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3. VISHNU PURANA

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION AND ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

Sage Parashar, the exponent of Vishnu Purana had narrated this treatise to Maitreya. Sage Suta inherited it from Maitreya. The text presented here is narrated by Suta.

Suta says- One day, Maitreya greeted sage Parashar and said- "Gurudev, you have studied all the scriptures. I wish to hear the tale of universe's origin from you. How will be the ages that are about to come? What is the reason for this whole creation? Who created it? Where did it exist? Whom did it mingle with? And with whom it will annihilate eventually? Apart from these, I also wish to hear about the expansion of fathomless sky, origin of ocean and mountains, origin of earth, expansion of the Sun, division of time in four ages, Pralaya, religion, sages, kings, creation of Vedas by Veda Vyasa, origin of four classes in society and system of four ashramas in one's life."

Parashar says: "Maitreya, you have reminded me today of the description once made by my grandfather Vashishta. When I learnt that the monster, which was created by Vishwamitra, had devoured my father, I grew quite angry and started a Yagya to destroy all the monsters. The Yagya destroyed such a large number of monsters that the whole race began to face the fear of extinction. My grandfather consoled me that too much anger was not good and that all the monsters could not be blamed for my father's death. According to my grandfather my father was sure to face such a fate ultimately. Only the fools get angry. A human being bears the fruit of his deeds himself. O son! Anger destroys all the virtues of penance. Hence, ascetics always shun anger. Hence, stop this Yagya for forgiving has always been the virtue of ascetics."

Thus, convinced by my grandfather, I stopped the Yagya. At the same time, Brahma's son, Pulastya, arrived there and said- "Despite your anger, you forgave the monsters when convinced by your grandfather Vashishta. You will learn all the scriptures and give commentaries on Puranas. You will also learn the real appearance of the gods". Vashishta also endorsed these words of Pulastya.

"O Maitreya! Now I narrate to you, the whole contents of Purana. This whole universe has originated from Lord Vishnu. It is existing within Him and will annihilate in Him eventually."

Parashar says: "The trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh is also known as the creator, the preserver and the destroyer. All of them save the devotees. All of them have equal importance. Still, preserver who fosters and protects all the living beings is far more significant. I salute to Him and narrate the tale that was once narrated by Brahma to all the Dakshas. Dakshas had narrated this tale to the King Purukutsa at the bank of the river Narmada. In turn, Purukutsa narrated this tale to Saraswat who narrated it to me."

"O Brahmin! Lord is eternal and endless. Hence, origin of universe, its existence and annihilation are also unending processes. During the period of Pralaya, the nature exists in a state of

equilibrium. It is during this period that Purusha (masculine forces of creation) separates from Prakriti (feminine forces of creation) and Kalroop of Vishnu (eternal, unending form of the Lord) is manifested. Lord Vishnu is beyond all the bonding of life like birth, growth, intelligence, senses, decay and death. Purusha is the first appearance of Lord Vishnu. Prakriti is the manifestation of His action while Kalroop is His supreme appearance."

During the Pralaya, there was neither day nor night, neither earth nor sky and neither darkness nor light. At the subsidence of Pralaya, with His desire, the Lord entered the Purusha who is beyond all bonding. His entry stimulated the process of creation. First of all, a single great element originated encompassing all the other lesser elements. From this great element originated three egos- Sattvic, Rajas and Tamas. Tamas created sky with sound as the main virtue. The sky then created the sense of touch. Touch produced air. Hence, touch is the main feature of air; no one can see air but only have an experience of it through touch. Air created Rupa, which gave birth to fire with Rupa as its main virtue. Fire gave birth to taste. Taste produced water with taste as its main property. From water originated scent, which produced earth with scent as the main feature. These senses have no special expression.

The ego Rajas produced ten sense organs whereas the ruling deities of these organs were produced by Sattvic ego. Thus, the ten deities who rule ten sense organs and the eleventh entity mind are Sattvic in nature. Skin, eyes, ears, nose and tongue- these five organs aid the mind in its function. O Maitreya! Anus, sex organs, hands, legs and speech organs are the five organs that help in action. Works like excretion, reproduction, movement and speech are carried out with the help of these five organs. All the five elements like sky, air, fire, water and earth are full of emotions. Hence, they are also known to have a special significance.

All these elements have different and distinct powers. Without their combination, creation of the universe was impossible. In the beginning, all these elements were present in the great ball or egg, which came into existence because of the inspiration of the Lord. As this ball increased in size, it formed the base as Prakriti in which, Lord Vishnu Himself entered as Hiranyagarbh.

When the universe comes into existence, Lord Vishnu fosters it till the end of Kalpa. At the end of Kalpa, Lord Vishnu Himself devours the entire physical elements in Rudra appearance. During that time, He inundates the entire universe and Himself sleeps on Shesha in Ksheersagar. When he awakes once again, He begins the process of creation in the appearance of Brahma.

CHAPTER TWO BIRTH OF BRAHMA AND EARTH SAVED BY VARAHA

At the end of the previous Kalpa, when Brahma awakened from his long slumber, he saw all the worlds devoid of everything. With a desire to save the earth from the depth of unfathomable inundation, He took the appearance of Varaha. Entering the water, He reached Patala loka. Seeing Him, the earth prayed Him with respect. Hearing her prayers, the Lord roared with frightening sound. Then, He supported the earth on His great incisors and came out from the abysmal depth. When He was rising, His breath produced big sprays of water, which drenched

sinless sages while the force of His breath frightened common creatures. When the Lord emerged from the water, all the sages prayed Him with reverence and respect.

Very soon, the Lord installed the earth at a position far above the unending stretches of water. Then, Lord carved out the topographical features on earth and divided it into many divisions and created all the four worlds. Then Lord Vishnu in the guise of Brahma carried out the process of creation.

As soon as Brahma thought of creation, Tamoguni (full of darkness) creatures were the first to appear. Absence of knowledge and presence of evils like attachment, anger etc. were the main virtues of these creatures. These creatures include lower organisms, trees, shrubs, creepers, plants and grasses. These together constitute the primitive world. Their creation was followed by the appearance of animals and birds, which are devoid of wisdom and are full of ego. They are also unaware of the nature of another organism of their status.

Still unsatisfied with His creation, Lord created the next world, which has a somewhat elevated position. The living beings that were produced in this world had internal and external knowledge, power of reflection and loved physical comforts. Though this creation pleased the Lord, He was still unsatisfied. So He created the next world, which was situated at a somewhat lower position. This new world had excess of all the three virtues. Human beings populate this world and because of excess of vices, they are full of sorrow but at the same time, highly active, have internal and external knowledge and are able to attain their goals.

