, pure, the only One to be surrendered, the bestower of benevolence, of the form of auspiciousness, my salutations to You.

18. The Beeja Mantra of Devi, which is the combination of Viyat i.e. Ether (Ha), and “ee” and fire (Ra), bedecked with crescent moon, fulfils all desires.

19. This Beeja Mantra (Hrim) is described as single letter containing the Brahman, and is meditated upon by Yogis of pure attention, who are verily the collection of knowledge, with great bliss.

20. The Mantra (Aiim Hrim Kleem, Chamunda Vicche) gives great joy to the devotees of the Devi, and leads them to Brahma realization.

21. We should devote ourselves to that Devi, Who resides at the centre of our lotus hearts; Whose glory is like that of a rising sun, Whose face is pleasing, Who is granting the boons and protection; Who is three-eyed and has put on red clothes, and is fulfilling the desires of Her devotees.

22. I salute that great Goddess (Mahadevi) who destroys great fears, Who removes great calamities, and Who is the great compassion personified.

23. Her form cannot be known, even by deities like Brahmadeva and others, and is therefore called as “Unknown”. She has no end and is therefore called

“Endless”. It cannot be known what is Her aim, and therefore She is called as “Without Aim”. She has no birth, and therefore She is called as “Unborn”. She is alone everywhere, hence She is called “One and the Only”. Although She is one, yet the whole universe is Her form. Hence She is called “Not One”. Therefore She has the names as Agnyeya, Ananta, Alakshya, Ajaa, Aika, Naika, etc..

24. That Devi is Matruka (i.e. letters which make mantras) in mantra; She is knowledge in words. In the knowledge She is beyond pure intelligence. In the nothingness, She is the Witness. There is nothing beyond Her; hence She is described as Durga.

25. I, who am afraid of the ocean of worldly affairs, salute that Durga, Who is inaccessible, Who is the destroyer of all wickedness and savior of the people from the ocean of illusion.

When verses of Devi Atharva Sheersha from Durga Saptashati were read, where the Devi speaks of Herself; Shree Mataji clarifies and explains in between …

When you give joy to someone, the source of joy has to be beyond joy.

I am the giver of knowledge.

Without the light of Atma, without the light of the Spirit, how can you know anything.

You see, the source is unborn. It can take birth because it is Primordial, so it is unborn. Primordial is there, it is absolute, but then absolute can take birth.

Why not get realization? Without that what's the use of doing Devi Puja. Without the knowledge of atma if you do any puja what is the use. You wont get Divine Blessings – already said thousands of years back.

Vaikhari is the power by which we speak.

Any god's name you take, you ask "Are You this?"…..(Vibrations) Because the Shakti of all those people is the essence of all those. Because I am that Shakti, that's why you get the vibrations. Ask anybody's name, even the saints, rishis, maharishis, "Hanh" all of that is Me. That is why that's the point they are trying to make.

Beeja mantra means say the Vaikhari. Vaikhari is the power of Speaking. This power of speaking is made into mantras by people who have power of Realisation. Now, so for them to improve, supposing they want to improve their centre, or they want to improve their left or right, they have to say the Beeja Mantras. If they say the Beeja Mantras: that area gets the beeja, then the beeja has to sprout and has to grow. So the first step they have is to say the beeja mantra, and they have to say different mantras of the different chakras. So one is the beeja, and then is the tree. So if you know the beeja first of all, you can implant a beeja into yourself by saying that, and then you start saying all others. So that's how you make it grow.

The word "Sanskrit" has come out of Kundalini's movement, when she makes a sound, all was recorded by the great saints, and like that every Chakra has got vowels and consonants according to the number of sub plexuses they have,

you can say petals they have, and all of them make all the alphabets of Sanskrit language.

Sanskrit is made holy.

This language was made holy. First it was one language, out of which two languages were born – was Latin, and the one which was made holy was Sanskrit. Sanskrit language comes from the saints who heard all those things and they made this. And this is the energy of the "Vaikhari". Now the script is there, the Vaikhari is there, the energy is there, and this is the way you should say the instrument. But to make it work in a divine way, you have to make it into a mantra. To make it a mantra, any mantra you want to do, you must know first the beeja mantra. Supposing you want to raise your Kundalini, then the beeja mantra is "reem", and from "reem" you should go on to "Om Twameva Sakshat Shri Reem". Then you should go on saying the mantras of all the deities that are there.

You all have become Vidyavaan now.

Now you try to understand how this "Vidya" has been penetrating into you slowly. Not with any teachers or anybody sitting with a stick in the hand. The whole "Vidya" is exposed from within and without. Whatever I say, you can tally it on your vibrations. So it goes into your hand. You don't accept it because I am saying, but it is so, that's why you accept it. Supposing I say this is water, then what you will drink the water and you will see if it quenches your thirst. Then only you are going to believe that this is water, otherwise you are not going to believe in the same way it is.

We are Swayama Siddhas.

“Ra” is the energy Radha. The one who sustains the energy is Radha. She is Mahalaxmi, that is why She sustains the Kundalini.

“Eee” is the Primordial Mother, and “Ra” is the energy that is Kundalini. So the “Reem” means that you have the energy passing through the thing towards the Primordial Being. So “Reem” that is why Yogis – because they believe only in connection. Yogis believe in Yoga, and so they have to look after the energy and also the Primordial Mother. This is very important because that is how energy should be there – Kundalini as well as Primordial Mother. Fourteen thousand years before they have written all this, which is the truth, which you know now Now when you read this book, Devi Saptashati, you will understand.

“Chitta Swaroopini” – Right side, that is Mahasaraswati. Then “Sattwa Roopini” Mahalaxmi, “Ananda Roopini” – Mahakali, – and you know all these things.

(For receiving the knowledge of Brahma, we always meditate on You).

Without that you have got it, even without meditation you got realization. Now meditate you must. I don’t know what to do about that.

In the witness state you become zero. See, your ‘I’ is no more in the witness state. You just see, and there that is “Shoonya”. So She’s the one at the time when you are in Shoonya state, who is the Shakti of that is She. You are in Nirvichara; thousands of people have that. Now they have found out, who knows that I know also if your Kundalini has passed through. So even if you may not know, I’ll say it is done you know. So She is the one who knows all your states. So the whole idea you can understand like a computer, that is already made so well that it records everything that happens, and

immediately. I, like see, I'm talking to you, suddenly a person is sitting, I say "Hanh", so the attention is there also. I am talking to you, attention is there, that Kundalini rises immediately. That's it.

If the Goddess is pleased, then by Her Grace we come to the Sahasrara. This is 2x7 i.e. 14 phases of the moon.

EIGHTH NIGHT (ashtami) "O Devi! You are the only support of this world, because You are there as the Mother Earth and supporting the universe.

MAHALAKSHMI HYMNS (CHAPTER 11 OF DEVI MAHATMYA)

1-2 After the demon Shumbha was killed by Devi, all gods led by Indra and Agni praised the Devi as under:-

3. O Devi Who removes the grief of all those who surrender, be pleased by us. O Mother of the whole world, be pleased. O Goddess of the universe, be pleased, and look after the universe. You are the Goddess of moving and non-moving things.

4. O Devi, as You are the mother earth, You alone are the support of the world. You are water and you quench the thirst of the people. O Devi of immeasurable valour.

5. O Devi, You are the Shakti Vaishnavi (the power of Shri Vishnu) of unending strength. You are the primordial seed of the universe, the supreme Maya. You have enticed all, and when You are pleased, there is liberation on the earth.

6. O Devi, all kinds of knowledge are Your forms. All women in the world are of Your form. You alone have occupied the whole universe. You are the Paraa Vaani (highest and subtlest form of speech) beyond all praises, so which praise is really appropriate for You.

7. O Devi You are praised in all scriptures as One Who grants liberation and kingdom of god to all beings. So what letters or words can there be to praise You.

8. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who is residing in the hearts of all as the Buddhi and leading all to the heavens.

9. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who gives the effect of time in the forms of Kalaa, Kashthaa (small units of time) and the Shakti beyond the universe.

10. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who is three eyed; One to be surrendered, Shree Gauri, consort of Shri Shiva, auspiciousness in all that is auspicious, and the One Who endows all success.

11. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who is the eternal Shakti behind the sustenance and destruction of the whole creation, Who is within and beyond the three gunas.

12. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who is prompt to protect and help out all those sufferers who surrender to You.

13. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who took the form of Brahmani (Shakti of Brahma), and was sprinkling water with kusha grass, while riding in the heavenly car (or airplane of Swan).

14. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who was mounted on the great bull in the form of Maheshwari (Shakti of Shiva) and was wielding trident, crescent moon and snake.

15. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, who took the form of Kaumari (Shakti of Kartikeya) riding on a peacock, and wielding great (invincible) shaktis.

16. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who took the form of Vaishnavi (Shakti of Shri Vishnu) wielding the conch and the weapons – mace, discus, bow of Shri Vishnu known as Sharangadhara. Be pleased with us.

17. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, the bestower of all benevolence, who is wielding the great discus in the hand, and raising the earth in the form of the great boar, with its tusk.

18. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who in the form of a ferocious lion, killed the demons and protected the three worlds.

19. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who in the form of Aindri (Shakti of Indra) wearing the crown, wielding great thunder, and having thousand bright eyes, killed the demon Vrutra.

20. Salutations to You, O Devi Narayani, Who in the form of Shiva dooti, made a frightening war cry and assumed the terrifying form, killed the mighty army of demons.

21. Salutations to You O Goddess Chamunda Narayani, whose mouth was dreadful due to Her great teeth, who wore as an ornament the garland of human heads and killed demon Munda.

22. Salutations to You O Devi Narayani, Laxmi, Lajja, Mahavidya, Shraddha, Pushti, Swadha, Dhruva, Maharatri, Mahamaya.

23. Salutations to You O Devi Narayani, Medha, Saraswati, Baabhravi, Taamasi, Niyati (destiny), be pleased.

24. Salutations to You, O Devi Durga, the whole universe is Your form, the Goddess of all; all powers are present within You. Please save us from calamities.

25. Salutations to You, O Goddess Katyayani. May this pleasing face of Yours, decorated with three eyes, protect us from all fears.

26. Salutations to You O Goddess Bhadrakali. May Your trident, which looks dreadful due to fire coming out of it, and which destroys mighty demons, protect us from calamities.

27. O Devi, may Your bell, the sound of which spreads everywhere and destroys the glory of the demons, protect us from sins, just as mother protects her son.

28. O Devi Chandika. May the sword in Your hand, from which the blood of demons is dripping, be auspicious to us.

29. O Devi, when You are pleased, you eradicate all diseases. When you are annoyed, no desire is fulfilled. Those who come to You for shelter, become capable of giving shelter to others.

30. O Devi Ambika. You have divided Your form into many, and have destroyed adharmik demons. Who else can do it.

31. O Devi, all knowledge, all scriptures, and tenets of Vedas, contain Your praise. You are the One who brings the people over and over again out of the darkness of ignorance and attachment.

32. O Devi, wherever there are dreadful demons, poisonous snakes, powerful armies of enemies and dacoits, wherever there are all burning fires and deep sea, You are present and protecting the universe.

33. O Goddess of the Universe, you are looking after the universe. You are supporting the Universe, as it is Your own form. O Devi, the Lord of the Universe bows before You. Those who are humble before You, with devotion, provide shelter to the Universe.

34. O Devi, as You have protected us by killing the demons please always protect us from enemies. Please dispel all sins and diseases and calamities which befall reward of sins.

35. O Devi, dispeller of calamities of the universe, be pleased with us. O Devi Who is worshipped by the three worlds, be pleased and grant boons.

SHREE MATAJI EXPLAINS :

In the Mahalaxmi Stotram why should we have all these. Because it is the Kundalini. The Mahalaxmi is the channel of the Kundalini, so there are Ashta Lakshmis (eight Lakshmis), then Mahalakshmi and lastly the Daksha Lakshmi. We got one after another, these powers within us, which are expressed on the Mahalakshmi channel. Now in the Mahalakshmi channel we have to talk about Gauri. Because Gauri is the one which is the Kundalini. So they have to

talk – that's why they say 'Udai Udai He Ambe'. They say in the Mahalakshmi temple. Why, because in the Mahalakshmi Temple only they have to say that now you rise, we are ready, we are prepared, we have got the Mahalakshmi principle within us, and now You can rise – the Kundalini; and that's why the Aavahana.

Palan means mothering, or looking after the child. She is the One who looks after the whole world like a mother.

O Devi! You are the only support of this world, because You are as the mother earth and supporting the universe as the mother earth. Because of mother earth the universe exists, because she, the Mother Earth was created out of all the cosmos. The whole cosmos is supported by Mother Earth. Like, supposing you are building a house. The house is there, but it is supported by the person who lives in it. Otherwise it is meaningless. Like a bridegroom, if he is not in the marriage, what's the use of having a marriage. The mere existence of this Mother Earth makes the whole cosmos to exist and to have a meaning.

Mahalakshmi looks after the brain. So everything that you know comes through your brain, and that is sustained, or I should say, looked after or nourished, by Mahalakshmi principle.

"Paravani" starts from here (Shree Mataji explains, keeping Her Hand on Her Nabhi). Is the sound which is silent.

Then it comes to the heart when it becomes 'anahat' it is called as "Pashyanti", because it just witnesses. The 'vani', the energy of Vani, the energy of that sound just witnesses and is in anahata state.

Then it comes here (Vishuddhi level) so it is called Madhyama still in the middle stage up to the throat. But when it comes to the mouth it becomes "Vaikhari" means then it speaks, speaks.

So this is how the Paravani, means the Paravani is the, say – if God has to say something – then He says it in Paravani, which you can't hear it. In the same way you have got your Paravanis within you, which is of course the human (we should say) reflection of the same Paravani which You can't hear it. You can't hear the Vani in your stomach, but say you get some troubles, specially cancer or any other such diseases you get a problem. That causes 'spandan', throbbing, is vibrations that you get, is the effect of that Paravani which shows you that there is some trouble. That trouble you can see, then it starts throbbing. Even the Kundalini, when She starts She doesn't make any sound, but She comes here (Sahasrara), and if there is any problem, She makes a throbbing. Its like a, - like a smooth water, when it runs it doesn't make any sound, but when there is obstruction, it makes a sound. So there is a sound innate. This sound is due to percussion in the water, but there is innately sound built into the 'Vani', this sound which is silent sound which rises from these four stages, and when it comes to the mouth, then only it becomes Vaikhari. In the case of God, see, when He speaks, whateve He is speaking, nobody can hear it unless and until you have reached the state of Paravani. Unless and until you have felt your Paravani, you cannot hear it.

So what happens, that God Himself has to come on this earth, and has to use His Vaikhari to explain things to you. So by that you start going down and down. Then you come to Madhyama state, where you enjoy your silence. Then you come to Pashyanti. There you enjoy your witness state. And then you come to Paravani where you got the sound, or you can say that you get the information. Just information, but it has no sounds, no noise, nothing.

Just the information, like a thought. Thoughts do not have sound, so the inspiration comes to you from Paravani. But thought has no sound. In the same way, it is a soundless thing that comes.

In the Ninth phase (NAVAMI) the Devi takes us to our destiny and fulfils us. With blessings we become a part and parcel of Her, and do not fall back.

SHREE MATAJI - Today is the last day of Navaratri. This should be the culminating point for all of you. As you see, within us, as you know, that there are seven chakras for your ascent, and two above it. That should be your destiny. But if you people go only on the agya, move on agya, you cannot rise any higher. People have been lost on that chakra. So that is a very important chakra. Sixth – Shashti of the Goddess is regarded as a very important thing and they say that Goddess comes on a 'Naav', a boat, because the Sixth Day is very big to cross. That is what today is the problem with all of us, that we have this sixth day still sitting on our heads and we cannot get out of it. So to come to the Ninth Stage though we may do puja, we may do anything, but we are still on the sixth. So it is just outwardly that we are doing Puja. Seventh day is the day where I am there. But Seventh and Eighth and Ninth has to be achieved by crossing your Sixth. Today I am going to tell you about the Sixth because it is the most important of all of us to know that what Goddess has done on the sixth day.

Mahalakshmi incarnated as Mary, and She brought Her son who was Jesus Christ, and She wanted Him to cross this Sixth center for everybody else, and that is how He had to become the subtle form of 'Chaitanya'. He was the

subtle form of Chaitanya – the way He walked on water. But ultimately He became Chaitanya, and he crossed over by leaving His body as subtle.

On the Tenth Day of Navratri, the triumph of the Goddess is celebrated after She has vanquished all the negative forces. On this day we worship Her Lotus Feet in our heart.

The Goddess incarnated on this Earth nine times, to save Her Children.

This is a book of prayers to our most beloved Shri Adi Shakti Mataji Nirmala Devi, Who has taken this incarnation only out of compassion for us.

“But we do not know, O Goddess! How to pray to You or how to please You. Please guide us”.

In answer to our prayers Shri Adi Shakti revealed how to offer prayer during these nine nights, in talks which are recorded here from notes compiled in Pratishtan, Pune. But a prayer should not become a ritual. Even a flower, a leaf, She accepts, when offered from the heart.

Again, we pray to Shri Adi Shakti for Her forgiveness for all our mistakes and omissions towards Her protocol, and that She may please indulge us, Her little children, who are ignorant and spoilt, but who love Her very much.

Chapter 12 - Episode 3

3 Brahmagyan. Moksha.

Naradji said - Prabho! Devdevesh! You are the Lord of the past and the present universes. From your divine voice I have heard about Devi Kavach. You are the knower of the Dharmas. You have told me all about the Shrutis and Smritis, the Purans, and all negativity destroying secrets. O Lord with eyes like Lotus petals, tell me that which gives Brahmagyan. What is it that grants moksha.

Bhagwan Narayan said - I bow to you and thank you for asking such a wise and holy question. Listen. I place before you the Sahasranama of the Almighty Devi Bhagawati. These divine names are most auspicious. –

LALITA SAHASRANAMA (Thousand Names of the Devi)

Aum Shree Lalita Maha Tripurasundari Svarupa, Shree Minakshi Parameshwari Paradevata Ambikayai Namah Dhyanam.

May we meditate on the Divine, whose body has the red hue of vermillion; Who has three eyes; who wears a beautiful crown studded with rubies; Who is adorned with the crescent moon; Whose face sports a beautiful smile indicating compassion; Who has beautiful limbs; Whose hands hold a jewel studded golden vessel filled with nectar and in the other a red lotus flower.

I meditate on the Great Empress. She is red in colour, and Her eyes are full of compassion. She holds the noose, the goad, the bow and the flowery arrow in

Her hands. She is surrounded on all sides by powers such as Anima for rays, and She is the Self within me.