The first few creations had resulted from the thoughts of the Lord. For the creation of the gods, the demons, Pitraganas, human beings and water, the Lord decided to use His body. Thus, the demons were the first to emerge from His thighs. The Lord then shed His dark body, which formed the night. Then from His mouth, the Lord produced the gods who had Sattvic virtues. The Lord then shed His Sattvic body as well from which the day came into being. It is also the reason why the gods acquire more strength in day and the demons are stronger during nights. Then the Lord acquired yet another body and behaved like Pitraganas to produce Pitraganas before shedding that body too, which gave rise to the dusk- the twilight between the day and the night. Thereafter, the Lord acquired a new body with Rajas virtue from which the human beings were produced. When the Lord shed that Rajas body it formed dawn- the twilight between the night and the day. It also explains why the human beings are stronger at dawn and Pitraganas at dusk.

Then the Lord assumed yet another body with Rajas virtues and produced desire from it. The desire gave birth to lust. Staying in the darkness then, the Lord created the world, which is full of desire and lust. In that world, many ugly looking human beings, who had long beard and moustache appeared and ran towards Him. Among those who said, 'Protect him' came to be known as Rakshas (demons) and those who said, 'We will eat him' came to be known as Yakshas. Then the angry Lord produced aggressive carnivores. Thereafter, the singing Lord produced Gandharvas. Thus, by turns, the Lord produced birds, sheep, goat, cow, horse, elephant, donkey, deer, camel, pony from His age, chest, mouth, belly and feet respectively. From the innumerable body hair of the Lord, fruits, flowers and herbs were produced. From His east-facing head, Lord produced Gayatri mantra, Rigveda, and Yagyas. From His south-facing

head, He produced Yajurveda. From west-facing head, He produced Samaveda and from His north-facing head, He produced Atharvaveda.

CHAPTER THIRD DIVISIONS OF EARTH AND ORIGIN OF CEREALS

With the desire of creating the world, Brahma produced different kinds of human beings from his different organs. Thus, from his mouth, Brahmins appeared. Kshatriyas appeared from his chest, Vaishyas from his thighs and from his feet, Shudras appeared. Thus, physical body is the greatest means for human beings in order to achieve his goals. With time, the human beings lost their divine virtues and perfections. Jealousy, sorrow, decay and infighting began to rise among the people. In order to earn their livelihood and run their life peacefully, the human beings developed agriculture and other handicrafts.

"O sage! Paddy, barley, wheat, lesser cereals, sesame, millet, rice, peas, pulses, beans, rye, gram flour and hemp are common agricultural produce that have edible as well as medicinal values in the villages. These and other produce are also used as oblations in the Yagyas because all of them have produced as a result of Yagyas. Performing Yagyas daily is the most virtuous exercise that every human being should undertake. This destroys the sins committed by common people."

CHAPTER FOUR BIRTH OF PRAJAPATIS AND THEIR PROGENY

At one point, the process of creation got saturated and no increase took place in the number of living beings. Then, with a desire of continuing the creation, Lord created nine sages from His thought. Then he produced nine daughters and handed them over as the wives to those nine sages.

When initially produced sons of Brahma took to asceticism, He got very much infuriated. His anger was enough to burn all the three worlds. From this anger, Rudra originated who was shining like the Sun. Rudra had appeared in half-masculine and half-feminine form. Immediately after His appearance, Rudra separated His body into eleven male parts and eleven female parts.

Then Swayambhu Manu appeared from the body of Brahma. He agreed to follow Brahma's dictate of continuing creation. He got a woman Shatrupa who had also appeared along with him. Together they begot two sons, Priyavrata and Utanpad and two daughters, Prasooti and Akooti. These two daughters were married to Daksha and Prajapati respectively.

Prajapati and Akooti gave birth to twins, Yagya and Dakshaina. Yagya and Dakshaina got married and produced twelve sons who later on came to be known as Yam, the gods.

Daksha and Prasooti produced twenty-four daughters, thirteen of which were married to Dharma. The remaining eleven daughters were married to Bhrgu, Shiva, Marichi, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Atri, Vashishta, Agni and Pitars.

From his thirteen wives, Dharma produced Kama, Darpa, Niyam, Santosh, Lobha, Shrut, Dand, Naya, Vinay, Bodh, Vyavasay, Kshema, Sukh and Yash. Kama got married to Rati and produced Harsh. Darpa married Hinsa and produced a son Anrit and a daughter Nikriti. Anrit and Nikriti got married and produced Bhaya and Narak and their wives Maya and Vedana. Maya produced Mrityu, the destroyer of all the creatures in the world. Vedana produced a son, Dukh. Mrityu produced Vyadhi, Jara, Shok, Trishna and Krodh. These are all the fierce appearances of Lord Vishnu and cause Pralaya.

The omnipresent eternal God creates this world in the form of Manus, protects it and ultimately destroys it. There are four kinds of Pralaya- Naimittik, Prakritik, Atyantik and Nitya. Among them, Naimittik is Brahma Pralaya during which God takes a nap. During Prakritik Pralaya, the universe annihilates in nature. Annihilation of Yogi in the Supreme Being is Atyantik Pralaya and a decay of physical elements that continues day and night is Nitya Pralaya.

CHAPTER FIVE CREATION OF RUDRA AND OF LAKSHMI

In the beginning of Kalpa when Brahma was thinking about a son, who would be like him in virtues, a boy with reddish-blue body appeared in his lap. Brahma addressed the boy with names like Rudra, Bhava, Shiv, Ibhān, Pashupati, Bhima, Ugra and Mahadeva. Brahma also fixed Surya, water, earth, air, fire, sky, Dikshit (graduate scholar) Brahmin and the Moon His abode. Since then, all these things idolise Shiv. These eleven idols of Shiv have wives like Suvarchala, Usha, Vikeshi, Aparā, Shiva, Swaha, Disha and Rohini. Shanaishchar, Shukra, Lohitang, Manojav, Skand, Sarg, Santan and Buddh are the sons of these idols respectively. Rudra Himself got Sati, the daughter of Daksha Prajapati as His wife. Sati had committed self-immolation because of the disrespect that her father had shown for her husband. In her next birth, she had appeared as Parvati, the daughter of Himalaya and Maina. Parvati too got married to Shiv. Khyati got married to Bhrigu and gave birth to two sons Dhata and Vidhata and a daughter Lakshmi. Lakshmi then married Lord Vishnu.

Maitreya says - "O sage! It is heard that Lakshmi was produced from Ksheersagar during the churning of the sea but you say that Lakshmi was the daughter of Bhrigu and Khyati. How is it possible?"

Parashar says- "O great Brahmin! Lakshmi who never separates from the Lord is Herself eternal like Him. But still, as you have expressed your doubt, I will narrate you the real story."

The famous short-tempered sage Durvasa is a partial incarnation of Shankar. One day, he was wandering on the earth when all of a sudden, he happened to see an extremely divine beauty. She was wearing a garland of beautiful flowers. The sage requested the beauty to give him that garland. She presented the garland respectfully to the sage. The sage adorned the garland on his head and began to wander again. Right at that moment, he saw Indra riding on Airavat and going somewhere in the procession of the gods. Instinctively, sage Durvasa put that garland around the neck of Indra but Indra removed it and put it on Airavat's head. Airavat pulled the garland with his trunk and smashed it on the ground. This whole sequence of events infuriated Durvasa who cursed Indra. "O Indra! You are so inebriated with your luxuries that you dared to insult my humble gift. Hence, all your splendour shall be destroyed. You will lose all your wealth."

Indra at once descended from the elephant and began to request sage Durvasa. Durvasa said- "Indra! Forgiveness has no place in my personality. So, all your repenting is meaningless." Saying this, sage Durvasa departed from the scene and Indra to left for Amravati.

Very soon, the curse began to show its influence. With the loss of Indra's luxuries, all the verdancy on the earth too began to wane. Hermits too began to give up Yagyas. All the human beings began to be guided by greed and gave up pious virtues. And at a place where pious virtues have no room, Lakshmi too doesn't stay there.

She made her abode in the abysmal depth of the sea. Very soon, the demons launched an attack on the gods and drove them out of heaven. Indra along with other gods approached Brahma and told him the whole thing. Brahma suggested them to take refuge at Lord Vishnu. He assured them also that Lord Vishnu would definitely protect them. Brahma even accompanied the gods to Lord Vishnu. There, they together prayed Lord Vishnu and intimated Him about their ordeal.

Pleased by their prayers, Lord Vishnu appeared before them and said- "I will definitely help you regain your splendour. Presently, do what I say. You reconcile with the demons and convince them to carry out the churning of the sea. Then bring all kinds of herbs and put them in the sea. With the help of the demons and using Mandarachal as churner and Vasuki, the Nag as the rope to carry out the churning of the sea. Thus, you will recover ambrosia drinking which, all of you will become immortal and regain your strength."

Following the advice of Lord Vishnu, the gods reconciled with the demons and convinced them to carry out the churning of the sea. They together procured all kinds of herbs and put them in the sea. Then they began the churning using Mandarachal Mountain. As soon as the churning began, Mandarachal began to sink. Lord Vishnu took incarnation of Kachchhap (the great tortoise) and bore the weight of the mighty mountain on His back. During the churning, Kamadhenu, the wishful cow was the first to emerge. It was presented to the sages as an aid for their Yagyas. It was followed by the damsel, Varuni, Kalpavriksha (the wishful tree) after which, beautiful elves appeared. The Moon followed the apsaras and was taken up by Shiva on His forehead. During the churning, huge quantity of poison had also emerged. It was drunk by Lord Shiva and some parts of it were taken up by the serpents. In the end, Dhanvantari himself emerged from the sea carrying the urn of ambrosia.

It was during the churning itself that Lakshmi appeared once again from the sea holding lotuses in her hands. All the sages prayed her. Then taking bath with divine water, goddess Lakshmi took her seat in the heart of Lord Vishnu.

When the demons saw that Lakshmi had chosen Lord Vishnu's heart as her abode, they got perplexed. They at once snatched the urn from Dhanvantari and ran away. Then a row broke out among them over the drinking of ambrosia. Each of the demons wanted to drink ambrosia in maximum quantity. Meanwhile, Lord Vishnu also arrived there in the guise of an extremely pretty woman Mohini and took possession of the urn. Mohini had pleased the demons with her sweet smile while distributing ambrosia among the gods.

Thus, the gods came to drink ambrosia. When at last, the demons realised that they had been cheated they immediately attacked the gods. But since the gods had regained their strength, they soon defeated the demons without much ado. Afterwards, the gods prayed Lord Vishnu and returned to heaven to rule it. The world also regained its verdancy. After regaining his splendour, comforts and luxuries of the heaven, Indra prayed goddess Lakshmi with devotion and respect.

Pleased by the prayers of Indra, Lakshmi asked him to seek a boon. Indra said- "O goddess! If you are pleased with me, kindly bless me with a boon that first you will never desert this world and also that you will never desert those who worship you with this prayer." Lakshmi granted these boons.

Thus, Lakshmi had appeared as the daughter of Bhrigu and his wife Khyati. Then second time, she emerged from beneath the sea during its churning. Thus, whenever Lord Vishnu takes an incarnation, Lakshmi accompanies Him. When God appears in divine form, she too takes a divine appearance. When God appears in human form, Lakshmi appears in human form also.

CHAPTER SIX DHRUVA'S MIGRATION TO THE FOREST

Swayambhu Manu had two sons- Priyavrata and Utanpad. Utanpad had two wives- Suruchi and Suniti. Suruchi had a son- Uttam while Suniti had also a son- Dhruva. King Utanpad loved Suruchi more than he loved Suniti.

One day the king was sitting on the throne. Prince Uttam was playing in his lap. Meanwhile Dhruva also arrived there and insisted to play in the lap of his father. At his insistence, queen Suruchi ridiculed that as he was not born to her he had no right to the king's love, ... "so your insistence is useless. Though you are also a son of this king but this throne belongs to my son. Don't you know that you have been born to Suniti."

Getting angry over his stepmother's ridicules, Dhruva went to his mother. Suniti consoled her son and enquired about the reason for his anger. Dhruva narrated the whole thing to his mother. Suniti too got perplexed and said: "O son! Suniti speaks the truth but you don't worry for no one can do away the virtues of your deeds that you performed in your previous birth. Hence you should not feel sorry over such petty things. If you feel really sorry by the words of your stepmother why don't you try to gather virtues? Why don't you try to be a gentle and altruistic person?"

Thus consoled by mother Dhruva said- "Mother! Since now onwards, I will do every such thing so that I may attain the most respected position in the world. I am no longer desirous of getting a position granted by others. I will achieve the same position as my father has." Saying this Dhruva left the palace and the town and reached a dense forest.

Seven Munishwars (mendicants) were already present in the forest. Dhruva greeted them all and said very politely- "O great sages! I am the prince Dhruva. King Utanpad is my father and his younger queen Suniti is my mother. I have arrived here out of desperation." The sages said- "O

prince! You are just a small boy. You have no reason to be worried because your father is still alive and neither you have any disease. What then caused you such a severe desperation?"

Dhruva narrated the whole events and also that how his stepmother Suruchi ridiculed about his inferior position in the palace. The sages said- "O prince! Kindly tell us whatever you have decided to do to change your destiny and also tell us if we can help you in any way."