The Divine Goddess is to be meditated upon as seated in the lotus, with petal eyes. She is golden hued, and has lotus flowers in Her hands. She dispels the fears of devotees who bow before Her. She is the embodiment of peace, knowledge (vidya), is praised by Gods and grants every kind of wealth wished for.

I meditate on the Mother Whose eyes are smiling, who holds the arrow, bow, noose and goad in Her hands. She is glittering with red garlands and ornaments. She is painted with kumkuma on Her forehead, and is red and tender like the japa flower.

Atha Shree Lalitha Sahasranama stotram.

Aum, aiim, hrim, shrim. Aum, aiim, hrim shrim.

1. Shree Mata - She Who is the auspicious Mother.

2. Shree Maha Ragyi - She Who is the Empress of the Universe.

3. Shrimath Simhasaneshvari - She Who is the Queen of the most glorious throne

4. Chithagnikunda Sambhuta - She Who was born in the fire pit of Pure Consciousness.

5. Deva Karya Samudyata - She Who is intent on fulfilling the wishes of the Gods.

6. Udyadh Bhanu Sahasrabha - She Who has the radiance of a thousand rising suns.

7. Chatur Bahu Samanvita - She Who is four-armed.

8. Raga Svarupa Pashadhya - She Who is holding the rope of love in Her hand.

9. Krodha Karan Kushojjvala - She Who shines, bearing the goad of anger.

10. Mano Rupekshu Kodanda - She Who holds in Her hand a sugarcane bow that represents the mind.

11. Pajncha Tanmatra Sayaka - She Who holds the five subtle elements as arrows.

12. Nijaruna Prabhapura Majjadh Brahmanda Mandala - She Who immerses the entire universe in the red effulgence of Her Form.

13. Champaka Ashoka Punnaga Saugandhika Lasath Kacha - She Whose hair has been adorned with flowers like champaka, ashoka, punnaga and saugandhika.

14. Kuruvinda Manishreni Kanath Kotira Mandita - She Who is resplendent with a crown adorned with rows of kuruvinda gems.

15. Ashhtami Chandra Vibhrajapadalikasthala Shobhita - She Whose forehead shines like the crescent moon of the eighth night of the lunar half-month.

16. Mukha Chandra Kalankabha Mriga Nabhi Visheshhaka - She Who wears a musk mark on Her forehead which shines like a spot on the moon.

17. Vadana Smara Mangalya Griha Torana Chillika - She Whose eyebrows shine like the archways leading to the house of Kama, god of love, which Her face resembles.

18. Vakra Lakshmi Parivaha Chalanh Minabha Lochana - She Whose eyes possess the luster of the fish that move about in the stream of beauty flowing from Her face.

19. Nava Champaka Pushhpabha Nasa Danda Virajita - She Who is resplendent with a nose that has the beauty of a newly blossoming champaka flower.

20. Tara Kanti Tiraskari Nasabharana Bhasura - She Who shines with a nose ornament that excels the luster of a star.

21. Kadamba Manjari Kiripta Karnapura Manohara - She Who is captivating, wearing bunches of kadamba flowers as ear-ornaments.

22. Tatanka Yugali Bhuta Tapanodupa Mandala - She Who wears the sun and the moon as a pair of large earrings.

23. Padma Raga Shila Darsha Paribhavi Kapolabhuh - She Whose cheeks excel mirrors made of rubies in their beauty.

24. Nava Vidruma Bimba Shree Nyakkari Radanachchhada - She Whose lips excel freshly cut coral and bimba fruit in their reflective splendor.

25. Shuddha Vidyankurakara Dvija Pankti Dvayojjvala - She Who has radiant teeth which resemble the buds of pure knowledge.

26. Karpura Vitika Moda Samakarshhi Digantara - She Who is enjoying a camphor-laden betel roll, the fragrance of which is attracting people from all directions.

27. Nija Sallapa Madhurya Vinirbhartsita Kachchapi - She Who excels even the Vina of Saraswati in the sweetness of Her speech.

28. Manda Smita Prabha Pura Majjath Kamesha Manasa - She Who submerges even the mind of Kamesha (Lord Shiva) in the radiance of Her smile.

29. Anakalita Sadrishya Chibuka Shree Virajita - She Whose chin cannot be compared to anything (it is beyond comparison because of its unparalleled beauty).

30. Kamesha Baddha Mangalya Sutra Shobhita Kandhara - She Whose neck is adorned with the Marriage Thread tied by Kamesha.

31. Kanakangada Keyura Kamaniya Bhujanvita - She Whose arms are beautifully adorned with golden armlets.

32. Ratnagraiveya Chintaka Lola Mukta Phalanvita - She Whose neck is resplendent with a gem-studded necklace with a locket made of pearl.

33. Kameshvara Prema Ratna Mani Pratipana Stani - She Who gives Her Breasts to Kameshvara in return for the gem of love He bestows on Her.

34. Nabhyalavala Romali Lata Phalakuchadvayi - She Whose Breasts are the fruits on the creeper of the fine hairline that starts in the depths of Her navel and spreads upwards.

35. Lakshya Roma Lata Dharata Samunneya Madhyama - She Who has a waist, the existence of which can only be inferred by the fact that the creeper of Her hairline springs from it.

36. Sthana Bhara Dalanh Madhya Pattabandha Vali Traya - She Whose abdomen has three folds which form a belt to support Her waist from breaking under the weight of Her Breasts.

37. Arunaruna Kausumbha Vastr Abhasvath Katitati - She Whose hips are adorned with a garment as red as the rising sun, which is dyed with an extract from safflower (kusumbha) blossoms.

38. Ratna Kinkini Karamya Rashanadama Bhushhita - She Who is adorned with a girdle which is decorated with many gem-studded bells.

39. Kameshagyata Saubhagya Mardavoru Dvayanvita - The beauty and softness of Whose thighs are known only to Kamesha, Her husband.

40. Manikya Makutakara Janudvaya Virajita - She Whose knees are like crowns shaped from the precious red jewel manikya (a kind of ruby).

41. Indragopa Parikshipta Smaratunabha Jamghika - She Whose calves gleam like the jewel-covered quiver of the God of love.

42. Guda Gulpha - She Whose ankles are hidden.

43. Kurmaprishhtha Jayishnu Prapadanvita - She Whose Feet have arches that rival the back of a tortoise in smoothness and beauty.

44. Nakhadidhiti Sanchanna Namajjana Tamoguna - She Whose toenails give out such a radiance that all the darkness of ignorance is dispelled completely from those devotees who prostrate at Her Feet.

45. Pada Dvaya Prabhajala Parakrita Saroruha - She Whose Feet defeat lotus flowers in radiance.

46. Sijnjana Manimajnjira Mandita Shree Padambuja - She Whose auspicious Lotus Feet are adorned with gem-studded golden anklets that tinkle sweetly.

47. Marali Manda Gamana - She Whose gait is as slow and gentle as that of a swan.

48. Maha Lavanya Shevadhih - She Who is the treasure house of beauty.

49. Sarvaruna - She Who is entirely red in complexion.

50. Anavadyangi - She Whose Body is worthy of worship.

51. Sarvabharana Bhushhita - She Who is resplendent with all types of ornaments.

52. Shiva Kameshvarankastha - She Who sits in the lap of Shiva who is the conqueror of desire.

53. Shiva - She Who bestows all that is auspicious.

54. Svadhina Vallabha - She Who keeps Her Husband always under Her control.

55. Sumeru Madhya Shringastha - She Who sits on the middle peak of Mount Sumeru.

56. Shrimanh Nagara Nayika - She Who is the mistress of the most auspicious or prosperous.

57. Chintamani Grihantastha - She Who resides in a house built of chintamani.

58. Pajncha Brahmasanasthita - She Who sits on a seat made of five Brahmas.

59. Maha Padmatavi Sanstha - She Who resides in the great lotus forest.

60. Kadamba Vana Vasini - She Who resides in the Kadamba forest.

61. Sudha Sagara Madhyastha - She Who resides in the centre of the ocean of nectar.

62. She Whose eyes awaken desire; or She who has beautiful eyes.

63. Kama Dayini - She Who grants all wishes.

64. Devarshhi Gana Sanghata Stutya Manatma Vaibhava - She Whose might is the subject of praise by multitudes of gods and sages.

65. Bhandasura Vadhodyukta Shakti Sena Samanvita - She Who is endowed with an army of shaktis intent on slaying Bhandasura.

66. Sampatkari Samarudha Sindhura Vrajasevita - She Who is attended by a herd of elephants ably commanded by Sampatkari.

67. Ashva Rudhadhishhthitashva Koti Koti Bhiravrita - She Who is surrounded by a cavalry of several million horses which are under the command of the Shakti Ashvarudha.

68. Chakra Raja Ratharudha Sarva Yudha Parishhkrita - She Who shines in Her chariot Chakra Raja equipped with all kinds of weapons.

69. Geya Chakra Ratha Rudha Mantrini Parisevita - She Who is served by the Shakti named Mantrini who rides the chariot known as Geyachakra.

70. Kiri Chakra Ratha Rudha Dandanatha Puraskrita - She Who is escorted by the Shakti known as Dandanatha seated in the Kiri Chakra chariot.

71. Jvala Malini Kakshipta Vahni Prakara Madhyaga - She Who has taken position at the centre of the fortress of fire created by the goddess Jvalamalini.

72. Bhanda Sainya Vadhodyukta Shakti Vikrama Harshhita - She Who rejoices at the valour of the shaktis who are intent on destroying the forces of Bhandasura.

73. Nitya Parakramatopa Nirikshana Samutsuka - She Who delights in seeing the might and the pride of Her Nitya deities.

74. Bhanda Putra Vadhodyukta Bala Vikrama Nandita - She Who delights in seeing the valour of the Goddess Bala who is intent on killing the sons of Bhanda.

75. Mantrini Ambas Virachita Vishhanga Vadhatoshhita - She who rejoices at the destruction, in battle, of demon Vishhanga by the Mantrini Shakti.

76. Vishukra Pranaharana Varahi Virya Nandita - She Who is pleased with the prowess of Varahi who took the life of Vishukra.

77. Kameshvara Mukha Loka Kalpita Shri Ganeshvara - She Who gives rise to Ganesha by a glance at the face of Kameshvara.

78. Maha Ganesha Nirbhinna Vighna Yantra Praharshhita - She Who rejoices when Ganesha shatters all obstacles.

79. Bhandasurendra Nirmukta Shastra Pratyastra Varshhini - She Who showers counter weapons to each weapon fired at Her by Bhandasura.

80. Karanguli Nakhotpanna Narayana Dashakritih - She Who created from Her fingernails all ten incarnations of Narayana (Vishnu).

81. Maha Pashupatastragni Nirdagdhasura Sainika - She burned the armies of the demons in the fire of the missile Mahapashupata.

82. Kameshvarastra Nirdagdha Sabhandasura Shunyaka - She Who burned and destroyed Bhandasura and his capital Shunyaka with the Kameshvara missile.

83. Brahmopendra Mahendradi Deva Sanstuta Vaibhava - She Whose many powers are extolled by Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and other gods.

84. Hara Netragni Sandagdha Kama Sanjivanaushhadhih - She Who became the life giving medicine for Kamadeva (god of love) who had been burned to ashes by the fire from Shiva's third eye.

85. Shrimadh Vagbhava Kutaika Svarupa Mukhapankaja - She Whose Lotus Face is the auspicious Vagbhavakuta (a group of syllables of the panchadashi mantra).

86. Kanthadhah Katiparyanta Madhya Kuta Svarupini - She Who from Her back to Her waist is of the form of the Madhykuta (the middle six syllables of the panchadashakshari mantra.)

87. Shakti Kutaika Tapanna Katyadho Bhaga Dharini - She Whose form below the waist is the Shaktikuta (the last four syllables of the panchadashakshari mantra).

88. Mula Mantratmika - She Who is the embodiment of the Mula Mantra (the panchadashakshari mantra).

89. Mula Kuta Traya Kalebara - She Whose subtle body is made of the three parts of the panchadashakshari mantra).

90. Kulamritaika Rasika - She Who is especially fond of the nectar known as Kula.

91. Kula Sanketa Palini - She Who protects the code of rituals of the path of yoga known as Kula.

92. Kulangana - She Who is well born (from a good family).

93. Kulantastha - She Who resides in the Kula Vidya.

94. Kaulini - She Who belongs to the Kula.

95. Kula Yogini - She Who is the deity in the Kulas.

96. Akula - She Who is beyond kula, that is measurable dimensionality.

97. Samayantastha - She Who resides inside “samaya”.

98. Samayachara Tatpara - She Who is attached to the samaya form of worship.

99. Muladharaika Nilaya - She Whose principal abode is the Muladhara.

100. Brahma Granthi Vibhedini - She Who breaks through the knot of Brahma.

101. Manipurantarudita - She Who emerges in the Manipura Chakra.

102. Vishnu Granthi Vibhedini - She Who breaks through the knot of maya of Vishnu. Then the devotee perceives the unreality of his individuality as body, mind, present incarnation: He loses the consciousness of the limited “I”ness.

103. Agya Chakra Antaralastha - She Who resides at the center of the Agya Chakra.

104. Rudra Granthi Vibhedini - She Who breaks through the knot of Shiva.

105. Sahasrambuja Rudha - She Who ascends to the thousand petalled lotus.

106. Sudha Sarabhi Varshhini - She Who pours out streams of ambrosia.

107. Tatilh Lata Samaruchih - She Who is as beautiful as a flash of lightning.

108. Shhat Chakropari Sansthita - She Who resides above the six chakras.

109. Mahashaktih - She Who is greatly attached to the festive union of Shiva and Shakti.

110. Kundalini - She Who has the form of a coil.

111. Bisa Tantu Taniyasi - She Who is fine and delicate as the fiber of the lotus.

112. Bhavani - She Who is the wife of Bhava (Shiva)

113. Bhavana Gamya - She Who is unattainable through imagination or thought.

114. Bhavaranya Kutharika - She Who is like an axe to clear the jungle of samsara.

115. Bhadra Priya - She Who is fond of all auspicious things, Who gives all auspicious things.

116. Bhadra Murtih - She Who is the embodiment of auspiciousness or benevolence.

117. Bhakta Saubhagya Dayini - She Who confers prosperity on Her devotees.

118. Bhakti Priya - She Who is fond of (and pleased by) devotion.

119. Bhakti Gamya - She Who is attained only through devotion.

120. Bhakti Vashya - She Who is to be won over by devotion.

121. Bhayapaha - She Who dispels fear.

122. Shambhavi - She Who is the wife of Shambhu (Shiva).

123. Sharadaradhya - She Who is worshipped by Sharada (Saraswati the goddess of speech).

124. Sharvani - She Who is the wife of Sharva (Shiva).

125. Sharmadayini - She Who confers happiness.

126. Shankari - She Who gives happiness.

127. Shrikari - She Who bestows riches in abundance.

128. Sadhvi - She Who is chaste.

129. Sharachchandra Nibhanana - She Whose face shines like the full moon in the clear autumn sky.

130. Shatodari - She Who is slender-waisted.

131. Shantimati - She Who is peaceful.

132. Niradhara - She Who is without dependence, unsupported.

133. Niranjana - She Who stays unattached, bound to nothing, unstained by any limitations whatsoever.

134. Nirlepa - She Who is untouched by various karmas and dualism.

135. Nirmala - She Who is free from all impurities.

136. Nitya - She Who is eternal.

137. Nirakara - She Who is without form.

138. Nirakula - She Who is without agitation, unruffled.

139. Nirguna - She Who is attributeless. Beyond the three gunas and the three nadis. She is consciousness devoid of the qualities and attributes of the mind.

140. Nishhkala - She Who is indivisible. Complete.

141. Shanta - She Who is tranquil.

142. Nishhkama - She Who has nothing to desire as She has everything.

143. Nirupaplava - She Who is indestructible.

144. Nityamukta - She Who is ever free from worldly bonds, and Her devotees are ever free.

145. Nirvikara - She Who is changeless; but is the unchanging basis of all changes.

146. Nishhprapajncha - She Who is not of this universe.

147. Nirashraya - She Who has no basis, as She is everything.

148. Nityashuddha - She Who is eternally pure.

149. Nityabuddha - She Who is ever wise.

150. Niravadya - She Who is blameless, or She Who is praiseworthy.

151. Nirantara - She Who is all pervading, undifferentiated.

152. Nishhkarana - She Who is causeless; the cause of all causes.

153. Nishhkalanka - She Who is faultless brilliance.

154. Nirupadhih - She Who is alone; without maya, the basis of plurality.

155. Nirishvara - She Who has no superior or protector, supreme.

156. Niraga - She Who is unattached.

157. Ragamathini - She Who destroys desires (passions).

158. Nirmada - She Who is without pride.

159. Mada Nashini - She Who destroys pride.

160. Nishchinta She Who has no anxiety in anything.

161. Nirahankara - She Who is without egoism. She Who is without the concept of 'I' and 'mine'.

162. Nirmoha - She Who is free from delusion, such as mistaking unreal for real.

163. Moha Nashini - She Who destroys delusion in Her devotees.

164. Nirmama - She Who has no self-interest in anything.

165. Mamatahantri - She Who destroys the sense of ownership.

166. Nishhpapa - She Who is beyond sin.

167. Papa Nashini - She Who destroys all the sins of Her devotees.

168 Nishhkrodha - She Who is without anger.

169. Krodha Shamani - She Who destroys anger in Her devotees.

170. Nirlobha - She Who is without greed.

171. Lobha Nashini - She Who destroys greed in Her devotees.

172. Nihsanshaya - She Who is without doubts.

173. Sanshayaghni - She Who kills all doubts.

174. Nirbhava - She Who is without origin, unborn.

175. Bhava Nashini - She Who destroys the sorrow of samsara (the cycle of birth and death.)

176. Nirvikalpa - She Who is beyond all doubts.

177. Nirabadha - She Who is not disturbed by anything.

178. Nirbheda - She Who is beyond of all sense of difference.

179. Bheda Nashini - She Who removes from Her devotees all sense of differences born of vasanas.

180. Nirnasha - She Who is imperishable.

181. Mritya Mathani - She Who destroys death.

182. Nishhkriya - She Who is beyond all actions. Not involved in any action.

183. Nishhparigraha - She Who does not take anything since She needs nothing; as She is the Purnakama. Devotees also become nishparigraha.