Dhruva said-"O sages! I neither long for wealth or for the kingdom. I simply long to enjoy such a position that nobody have ever enjoyed earlier. Kindly help me and guide me what I should do to attain such a position."

Marichi said-"O prince! Nobody can attain such an unparalleled position without the worship of Govind (an epithet of Lord Vishnu), so you also worship that eternal Supreme Being." Atri said-"He who is far above the tangible can only satisfy Him and bring you that supreme position."

Angira said-"Go and worship Govind who holds the entire universe within Him."

Pulastya said-"Even the wretched people attain the rare salvation worshipping Hari."

Pulaha said-"Go and worship that Vishnu worshipping whom even Indra attained the position of the gods' king."

Kratu said- "Go and worship Janardana who is supreme, who is deity of the Yagyas and Yagya Himself."

Vashishta said-"O son! You will attain whatever you wish by worshipping Lord Vishnu."

Dhruva said - "O sages! At my prayers all of you told me about whom I should worship. Now kindly tell me what should I do to please the Lord."

The sages said- "It is imperative for a person, who wishes to worship Lord Vishnu that first of all, he should expel all other menial thoughts from his mind and replace them with the contemplation Lord alone. O prince! Thus concentrate on that omnipotent eternal Lord with the mantra - 'OM NAMO BHAGVATE VASUDEVAY'. Your grandfather Swayambhu Manu had himself recited this mantra during the previous age and had received the perfection of his desire.

CHAPTER SEVEN DHRUVA PLEASES GOD WITH HIS PENANCE

The prince Dhruva greeted the sages and continued on his journey. At last, he reached a beautiful forest Madhuvan on the bank of the river Yamuna. It was the same forest, which was later occupied by a demon Madhu. Shatrughana, the youngest brother of Lord Rama had killed the demon Lavan, the son of Madhu in the same forest and founded the township of Mathura. In the same forest, prince Dhruva decided to carry out his penance. As per the dictate of the sages, he began to recite the mantra continuously.

Very soon, the earth began to move because of Dhruva's severe penance. Even the seat of Indra could not remain stable. A stampede resulted among the gods. The gods then hatched a conspiracy to disturb the penance.

According to the plan an illusionary image of Suniti, Dhruva's mother appeared before him and pleaded - "O son! Please stop this severe penance that is bound to decay your body. I got you after great desires and worship. It is not proper for you to take your stepmother's words so seriously and desert your real mother. You are my only support. You are only four or five years old. Presently you should pay more attention to your plays and studies. Why are you observing such a severe penance then? O son! If you don't give up your penance right now I will give my life." But Dhruva was so much sunk in the contemplation of Lord Vishnu that he did not hear the wailing of his mother."

His mother then said- "Run, O son! Run away to save your life. Look! Formidable demons are approaching. They are carrying lethal weapons." Suddenly that illusionary image blew out intense fire from her mouth. That fire took appearance of many dreadful monsters, who were shouting loudly like 'kill him', 'eat him'. Those monsters bore the heads of lion, camel, crocodile etc. and appeared extremely formidable. The monsters were roaring loudly.

But Dhruva's mind was deeply in contemplation. He neither saw the monsters or heard the noises made by them. Thus, seeing their all attempts failed. The gods decided to take refuge at Lord Vishnu. There they said- "O Lord! We have come to you perplexed by the severe penance of Dhruva the son of Utanpad. His penance is increasing like a waxing Moon. We are not sure if he desires for the position of Indra, Surya, Kubera, Varuna or any other deity. But kindly remove our fears."

Assuring the gods, the Lord said- "That boy has no desire for attaining the position of any deity. But I will definitely grant him whatever he desires. But all of you need not worry." The gods greeted the Lord and returned.

Ultimately pleased by the severe penance of Dhruva, Lord Vishnu appeared before him in his formal four-armed form and said- "Dhruva! May it all be well for you. I am very much pleased with you." Hearing these words Dhruva opened his eyes and to his amazement found Lord Vishnu standing before him. For a moment he did not believe his eyes. Standing before him was the same Lord Vishnu whom he used to see in contemplation. For a moment, Dhruva forgot how to pray God. He then took refuge of God and said- "O Lord! If you are pleased with me, kindly bless me with power to pray you. My mind is exhilarated with devotion for you. It wishes to pray you." Hearing these words the Lord touched Dhruva with His conch and as soon as it happened, an unbinding stream of devotional prayer sprang from Dhruva's mouth.

At the completion of the prayer Lord Vishnu said- "O son! Your penance succeeds with my sight but my presenting a sight should also not go waste. So seek a boon of your desire." Dhruva said- "O Lord! Nothing is hidden from your divine sight. I started this severe penance out of desperation caused by the harsh words of my stepmother. She had ridiculed my insistence of playing in my father's lap saying that as I was not born to her, I had no right to the king's love. Hence, O Lord! I wish to attain such a position that could be the base of the entire universe."

Lord said- "O son! You were born in a Brahmin family in your previous birth. Then you had pleased me by your abidance to the religion. You were also a friend of a prince and wished to enjoy the same royal luxuries that your friend was enjoying. You had in fact wished to be a prince. Hence O son! You are born as a prince in this birth. It is rare to get a place in the lineage of Swayambhu Manu. But this honor has no value for a devotee like you. O son! I will definitely accord you the position that is excellent among all the three worlds. In future you will be the base of all the planets and all the constellations. I grant you a fixed position that is far above the Sun, the Moon, the planets, constellations, Saptarishis and all the gods who fly about in divine aircraft. Besides it, you will stay there for a complete Kalpa whereas even the gods do not stay in their position more than a single Manvantara. Your mother Suniti too will come to stay with you as a bright star for the same period of time. There she will stay on an aircraft. People will see you with faith for you will show them the right direction."

Thus receiving a boon from Lord Vishnu, Dhruva occupied a fixed position in the northern sky. Even the sage like Shukracharya praises Dhruva that how fortunate he is.... that even Saptarishis go around him? That pivotal position of Dhruva would continue even in the ages to come.

CHAPTER EIGHT TALE OF THE KING VENA AND PRITHU

Parashar says- " With the help of Dhruva, his wife gave birth to two sons- Sishti and Bhavya. Sishti had five sons- Ripu, Ripunjay, Vipra, Vikal and Vrikteja. Ripu had a brilliant son Chakshush. Chakshush had a son Manu. Manu had sons- Puru, Kuru, Shatadyumna, Tapasvi, Satyavan, Suchi, Agnishtome, Atiratra, Sudyumna and Abhimanyu. Kuru had sons- Anga, Suman, Khyati, Kratu, Angira and Shivi. Anga had a son named Vena. The sages had churned the right hand of Vena to produce a son named Vainya. He later on became renowned as Prithu. He had even milked the earth for the benefit of his subjects."