184. Nistula - She Who is incomparable, unequalled.

185. Nila Chikura - She Who has shining black hair.

186. Nirapaya - She Who is beyond dangers.

187. Niratyaya - She Who cannot be crossed or transgressed.

188. Durlabha - She Who is won only with much difficulty.

189. Durgama - She Who is approachable only with extreme effort.

190. Durga - She Who is the Goddess Durga.

191. Dukhahantri - She Who is the destroyer of sorrow.

192. Sukha Prada - She Who is the giver of happiness.

193. Dushhta Dura - She Who is unapproachable by sinners.

194. Durachara Shamani - She Who stops evil customs.

195. Doshha Varjita - She Who is free from all faults.

196. Sarvaya - She Who is omniscient.

197. Sandrakaruna - She Who is intensely compassionate to Her devotees.

198. Samanadhika Varjita - She Who has neither equal nor superior.

199. Sarva Shaktimayi - She Who has all the divine powers. She Who is omnipotent.

200. Sarva Mangala - She Who is the source of all that is auspicious.

201. Sadgatiprada - She Who leads into the right path.

202. Sarveshvari - She Who rules over all living and non-living things.

203. Sarvamayi - She Who pervades every living and non-living thing.

204. Sarva Mantra Svarupini - She Who is the essence of all the mantras.

205. Sarva Yantratmika - She Who is the soul of all yantras.

206. Sarva Tantra Rupa - She Who is the soul (embodiment) of all tantras.

207. Manonmani - She Who is Shiva's Shakti.

208. Maheshvari - She Who is the wife of Maheshvara.

209. Mahadevi - She Who has the immeasurable body.

210. Mahalakshmi - She Who is the great goddess Lakshmi.

211. Mridapriya - She Who is the beloved of Mrida (Shiva).

212. Maha Rupa - She Who has a great form.

213. Maha Pujya - She Who is worshipped by the highest i.e. the trimurtis – Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva.

214. Maha Pataka Nashini - She Who destroys even the greatest of sins.

215. Maha Maya - She Who is the supreme creator of illusion and confusion even to the greatest of gods.

16. Maha Sattva - She Who possesses great sattva

217. Maha Shaktih - She Who has great power.

218. Maha Ratih - She Who is boundless delight.

219. Maha Bhoga - She Who has immense wealth.

220. Maha Ishvarya - She Who has supreme sovereignty.

221. Maha Virya - She Who is supreme in valour.

222. Maha Bala - She Who is supreme in might.

223. Maha Buddhih - She Who is supreme in intelligence.

224. Maha Siddhih - She Who is endowed with the highest attainments.

225. Maha Yogeshwareshvari - She Who is the object of worship even by the greatest of yogis.

226. Maha Tantra - She Who is worshipped by the greatest tantras such as Kularnava and Jnanarnava.

227. Maha Mantra - She Who is the greatest mantra.

228. Maha Yantra - She Who is in the form of the great yantras.

229. Mahasana - She Who is seated on great seats.

230. Maha Yaga Kramaradhya - She Who is worshipped by the ritual of Mahayaga.

231. Maha Bhairava Pujita - She Who is worshipped even by Mahabhairava (Shiva).

232. Maheshvara Mahakalpa Mahatandava Sakshini - She Who is the witness of the great dance of Maheshvara (Shiva) at the end of the great cycle of creation.

233. Maha Kamesha Mahishhi - She Who is the great queen of Mahakameshvara (Shiva).

234. Maha Tripura Sundari - She Who is the great Tripurasundari.

235. Chatushhshhashhti Upacharadhya - She Who is adored in sixty-four ceremonies.

236. Chatushhshhashhti Kalamayi - She Who embodies the sixty-four fine arts.

237. Maha Chatushhshhashhti Koti Yogini Gana - She Who is attended (served) by sixty-four crores of bands of yoginis.

238. Manu Vidya - She Who is the embodiment of manuvidya.

239. Chandra Vidya - She Who is the embodiment of chandravidya.

240. Chandramandala Madhyaga - She Who resides in the center of chandramandala, the moon's disc.

241. Charu Rupa - She Who has a beauty that does not wax or wane.

242. Charu Hasa - She Who has a beautiful smile.

243. Charu Chandra Kaladhara - She Who bears the beautiful crescent moon that does not wax or wane.

244. Charachara Jagannatha - She Who is the ruler of the animate and inanimate worlds.

245. Chakra Raja Niketana - She Who abides in the Shree Chakra

246. Parvati - She Who is the daughter of the Mountain (Mount Himavat or Himalaya).

247. Padma Nayana - She Who has eyes that are long and beautiful like the petals of the lotus flower.

248. Padma Raga Samaprabha - She Who has a resplendent red complexion like the ruby.

249. Pajncha Pretasana Sina - She Who sits on the seat formed by the five corpses.

250. Pajncha Brahma Svarupini - She Whose form is composed of the five brahmas.

251. Chinmayi - She Who is consciousness itself.

252. Paramananda - She Who is supreme bliss.

253. Vigyana Ghana Rupini - She Who is the embodiment of all-pervading solid intelligence.

254. Dhyana Dhyatri Dhyeya Rupa - She Who shines as meditation, meditator and the object of meditation.

255. Dharma Adharma Vivarjita - She Who is devoid of, Who transcends, both virtue and vice.

256. Vishvarupa - She Who has the whole universe as Her form.

257. Jagarini - She Who is in the waking state, or She Who assumes the form of the jiva who is in the waking state.

258. Svapanti - She Who is in the dream state, or She Who assumes the form of the jiva in the dream state.

259. Taijasatmika - She Who is the soul of taijasa (jiva in the dream state, proud of its subtle body.)

260. Supta - She Who is in the deep-sleep state, or assumes the form of the jiva experiencing deep sleep.

261. Pragyatmika - She Who is not separate from pragya (deep sleep).

262. Turya - She Who is in the state of turya (fourth state in which the ultimate realization of Atman is obtained).

263. Sarvavashtha Vivarjita - She Who transcends all states.

264. Srishhti Kartri - She Who is the creator.

265. Brahma Rupa - She Who is in the form of Brahma.

266. Goptri - She Who protects.

267. Govinda Rupini - She Who has assumed the form of Govinda (Vishnu) for the preservation of the universe.

268. Sanharini - She Who is the destroyer of the universe.

269. Rudra Rupa - She Who has assumed the form of Rudra (Shiva) for the dissolution of the universe.

270. Tirodhanakari - She Who causes the disappearance of all things.

271. Ishvari - She Who protects and rules everything.

272. Sadashiva - One Who always bestows auspiciousness.

273. Anugrahada - She Who confers blessings.

274. Pajncha Kritya Parayana - She Who is devoted to the five functions of creation, preservation, destruction, annihilation, and reappearance.

275. Bhanu Mandala Madhyastha - She Who abides in the center of the sun's disc.

276. Bhairavi - She Who is the wife of Bhairava (Shiva).

277. Bhagamalini - She Who wears a garland made of the six excellences of (auspiciousness, supremacy, fame, valor, detachment, and knowledge).

278. Padmasana - She Who is seated in the lotus flower.

279. Bhagavati - She Who protects those who worship Her.

280. Padmanabha Sahodari - She Who is Vishnu's sister.

281. Unmeshha Nimishhotpanna Vipanna Bhuvanavali - She Who causes a series of worlds to arise and disappear with the opening and closing of Her Eyes.

282. Sahasra Shirshha Vadana - She Who has a thousand heads and faces.

283. Sahasrakshi - She Who has a thousand eyes.

284. Sahasra Path - She Who has a thousand feet.

285. Abrahma Kita Janani - She Who is the mother of everything from Brahma to the lowliest insect.

286. Varnashrama Vidhayini - She Who established the order of the social division in life.

287. Nijagya Rupanigama - She Whose commands take the form of the Vedas.

288. Punya Apunya Phala Prada - She Who dispenses the fruits of both good and evil actions.

289. Shruti Simanta Sinduri Kritapadabjadhulika - She is the One, the dust from Whose Feet forms the vermillion marks at the parting line of the hair of the shruti devatas (Vedas personified as goddesses).

290. Sakalagama Sandoha Shukti Samputa Mauktika - She Who is the pearl enclosed in the shell made of all the scriptures.

291. Purushhartha Prada - She Who grants the fourfold objects of human life.

292. Purna - She Who is always whole, without growth or decay.

293. Bhogini - She Who is the enjoyer.

294. Bhuvaneshwari - She Who is the ruler of the universe.

295. Ambika - She Who is the mother of the universe.

296. Anadi Nidhana - She Who has neither beginning or end.

297. Hari Brahmendra Sevita - She Who is attended by Brahma, Vishnu and Indra.

298. Narayani - She Who is the female counterpart of Narayana.

299. Nada Rupa - She Who is the form of sound.

300. Nama Rupa Vivarjita - She Who has no name or form.

301. Hrinkari - She Who is in the form of syllable “Hrim”.

302. Hrimati - She Who is endowed with modesty.

303. Hridya - She Who abides in the heart.

304. Heyopadeya Varjita - She Who has nothing to reject or accept.

305. Rajarajarchita - She Who is worshipped by the King of Kings.

306. Ragyi - She Who is the queen of Shiva, the Lord of all kings.

307. Ramya - She Who gives delight; She Who is lovely.

308. Rajiva Lochana - She Whose eyes are like rajiva (lotus)

309. Ranjani - She Who delights the mind.

310. Ramani - She Who gives joy.

311. Rasya - She Who is to be enjoyed; She Who enjoys.

312. Ranath Kinkini Mekhala - She Who wears a girdle of tinkling bells.

313. Rama - She Who has become Lakshmi and Saraswati.

314. Rakendu Vadana - She Who has a delightful face like the full moon.

315. Rati Rupa - She Who is in the form of Rati, wife of Kama.

316. Rati Priya - She Who is fond of Rati, the wife of Kama.

317. Raksha Kari - She Who is the protector.

318. Rakshasaghni - She Who is the slayer of the entire race of demons.

319. Rama - She Who gives delight.

320. Ramanalampata - She Who is devoted to the Lord of Her heart, Lord Shiva.

321. Kamya - She Who is to be desired.

322. Kama Kala Rupa - She Who is in the form of Kama Kala.

323. Kadamba Kusuma Priya - She Who is especially fond of Kadamba flowers.

324. Kalyani - She Who bestows auspiciousness.

325. Jagatikanda - She Who is the root of the whole world.

326. Karuna Rasa Sagara - She Who is the ocean of compassion.

327. Kalavati - She Who is the embodiment of all arts.

328. Kalalapa - She Who speaks musically and sweetly.

329. Kanta - She Who is beautiful.

330. Kadambari Priya - She Who is fond of mead.

331. Varada - She Who grants boons generously.

332. Vama Nayana - She Who has beautiful eyes.

333. Varuni Mada Vivhala - She Who is intoxicated by Varuni (ambrosial drink)

334. Vishvadhika - She Who transcends the universe.

335. Veda Vedya - She Who is known through the Vedas.

336. Vindhyachala Nivasini - She Who resides in the Vindhya mountains.

337. Vidhatri - She Who creates and sustains this universe.

338. Veda Janani - She Who is the mother of the Vedas.

339. Vishnu Maya - She Who is the illusory power of Vishnu.

340. Vilasini - She Who is playful.

341. Kshetra Svarupa - She Whose body is matter.

342. Kshetreshi - She Who is the wife of Kshetresha (Shiva).

343. Kshetra Kshetragya Palini - She Who is the protector of matter and the knower of matter, therefore the protector of body and soul.

344. Kshaya Vriddhi Vinirmukta - She Who is free from growth and decay.

345. Kshetra Pala Samarchita - She Who is worshipped by Kshetrapala (Shiva in infant form).

346. Vijaya - She Who is ever victorious.

347. Vimala - She Who is without a trace of impurity.

348. Vandya - She Who is adorable, worthy of worship.

349. Vandaru Jana Vatsala - She Who is full of motherly love for those who worship Her.

350. Vagh Vadini - She Who speaks.

351. Vama Keshi - She Who has beautiful hair.

352. Vahni Mandala Vasini - She Who resides in the disc of fire.

353. Bhaktimath Kalpalatika - She Who is the kalpa (wish-granting) creeper to Her devotees.

354. Pashupasha Vimochini - She Who releases the ignorant from bondage.

355. Samhrita Sheshha Pashhanda - She Who destroys all heretics.

356. Sadachara Pravartika - She Who is immersed in (and inspires others to follow) right conduct.

357. Tapatrayagnisantapta Samahladana Chandrika - She Who is the moonlight that gives joy to those burned by the triple fire of misery.

358. Taruni - She Who is ever young.

359. Tapasaradhya - She Who is worshipped by ascetics.

360. Tanu Madhya - She Who is slender-waisted.

361. Tamopaha - She Who removes the ignorance born of tamas.

362. Chith - She Who is in the form of pure intelligence.

363. Tath Pada Lakshyartha - She Who is the embodiment of Truth (which is indicated by the word “Tat”).

364. Chideka Rasa Rupini - She Who is of the nature of Pure Intelligence. She Who is the cause of knowledge.

365. Svatmanandalavi Bhuta Brahmadyananda Santatih - She Who makes the bliss of Brahma and others insignificant compared to Her own bliss.

366. Para - She Who is the Supreme; She Who transcends all.

367. Pratyakh Chiti Rupa - She Who is of the nature of unmanifested consciousness or of unmanifested brahman.

368. Pashyanti - She Who is pashyanti – the second level of sound after para in the Swadishtana Chakra.

369. Para Devata - She Who is the Supreme Deity; Parashakti.

370. Madhyama - She Who stays in the middle.

371. Vaikhari Rupa - She Who is in the form of vaikhari (sound in the manifested audible form.

372. Bhakta Manasa Hansika - She Who is the Swan in the minds of Her devotees.

373. Kameshvara Prana Nadi - She Who is the very life of Kameshvara, Her consort.

374. Kritagya - She Who knows all of our actions as they occur.

375. Kama Pujita - She Who is worshipped by Kama.

376. Shringara Rasa Sanpurna - She Who is filled with the essence of love.

377. Jaya - She Who is victorious always and everywhere.

378. Jalandhara Sthita - She Who resides in the Jalandhara Pitha (in the throat region).

379. Odanya Pitha Nilaya - She Whose abode is the center known as Odyana (in the Agnya chakra).

380. Bindu Mandala Vasini - She Who resides in the Bindumandala (Shri Chakra).

381. Rahoyaga Kramaradhya - She Who is worshipped in secret through sacrificial rites.

382. Rahastarpana Tarpita - She Who is to be gratified by the secret rites of worship.

383. Sadyah Prasadini - She Who bestows Her grace immediately.

384. Vishva Sakshini - She Who is witness to the whole universe.

385. Sakshi Varjita - She Who has no other witness.

386. Shhadanga Devata Yukta - She Who is accompanied by the deities of the six angas (heart, head, hair, eyes, armor and weapons).

387. Shhadhgunya Paripurita - She Who is fully endowed with the six good qualities (prosperity, valor, dispassion, fame, wealth and wisdom.)

388. Nitya Klinna - She Who is ever compassionate.

389. Nirupama - She Who is incomparable.

390. Nirvana Sukhadayini - She Who confers the bliss of liberation.

391. Nitya Shhodashika Rupa - She Who is in the form of the sixteen daily deities (i.e. Kameshvari, Bhagamalini, Nityaklinna, Bherunda, Vahnivasini, Mahavajreshvari, Shivaduti, Tvarita, Kulasundari, Nitya, Nilapatakini, Vijaya, Sarvamangala, Jvalamalini, Citra and Tripurasundari).

392. Shri Kanthardha Sharirini - She Who possesses half of the body of Shrikantha (Shiva). She Who is in the form of Ardhanarishvara.

393. Prabhavati - She Who is effulgent.

394. Prabha Rupa - She Who is effulgence.

395. Prasiddha - She Who is celebrated.

396. Parameshvari - She Who is the Supreme Sovereign.

397. Mula Prakriti - She Who is the first cause of the entire universe.

398. Avyakta - She Who is unmanifested.

399. Vyaktavyakta Swaroopini - She Who is in the manifested and unmanifested forms.

400. Vyapini - She Who is all-pervading.

401. Vividhakara - She Who has a multitude of forms.

402. Vidya Avidya Swaroopini - She Who is the form of both knowledge and ignorance.

403. Maha Kamesha Nayana Kumudahlada Kaumudi - She Who is the moonlight that gladdens the water lilies that are Mahakamesha's eyes.

404. Bhakta Harda Tamo Bheda Bhanumadh Bhanusantatih - She Who is the sunbeam which dispels the darkness from the heart of Her devotees.

405. Shivaduti - She for Whom Shiva is the messenger; She Who is Shiva's messenger.

406. Shivaradhya - She Who is worshipped by Shiva.

407. Shivamurtih - She Whose form is Shiva Himself.

408. Shivankari - She Who confers prosperity (auspiciousness, happiness). She Who turns Her devotees into Shiva.

409. Shiva Priya - She Who is beloved of Shiva.

410. Shiva Para -- She Who is solely devoted to Shiva.

411. Shishhteshhta - She Who is loved by the righteous; She Who is the chosen deity of devotees; She Who loves righteous people.

412. Shishhta Pujita - She Who is always worshipped by the righteous.

413. Aprameya - She Who is immeasurable by the senses.

414. Svaprakasha - She Who is self luminous.

415. Mano Vachamagochara - She Who is beyond the range of mind and speech.

416. Chichchhaktih - She Who is the power of consciousness.

417. Chetanarupa - She Who is pure consciousness.

418. Jadashaktih - She Who is the maya that has transformed itself as the power of creation.

419. Jadatmika - She Who is in the form of the inanimate world.

420. Gayatri - She Who is the Gayatri Mantra.

421. Vyahritih - She Who is in the nature of utterance. She Who presides over the power of speech.

422. Sandhya - She Who is in the form of twilight.

423. Dvija Brinda Nishhevita - She Who is worshipped by the twice-born.

424. Tatvasana - She Who has tattvas as Her seat. She Who abides in tattva.

425. Tat.h - She Who is meant by “That”; the supreme truth, brahman.

426. Tvam - She Who is referred to as “Thou”.

427. Ayi - O Mother!

428. Pajncha Koshantara Stitha - She Who resides within the five sheaths.

429. Nihsima Mahima - She Whose glory is limitless.

430. Nitya Yauvana - She Who is ever youthful.

431. Madashalini - She Who is shining in a state of inebriation or intoxication.

432. Mada Ghurnita Raktaskshi - She Whose eyes are reddened, rolling with rapture, and inward-looking.

433. Madapatala Gandabhuh - She Whose cheeks are rosy with rapture.

434. Chandana Drava Digdhangi - She Whose body is smeared with sandalwood paste.

435. Champeya Kusuma Priya - She Who is especially fond of champaka flowers.

436. Kushala - She Who is skillful.

437. Komalakara - She Who is graceful in form.

438. Kurukulla - She Who is the Shakti Kurukulla (residing in the Kuruvinda ruby).

439. Kuleshvari - She Who is the ruler of Kula (the triad of – the knower, the known and the knowledge).

440. Kulakundalaya - She Who abides in the kulakunda (the bindu at the center of the pericarp in Mooladhara Chakra).

441. Kaula Marga Tatpara Sevita - She Who is worshipped by those devoted to the kaula tradition.

442. Kumara Gananatha Amba - She Who is the mother of Kumara (Subrahmanya) and Gananatha (Ganapathi).

443. Tushhtih - She Who is ever content.

444. Pushhtih - She Who is the power of nourishment.

445. Matih - She Who manifests as intelligence.

446. Dhritih - She Who is fortitude.

447. Shantih - She Who is tranquility itself.

448. Svastimatih - She Who is the ultimate truth.

449. Kantih - She Who is effulgence.

450. Nandini - She Who gives delight.

451. Vighna Nashini - She Who destroys all obstacles.

452. Tejovati - She Who is effulgent.

453. Trinayana - She Who has the sun, moon and fire as Her three eyes.

454. Lolakshi Kamarupini - She Who is in the form of love, in women.

455. Malini - She Who is wearing garlands.

456. Hansini - She Who is not separate from hamsas (the yoginis who have reached great spiritual heights).

457. Mata - Mother of the universe.

458. Malayachal Vasini - She Who resides in the Malaya Mountain.

459. Sumukhi - She Who has a beautiful face.

460. Nalini - She Whose body is soft and beautiful like lotus petals.

461. Subhruh - She Who has beautiful eyebrows.

462. Shobhana - She Who is always radiant.

463. Suranayika - She Who is the leader of the gods.

464. Kalakanthi - She Who is the wife of Shiva.

465. Kantimathi - She Who is radiant.

466. Kshobhini - She Who creates upheaval in the mind.

467. Sukshmarupini - She Who has a form that is too subtle to be perceived by the sense organs.

468. Vajreshvari - She Who is Vajreshvari, the sixth daily deity.

469. Vama Devi - She Who is the wife of Vama Deva (Shiva).

470. Vayovastha Vivarjita - She Who is exempt from changes due to age (time).

471. Siddheshvar - She Who is the goddess worshipped by spiritual adepts.

472. Siddha Vidya - She Who is in the form of Siddhavidya, the fifteen-syllabled mantra.

473. Siddha Mata - She Who is the mother of siddhas.

474. Yashasvini - She Who is of unequalled renown.

475. Vishuddhi Chakra Nilaya - She Who resides in the Vishuddhi Chakra.

476. Araktavarna - She Who is of slightly red (rosy) complexion.

477. Trilochana - She Who has three eyes.

478. Khatvangadi Praharana - She Who is armed with a club and other weapons.

479. Vadanaika Samanvita - She Who possesses only one face.

480. Payasannapriya - She who is especially fond of sweet rice.

481. Tvakstha - She Who is the deity of the organ of touch (skin)

482. Pashuloka Bhayankari - She Who fills with fear the mortal beings bound by worldly existence.

483. Amritadi Mahashakti Samvrita - She Who is surrounded by Amrita and other Shakti deities.

484. Dakinishvari - She Who is the Dakini deity.

485. Anahatabja Nilaya - She Who resides in the anahata lotus in the heart.

486. Shyamabha - She Who is black in complexion.

487. Vadana Dvaya - She Who has two faces.

488. Danshhtrojjvala - She Who has shining tusks.

489. Aksha Maladi Dhara - She Who is wearing garlands of rudraksha beads and other things.

490. Rudhira Sansthita - She Who presides over the blood in the bodies of living beings.

491. Kala Ratriyadi Shaktyaughavrita - She Who is surrounded by Kalaratri and other shaktis.

492. Snighaudana Priya - She Who is fond of food offerings containing ghee, oil and other substances containing fats.

493. Maha Virendra Varada - She Who bestows boons on great warriors.

494. Rakinyamba Svarupini - She Who is in the form of the Rakini deity.

495. Manipurabja Nilaya - She Who resides in the ten-petalled lotus in the Manipur Chakra.

496. Vadana Traya Sanyuta - She Who has three faces.

497. Vajradikayudhopeta - She Who holds the Vajra (lightning bolt) and other weapons.

498. Damaryadibhiravrita - She Who is surrounded by Damari and other attending deities.

499. Raktavarna - She Who is red in complexion.

500. Mansa Nishhtha - She Who presides over the flesh in living beings.

501. Gudanna Prita Manasa - She Who is fond of sweet rice made with raw sugar.

502. Samasta Bhakta Sukhada - She Who confers happiness on all Her devotees.

503. Lakinya-anbasvarupini - She Who is in the form of the Lakini yogini.

504. Svadishhthananbu Jagata - She Who resides in the six-petalled lotus in the Swadishtana, Kakini yogini.

505. Chatur.h Vaktra Manohara - She Who has four beautiful faces

506. Shuladyayudha Sanpanna - She Who possesses the trident and other weapons, i.e. noose, skull and abhaya.

507. Pita Varna - She Who is yellow in colour.

508. Ati Garvita - She Who is very proud.

509. Medo Nishhtha - She Who resides in the fat in living beings.

510. Madhu Prita - She Who is fond of honey and other offerings made with honey.

511. Bandhinyadi Samanvita - She Who is accompanied by bandhini and other shaktis.

512. Dadhyannasakta Hridaya - She Who is particularly fond of offerings made with curd.

513. Kakini Rupadharini - She Who is in the form of Kakini Yogini.

514. Muladharambujarudha - She Who is resident in the lotus in the Mooladhara.

515. Pajncha Vaktra - She Who has five faces.

516. Asthi Sanstitha - She Who resides in the bones.

517. Ankushadi Praharana - She Who holds the goad and other weapons.

518. Varadadi Nishhevita - She Who is attended by Varada and other shaktis.

519. Mudgaudanasakta Chitta - She Who is particularly fond of food offerings made of mudga, a lentil.

520. Sakinyanba Swaroopini - She Who is in the form of Sakini Yogini.

521. Agya Chakrabja Nilaya - She Who resides in the two-petalled lotus in the Agya Chakra.

522. Shukla Varna - She Who is white in colour.

523. Shhadanana - She Who has six faces.

524. Majja Sanstha - She Who is the presiding deity of the bone marrow.

525. Hansavati Mukhya Shakti Samanvita - She Who is accompanied by the shaktis Hamsavati and Kshamavati (in the two petals of the lotus).

526. Haridrannaika Rasika - She Who is fond of food seasoned with turmeric.

527. Hakini Rupa Dharini - She Who is in the form of Hakini Devi.

528. Sahasra Dala Padmastha - She Who resides in the thousand-petalled lotus.

529. Sarva Varnopa Shobhita - She Who is radiant in many colours.

530. Sarva Yudha Dhara - She Who holds all the known weapons.

531. Shukla Sansthita - She Who resides in the semen.

532. Sarvato Mukhi - She Who has faces turned in all directions.

533. Sarvaudana Prita Chitta - She Who is pleased by all offerings of food.

534. Yakinyamba Svarupini - She Who is in the form of Yakini yogini.

535. Svaha - She Who is the object of the invocation "svaha" at the end of mantras while offering oblations to the fire in Yagya ceremonies.

536. Svadha - She who is the object of the "svadha" invocation at the end of mantras.

537. Amatih - She Who is in the form of ignorance or nescience.

538. Medha - She Who is in the form of Wisdom (knowledge).

539. Shrutih - She Who is in the form of the Vedas.

540. Smritih - She Who is in the form of Smriti (works based on the meaning of Vedas).

541. Anuttama - She Who is the best; She Who is not excelled by anyone.

542. Punyakirtih - She Whose fame is sacred or righteous.

543. Punyalabhya - She Who is attained only by righteous souls.

544. Punya Shravana Kirtana - She Who bestows merit on anyone who hears of Her and praises Her.

545. Pulomajarchita - She Who is worshipped by Pulomaja (Indra's wife).

546. Bandha mochani - She Who is free from bonds; She Who gives release from bondage.

547. Barbaralaka - She Who has wavy locks.

548. Vimarsha Rupini - She Who is in the form of vimarsha (reflection or meaning).

549. Vidya - She Who is in the form of knowledge.

550. Vyadadi Jagath Prasuh - She Who is the Mother of the Universe, which is the aggregate of all the elements starting with the ether.

551. Sarva Vyadhi Prashamani - She Who removes all diseases and sorrows.

552. Sarva Mrityu Nivarini - She Who guards Her devotees from all kinds of death.

553. Agraganya - She Who is to be considered the foremost.

554. Achintya Rupa - She Who is of a form beyond the reach of thought.

555. Kali Kalmashha Nashini - She Who is the destroyer of the sins of the age of Kali.

556. Katyayani - She Who is the daughter of a sage named Kata.

557. Kala Hantri - She Who is the destroyer of time (death).

558. Kamalaksha Nishhevita - She in Whom Vishnu takes refuge.

559. Tambula Purita Mukhi - She Whose mouth is full from chewing betel.

560. Dadimi Kusuma Prabha - She Who shines like a pomegranate flower.

561. Mrigakshi - She Whose eyes are long and beautiful like those of a doe.

562. Mohini - She Who is enchanting.

563. Mukhya - She Who is the first.

564. Mridani - She Who is the wife of Mrida (Shiva).

565. Mitrarupini - She Who is the friend of everyone (universe).

566. Nitya Tripta - She Who is eternally contented.

567. Bhaknanidhih - She Who is the treasure of the devotees.

568. Niyantri - She Who controls and guides all beings on the right path.

569. Nikhileshvari - She Who is the ruler of all.

570. Maitryadi Vasana Labhya - She Who is to be attained by love and other good dispositions.

571. Maha Pralaya Sakshini - She Who is witness to the great dissolution.

572. Para Shaktih - She Who is the original, supreme power.

573. Para Nishhtha - She Who is the supreme end, the supreme abidance.

574. Pragyana Ghanarupini - She Who is pure, condensed knowledge.

575. Madhvipanalasa - She Who is languid from drinking wine; She Who is not eager for anything.

576. Matta - She Who is intoxicated.

577. Matrika Varna Rupini - She Who is in the form of the letters of the alphabet

578. Maha Kailasa Nilaya - She Who resides in the great Kailash.

579. Mrinala Mridu Dorlata - She Whose arms are as soft and cool as the lotus stem.

580. Mahaniya - She Who is adorable.

581. Daya Murtih - She Who is the personification of compassion.

582. Maha Samrajya Shalini - She Who controls the great empire of the three worlds.

583. Atma Vidya - She Who is the knowledge of the self.

584. Maha Vidya - She Who is the seat of exalted knowledge, the knowledge of the self.

585. Shri Vidya - She Who is the sacred knowledge (panchadashi mantra).

586. Kama Sevita - She Who is worshipped by Kama Devata.

587. Shri Shhodashakshari Vidya - She Who is in the form of the sixteen-syllabled mantra.

588. Trikuta - She Who is in the three parts of panchadashi mantra.

589. Kama Kotika - She, of Whom Kama (Shiva) is a part or an approximate form.

590. Kataksha Kinkari Bhuta Kamalakoti Sevita - She Who is attended by millions of lakshmis who are subdued by Her mere glances.

591. Shirah Stitha - She Who resides in the head.

592. Chandra Nibha - She Who is resplendent like the moon.

593. Phalastha - She Who resides in the forehead, (between the eyebrows).

594. Indra Dhanuh Prabha - She Who is resplendent like the rainbow.

595. Hridayastha - She Who resides in the heart.

596. Ravi Prakhya - She Who shines with the special brilliance of the sun.

597. Trikonantara Dipika - She Who shines as a light within the triangle.

598. Dakshayani - She Who is Satidevi, the daughter of Daksha Prajapati.

599. Daitya Hantri - She Who is the killer of Demons.

600. Daksha Yagya Vinashini - She Who is the destroyer of the sacrifice conducted by Daksha.

601. Darandolita Dirghakshi - She Who has long, tremulous eyes.

602. Dara Hasojjvalan Mukhi - She Whose face is radiant with a smile.

603. Guru Murtih - She Who has assumed a severe form, or One Who has assumed the form of the Guru.

604. Guna Nidhih - She Who is the treasure house of all good qualities.

605. Go Mata - She Who became Surabhi, the cow that grants all wishes.

606. Guha Janma Bhuh - She Who is the Mother of Guha (Subramanya).

607. Deveshi - She Who is the protector of the gods.

608. Danda Nitishtha - She Who maintains the rules of justice without the slightest error.

609. Daharakasha Rupini - She Who is the subtle self in the heart.

610. Pratipanh Mukhya Rakanta Titih Mandala Pujita - She Who is worshipped daily starting with Pratipad (first day of the lunar half-moon and ending with the full moon).

611. Kalatmika - She Who is in the form of the kalas.

612. Kalanatha - She Who is the mistress of all the kalas.

613. Kavyalapa Vinodini - She Who delights in hearing poetry.

614. Sachamara Rama Vani Savya Dakshina Sevita - She Who is attended by Lakshmi on the left side and Saraswati on the right side, bearing ceremonial fans.

615. Adi Shaktih - She Who is the primordial power, the parashakti Who is the cause of the universe.

616. Ameya - She Who is not measurable by any means.

617. Atma - She Who is the Self in all.

618. Parama - She Who is the supreme.

619. Pavan Akriti - She Who is of sacred form.

620. Aneka Koti Brahmanda Janani - She Who is the creator of many crores of worlds.

621. Divya Vigraha - She Who has a divine body.

622. Klimkari - She Who is creator of the syllable “Klim”

623. Kevala - She Who is the absolute, as She is complete, independent and without any attributes.

624. Guhya - She Who is to be known in secret.

625. Kaivalya Pada Dayini - She Who bestows liberation.

626. Tripura - She Who is older than the three (trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

627. Trijagadvandya - She Who is adored by the inhabitants of all three worlds.

628. Trimurtih - She Who is the aggregate of the trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva)

629. Tridasheshvari - She Who is the ruler of the gods.

630. Tryakshhari - She Whose form consists of three letters or syllables a u m.

631. Divya Gandhadhya - She Who is richly endowed with divine fragrance.

632. Sindhura Tilakajnchitas - She Who shines with a vermillion mark on Her forehead; She Who is decorated with a special paste made of vermillion.

633. Uma - She Who is Parvati Devi.

634. Shailendra Tanaya - She Who is the daughter of Himavat, the king of the mountains.

635. Gauri - She Who has a fair complexion.

636. Gandharva Sevita - She Who is served by Gandharvas.

637. Vishva Garbha - She Who contains the whole universe in Her womb.

638. Svarna Garbha - She Who is the cause of the universe.

639. Avarada - She Who destroys the unholy.

640. Vagadishvari - She Who presides over speech.

641. Dhyana Gamya - She Who is to be attained through meditation.

642. Aparichchhedya - She Whose limits cannot be ascertained. (unlimited)

643. Gyanada - She Who gives knowledge of the self.

644. Gyana Vigraha - She Who is the embodiment of knowledge itself.

645. Sarva Vedanta Sanvedya - She Who is known by all of Vedanta.

646. Satyananda Swarupini - She Whose form is existence and bliss.

647. Lopamudrarchita - She Who is worshipped by Lopamudra (wife of sage Agastya).

648. Lila Klipta Brahmanda Mandala - She Who has created and maintained the universe purely as a sport.

649. Adrishya - She Who is not perceived by sense organs (normal eyes).

650. Drishya Rahita - She Who has nothing to see.

651. Vigyatri - She Who knows the truth of the physical universe.

652. Vedya Varjita - She Who has nothing left to know.

653. Yogini - She Who is constantly united with Parashiva; She Who possesses the power of yoga.

654. Yogada - She Who bestows the power of yoga.

655. Yogya - She Who deserves yoga of all kinds.

656. Yogananda - She Who is the bliss attained through yoga; She who enjoys the bliss of yoga.

657. Yugandhara - She Who is the bearer of the yugas.

658. Ichchha Shakti Gyana Shakti Kriya Shakti Svarupini - She Who is in the form of the powers of will, knowledge and action.

659. Sarvadhara - She Who is the support of all.

660. Supratishhtha - She Who is firmly established.

661. Sadasad Rupa Dharini - She Who assumes the forms of both being and non-being.

662. Ashhta Murtih - She Who has eight forms.

663. Aja Jaitri - She Who conquers ignorance.

664. Loka Yatra Vidhayini - She Who directs the course of the worlds.

665. Ekakini - She Who is the lone one.

666. Bhumarupa - She Who is the aggregate of all existing things.

667. Nirdvaita - She Who is without the sense of duality.

668. Dvaita Varjita - She Who is beyond duality.

669. Annada - She Who is the giver of food to all living things.

670. Vasuda - She Who is the giver of wealth.

671. Vriddha - She Who is ancient.

672. Brahmatmaikya Swaroopini - She Whose nature is the union of Brahman and Atman.

673. Brihati - She Who is immense.

674. Brahmani - She Who is predominantly Sattwic.

675. Brahmi - She Who presides over speech.

676. Brahmananda - She Who is ever immersed in the bliss of brahman.

677. Bali Priya - She Who is especially fond of sacrificial offerings

678. Bhashha Rupa - She Who is in the form of language.

679. Brihath Sena - She Who has a vast army.

680. Bhavabhava Vivarjita - She Who is beyond being and non-being.

681. Sukharadhya - She Who is easily worshipped.

682. Shubha Kari - She Who does good.

683. Shobhana Sulabha Gatih - She Who is attained through a bright and easy path.

684. Raja Rajeshwari - She Who is the ruler of kings and emperors.

685. Rajya Dayini - She Who gives dominion.

686. Rajya Vallabha - She Who protects all the dominions.

687. Rajatkripa - She Who has a compassion that captivates everyone.

688. Raja Pitha Niveshita Nijashrita - She Who establishes on royal thrones those who take refuge in Her.

689. Rajya Lakshmi - She Who is the embodiment of the prosperity of the world.

690. Kosha Natha - She Who is the mistress of the treasury.

691. Chaturanga Baleshvari - She Who commands armies of four types.

692. Samrajya Dayini - She Who is the bestower of imperial dominion.

693. Satyasandha - She Who is devoted to (or maintains) truth.

694. Sagara Mekhala - She Who is girdled by the oceans.

695. Dikshita - Who is under a vow.

696. Daitya Shamani - She Who destroys the demons; wicked forces.

697. Sarva Loka Vashankari - She Who keeps all the worlds under Her control.

698. Sarvartha Datri - She Who grants all desires.

699. Savitri - She Who is the creative power in the universe.

700. Satchitananda Rupini - "Sat" is absolute truth, "Chit" is the consciousness, "Anand" is the bliss. These are the three components of ultimate; they are therefore Her forms.