Maitreya says- "Why did the sages churn Vena's hand? What was their purpose of getting Prithu?"

Parashar says- "Mrityu had his first child as a daughter named Sunitha who was married to Anga. Sunitha had given birth to Vena. Vena had all the faults of his maternal grandfather Mrityu and hence was devil-like in nature." At the time of his coronation, Vena had declared- "I am the God and the Yagya Purusha. Hence, in future, no one shall perform Yagyas and donate Dakshaina." The sages praised him and said- "O king! We speak about the benefit of you and your subjects. Through grand Yagyas, we shall worship omnipotent Lord Hari. Thus pleased, he will grant all your desires. O king! In the kingdom of which kings, Lord Hari is worshipped as the presiding deity of Yagyas, He fulfils all their desires."

Vena said- "Who is greater than me and even venerable, whom you regard as the presiding deity of the Yagyas? All the deities like Brahma; Vishnu, Mahesh, Indra, Vayu etc. are present in the body of the king. Hence, the king has all the virtues of these deities. Therefore, do what I say. Such as a woman's duty is to serve her husband, similarly it is your duty of all of you to obey my dictate."

The sages tried to convince Vena repeatedly but in vain. At last, when he did not agree to their proposal, the sages killed him. Immediately after killing the king, the sages saw the clouds of dust rising all around. It was revealed to them upon enquiry that the subjects of a king-less kingdom have resorted to plundering and looting each other and it was because of that stampede that clouds of dust were rising.

The sages then churned the thighs of issue-less king and produced an ugly black man. He was feeling excited and asked the sages what he should do? The sages asked him to Nishid (sit down); hence he came to be known as Nishad. His progeny came to be known as Nishadgana. Appearance of Nishad did away with all the sins of Vena. The sages then churned Vena's right hand and produced prowessive Prithu whose body was radiating like fire. As soon as he appeared, bow and arrow and shield of Lord Shiva descended from heaven and all the subjects felt extreme joy. With the birth of such a pious son, Vena attained a position in the heaven.

For the coronation of Prithu, Brahma himself had appeared there with the water from all the rivers and oceans, all kinds of gems and along with all the deities. Presence of chakra in right hand of Prithu pleased Brahma. This chakra of Lord Vishnu is present in the hands of extremely dominating kings. Such a king remains unaffected even by the gods.

Thus occupying the royal throne, King Prithu was a boon for his subjects. He was so religious that the seas and mountains paved way for him. His flag always remained fresh and new. Even there was no need to sow the seeds; the earth herself provided all the cereals. Cows gave milk spontaneously and every leaf of all the trees in the kingdom was full of honey.

Immediately after his appearance, King Prithu organised a grand Yagya. At the time of Somabhishek (bathing with grape-wine) during the Yagya, a man and a woman appeared from the earth. The sages advised them to pray King Prithu. With folded hands they asked that the king had arrived moments before them. His reputation had not spread far and wide. Why should then they pray such a king? The sage said that they should pray the king for the great achievements he would attain in future. King Prithu thought that it was because of merits that a man becomes praiseworthy. 'Hence I will do exactly the same things that this couple would recite during the prayers' thought the king. Thus during the later course, king Prithu planted those virtues firmly in his conscience and ruled the earth. During his rule, he performed many great Yagyas.

During the anarchy of his father's regime, all the vegetation had been destroyed from all over the earth. There was nothing for the subjects to satisfy their hunger with. So, they approached him and said- "O great king! Due to the anarchy of your father's regime, the earth had annihilated all the cereals within her. Your subjects have no choice but to starve. Kindly protect us from this condition."

Pitiable condition of the subjects infuriated king Prithu. Taking the divine weapons of Lord Shiva, he ran after the earth. In guise of the cow, the earth ran in all the three worlds but wherever she went she found Prithu still chasing her. Thus shivering with fear, she ultimately appeared before him and said- "O king! Don't you see the sin in killing a helpless woman." Prithu said- "If killing a wretched person benefits scores of other people, there is no sin doing

so." The earth said- "You want to kill me in the interest of your subjects but think what will be the base of the subject then?" Prithu said- "You need not worry about that. I will myself support my subjects." These words frightened the earth. She greeted the king and said- "O king! All the tasks started with a distinct purpose reach their completion successfully, so I am telling you a way out of the present condition. Do then, as you desire. I can give out all the herbs and cereals that I have annihilated in the form of milk. So, for the benefit of the subjects, kindly produce such a calf for which I can give milk spontaneously with motherly feelings. You then provide me with a plain surface everywhere so that I can produce milk that is the seed of all the cereals and herbs."

King Prithu then uprooted many great mountains with his bow and arrow and stowed them at a single place. Before that there was no distinct demarcation of village, towns, cities etc. because of the plain surface of the earth and there was no distinct sequence of cereals, cows, agriculture and trade. All this systems started from the time of Prithu. Since then people began to populate those parts of the earth that were plain.

For the benefit of his subjects, King Prithu himself milked all the cereals from earth making Swayambhu Manu a calf. It is the cereals that still sustain the entire population of the world. Since then King Prithu came to be known as the father of earth because he had spared her life.

CHAPTER NINE BIRTH OF PRACHIN BARHI AND PRACHETAS PRAY GOD

King Prithu had two sons- Antardhan and Vadi who were very religious minded themselves. Antardhan's wife Shikhandi gave birth to Iviradhan. Prachin Barhi was the son of Iviradhan and his wife, Ghishna. Shukra, Gaya, Krishna, Vrij and Ajin were their other sons. Prachin Barhi was a great fosterer of his subjects. Through continuous oblations, he increased his subjects to great limits.

King Prachin Barhi married again with Savarna; the daughter of Samudra and they together produced ten sons. All of them were known as Prachetas who were expert in the art of archery. All of them observed serious penance under the sea for 10,000 years.

Maitreya says- O great sage! Kindly narrate to us the reason for which Prachetas observed severe penance under the sea.

Parashar says- Once by the inspiration of Brahma, King Prachin Barhi asked his sons Prachetas to continue the progeny in an honored way. Prachetas agreed to obey the dictate of their father but they asked- O father! Kindly narrate to us, what should we do to enable ourselves so that we could carry out the process of reproduction.

King Prachin Barhi said that worship of Lord Vishnu was the only thing that enabled a person to achieve his desired objectives. He dictated his sons to worship Lord Vishnu. It was by the dictate of the father that all the ten Prachetas observed severe penance for ten thousand years under the sea.

At the end of their penance, Sri Hari appeared before them radiating with blue light like a freshly bloomed blue lotus. Accepting the greetings of the Prachetas, Lord Vishnu asked them to seek a boon. Prachetas then told the dictate of their father. Lord granted their boon. Thereafter all the Prachetas re-emerged from the waters.

CHAPTER TEN MARRIAGE OF PRACHETAS AND BIRTH OF PRAJAPATIS

Parashar says- During the time when Prachetas were engaged in penance, the earth was unprotected. Hence, huge trees came to cover her everywhere on land. Their foliage was so dense they that cut off entire sky and the sun could not reach the surface of the earth. After their emergence from the sea, Prachetas got very angry when they saw the trees. In anger, they let out formidable flames mixed with ghastly winds and uprooted all the trees before reducing them to ashes. A massive destruction of the trees followed. Seeing that Soma, the king of the trees approached Prachetas and requested- 'O kings! Kindly relinquish your anger and listen to what I say.'

I will mediate a pact between the trees and you. The trees have produced an extremely pretty girl named Marisha. Her creation has been meant only for the continuation of your progeny. She will produce Daksha Prajapati who will be as radiant as the fire and cause much increase in your progeny further.

In the ancient times, a great savant of Vedas, sage Kandou was observing penance at the bank of river Gomti. Frightened by his penance Indra sent an apsara Prabhlocha to create a disturbance. That elf successfully created a disturbance in the penance of Kandou who then began to live with her in a cave. Kandou passed one hundred years enjoying sensual pleasures with the apsara. One day, the apsara expressed her desire to leave for her heavenly abode. This came as a shock for the sage Kandou. He requested her to stay for some more time with him. The apsara agreed to his request and stayed with him for another hundred years. Then once again she expressed her desire to leave for her heavenly abode. Once again, blinded by lust, the sage requested her to stay for some more time. Once again the apsara stayed for another hundred years with Kandou.

Thus, every time, when the apsara got ready to leave, sage stopped her. The apsara knew about the agony of separation that a person experiences who is blinded by lust. She also feared the curse that such a person might pour down out of agony. Thus she herself did not desert the sage and their love kept on increasing like a new moon. One day, towards the evening, the sage hurriedly left his hut. Amazingly Prabhlocha enquired about the reasons why he was going out in such a hurry. The sage replied that as it was dusk, he should offer his evening prayers. The sage's reply amazed the apsara further. Laughingly, she said- "O knower of religion, your day has ended after hundreds of years! Who will not be surprised to learn that your day ends after hundreds of years."

The sage said- "You had arrived at the river bank right in the morning today. You passed the whole day with me and now it is evening. Why do you laugh at me then? Prabhlocha said- "O Brahmin! Hundreds of years have passed since I had arrived at your hut." Perplexed sage asked

her- "Tell me exactly how much time has passed in our present communion? Prabhlocha told the sage that they had together passed nine hundred and seven years six months and three days. Hearing this, the sage began to curse himself that he was so sunk in the carnal pleasure with the apsara that he even forgot the time. He also began to fret that his whole penance had been brought to nought. Thus cursing himself, the sage also scolded the apsara and asked her to leave his hut at once.

"The apsara was shivering in fear while her whole body was drenched in sweat. When she left the hermitage, she wiped her sweat with the leaves of the trees. While having carnal pleasure with the sage, Prabhlocha had conceived. Her foetus also oozed out in the form of sweat and was collected on the leaves. The wind brought the different parts of the foetus together while I nourished it with my rays. Thus the foetus grew safely and ultimately took birth as a girl child, Marisha. The trees will present you that same girl as your wife", said Soma.

On the other hand after his penance was disturbed sage Kandu migrated to Purushaottam region (modern Jagannath-Puri) and began his penance afresh to please Lord Vishnu.

Tale of Marisha's previous birth Marisha, daughter of sage Kandu and Prabhlocha was a queen in her previous birth. She had lost her husband without having any child. She had then pleased Lord Vishnu with her devotion. The Lord had then asked her to seek a boon. She said- "O Lord! Having been widowed at a young age, I feel that my life has gone futile. I am very unfortunate. Hence O Lord! May I have by your grace, a virtuous husband like you and sons like Prajapati in my next birth. May I take birth not from the body of my mother.

Lord Vishnu said- "All your wishes shall come true in your next birth. You will have ten prowessive and popular husbands. With their help, you will give birth to Prajapati whose progeny will populate all the three worlds. You will take birth not from your mother's body still you will be unmatched in beauty."

Thus, coerced by Soma, Prachetas dropped their angry stance and accepted Marisha as their wife. From the parts of Prachetas, Marisha gave birth to Daksha Prajapati who had emerged from Brahma earlier. Following the dictate of Brahma, Daksha Prajapati produced different kinds of living beings as his children. First of all, he created womenfolk from his mind. He got ten of those women married to Dharma. Thirteen women were married to Kashyapa while twenty-seven were married to Chandrama. All the gods, demons, Nagas, cows, birds, Gandharvas, Apsaras, giants etc. are the progeny of those fifty women.

Maitreya says- "O great sage! I want to hear the tale of origin of the gods, the demons and all other creatures in detail."

Parashar says- "Daksha created the sages, Gandharvas, demons, and serpents from his mind first. But none of those creatures could continue the progeny. So, with an intention of producing his progeny through carnal union, Daksha married Asikni, the daughter of another Prajapati. Daksha and Asikni together produced five thousand sons. All of those sons were eager to continue the process of reproduction when Devarshi Narada approached them and said- "O children! It appears from your action that all of you are eager to begin the process of reproduction right now.

But before you do anything, kindly listen to what I say. All of you are so ignorant that you do not know anything about the earth. How then will you carry out the reproduction? Look! You can move anywhere in the universe, so why don't you go and see the end of the earth?" Thus motivated by Narada, all the five thousand sons of Daksha dived into the sea and never returned thereafter like a river annihilates in the ocean.

Daksha then married Vairuni and produced one thousand sons. They also intended to carry out reproduction but were misguided by Narada. They too followed the footsteps of their elder brothers. Learning about the fate of his sons, Daksha cursed Narada. Then Daksha and Vairuni gave birth to sixty daughters. Ten of them were married to Dharma, thirteen to Kashyapa, twenty-seven to Soma, four to Arishtnemi and two to Angira and Krishasva each. Arundhati, Vasu, Yami, Lamba, Bhanu, Marutvati, Sankalpa, Muhurta, Sadhya and Vishwa were the wives of Dharma. Vishwa gave birth to Vishwadeva, Sadhya to Sadhyagana; Marutvan was the son of Marutvati. Vasu gave birth to eight Vasus. Lamba gave birth to Ghosha, Yami to Nagveethi whereas Arundhati gave birth to all other creatures that dwell on earth. Sankalpa produced Sankalpa that is omnipresent resolution.