701. Desha Kala Parichchhinna - She Who is not limited by time and space; She Who is not measured by time and space.

702. Sarvaga - She Who pervades all the worlds and all living and non-living things. She Who is omnipresent.

703. Sarva Mohini - She Who deludes all.

704. Saraswati - She Who is in the form of knowledge.

705. Shastra Mayi - She Who is in the form of the scriptures; She Whose limbs are the scriptures.

706. Guhamba - She Who is the Mother of Guha (Subramanya). She Who dwells in the cave of the heart.

707. Guhya Rupini - She Who has a secret form.

708. Sarvopadhi Vinirmukta - She Who is free from all limitations.

709. Sada Shiva Pativrata - She Who is Sadashiva's devoted wife.

710. Sampradayeshvari - She Who is the guardian of sacred traditions.

711. Sadhu - She Who possesses equanimity.

712. I - She Who is the symbol "I"

713. Guru Mandala Rupini - She Who embodies in Herself the lineage of Gurus.

714. Kulottirna - She Who transcends the senses.

715. Bhagaradhya - She Who is worshipped in the Sun's disc.

716. Maya - She Who is illusion.

717. Madhumati - She Whose nature is as sweet as honey.

718. Mahi - She Who is the goddess Earth.

719. Ganamba - She Who is the mother of Shiva's attendants.

720. Guhyakaradhya - She Who is worshipped by guhyakas (a kind of devas).

721. Komalangi - She Who has beautiful limbs.

722. Guru Priya - She Who is beloved of the gurus.

723. Svatantra - She Who is free from all limitations.

724. Sarvatantreshi - She Who is the goddess of all tantras.

725. Dakshina Murti Rupini - She Who is in the form of Dakshina Murti.

726. Sanakadi Samaradhya - She Who is worshipped by Sanaka and other sages.

727. Shiva Gyana Pradayini - She Who bestows the knowledge of Shiva.

728. Chitkala - She Who is the consciousness in Brahman.

729. Ananda Kalika - She Who is the bud of bliss.

730. Premarupa - She Who is pure love.

731. Priyankari - She Who grants what is dear to Her devotees.

732. Nama Parayana Prita - She Who is pleased by the repetition of Her names.

733. Nandi Vidya - She Who is the deity worshipped by the Nandi mantra.

734. Nateshvari - She Who is the wife of Natesha (Shiva).

735. Mithya Jagadh Adhishhthana - She Who is the basis of the illusory universe.

736. Muktida - She Who gives liberation.

737. Mukti Rupini - She Who is in the form of liberation.

738. Lasya Priya - She Who is fond of the Lasya dance.

739. Laya Kari - She Who causes absorption.

740. Lajja - She Who exists as Bashful modesty in all living beings.

741. Rambhadi Vandita - She Who is adored by the celestial damsels such as Rambha.

742. Bhava Dava Sudha Vrishhtih - She Who is the rain of nectar falling on the forest fire of worldly existence.

743. Paparanya Davanala - She Who is like wild fire to the forest of sins.

744. Daurbhagya Tula Vatula - She Who is the gale that drives away the cotton wisps of misfortune.

745. Jara Dhvanta Ravi Prabha - She Who is the sunlight that dispels the darkness of old age.

746. Bhagyabdhi Chandrika - She Who is the full moon to the ocean of good fortune.

747. Bhakta Chitta Keki Ghanaghana - She Who is the cloud that gladdens the peacocks who are the hearts of Her devotees.

748. Roga Parvata Dambholi - She Who is the thunderbolt that shatters the mountain of disease.

749. Mrityu Daru Kutharika - She Who is the Axe that cuts down the tree of death.

750. Maheshvari - She Who is the supreme goddess.

751. Maha Kali - She Who is the great Kali.

752. Maha Grasa - She Who devours everything great; She Who is the great devourer.

753. Maha Shana - She Who eats everything that is great.

754. Aparna - She Who owes no debt.

755. Chandika - She Who is angry (at the wicked).

756. Chanda Mundasura Nishhudini - She Who killed Chanda, Munda and other asuras.

757. Ksharaksharatmika - She Who is in the form of both the perishable and imperishable Atman.

758. Sarva Lokeshi - She Who is the ruler of all worlds.

759. Vishva Dharini - She Who supports the universe.

760. Tri Varga Datri - She Who bestows the three goals of life.

761. Subhaga - She Who is the seat of all prosperity.

762. Trayambaka - She Who has three eyes.

763. Trigunatmika - She Who is the essence of the three gunas.

764. Svargapavargada - She Who bestows heaven and liberation.

765. Shuddha - She Who is the purest.

766. Japa Pushhpa Nibhakritih - She Whose body is like the hibiscus flower.

767. Ojovati - She Who is full of vitality.

768. Dyuti Dhara - She Who is full of light and splendor; She Who has an aura of light.

769. Yagya Rupa - She Who is in the form of sacrifice.

770. Priya Vrata - She Who is fond of vows.

771. Duraradhya - She Who is difficult to worship.

772. Duradarshha - She Who is difficult to control.

773. Patali Kusuma Priya - She Who is fond of the patali flower (pale red trumpet flower).

774. Mahati - She Who is great. She Who is in the form of Mahatti (Narada's vina).

775. Meru Nilaya - She Who resides in the Meru mountain.

776. Mandara Kusuma Priya - She Who is fond of the Mandara flowers.

777. Viraradhya - She Who is worshipped by heroic persons.

778. Viradhrupa - She Who is in the form of the cosmic whole.

779. Viraja - She Who is without Rajas (desire and anger).

780. Vishvato Mukhi - She Who faces all directions.

781. Prathyagrupa - She Who is the indwelling self.

782. Parakasha - She Who is the transcendental ether (which is the material cause of the cosmic and individual bodies).

783. Pranada - She Who is the giver of life.

784. Prana Rupini - She Who is the nature of life.

785. Martanda Bhairava Aradhya - She Who is worshipped by Martandabhairava.

786. Mantrini Nyasta Rajya Dhuh - She Who has entrusted Her regal responsibilities to Her mantrini.

787. Tripureshi - She Who is the goddess of Tripura.

788. Jayatsena - She Who has an army which is accustomed only to victory.

789. Nistraigunya - She Who is devoid of the three gunas.

790. Parapara - She Who is both para and apara.

791. Satya Gyana Ananda Rupa - She Who is truth, knowledge and bliss.

792. Samarasya Parayana - She Who is immersed in a state of steady wisdom.

793. Kapardini - She Who is the wife of Kapardi (Shiva, one with matted hair).

794. Kala Mala - She Who wears all sixty-four forms of art as a garland.

795. Kamadhukh - She Who fulfils all desires.

796. Kamarupini - She Who has a desirable form.

797. Kalanidhih - She Who is the treasure house of all arts.

798. Kavya Kala - She Who is the art of poetry.

799. Rasagya - She Who knows all the rasas.

800. Rasa Shevadhih - She Who is the treasure house of rasa.

801. Pushhta - She Who is always full of vigour.

802. Puratana - She Who is ancient.

803. Pujya - She Who is worthy of worship by all.

804. Pushhkara - She Who is complete. She Who gives nourishment to all.

805. Pushhkarekshana - She Who has eyes like lotus petals.

806. Param Jyotih - She Who is the supreme light.

807. Param Dham - She Who is the supreme abode.

808. Paramanuh - She Who is the subtlest particle.

809. Paratpara - She Who is the most supreme of the supreme ones.

810. Pasha Hasta - She Who holds a noose in Her hand.

811. Pasha Hantri – She Who destroys the bonds.

812. Para Mantra Vibhedini - She Who breaks the spell of the evil mantras of the enemy.

813. Murta - She Who has forms.

814. Amurta - She Who has no definite form.

815. Anitya Tripta - She Who is satisfied even by our perishable offerings.

816. Muni Manasa Hansika - She Who is the swan in the manasa lake of the minds of sages.

817. Satya Vrata - She Who abides firmly in truth.

818. Satya Rupa - She Who is truth itself.

819. Sarvantaryamini - She Who dwells inside all.

820. Sati - She Who is reality, the eternal being.

821. Brahmani - She Who is the tail that is brahman; the support for all.

822. Brahma - She Who is brahman.

823. Janani - She Who is the mother.

824. Bahu Rupa - She Who has a multitude of forms.

825. Budharchita - She Who is worshipped by the wise.

826. Prasavitri - She Who is Mother of the universe.

827. Prachanda - She Who is full of awe-inspiring wrath.

828. Agya - She Who is divine commandment itself.

829. Pratishhtha - She Who is the foundation.

830. Prakatakriti - She Who is manifested in the form of the universe.

831. Praneshwari - She Who lords over the five pranas and the senses.

832. Pranadatri - She Who is the giver of life.

833. Pajnchashath Pitha Rupini - She Who has fifty centers of worship.

834. Vishrinkhala - She Who is unfettered, free in every way.

835. Viviktastha - She Who abides in secluded places.

836. Vira Mata - She Who is the mother of the valiant.

837. Viyatprasuh - She Who is the mother to the ether.

838. Mukunda - She Who gives salvation.

839. Mukti Nilaya - She Who is the abode of salvation.

840. Mula Vigraha Rupini - She Who is the root form of everything.

841. Bhavagya - She Who is the knower of all thoughts and sentiments.

842. Bhava Rogaghni - She Who eradicates the diseases of the cycle of birth and death.

843. Bhava Chakra Pravartini - She Who turns the wheel of the cycle of birth and death.

844. Chhandah Sara - She Who is the essence of all the Vedas.

845. Shastra Sara - She Who is the essence of all the Scriptures.

846. Mantra Sara - She Who is the essence of all the Mantras.

847. Talodari - She Who is slender-waisted.

848. Udara Kirtih - She Who possesses exalted fame.

849. Uddama Vaibhava - She Whose prowess is unlimited.

850. Varna Rupini - She Who is in the form of the letters of the alphabets.

851. Janma Mrityu Jara Tapta Jana Vishranti Dayini - She Who gives peace and repose to those who are afflicted by birth, death and decrepitude.

852. Sarvopanishhadh Udghushhta - She Who is celebrated by all the Upanishads.

853. Shantyatita Kalatmika - She Who transcends the state of peace.

854. Gambhira - She Who is unfathomable.

855. Gaganantastha - She Who resides in the ether, space.

856. Garvita - She Who is proud.

857. Gana Lolupa - She Who delights in music.

858. Kalpana Rahita - She Who is free from imaginary attributes.

859. Kashhtha - She Who dwells in the highest state (beyond which there is nothing).

860. Akanta - She Who ends all sins and sorrows.

861. Kantardha Vigraha - She Who is half the body of Her husband.

862. Karya Karana Nirmukta - She Who is free from the bond of cause and effect.

863. Kama Keli Tarangita - She Who is overflowing with pleasure in the union with Kameshvara.

864. Kanath Kanaka Tatanka - She Who wears glittering gold ear ornaments.

865. Lila Vigraha Dharini - She Who assumes various glorious forms as a sport.

866. Aja - She Who has no birth.

867. Kshaya Vinirmukta - She Who is free from decay.

868. Mugdha - She Who is captivating in Her beauty.

869. Kshipra Prasadini - She Who is quickly pleased.

870. Antarmukha Samaradhya - She Who is to be worshipped internally (mentally).

871. Bahirmukha Sudurlabha - She Who is difficult to attain by those whose attention is directed outwards.

872. Trayi - She Who is the three Vedas.

873. Trivarga Nilaya - She Who is the abode of the threefold aims of human life.

874. Tristha - She Who resides in the three worlds.

875. Tripura Malini - She Who is the goddess of the antardashara chakra of the Shri Chakra.

876. Niramaya - She Who is free from diseases of all kinds.

877. Niralamba - She Who depends on no one.

878. Svatmarama - She Who rejoices in Her own self.

879. Sudhastrutih - She Who is the source of nectar.

880. Sansara Panka Nirmagna Samuddharana Pandita - She Who is skilled in raising those who are immersed in the mire of transmigratory life.

881. Yagya Priya - She Who is fond of sacrifices and other rituals.

882. Yagya Kartri - She Who is the doer of sacrificial rites.

883. Yajamana Svarupini - She Who is in the form of Yajamana; who directs sacrificial rites.

884. Dharmadhara - Dharma is the code of right conduct handed down by tradition in each age. She is the support of right conduct.

885. Dhanadhyaksha - She Who overseas wealth.

886. Dhana Dhanya Vivardhini - She Who increases wealth and harvests.

887. Vipra Priya - She Who is fond of the learned.

888. Vipra Rupa - She Who is in the form of a knower of the self.

889. Vishva Bhramana Karini - She Who makes the universe go around through Her power of illusion.

890. Vishva Grasa - She who devours the universe.

891. Vidrumabha - She Who shines like coral (with Her red complexion).

892. Vaishhnavi - She Who is in the form of Vishnu.

893. Vishnu Rupini - She Who is in a form that extends over the whole universe.

894. Ayonih - She Who is without origin.

895. Yoni Nilaya - She Who is the seat of all origins.

896. Kutastha - She Who remains unchanged like the anvil.

897. Kularupini - She Who is the deity of the Kaula path.

898. Vira Goshhthi Priya - She Who is fond of the assembly of warriors.

899. Vira - She Who is heroic.

900. Naishhkarmya - She Who abstains from actions.

901. Nada Rupini - She Who is in the form of the primal sound.

902. Vigyana Kalana - She Who realizes the knowledge of brahman.

903. Kalya - She Who is capable of creation.

904. Vidagdha - She Who is expert in everything.

905. Baindavasana - She Who is seated in the baindava chakra (spot between the eyebrows).

906. Tattvadhika - She Who transcends all cosmic categories.

907. Tattvamayi - She Who is reality itself; She Who is Shiva Himself.

908. Tattvamartha Svarupini - She Who is the meaning of Tat (that) and Tvam (thou).

909. Sama Gana Priya - She Who is fond of the chanting of the Sama Veda.

910. Saumya - She Who is benign and gentle in nature; of a cool, gentle nature as the moon.

911. Sada Shiva Kutumbini - She Who is the wife of Sadashiva.

912. Savyapasavya Margastha - She Who occupies (or can be reached by) both the left and right.

913. Sarvapadh Vinivarini - She Who removes all dangers.

914. Svastha - She Who abides in Herself. She Who is free from all afflictions.

915. Swabhava Madhura - She Who is sweet in Her inherent nature.

916. Dhira - She Who is wise; Who gives wisdom.

917. Dhira Samarchita - She Who is worshipped by the wise and brave; meaning She cannot be worshipped by the cowardly and stupid.

918. Chaitanyarghya Samaradhya - She Who is worshipped with consciousness as the oblation.

919. Chaitanya Kusuma Priya - She Who is fond of the flower that is consciousness.

920. Sadodita - She Who is ever shining.

921. Sada Tushhta - She Who is ever pleased.

922. Tarunaditya Patala - She Who is rosy like the morning sun.

923. Dakshinadakshin Aradhya - She Who is adored by both right and left-handed worshippers.

924. Darasmera Mukhambuja - She Whose lotus face holds a sweet smile.

925. Kaulini Kevala - She Who is worshipped as pure knowledge (consciousness) by the spiritual aspirants following the Kaula path.

926. Anarghya Kaivalya Pada Dayini - She Who confers the priceless fruit of final liberation.

927. Stotra Priya - She Who is fond of hymns in Her praise.

928. Stuti Matih - She Who is the true object, the essence of all praises.

929. Shruti Sanstuta Vaibhava - She Whose glory is celebrated in the Shrutis.

930. Manasvini - She Who is well-known for Her mind.

931. Manavati - She Who is high-minded; She Who has great fame.

932. Maheshi - She Who is the wife of Mahesha.

933. Mangalakritih - She Who is of auspicious form.

934. Vishva Mata - She Who is the Mother of the Universe.

935. Jagadh Dhatri - She Who is the Mother Who protects and sustains the world.

936. Vishalakshi - She Who has large eyes.

937. Viragini - She Who is dispassionate.

938. Pragalbha - She Who is skillful and confident.

939. Paramodara - She Who is supremely generous

940. Paramoda - She Who is supremely joyful.

941. Manomayi - She Who is in the form of the mind.

942. Vyoma Keshi - She Who has the sky as Her hair.

943. Vimanastha - She Who is seated in Her celestial chariot; She Who journeys in Her celestial chariot along with the gods.

944. Vajrini - She Who bears the Vajra weapon (thunderbolt).

945. Vamakeshvari - She Who is the presiding deity of the vamakeshvara tantra.

946. Pajncha Yagya Priya - She Who is fond of the five forms of sacrifices (agnihotra, darshapurnamasa, chaturmasya, goyagya and somayagya)

947. Pajncha Preta Majnchadhi Shayini - She Who reclines on a couch made of five corpses.

948. Pajnchami - She Who is the Fifth (after Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Ishwara)

949. Pajncha Bhuteshi - She Who is the goddess of the five elements.

950. Pajncha Samkhyopacharini - She Who is worshipped using five objects of (fragrance, flower, incense, lamp and food).

951. Shashvati - She Who is eternal.

952. Shashvataishvarya - She Who holds eternal sovereignty.

953. Sharmada - She Who is the giver of happiness.

954. Shambhu Mohini - She Who deludes Shiva.

955. Dhara - She Who is Mother Earth.

956. Dhara Suta - She Who is the daughter of Dhara (Himavat).

957. Dhanya - She Who possesses great wealth; She who is extremely blessed.

958. Dharmini - She Who is righteous.

959. Dharma Vardhini - She Who promotes righteousness.

960. Lokatita - She Who transcends the worlds.

961. Gunatita - She Who transcends the Gunas.

962. Sarvatita - She Who transcends everything.

963. Shamatmika - She Who is of the nature of peace and bliss.

964. Bandhuka Kusuma Prakhya - She Who resembles the bandhuka flower in beauty and grace.

965. Bala - She Who never forsakes the nature of a child.

966. Lila Vinodini - She Who delights in Her sport.

967. Sumangali - She Who is eternally auspicious; She Who never becomes a widow.

968. Sukha Kari - She Who gives happiness.

969. Suveshhadhya - She Who is very attractive in Her beautiful rich garments and ornaments.

970. Suvasini - She Who is ever auspiciously married.

971. Suvasinyarchana Prita - She Who is pleased by the worship by married women.

972. Ashobhana - She Who is always radiant.

973. Shuddha Manasa - She Who is of pure mind; She Who purifies the mind of Her worshippers.

974. Bindu Tarpana Santushhta - She Who is pleased by offerings to the bindu (of Shri Chakra).

975. Purvaja - She Who is ahead of everyone; first born.

976. Tripurambika - She Who is the mother of the tripuras (three cities)

977. Dasha Mudra Samaradhya - She Who is worshipped by ten mudras (sarva sankshobhini, sarva vidravini, sarva akarshini, sarva vashankari, sarvonmadini, sarva mahankusha, sarva khechari, sarva bija, sarva yoni, sarva trikhanda)

978. Tripura Shri Vashankari - She for Whom Tripurashri is under control.

979. Gyana Mudra - She Who is in the form of Gyana Mudra.

980. Gyana Gamya - She Who is to be attained through the yoga of knowledge.

981. Gyana Gyeya Svarupini - She Who is both knowledge and the known.

982. Yoni Mudra - She Who is in the form of the yoni mudra.

983. Tri Khandeshi - She Who is the ruler of the tenth mudra, the trikhanda.

984. Triguna - She Who is endowed with the three gunas of sattva, rajas and tamas.

985. Amba - She Who is the mother of all beings; mother of the universe.

986. Trikonaga - She Who resides in the triangle.

987. Anagha - She Who is sinless.

988. Adbhuta Charitra - She Whose deeds are marvelous.

989. Vajnchhitartha Pradayini - She Who gives all the desired objects.

990. Abhyasatishaya Gyata - She Who is known only through the exceedingly strenuous practice of spiritual discipline.

991. Shhadadhvatita Rupini - She Whose form transcends the six paths.

992. Avyajakaruna Murtih - She Who is pure compassion.

993. Agyana Dhvanta Dipika - She Who is the bright lamp that dispels the darkness of ignorance.

994. Abala Gopa Vidita - She Who is well known by all; even by children and cowherds.

995. Sarvanullanghya Shasana - She Whose commands are not disobeyed by anyone.

996. Shri Chakra Raja Nilaya - She Who abides in Shri Chakra, the king of chakras.

997. Shrimath Tripura Sundari - She Who is the divine Tripurasundari Devi.

998. Shri Shiva - She Who is the auspicious and divine Shiva.

999. Shivashaktaikya Rupini - She Who is the union of Shiva and Shakti into one form.

1000. Lalitambika - She Who is the divine mother Lalita.

Shrim Hrim Aim Aum

Evam Shrilalitadevya Namnam Sahasrakam Jaguh

Iti Shri Brahmandapurane Uttarakhande Shri Hayagrivagastyasanvade Shri Lalitasahasranama Stotra Kathanam Sampurnam.