Names of the eight Vasus were Ap, Dhruva, Soma, Dharma, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhas. Vaitand, Shrama, Shant and Dhvani were the sons of Ap. All annihilating Kal was the son of Dhruva. Varcha was the son of Soma. Dravin, Huta, Ityavar, Shishir, Pran and Varuna were the sons of Dharma. Manojav and Avigyatgati were the sons of Anil. Sharastamb, Shakh, Vishakh and Naigmeya were the sons of Anal. Pratyush had a son Deval. Vatstree the sister of Brihaspati was the wife of Prabhas. They had Vishwakarma as their son. Vishwakarma himself had four sons- Ajaikpad, Ahirbudhanya, Twashta, and Rudra. The great penancer Vishwaroop was the son of Twasta.

O great sage! Har, Bahuroop, Treyambak, Aparajit, Vrishakapi, Shambhu, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharpa and Kapali are the eleven Rudras. Sage Kashyapa had thirteen wives- Aditi, Diti, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Khasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Tamra, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kadru and Muni. Now listen to the description of their progenies.

During the previous Manavantar, there were twelve gods named Tushit. At the end of the Manavantar, they met together and said- "O brothers! Let us now enter the womb of Aditi and take birth as the gods again in Vaivasvat Manavantar." Thus, Vishnu, Indra, Aryama, Dhata, Twashta, Pusha, Vivasvan, Savita, Maitra, Varuna, Anshu and Bhaga, these twelve sons of Aditi came to be known as Aditya.

The twenty-seven wives of Soma gave birth to many talented sons. Wives of Arishtnemi gave birth to sixteen sons. Thus in all thirty-three gods including eight Vasus, eleven Rudra, twelve Aditya, Prajapati and Vashatkar have been described in the Vedas. All of them are capable of taking birth at will. Just as the Sun rises and sets, similarly these gods also appear in different yugas.

From the part of Kashyapa, Diti gave birth to two invincible sons, Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksh and a daughter Sinhika who was married to Viprachiti. Hiranyakashipu had four sons- Anuhlada, Ahlada, Sahlada and Prahlada.

CHAPTER ELEVEN TALE OF PRAHLADA AND NARSIMHA INCARNATION

Parashar says- By the boon of Brahma, Hiranyakashipu had acquired tremendous power and came to control all the three worlds. He had driven the gods out of heaven and used to receive the oblations offered to Surya, Vayu, Agni, Varuna, Chandrama, Kubera, Yamaraj etc. Because of his fear, all those gods roamed on earth.

All the creatures began to worship Hiranyakashipu. Beautiful and amorous elves danced in his palace while Gandharvas accompanied them on instruments. Prahlada was the youngest son of Hiranyakashipu. Like other children, he too was sent to Gurukula to be educated. One day, his teachers took Prahlada to Hiranyakashipu who was engaged in drinking of wine at that moment. Lovingly he took his son into his lap and asked- "O son, tell me, what you have learnt so far in the auspices of your teachers?"

Prahlada said- "O father! I salute to that Sri Hari who has no beginning, no end and no mid-part, who doesn't take birth and who is free from growth and decay." Hearing this, Hiranyakashipu looked at the teachers with bloodshot eyes and shouted at them- "O wretched Brahmins! In sheer violation of my orders, you have taught my son to praise my enemy." The teachers tried to express their apology saying that what Prahlada was saying was not taught by them. Hiranyakashipu asked then Prahlada who had taught him like that. Prahlada said- "O father! Lord Vishnu who resides in the heart of us all is the supreme creature. Who can teach anybody anything apart from Him?" Hiranyakashipu said- "O fool! Who is that Vishnu about whom you are describing before me, the Lord of entire world?" Prahlada replied- "Lord Vishnu is he who is contemplated about by the Yogis. He is the originator of the entire universe. His virtues cannot be described in words. That Parmeshwar is Vishnu."

Hiranyakashipu said- "Fool! Who can be Parmeshwar other than me? Do you want to die that you are babbling like that?" Prahlada said- "O father! Your anger is baseless. Lord Vishnu is the creator of all of us including you and me. He controls our breaths."

Infuriated Hiranyakashipu then ordered the teachers to take Prahlada away at once and wash his brain thoroughly. The teachers took Prahlada with them to their Gurukula. Prahlada began to concentrate in his studies. After many months, Hiranyakashipu once again called Prahlada to his palace and asked about his learning. Once again, Prahlada began to praise Lord Vishnu. This time, Hiranyakashipu ordered his assassination. He began to see his son as a threat to his throne. By the orders of Hiranyakashipu, many formidable demons attacked Prahlada with their weapons but Prahlada stood unfazed. He said- "O fools! Lord Vishnu is present in you, in me and even in your weapons. May your weapons have no effect on me." Indeed, the weapons of the demons could not even touch Prahlada. Hiranyakashipu said- "I can still pardon your life provided that you stop praising my opponent." Prahlada said- "O father! I fear nothing. By the God's grace, I am free from the fear of birth and death." Hiranyakashipu then got Prahlada thrown amidst venomous snakes. But, biting by the snakes had no effect on Prahlada because his mind was contemplating in Lord Vishnu.

Hiranyakashipu then got Prahlada trampled by big bull elephants. But even elephants could not harm Prahlada. Instead their tusks were broken as soon as they touched Prahlada. Even then Prahlada tried to pacify his father that it was Lord's strength that protected him every time. Prahlada's teachers who were the sons of Shukracharya then assured Hiranyakashipu that Prahlada was having a fickle mind because of his tender age. They also assured the demon king of transforming Prahlada and took him to their hermitage once again.

Prahlada's Preaching-- But in the hermitage, Prahlada assembled other demon children and said- " Friends, listen to my preaching carefully and don't take it for granted because I have no personal interest in it. Every living being takes birth and suffers a lot while passing his life through childhood, youth and old age. The end result of life is nothing but death. It is one's Karma that accompany him birth after birth. But in every birth, this soul mistakes hunger, thirst, cold or hot for the pleasures. More of the luxuries one collects, more the sorrow increases. Attachment and passion are the greatest cause of sorrow. Even after passing a life that is full of sorrow, one suffers the agony of death and rebirth again. This whole cycle continues again and again. Lord Vishnu is the ultimate refuge for the soul, which feels drowned in the ocean of sorrow."

Don't be confused with my young age. I am a boy like you. But the soul that stays within me is eternal. The soul has no distinct stages in life. But a human being is inflicted with lot of misconceptions. In the childhood, he prefers to play than contemplating on God. In the youth, lust and carnal pleasures attract the mind. Still a human being doesn't get serious about his benefit. He keeps on postponing his spiritual matters for his old age. But in old age, a human being has no option but to see his trembling fingers and repent about his past. Thus a human being spoils his whole life. A wise person hence must ignore the different stages of his body's stay on earth and make efforts for his benefit right in his childhood.