Chapter 12, Episode 4.

4 Deeksha Vidhi

Narad said - Bhagwan! There is one knowledge I still have to get, and without which one does not have the authority to recite the Sahasranam of the Devi. That is Deeksha. Please describe this to me in detail.

Bhagwan Narayan says - Narad, I will tell you about that which entitles and qualifies one to offer puja to the Gods, Agni, and the Guru. This not only gives divine knowledge, but also is the main ingredient in the neutralization of karmas and sins. This is what is called Deeksha. It is absolutely essential for the Guru and the Shishya both to be absolutely cleansed. Early in the morning the Guru should take his prescribed bath and then with kamandelu in hand he should walk from the river to his house. There he should take his seat in the yagya mandap. He should sprinkle holy water on the samagri and on the doors. The left side of the door represents Ganga and the right side represents Yamuna, and the middle represents Bhagawati Lakshmi. Then he should purify all his limbs with the full knowledge that his body is the footstool of Bhagawati Adi Shakti and has to be worthy of the Lotus Feet.

The sadhaka must have his ritual bath and purify himself in the full knowledge that he is about to receive a most precious gift. He must anoint all his limbs and his body with sandal paste and other perfumed ingredients. He should fill a kalash with water and pray to the holy rivers to come into the kalash. Then he should cover the mouth of the kalash with tender leaves of the peepal, jackfruit, and mango trees. Then he should wrap the kalash in two pieces of cloth. He should offer to the Devi water for washing feet, for sipping, and two pieces of red silk cloth. Then he should perform puja by offering black aguru

(fragrant wood), camphor, perfume, saffron mixed with kasturi, sandalwood, kund flowers (lotus), gugul (fragrant resin), usheer (fragrant root of Khus – vetiver), jaggery, and dhoop mixed with honey which is dear to the Devi. Then he should offer Naivedya (nine kinds of delicacies). He should sprinkle holy water with sprigs of kusha grass. No other water should be used. After the puja, the guru and the shishya should observe silence, eat their food and sleep in the mandap.

The next morning after bath and ritual cleansing, the guru who is dissolved in Guru Brahma imparts his Nirmal Vidya to his shishya. They must perform a havan and invite all the gods to attend. As they invoke each deity, a special offering is put into the havan. After dissolving himself into Guru Brahma, the Guru should pass on to his shishya the Chaitanya that is flowing through him. The shishya offers pushpanjali and is made to sit on a seat made of kusha grass. Here the guru cleanses the elements of the shishya by doing abhishekh of the shishya using the sacred water of the kalash. After this the shishya is dressed in new clothes and made to sit next to the Guru. The Guru expresses the desire that "Bhagawati Shiva Who is in my heart should reign over the heart of my shishya". Then he anoints the shishya with fragrant substances, puts his hand on the head of the shishya and whispers three times in his ear the mahamantras of Adi Shakti. Then the shishya chants this mantra 108 times. Then the shishya prostrates before the guru in adoration and surrender.

Narad! I have just told you the supreme ceremony of Deeksha being given by a guru to his shishya. Now you should fully involve and immerse yourself in the worship of the Supreme Guru, the Almighty Adi Shakti, by Whose grace I have reached this stage of ascent.

Vyasji says - Rajan! After this very inspiring and valuable discourse, Bhagwan Narayan closed his eyes and went into meditation on the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Adi Shakti. Narad offered pranaams to the great guru, and left with the intention of settling down into meditation and worship of Adi Shakti.

Chapter 12, Episode 5

5 The vanity, conceit and arrogance of the gods; unsuccessful attempts by Agni and Vayu to burn all the grass. Indra gets darshan of Bhagawati Uma and Gyanopadesh (discourse on knowledge).

Janmejay asked - O Foremost of gods and knower of the shastras, nothing is hidden from you. When the shrutis have directed that worship of the Shakti is the only way to get moksha, why are people still worshipping other deities. Brahman! What is the reason. Please tell me. Also earlier, you had mentioned the importance of Manidweep. I desire to know what qualities it has which makes it the Abode of the Devi.

Sootji says - Munis! Hearing this desire of Maharaj Janmejay, Bhagwan Ved Vyasji began to speak –

Vyasji said - Rajan! You have asked a very wise question, because in the present context of time it is most relevant and useful. It is apparent that you are intelligent and have deep knowledge and respect for the Vedas. This is an ancient story. The proud and arrogant Daityas went to war against the gods, and this lasted for a hundred years. Various kinds of weapons and strange illusory powers were being used. It seemed as if the time of the great dissolution of the world had arrived. But by the grace of Bhagawati Parashakti the gods were victorious and the daityas went back to Pataal. This made the devas very proud and conscious of their victory. They boasted that the war was won entirely due to their own valour and prowess. They were overcome by delusion and illusion, and could not recognize the Doer, the Great Power of Parashakti. In Her great mercy and benevolence, the most compassionate

Devi Bhagawati Jagaddamba manifested as a Yaksh (a kind of demi-god). The Yaksh shone with the radiance and brilliance of one crore suns, and the silvery coolness of a crore of moons. The Shree-vigraha (form bearing divine arms and lotus feet and heavenly robes and ornaments) blazed with the brilliance of crores of flashes of lightning. The gods were wonder-struck as they had never seen dazzling radiance like this before. They decided – "We must go and ask who this yaksh is and discover the secret of this power, and then we can decide on a course of action". Indra called Agni and said - "As you are our voice you can go and find out who this yaksh is". When Agni appeared before him, the yaksh asked – "Pray, who are you and what qualities do you possess?" Agni replied "I am Agni, and I am also called Jaatveda. I have the power to consume the whole world with my fire." The most divine Yaksh placed a sprig of kusha grass before Agni and said "If you have the power to burn the whole world into ashes, burn this blade of grass and show me." Agni commanded all his strength and tried to burn the sprig but could not succeed. He left the place and went to heaven, very ashamed, and said – "We are not as powerful as we thought, and our claims are premature."

Then Indra sent Vayu, saying "Your winds are the warp and weft which weave the whole world. It is by your energy that the earth has movement and action. By your Pranava (life force) you maintain the balance of all shaktis within living beings. You go and find out who this yaksh is. No one else can succeed."Hearing Indra's words of praise and importance, Vayu's vanity and self-conceit knew no bounds. Seeing him approach, Yaksh spoke in sweet tones – "Who are you and what shaktis do you have." "I am the great Matrikshva (Checkmate). I am also known as Vayudeva. I have boundless Shakti and I also maintain mobilization of forces and gravitation of all things. Because of me the business of existence happens in the world.

Yaksh said - There is a blade of grass lying before you. Displace it if you can. If you cannot, you must surrender your ego and return to Indra and admit defeat. Vayu summoned all his powers and tried to make the blade of grass fly. But he could not move it even an inch from its place. He hung his head in shame, surrendered his ego, and returned to Indra. He said - "We have not been able to recognize this Yaksh. We are lost in our pride and ego. This Yaksh is not of this world, and his dazzling brilliance is unbearable to the eye." Then all the gods requested Indra to go himself and find out who the Yaksh was.

Indra set out with great arrogance to meet the Yaksh, but when he reached, the Yaksh had withdrawn from there. Indra felt very insulted and belittled that Yaksh did not even wish to meet him. Indra realized that he could not go back to the gods and tell them that he had been spurned. He humbled down, dissolved his ego, and prostrated in a gesture of surrender. No sooner had he done this than he heard a voice from heaven - Sahastraaksh (1000 eyed one)! You must chant the Mayabeej. Only then you can be happy. Instantly Indra began to chant the Mayabeej. He closed his eyes, meditated upon the Devi; and without food or water he kept chanting the mantra for a long time.

One day, in the month of Chaitra, during the ninth day of Shukla paksh, at the time of mid-day, in the very same spot, a great brightness began to manifest. In the heart of that stream of light (tejpunj) sat a Devi, filled with youth and light. Her complexion was like japakusum (china rose) and radiant like the first rays of the morning sun. A two-day-old moon was mounted on Her crown and She bore boons (gift of a deity), goad and noose; and abhay-daan mudra (posture of protection). Her limbs were as graceful and delicate as vines. She was the Goddess Shiva. For Her devotees Bhagawati Jagaddamba is the Kalpavriksh (wish fulfilling tree). She was decked with beautiful ornaments,

and around Her neck hung a fragrant garland of chameli (a variety of jasmine). On all four sides the Vedas had assumed forms, and were singing Her praises. By the sparkling radiance of Her teeth the whole world was illumined as if laden with rubies. Her shining face looked like a crore of beautiful Kamdevas. Her raiments were glorious red and Her body was smeared with red sandal paste (raktachandan). This was the Goddess Uma, Who manifested in the Himalayas, Sakshat Bhagawati Jagaddamba. She is Causeless – the cause of all causes. On receiving this darshan, Indra was filled with joy and happiness. He was filled with vibrations, and tears of joy flowed from his eyes. He prostrated at the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagadeeshwari, and sang all forms of stotras to please Her. Then bowing his head in reverence and worship he said -- "O Most beautiful Devi! Who was this Yaksha and why did he manifest? Please tell me the cause.

Hearing this, the Ocean of Compassion, the Merciful Devi said - I am the Cause of all Causes. I am the Maya, Witness and Sustainer of all. I am that State which has been described in the Vedas, and which people try to experience by renunciation and meditation. I will tell you That in its essence.

That is the One which is called OM. That is the Brahma, the divine knowledge. That is also in the form of HRIM. Deveshwar! OM and HRIM – these are My two main Beeja Mantras. I exist in these two parts and cause the whole creation. It is this – the first part of each is Sat Chit Anand Brahma; and the second part is Maya Prakriti (Illusory Creation). That Maya is verily Para Shakti, and I am That. This is my illusory state. At the time of Pralaya or dissolution all this dissolves into Me and becomes a Chakra in My Body.

And according to their karmas, and resultant evolutionary state of spiritual and material maturity that living beings had achieved at the time of dissolution;

that same state is assumed by Me in all life forms in the new creation. The Energy that is Antarmukhi (opening inwards) becomes Maya or Yogamaya; and the Energy that is Bahirmukhi (opening outwards) is called Tam or Avidya. Tamoroopini Bahirmukhi Maya is what causes the creation of the living world. This same Primal Energy presides as Rajoguna. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar are Trigunatmak. The predominance of Rajogun caused Brahma; the predominance of Sattwagun caused Vishnu; and the predominance of Tamogun caused Rudra to come into being. Those having tangible mass and matter are called Brahma; those which are subtle (sookshma) are called Vishnu; and those which are causal or instrumental are called Rudra. And, beyond these three gunas there is a Fourth State, and that is Me. That which is called All Pervading Form is Me. Above all this is Parabrahma. That is Me in Nirakar (formless). Nirgun (without attributes) and Sagun (with attributes) are My two manifestations. Maya rahit (devoid of Shakti) is Nirgun, and Maya yukt (possessing Shakti) is Sagun. It is in those forms that I, after creation, enter and reside within all living beings, and instigate their actions (according to fate and destiny). It is this same working of Mine, which gives instigation to Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra to create, sustain and dissolve. Pavan (wind god) moves in obeisance to Me; as also the Sun follows his path in the universe in obeisance to Me. It is on My command that Indra, Agni and Yam perform their functions – because I am the Supreme and Most Omnipotent Shakti. It is by My benevolence that you gained victory in all your campaigns. You are the puppets and I am the One Who holds the strings. I am the One Who causes victory, sometimes for the gods, and sometimes for the daityas. I am the Doer, and My attention is always on fate and destiny (Prarabdh). In your ego you forget My all pervading Self, My Shakti. Your wisdom got eclipsed by your ego. Insurmountable maya left its deep impression on you. Therefore, out of compassion My light shone on you as Yaksha. So now all of you should surrender your ego and take refuge in My form as Sat Chit Ananda Roopini.

Vyasji says – Janmejay, after saying this, the great Ishwari, Bhagawati Mahadevi, removed Herself from his sight. Then all the devatas surrendered their egos and arrogance and began to worship Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Rajan! That is how it came to pass that in Satya Yuga all the twice-born (realized souls) are completely immersed in the worship of Bhagawati Adi Shakti.

Chapter 12 Episode 6

6 Muni Gautam - By the grace and favour of Gayatri, countless brahmin families get the protection of muni Gautam. They incur the wrath of the muni by their ingratitude and he pronounces a horrible curse on them.

Vyasji says – Rajan! It happened a long time ago that to punish living beings for their karmas, Indra stopped the rain for 15 years. This drought brought about dreadful annihilation and destruction. In every house there were so many dead, that it was impossible to count the bodies. Crazed by hunger people began to eat each other. In this situation, the brahmins decided to go to Gautamji who had received enlightenment from his long tapasyas. At that moment Gautam was in his ashram, meditating on the Devi. They had heard that in his ashram there is protection and refuge for all; and many living things had gathered there. The brahmins collected all their puja articles, their cows, their maids and their families. From all directions brahmins were arriving at Gautam's ashram. The muni received the brahmins with all protocol and offered them seats. Then he enquired after their wellbeing and asked why they had arrived in such large numbers. The brahmins told him their problem. He offered them his protection and said, "I am your servant and this is your ashram. I am honoured to have so many brahmins of such high spritual stature. Just by your presence my evil tendencies become pious and virtuous, so please bless my ashram with the dust of your feet. I am indeed very fortunate to be able to receive you in my ashram."

Vyasji says:- After welcoming them, munivar Gautam began to sing the praises of the Devi. "O Devi! Obeisance to you. You are verily Mahavidya (the Highest Knowledge); Vedmata (Mother of the Vedas) and the embodiment of Wisdom.

You are the immeasurable supreme object of worship and attention! Mother! You are always present in Your true forms. You who are in the form of Hrim, I worship you again and again. You assume the forms of Swaha and Swadha (mantras used during offering of oblations), and I worship you again and again. For your devotees you are Kalplata and you are the supreme witness. I worship You again and again. Your form (Turiyaavastha se atith hai), is beyond the fourth dimension; and You are Sat Chit Ananda (Truth-Consciousness-Bliss). I worship You again and again. (Sampoorna Vedanto ke vedyavishay ho) -You are the irrefutable authenticity of all the scriptures, and I worship you again and again. You reside in Suryamandal (Cosmos). I worship you again and again. At dawn you are glowing red like the newborn sun; at noon you appear like the youthful sun, and at dusk you appear in mature form. I worship you again and again. Please grant liberation to all living beings. O Devi Parameshwari! Forgive my indiscretions. Bhagawati Jagaddamba was so pleased that She appeared before Muni Gautam. She gave Gautam a miraculous pot from which he could feed the multitude of brahmins who had come to his ashram. Then She spoke to him:

"Mune! Whatever you require, this vessel will provide." Saying this, the most omnipotent Bhagawati Jagaddamba removed Herself from his sight.

Rajan! This vessel produced so much rice that it was as big as a mountain. Six kinds of flavours, different kinds of divine grass; Divine ornaments, silk clothes; ingredients for yagyas; and various types of utensils were all supplied by the miracle vessel. Rajan! Muni Gautam was a very great soul (Mahatma). Whatever he desired in his heart, it all materialised from the vessel. He invited all the brahmins and gave them food, and clothes, and wealth. He also gave them cows and buffaloes, puja utensils and other materials for yagyas, and all other things which were received from the divine vessel. Everybody

assembled and as directed by Muni Gautam they performed a yagya. Just like paradise, this ashram became expansive, bestowing shelter and refuge to all who came there for protection. All the most beautiful things of the world had been provided by the vessel, and all the brahmin ladies were decked in fine clothes and jewels. All the brahmins in their fine garments and sandal paste looked like gods from Indra's palace. The celebrations were enjoyed without fear of sickness or interference from daityas or demons.

The ashram was spread over a large area, and many living things came for protection, which Gautam gave liberally. And even the devas were pleased because they received the offerings of the great number of yagyas. Indra himself announced in his kingdom – Muni Gautam has become like a Kalpavriksh (wish fulfilling tree) for us. Because of him we are getting our requirements fulfilled. Otherwise in these days of famine and drought who will be able to perform yagyas and from where will we get sustenance. In this manner Muni Gautam supported the brahmin community and looked after them as if they were his children. And never did he feel any ego about it. He had erected a special altar for Bhagawati Jagaddamba, and all the munis and brahmins would go there and perform puja to the Devi.

It happened once that Narad muni visited that place. His melodious veena played sweet music and he was singing the praises of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. He entered and sat among the munis. They welcomed him with the proper protocol. Naradji began to describe the fame that had spread in heaven about Muni Gautam. Indra himself had been praising Muni Gautam and had mentioned that the grace of Bhagawati Jagaddamba was upon him. That is what made Narada visit the ashram to see for himself this great blessing that had been bestowed upon Muni Gautam.

All the brahmins present had been the beneficiaries of Gautam's generosity, but some of them became jealous of the praises that were being showered on Gautam. They plotted to do something which would detract and defame the muni. Within a few days the earth was blessed with rain. Everywhere the conditions improved and the famine ended. The group of jealous and ungrateful brahmins decided to lay a curse on Muni Gautam. Maharaj! Who can describe the magnitude of the play of Time. Rajan! Those ungrateful brahmins, by their power of maya, created a cow that was dying from starvation. They placed it outside the yagyashala (shelter where pujas are performed). When Muni Gautam came out and saw the cow he called out to it, but it fell down dead. Immediately the brahmins loudly accused Muni Gautam of killing the cow. The muni had just come out after performing yagya. He closed his eyes and meditated on the reason for the present happening and immediately divined the evil intentions of the brahmins. He became so angry that it was like Judgement Day. His eyes became red and he pronounced a curse on the guilty brahmins. "O base and worthless brahmins! From today you lose the privilege of meditating on Devi Jagaddamba and have no authority to use Her sacred mantra. May you also lose your rights to the Vedas, you will have no authority to perform yagyas enjoined by the holy writ or access to information contained in the Vedas. You also lose the privilege of worshipping Shiva and using His mantras or Shastras. You will not have permission to meditate on Bhagawati Shree Devi; nor can you go within hearing distance of Her descriptions or episodes, and this will cause you to fall into the lowest category of your caste. You will not be invited to any places of worship of the Devi; nor can you utter Her mantras and you will always be considered inauspicious. You cannot witness celebrations in honour of the Devi, nor can you go in the vicinity of the devotees of the Devi. You lose the right to attend celebrations in honour of Bhagwan Shiva and you cannot felicitate the devotees of Shiva. You lose the privilege of using Rudraaksh,

Bilva leaves and sacred bhasma (ash). In gatherings of pious and virtuous people you will lose your claim or privileged place, you will suffer loss of tranquility. At pujas, yagyas and holy gatherings you will be considered inauspicious. You will not be authorised to conduct ceremonies of offerings to the forefathers, you will lose your right to receive gifts of cows (go-daan); You no longer have authority to perform Chaandrayan or prayaschit vrat (penance or fast for expiation of sins).You will live useless lives. You will be counted among those unfortunate beings who sell their father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter and wife. You will suffer the same consequences as those who sell the Vedas, holy places and dharmas. Your progeny will also bear this curse. What more can I say! The Creator Herself, Bhagawati Jagaddamba must be displeased with you, and the only place fit for you is hell.

Vyasji said – Rajan! After pronouncing this terrible curse Muni Gautam rinsed his mouth with water. Then he entered the prayer room to meditate on the Devi. He prostrated in deep adoration. The most supreme Devi was also witnessing the ingratitude of the brahmins. Muni Gautam saw surprise on the Lotus Face of the Devi. She said to him:

“O Fortunate One! The milk which is fed to the snake only nourishes it to produce more poison. Do not get perturbed. Actions performed in ego often end in deceit).

After the Devi removed Herself from his sight, Muni Gautam returned to his seat to meditate.

Reeling under the curse, whatever vedadhyayan (study and meditation of the Vedas) the brahmins had done, were wiped out of their memory, and they could not recall or recite the Devi mantra. A most disturbing spectre loomed

before them. All the brahmins were filled with remorse and repentance. They fell at the feet of Muni Gautam and were so ashamed and sorry that they could not speak. They kept begging the Muni – "Please be appeased. Please forgive us. They surrounded him on all sides and kept pleading for pardon. The compassionate Muni Gautam began to feel pity for them. He said: Brahmins! Until such time as the Lord takes His incarnation as Bhagwan Shri Krishna Chandra you will have to remain in the hell known as Kumbhipaak. This is because my word is absolute and cannot be changed. You have to understand this. After this you will take birth on earth during Kaliyuga. All my words will come to pass. And to come out of my curse you must worship Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

Vyasji says: - Rajan! Muni Gautam bade farewell to the brahmins and returned to his ashram with the calming thought that this was all the effect of Destiny. Rajan! Thus after the advent of Shri Krishna's incarnation, when Kaliyug started these brahmins got their release from hell. All those who were under the curse, were born into the Brahmin sect, but without knowledge of the Trikaal sandhya, (morning, noon and evening prayers enjoined on Brahmins); and ignorant and insensitive to devotion to Gayatri. The effect of the curse was that they had no respect or belief in the Vedas; and they began false and fake teaching. They had no knowledge how to conduct Agnihotras (ceremonies offering oblations to the consecrated fire) and other sat karms (religious rites); and were unable to chant Svadha (word uttered when making offering to the manes) or Swaha (when making an offering to a deity). There are so many brahmins who do not even have an iota of knowledge, or realization, of the Primordial Creatrix of the Universe, Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Inspite of being under a curse they still continue to proclaim themselves as religious teachers and spread avidya (false knowledge). All such false gurus will be punished for misleading innocent seekers, and will definitely go back to

Kumbhipaak hell. Therefore O Rajan! It is imperative, in every way possible to do aradhana (worship) of Bhagawati Parameshwari.

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Chapter 12 - Episodes 7-12

7 - 12 Manidweep - Abode of The Devi. On the request of Raja Janmejay Vyasji describes the grandeur of Manidweep.

Vyasji - Rajan! Now I will give you the precious description of Manidweep. This is the sacred and most divine abode of the Creatrix of the Universe, Adi Shakti Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari.

Vyasji says:- Rajan! We have heard of Sarvalok, which exists beyond Brahmalok. That is verily Manidweep, the sacred abode of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. Of all the lokas it is the most supreme, and is therefore known as Sarvalok (all pervading). Nowhere in the creation or beyond, does there exist a better place. For the whole creation this is the sole, protective umbrella – Chatra Swaroop. No worldly activities or entrapments can affect or influence it. Rajan! The whole Brahmand (created Universe), exists within its shade. Rajan! This Manidweep is surrounded on all sides by a vast and bottomless ocean of nectar. Gentle breezes from Pavan (wind-god) ripple the ocean; and gemlike gleaming fish; and shells of all shapes and sizes live in this ocean. Big waves break on the shores in colourful sprays. Graceful boats, flying colourful flags, glide over this Sudha Sagar (ambrosial water). The ocean is bordered with ornamental trees bearing precious gems. Rising to the skies are lofty walls made of gleaming metal. They are seven yojans long. Here reside the guardians, bearing all variety of weapons, accomplished in the art of defence and war; and learned in all the forms of knowledge and spirituality. Here the atmosphere of peace and joy prevails. This Parkota (quadrangle) has four doors. Inside this fort reside the ganas who have unbounded loyalty and reverence for the Devi. When the gods come for darshan of Bhagawati Jagaddamba, their ganas are housed in this place. Their vahanas and vehicles

are kept here, and there is an air of movement and sound always in this place. It is dotted with lakes and streams of sweet, clear water, and surrounded by beautiful gardens of jewel laden trees.

Beyond this is a bronze parkota (rampart), which is huge. Its shikhar (peak) touches the sky. It is hundred times more brilliant than the glow of the previous tower. There is no tree or plant in existence, that does not grow in this garden. Every tree is laden with fragrant flowers and delicious fruits. Not a single tree is bare. The trees drip nectar in the salubrious surroundings of cuckoo songs and the droning of bumblebees. Birds of all seasons nest in these trees. The trees are nourished by life giving rivers, and are always swaying under the weight of twittering birds like doves, parakeets and swans.

After this bronze quadrangle, is the quadrangle with walls made of copper. They are hundred yojans high. In the centre of this quadrangle stands the beautiful vatika (tree) Kalpavriksh. Rajan! The flowers of this tree shine like gold, and so also the leaves. The fruit and seeds are like gemstones. The fragrance is wafted on the breeze for a distance of ten yojans in all directions. It is always spring in these gardens. Under a canopy of flowers sits Vasant Ritu (god of Spring) and his two consorts Madhushree and Madhavshree. Their faces are as beautiful as Kamdev's and they play with a ball made of flowers. Streams of honey pour out of the tree. The perfume laden breeze spreads for ten yojans, and the cupid-like gandharvas, accompanied by their wives also enjoy the garden.

After this is the Glass Parkota (rampart). It is seven yojans tall. In the centre of this parkota is a tree called Santaan. The fragrance of its flowers spread for ten yojans. It is always in full bloom with golden flowers and its fruits are as sweet as honey. Rajan! The ruler of this tree is Greeshma Ritu (god of

Summer) and his two consorts Shukrashree and Shuchishree. All the siddhas and devatas rest under the shade of this tree.

Rajan! Beyond this is the quadrangle made of shining Brass. In the middle is the tree called Malayagiri vriksh vatika. Varsha Ritu (rain god), who reigns over the clouds presides over this garden. The colour of his eyes is Pingalvarn (tawny), and he is covered with a garment of clouds. Lightning and thunder are his voice, and the rainbow is his weapon. It is his nature to rain thousands of droplets of life-giving water. Varsha Ritu has 12 Shaktis, called Nabhashree, Nabhasyashree, Swarasya, Rasyamalini, Ambadula, Niratni, Abhramanti, Meghayantika, Varshayanti, Chibunika, Varidhara, and Sammatha. This place is always full of new leaves and delicate creepers; and fast flowing rivers and streams. This place is occupied by punya atmas who are constantly engaged in making Vapi, Koop and Tadaag (waterpots and wells) as offerings to the Devi.

The next Parkota is made of Panchaloha (five metals). It is seven yojans long. In the middle of this stands the sacred Mandar tree. The holy Sharad Ritu (god of Autumn) presides over this forest with his two deers Ishulakshmi and Urjalakshmi. This is the abode of many siddhpurush with their wives.

The seventh Parkota is made of Silver and is seven yojans long. This huge turret adds to the beauty of the place. In the middle is a garden of the most divine and fragrant Parijaat. These flowers that are used for Devi Yagya spread their perfume for a distance of ten yojans. Hemant Ritu (god of Winter) is the presiding deity. It is his nature to give happiness and love. His two shaktis are Sahashri and Sahasyashree.

After the Silver comes the eighth Parkota made of shimmering gold. It is called Suvarnashaal. It is seven yojans long. In the centre is a beautiful vatika called

Kadamb. It is covered with fragrant flowers and tender new leaves. The presiding devata is Sishir Ritu (cold season), and his consorts are Tapahshree and Tapasyashree. This abode is granted to those siddhpurushas who have pleased the Devi with their generosity and virtuous acts.

Beyond this Hiranyamay Praakaar (golden quadrangle) there is a seven yojan long praakaar which has the kumkum colour of the morning sun because it is made of Pushpraajmani (topaz). Every thing, from earth to garden to forest, appears like Pukhraj (Topaz). The gem stone of which the praakaar is made, has also been used to form the trees, earth, water, canopy, pillars, lakes and lotuses. Not only that, but even inside everything is made of pushpraj (topaz) mani. Rajan! This is a most inadequate description. Each one is better in excellence and beauty than the one before. Indra and all the Digpals (guardian deities of the different quarters), stand in attention, holding their weapons in their hands.

On the eastern side of this Manidweep (island of emeralds and rubies) lies Amaravatipuri. It is the residence of Lord Indra and hundred times more beautiful. Here presides Indra, mounted on Airawat (Indra's chief elephant, which came out of the churning of the ocean), holding the thunderbolt in his hand, and surrounded by the gods. Beside him is his consort Devi Shachi, decked with ornaments and surrounded by her attendants.

Rajan! In the Agnikon (south-eastern quarter) of Manidweep like the glowing Agni, is Vahnipuri. Agnidev (God of fire), presides here with his shaktis Swaha and Swadha.

On the south side of Manidweep lies Yamrajpuri. Together with Chitragupt and other ministers, and surrounded by his attendants; is seated Yamraj (god

of death), holding a rod in his hand. This is the residence of Suryanandan (son of the Sun god), Yamraj.

Nairthriyakon (south-western quarter), is known as Rakshaspuri (abode of the demons). Holding the Khadga in his hand Nirthriti resides here with his shaktis and his demons.

On the west side is the residence of Varuna (god of the waters) who holds a pash (noose). Mahaan Matsya (the great fish) is his vehicle. He presides with his shakti Varunani and his ganas.

In the north-west of Manidweep is Vayulok, residence of Vayu (Wind god). Excelling in pranaayam and surrounded by siddhi yogis, Vayu is sitting on a deer and holds a pennant in his hand, and is always surrounded by marutgans.

Rajan! In the north of Manidweep is the loka of yakshas (abode of demi-gods in attendance on Kuber). Their master Kuber (treasurer of the gods) presides with Riddhi and Vriddhi. He is surrounded by an army of yakshas including Manibhadra, Poornabhadra, Maniman, Manikandan, Manibhushan, Manimali and Manidhanurdhan.

In the Ishaankon (North-east quarter) of Manidweep stands Rudralok where the bejewelled Rudra (eleven inferior manifestations of Shiva) presides. His face expresses anger and his glittering eyes are red. He has a tarkas (quiver) tied to his back, and a tightly strung bow in his hand. In his other hand he holds the trident. Surrounding him are countless, identical rudras, some with ten hands, some with hundred hands and others with thousand hands. Some rudras have ten legs, ten necks, and some have three eyes. Surrounded by all these rudras stands the majestic Bhagwan Shankar. Also residing here are crores of rudranias, Bhadrakali and other Matrikagans. Also in attendance are

Damri, Veerbhadra and other ganas. He wears a garland of skulls, and on his hand a snake bracelet; on his shoulder a snake as a sacred thread (sarpmay yagyopvit), on his upper body, tiger skin, and his lower body draped in elephant hide. His entire body is smeared with ash from the pyres. Pramath and other ganas are never far from him. The deafening sound of his damroo radiates in all directions. He is always surrounded. Being the ruler of the Ishan direction, he is also known as Ishaan.

Vyasji says:- Rajan! Beyond this is the parkota, red like kumkum, made of Padmaragmani (Ruby). In the middle is a structure made of the same gem, which is ten yojans long and is surmounted by a beautiful dome. Hundreds of canopies are supported by columns made of Padmaragmani gems. Under these canopies stand sixty four Kalas (divisions presided over by minor deities), richly jewelled and ornamented, and bearing all kinds of weapons. Each Kala is the ruler of her own domain. These Kalas preside there, complete with their attendants and vahanas (conveyance). Janmejay! I will tell you the names of these Kalas: Pingalakshi, Vishalakshi, Sumriddhi, Vriddhi, Shraddha, Svaha, Swaddha, Abhikhya, Maya, Sanghya, Vasundhara, Trilokdhari, Savitri, Gayatri, Trideshwari, Suroopa, Bahuroopa, Skandamata, Achyutpriya, Vimala, Amala, Aruni Aarooni, Prakriti, Vikriti, Srishti, Sthithi, Sanhriti, Mata, Sandhya, Paramsadhvi-Hansi, Mandika, Vajrika, Devmata, Bhagwati, Devaki, Kamalasana, Trimukhi, Saptamukhi, Surasurvimardini, Lamboshti, Urdhvakeshi, Bahusheersha, Vrikodari, Rathrekha, Sashirekha, Gaganvega, Pavanvega, Madanatura, Ananga, Anangamathana, Snangmekhala, Anangkusuma, Vishwaroopa, Suradika, Kshayankari, Shakti, Akshobhya, Satyavadini, Bahurupa, Shrichivrata, Udara and Vagishi.

These are known as the 64 Kalas. They all have darting tongues, (prajvalith jivha); and fire flares from their mouths. When they gnash their teeth in

anger, the sound is deafening. Each Kala possesses 100 Akshowhini sena who can devour thousands of brahmands. I cannot fully describe their valour and prowess. This parkota is full of their weapons and countless chariots, horses, elephants and infantry.

Rajan! Further away is a majestic praahaar made entirely of Gomedratna (red onyx). The rear portion is of the same gomed gemstone, as also the birds, trees, columns, wells and lakes. Everything is red, like the colour of kumkum. Thirty-two great shaktis reside here. They are decked with jewels made of the same gems, and hold weapons in their hands. Their faces are frightening, like those of female demons. Their slogan is – Cut them, crush them, riddle them with holes and burn them to ashes!

Even one of them is sufficient to destroy one lakh brahmands (universes). All the Weapons and equipment of war of Bhagawati Jagaddamba, are kept in this prahaar. This is the Antarang Sena (personal army) of Bhagawati. Now I will enumerate the negativity destroying names:

Vidya, Hrim, Pushti, Pragya, Siniwali, Kuhu, Rudra, Virya, Prabha, Ananda, Pashini, Riddhida, Kaalratri, Maharatri, Bhadrakali, Kapardini, Vikriti, Dandini, Mundani, Sendhukhand, Shikhandini, Nishumbh-Shumbh Mathini, Mahishasuramardini, Indrani, Rudrani, Shankar-ardhsharirini, Nari, Narayani, Trishulini, Palini, Ambika and Hladini.

These are thirty-two important names of the Shakti. If these devis get angry, there will be instantaneous destruction of the creation. They can never ever be defeated.

The next prakaar is made of Diamond. The dome and doors are made of diamond, and fastened with bolts and chains. All the structures, the roads,

crossroads, gardens, trees, birds, are made of dazzling, brilliant diamonds. Shree Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari's maids reside here together with thousands of attendants. The maids are always engaged in works of art, decorating the Lotus Feet, and adorning the Devi with ornaments. Others are experts in flower decoration or entertainments. The shaktis are known as the Dootis of the Devi. These are their names:

Anangroopa, Anangmadana, Sundari, Madanatura, Bhuvanvega, Bhuvanpalika, Sarvasishira, Anangvedana and Anangmekhala.

Their persons shine with the brilliance of lightning. They wear waist ornaments made of many chains, and anklets with tinkling bells. All their vahanas are also housed in this prakaar.

After this is the prakaar made of Vydooryamani (Lapis-lazuli). It is ten yojans long and has domes and many doors. Here also every building, street, crossroad, rajmarg, tank, well, and banks of the rivers, are all made of Vydoormani gemstones. In various places, groups of Brahmi and other devis can be seen surrounded by their ganas

Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda – are known as Sapt-Matrika (seven goddesses). The eighth Matrika's name is Mahalakshmi.

They are the cause of benevolence and auspiciousness in the world and are in the same form as Brahma, Rudra and other gods.

Rajan! At all four Mahadwars (main entrances), are standing in readiness, decorated and caparisoned Vahanas, and chariots; flying colourful penants and

flags. Crores of vehicles bearing different crests and colours, also stand in readiness. The array is beautiful and awesome!

Beyond the Vydooryamani prakaar is the prakaar made of Indraneelmani gemstone (sapphire). It is ten yojans tall and is exquisite. Everything is made of Indraneelmani (Sapphire) gemstone. It is said that in the middle is a lotus which has a diameter of many yojans. It is made of Indraneelmani, and the dazzling lotus looks like a sixteen-pointed Sudarshan Chakra. It bears the thrones of the sixteen shaktis. I will tell you their names – Karali, Vikrali, Uma, Saraswati, Shree, Durga, Usha, Lakshmi, Shruti, Smriti, Dhriti, Shraddha, Medha, Mati, Kanti and Arya. They are blue in colour, like rainfilled clouds. They bear sword and shield in their hands. They are the warriors of the Goddess Shree Devi. Drawing their energy from Bhagawati Jagaddamba, they complete their work of ridding brahmand of negative forces, and even the thousand headed Seshnaag finds himself inadequate to praise their strength and valour. Rajan! After this is a vast Mukta (Pearl) prakaar, which is ten yojans tall. In the middle is an eight petalled lotus. Studded with pearls and other precious stones, this lotus is full of kesar (stamens of the saffron flower). On the eight petals are seated goddesses resembling Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari, holding weapons in their hands. They are constantly engaged in conveying news of the world, and these eight devis are called informers of the Bhagawati. They are conscious of every requirement of Bhagawati Jagaddamba; and they are aware of all the happenings in the cosmos. Their main function is to gather intelligence of all actions of all living things in the created universe. Rajendra, their names are like this - Anangkusuma, Anangkusumathura, Anangmadana, Anangmadanatura, Bhuvanpala, Gaganvega, Sashirekha and Gaganrekha. They are of red colour and bear in their hands noose, ankush (prod with hook); and varad and abhay mudras (posture of granting boons and protection).

Next to this is a prakaar made of the Mahamarkat mani – emerald. It is ten yojans wide, and is the most important and impressive of all. It contains auspicious items and delicious eatables. Inside this lies the immense, Shree Chakra (six cornered mystical diagram) of Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. I will tell you the names of the deities seated in the six corners of this star. In poorvakon (the eastern corner) is seated chaturmukh (four faced) Brahma and his Shakti Bhagawati Gayatri. He is holding kamandelu (pot), akshaysootra (rosary), abhaymudra dand (staff of protection) and a royal weapon. The Vedas and Shastras are present in divine forms. The Smritis and Puran have also assumed divine forms and are present.

In Nairathyakon (southwestern corner) is situated Bhagawati Savitri holding conch, chakra, mace and lotus. Bhagwan Vishnu is also in similar form. Matsya (fish), Koorma (tortoise) and other incarnations of Lord Vishnu have also been provided seats.

In Vayavyakon (northwestern corner) presides the great Rudra, bearing in his hand axe, rosary and postures of granting protection and boons. In this area is also seated Bhagawati Saraswati in the same form. Rajan! Dakshinamoorthy and all other Rudras which are his forms, are present; and Gauri and all other forms of Parvati are also present here. 64 kinds of prophets and prophecies (Aagam and Aagam Shastras) have assumed form, and are there present.

In Agnikon (Southeastern quarter) is seated Kuber, god of wealth, holding in his hands the jewelled kalash and ornaments. He is accompanied by many kinds of riches and wealth; and Mahalakshmis. Full of virtues and grace, Kuber is the keeper of the wealth and possessions of Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

In the Mahankon which belongs to Varun, God of the oceans, sits Kamdev with his shakti Rati. He holds in his hands noose, goad, bow and arrows. All the adornments and ornaments have taken form and are present.

In Ishaankon (Northeastern corner) sits Vighnanashini (remover of obstacles) Shri Ganesha with Devi Pushtih. He is holding noose and goad. All the dignified qualities of Ganesha have assumed majestic and glorious forms and are present. Rajan! The aggregate of all forms of Brahma etc.. from all the created brahmands, manifest as Brahma and are always in attendance on Bhagawati Jagaddeeshwari.

Further on is a hundred yojan wide pravalka (rampart) which is as red as kumkum. Within this prakaar reside the Panchabhootas (five elements) with their shaktis Hrillekha, Gagana, Rakta, Karalika and Mahocchushma. They bear the pash, ankush and Abhay Mudras.

Rajan! Beyond this is a vast prakaar made of Navaratna (nine gems). Skilled in the science of the future, and having the name Aamraya, Gods and bhavans exist here. Rajan! All the forms of Shree Devi exist here. All the forms of Mahavidya also reside here. The governing deities of the seven crore Mahamantras also have a place here.

After this is a vast temple formed of Chintamani (a fabulous gem supposed to yield anything desired). It has thousands of pillars covered with brilliant gemstones which dazzle the eyes.

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Chapter 12 - Description of Manidweep continues

Vyasji says: Rajan! Right in the centre of all this stands the Bhavan of Bhagawati Jagaddamba. It has four mandaps (domes and pavillions). Every mandap is supported by 1000 pillars

The first is the Shringar Mandap, the second Mukti Mandap, the third Gyan Mandap and the fourth Ekaanth Mandap. These mandaps shine with the brilliance of crores of suns. They are surrounded by gardens of kesar, mallika and kund flower bearing plants. These groves are filled with celestial bumble bees intoxicated with the overpowering fragrance of the flowers. On all sides of the four Mandaps are mahapadmavatis (marigolds). They are filled with nectar and the bumblebees are hovering over them. Graceful Swans fill the lakes . The whole atmosphere is laden with fragrance.

Within the first Shringaar Mandap is a singhasaan and seated on it is the Devi. The gods of entertainment and the apsaras sing and dance for Bhagawati Jagaddamba.

In Mukti Mandap is seated the auspicious Bhagawati Shiva who grants mukti to all Her bhaktas.

Rajan! The third mandap is called Gyan Mandap and the Devi seated on this Singhaasan gives Nirmal Vidya.

In the fourth mandap called Ekaanth Mandap, Bhagawati Jagaddamba sits with Anangkusuma and other shaktis, and works out the preservation of the universe.

Rajan! Chintamani Griha is the prime place of the Devi. Here presides Moolaprakriti Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari with Her ten shaktis. This is the most majestic throne. Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Ishwar form the four legs of this seat. Sadashiva is the Patash (canopy), and right on top is stationed Bhuvaneshwar.

Before the creation Bhuvaneshwar divided into two – the right part became Bhagwan Bhuvaneshwar and the left part became Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. He is also called Sadashiva. This Maheshwar has the beauty of one crore kamdevs. He has five faces and three eyes. He is decorated with chintamani and in His hands He holds the sun, abhay and var mudras, and axe. This Mahadeveshwar who rules over all, is ever youthful and looks sixteen years old. He shines like a crore of suns and is sheetal (cool) as a crore of moons. On His left side resides Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari. She is wearing a waist ornament made of Navratna (nine gems). On Her arms are bands made of beaten gold and vaidurya mani (lapis lazuli). Her earrings are in the form of Shree Chakra. On Her forehead is set the four-day-old moon. Her lips are redder than the bimba fruit, and Her teeth are like precious pearls. On Her shining forehead sits a tilak of kumkum and kasturi (musk). On Her head is a jewel studded crown outshining the sun and the moon. Her nose ornament is the resplendent Evening Star (Shukratara). Strings of irridescent pearls form Her necklaces. Fragrant paste of sandal, Kapoor (camphor), and kumkum has been applied to Her divine body. A row of curls surrounds Her lotus-like face and the bumblebees are droning around Her. The ripples of the Ganga get their beauty from Her belly. Her fingers are bejewelled with rings. On Her lotus face She bears three eyes which shine with the lustre of diamonds and rubies. She also wears gem studded kangans (bracelets), and a waistband with tiny bells. A gleam of pearls and the dazzling brilliance of gems comes from Her Lotus Feet. Her Lotus Feet are beautiful with toe rings. From Her gem-

encrusted bodice radiates light in all directions. The sweet perfume of mallika (jasmine) and the tinkling of tiny bells from Her decorated hair has attracted the bumble bees. She appears to be weighted down by Her ornaments and Her heavy breasts; and Bhagawati Shiva looks tired. In Her four hands She is holding paash, ankush, abhay and var mudras. She is the embodiment of youth and beauty beyond description, and unbounded compassion. Her own sweet voice has rendered the notes of the veena ineffective. She is constantly surrounded by attendants, handmaidens, wives of the gods, and assemblies of gods. She is one with Iccha shakti, Gyan shakti and Kriya shakti. Lajja, Thushti, Pushti, Kirti, Kanti, Kshama, Daya, Buddhi, Medha have all assumed forms and are seated in Her presence. Also in attendance are the nine peeth shaktis – Jaya, Vijaya, Ajita, Aparajita, Nitya, Vilasini, Doghdhi, Aghora and Amangala. Also present are Shanknidhi, and Padmanidhi. The rivers Navratnavaha, Kanchansrava and Saptadhatuvha owe their source to these nidhis. All these rivers are flowing into Sudhasindhu. This most powerful Bhagawati Bhuvaneshwari presides in the left side of Mahabhag Bhuvaneshwar. It is by this presence of Hers that Bhuvaneshwar can manifest as Almighty. This is the absolute truth.

Rajan! Now hear about this Chintamani Griha. This vast bhavan is 1000 yojans wide and 1000 yojans long. On its northern side there are many lofty prakaars. This north prakaar is double and size of the eastern prakaar. This Manidweep of the Devi is not on the earth but in Antariksh Lok (celestial region beyond atmosphere). It cannot be dissolved during Pralaykaal (dissolution of the universe) nor does it come into existence during the creation. But here also there is constant contraction and expansion as in the evolutionary process. All the parlokas that are in existence get their stimulus from Chintamani Griha. It is this grand and auspicious bhavya bhavan that is the residence of Bhagawati Mahamaya.

Rajan! All the bhaktas of Shree Devi, from all the brahmands (universes and galaxies), devlok, naaglok and manushyalok come to this place to worship Her. Those who renounce even their lives in the worship of the Devi, go to a place where Devi Mahotsava resides. There flow thousands of rivers of ghee, milk, curds, honey, nectar, grapejuice, rose-apple juice and mango juice. All varieties of fruitbearing trees provide nectar like fruits. In Manidweep no one gets sick, nor does old age touch them. That sacred place is devoid of worry, stress, anger, lust and greed. Everyone is youthful, in the sacred state of marriage, and glowing like a thousand suns. Bhagawati Shree Bhuvaneshwari presides here and grants samipya and salokya (proximity and salvation). Many get saroopya (likeness) and a chosen few get dissolved into divinity (saarshtata). Devatas from all brahmands reside there in worship of the Devi Jagaddishwari. Seven crores of mahamantras take form and perform aradhanas to the Devi. In saamyavashtha (appearance) Devi Shiva is caused to manifest as Brahma swaroopa. All the mahavidyas are present in Her service.

Rajan! I have given you the complete description of the resplendent Manidweep. Even a crore of suns and moons pales before the dazzling glory of Manidweep. Some parts are made of markarmani gem (emerald), some glitter like lightning, others are made of neelandra mani (one of the nine celestial gems – sapphire), and some glow like molten gold. Other parts are studded with chandrakantamani (moonstone) and suryakantamani (jasper).

The gardens are filled with trees bearing beautiful fragrant flowers. Peacocks dance and pigeons coo. The sweet notes of the cuckoo and the songs of the parrot are the sounds pervading the gardens. This place has countless lakes filled with gemlike lotuses which make the air sweetly fragrant. The entire sky is alight with the radiance of Manidweep, and sparks from myriad gems twinkle all over. Rajan! This is the destination of all beauty, ornamentation,

decoration, knowledge, brilliance, good qualities, valour, bravery and compassion. All the joys from kingship to brahmalok exist here. Just by putting attention on Manidweep, all sins get neutralised. At the time of death if one remembers Manidweep his soul reaches Manidweep. One who faithfully reads this description (the eighth chapter) is protected from bhoots, prets and pichaases. For auspiciousness when building a new house, and during performance of puja of Vaastu deva, this should be read.

Chapter 12 - Praise and Description of Manidweep Continues.

Vyasji says: O Sinless One. Whatever you wanted to hear I have told you. The Eighth Chapter till the end contains what Bhagwan Narayan narrated to Mahatma Narada. This Puran of Bhagawati Mahadevi is without parallel. Anyone who hears this becomes complete. Rajendra! For the benevolence of yourself and your father you must perform Devi yagya. First of all it is imperative for you to take deeksha of the most superior and paramount mantra. The receiving of this mantra with proper protocol fulfils the purpose and meaning of life.

Sootji says: O Shounak and other rishis! After hearing the words of Ved Vyas Raja Janmejay prepared himself and received with proper protocol, the Pranav Mantra of the Devi. Then on the occasion of Navratri he invited Dhoumya and

other munis and hosted the Amba Yagya of the Devi. He lavished gifts on all the brahmins who came to participate in the yagya and to those who read the mahapuran Srimad Devi Bhagwat. Food was served to brahmins, suhagan ladies (ladies whose husband is alive), unmarried girls and brahmacharis. Orphans and poor were also fed. Everyone was overwhelmed with gifts from the king. After completing the yagya, when Raja Janmejaya ascended the throne muni Narad arrived from heaven. Raja Janmejaya was surprised to see him. He rose from his throne and offered the muni the proper welcome with full protocol. Then he enquired after his well being and asked the reason for his visit.

Raja asked – "Bhagwan! From which place have you come. Please tell me what I can do for you. I am honoured by your visit."

Muni Narad replied – "Rajendra! I have just seen a most amazing thing in Devlok. I came here as soon as I could to tell you about it. Rajan! Your father has acquired a divine body. He has mounted a grand chariot and left for Manidweep. This is the fruit of the worship of the Devi Bhagwat that has just been performed. By performing the Devi Yagya you not only got moksha for the soul of your father, but have fulfilled the purpose of your life. For this reason your fame has spread all over Devlok.

Sootji says:- Hearing these words of Naradji, the heart of Janmejay was filled with love. He prostrated at the feet of Vyasji and said – "Bhagwan! It is by your grace that I was able to do this great work. Mahamuni! What can I give you except my most heartfelt thanks and humble namaskars. May you always be compassionate towards me". Vyasji blessed him and gave him this advice:

“Rajan! Renounce everything and involve yourself completely in the worship of the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Adi Shakti. With great care and devotion it should become the only priority of your life to read and absorb Srimad Devi Bhagwat. Devote your life to the Ambayagya. You should never ever become casual or lethargic in this most divine activity. As a fruit of this you will get detachment from worldly involvements and attachments. This is the pure essence of all the Purans and Vedas. Janmejay! The blessings and benefits that you will get will be the same as from reading all the Vedas”. After this Ved Vyas left. Only then did Muni Dhoumya and the other munis leave. Long after, they continued to speak about the Srimad Devi Bhagwat that they had just completed. Raja Janmejay was very satisfied and started the process of renunciation. He spent all his time, either reading or listening to the most divine Sri Devi Bhagwat.

CONCLUSION

Sootji says – O! Rishis! The half shlok that emanated from the most divine, most beautiful Lotus Face of the Devi - Sarvam Khalvidam Me Vaaham Nayanyadasti Sanatanam – has become Srimad Devi Bhagawat. This Puran is the actualisation of the Vedas. This half shlok was uttered in the hearing of Vishnu , who in the form of a baby, was floating on a banyan leaf in the Ocean. Brahmaji was the very first to compose and explain 100 crores of Shlokas on this half shloka. Later Vyasji, with the sole purpose of teaching it to Sukhdevji, gathered the essence of it and arranged it in the form of 18-thousand shlokas. He decorated them in 12 chapters and called this puran Srimad Devi Bhagawat. It still exists in all its entirety in Devlok. There is no other Puran in existence, which can equal this in purity and holiness, and which grants punyas and deliverance from sins. One who reads each word with reverence and devotion, gets the same fruits as performing an ashvamedhayagya. The person who accepts the position of reader of this most sacred puran , should be honoured with new garments and gifts of wealth. He should be received, respected and honoured as if Ved Vyas himself is reading the puran to us.

Mune! It is advised that one should either write this or engage someone to write it, and on the auspicious occasion of Bhadrapad Purnima it should be placed on a golden singhasan and presented to the puran vettha (reader). As dakshina or offering of thanksgiving one should present the embodiment of Ved Vyas a milch cow which has been garlanded and decorated with gold. After the completion of the reading, brahmins should be offered food. One should also invite suvasinis (suhagan married ladies), youths (boys) and unmarried girls. Giving them the respect due to a devi they should be offered new clothes and tasty food. They should be garlanded with sandal and flower

malas. The fruit of these actions is the same as giving land in charity. It ensures passage of the soul to Devilok.

For the person who continuously reads Devi Bhagwat, nothing is impossible. Even by listening to the reading of this puran the childless are blessed with children, the penniless get wealth, the students get enlightened, and so many other blessings are showered. Women who are infertile, or have only one child are freed from the stigma of being barren. There is no doubt in this. The home in which this puran is installed with great reverence, Lakshmi and Saraswati will always be in its vicinity and never leave. That house can never be affected by evil eye (drishti) of betaal, dakini or rakshasas (goblins and demons). If there is contact with a person suffering from typhus, typhoid, yellow fever or any other febrile fever, one should carefully read this puran, and the infection will leave his house. Chanting of Ashrithi Paath, one hundred times, rescues one from tuberculosis. The one who regularly reads this puran receives Nirmal Vidya. During the Navratri of Sharad Ritu one must invariably read this puran. Bhagawati Jagaddamba becomes most pleased with such a person and showers Her blessings on him. Mune! In a year, during the months of Ashaad, Ashwin, Magh and Chaitra, at the time of Shuklapaksh, there are four navratras. This is a most auspicious time to read the Devi Bhagwat. This puran does not contain a single criticism or belittling of any living being. This is only about homage and worship, because Bhagawati Jagaddamba resides within all as Shakti Roopa. To please that Shakti one should always read this holy puran. It is a maryada for women and shudras to listen to this reading from the mouth of a brahmin (realised soul). What I am telling you is the pure essence.

O twice-born Ones! This most holy mahapuran Devi Bhagwat is the essence of all the Vedas. Reading this is the same as having knowledge of all the Vedas. This is the absolute truth.

I offer pranaams to that Bhagwati Satchitanand Swaroopini who is also known as Bhagawati Gayatri, and who is verily Shree Bhagawati Jagaddamba, Shree Adi Shakti. May She enlighten all the cells of our brain. The ascetic munis who spent all their days meditating in the deep forests, were so pleased with the narration of Sootjee, that they thanked him and blessed him with one voice. Everyone's heart was filled with joy. After drowning themselves in the ocean of pure knowledge by listening to this vast puran, all their mundane doubts were put to rest. They begged Sootjee to forgive them for putting him to so much exertion in narrating to them, this magnificent story. O Great Instrument! You were verily the boatman who took us across this ocean of worldly illusion. This Srimad Devi Bhagwat is the embodiment of all the Vedas. Throughout the reading the group of munis sat with folded hands and rapt attention. Again and again they blessed him and thanked him. After this, Sootjee who constantly hovers in the vicinity of the Lotus Feet of Bhagawati Jagaddamba, arose, and left.

SHRIMAD DEVI BHAGAWAT SAMPOORNA!

Vahanas of the Devi