What I have told you is unchangeable fact. Start reciting Lord Vishnu's name for my pleasure atleast. His remembrance is enough to destroy all the sins. May your mind always contemplate on Him day and night. Thus all your miseries shall come to an end.

CHAPTER TWELVE ATTEMPTS TO KILL PRAHLADA

When the demons saw that their all efforts failed to faze Prahlada and that he was preaching the demon children they informed Hiranyakashipu about all these happenings. Hiranyakashipu at once called his cook and ordered him to poison Prahlada through food. But the poisonous food also could not hurt Prahlada. In fact, its poison was rendered ineffective by the recitation of Lord's name. This frightened the cook. He informed Hiranyakashipu about that miraculous event.

Hiranyakashipu then ordered the priests who were Prahlada's teachers to invoke the ogress Kritya in order to kill Prahlada. The teachers tried to convince Prahlada before invoking Kritya. "O prince, you are the son of great Hiranyakashipu and have taken birth in Brahma's lineage. What have you to do with matters like God and all that? The whole world is dependent on your father. You should also take refuge of your father and stop praising his opponent. Father is revered and even greater than the teachers."

Prahlada said-"O fortunate ones! I know the prowess of my father. I also do not doubt regarding my father's reverence and greatness. I will not commit any crime against him but kindly listen to me what I mean by the endless God."

"O teachers! There are four attainable goals in one's life. You ask me what have I to do with He, who helps all the human beings to attain these four goals- Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. You are my teachers. You are free to say anything to me. But within me stays He who is the creator of all, who is the preserver of all and who is the destroyer of all of us. Kindly forgive me if I have committed any thing wrong in your honor."

The teachers said-"O foolish boy, we saved you from imminent death thinking that you are our disciple and that you will not balderdash in future. But still you speak nonsense. Listen, if you don't drop your stubbornness we'll have to invoke Kritya the ogress in order to get you slain."

Unfazed Prahlada said that life and death were immaterial for the soul that protects or destroys itself through auspicious and inauspicious deeds. Hence one should always strive to behave in an auspicious way. But Prahlada's words further enraged his teachers. They invoked the ogress Kritya to get Prahlada slain. Kritya hit Prahlada's chest hard with her trident. But as soon as the trident touched his chest it broke into pieces without harming Prahlada.

Seeing her attempt failed, Kritya killed the teachers and disappeared. His teachers' death caused immense pain for Prahlada. Mourning for their death, he prayed Lord Vishnu to resurrect them. Hearing his prayers, Lord Vishnu once again granted life to his teachers. The teachers got up as if from a deep slumber. They realised their mistake and blessed Prahlada and resolved never to have hostility against him. Then they went to the palace and informed Hiranyakashipu about all the happenings.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN LORD'S VIRTUES AND PROTECTION OF PRAHLADA

Hearing the news of Kritya's failure to kill Prahlada, killing of teachers and their subsequent revival as effected by Prahlada, Hiranyakashipu called his son and asked if all those miracles were natural or he knew some magical tricks. Prahlada said- "O father, neither I know any magic nor is the miracle a part of my nature. All these are ordinary things for he who has eternal God in his heart. No one can harm those who never wish ill for the others. All the living beings are equal for Him. In every creature, I see the same Lord Vishnu who is present within me; hence I never try to harm him or her. I cannot even think of harming anybody. It is this feeling that protects me from every physical, mental or divinely discomfort."

But these words failed to please Hiranyakashipu. He ordered his men to throw Prahlada from a very high fort. Even this attempt, however failed to cause any harm to Prahlada for the mother earth took him in her lap tenderly in the midway. Suspecting some illusionary powers helping Prahlada, Hiranyakashipu ordered Shambarasur to kill him using his illusionary powers. Shambarasur created many illusions to kill Prahlada. But right then Lord Vishnu sent His Sudarshan Chakra to counter those demonic illusions and protect Prahlada. Sudarshan Chakra destroyed all the demonic illusions one by one. Then Hiranyakashipu ordered Vayu to dry up

Prahlada to death. When Vayu entered Prahlada's body and began to dry him up, the Lord came to stay in his heart where God absorbed all the drying effects of the air thus rendering it weak.

After all those attempts failed, Prahlada returned to his teachers' hermitage and resumed his education once again. The teachers trained him all the relevant subjects. Then they once again took Prahlada to his father and told him that now his education was over. Hiranyakashipu asked- "O son! How should one behave with the others? Tell me what have learned so far. I am eager to know your opinions."

Prahlada said-"O father, indeed my teachers have taught me in different subjects. I have too learned them with heart. They taught me that diplomatic policies should be applied in order to train friendship. But excuse me father, I see no friend or no enemy, so in my opinion these policies are totally irrelevant. Tell me O father what is the use of means when there is nobody to be trained. Lord Vishnu is present everywhere. In you, in me and in all other creatures. Hence instead of using in sinisterly actions, one should use his wits for good and benefit of all."

"O fortunate one, everybody longs for the throne and a big kingdom. But only those attain these things who really deserve and have them in their destiny. Even the most inert and imprudent people who are weak and know nothing about the policies get these things because of destiny. Hence all those who wish for splendour must strive to accumulate pious actions. Those who long for salvation must strive to acquire impartial view for all. Such actions please God and when He is pleased all the miseries are attenuated."

Hearing these words, Hiranyakashipu kicked Prahlada hard and ordered his demons to tie him in Nagpash and throw into the sea. The demons obeyed their master and threw Prahlada into the sea after tying him in Nagpash. With Prahlada's motion great disturbances occurred in the sea, seeing that Hiranyakashipu ordered the demons to cover the sea with huge mountains so that Prahlada could not get a passage to escape. When the demons uprooted huge mountains and put them into the sea, Prahlada began to pray God with concentrated mind.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN APPEARANCE OF LORD

As soon as Prahlada began to pray the Lord, his Nagpash broke and the mountains that the demons had thrown into the sea also lightened up causing great relief for Prahlada. Lord Vishnu appeared before him and said- "O Prahlada! I am pleased with your devotion. You may seek any boon of your wish." Prahlada said- "May I always have an unconditional devotion for you. May your remembrance never be away from my heart."

God said - " Your devotion for me shall always remain the same. Now, seek anything you wish." Prahlada said- "O Lord! My father has always cultivated hostility for you because of my devotion. May my father be free from the sin of his action." Lord said- "O Prahlada! All your wishes shall come true but still seek any boon of your choice."

Prahlada said- "O Lord! I don't want anything other than devotion for you." Lord said -" O Prahlada! You have nothing in your mind but devotion for me, so with my grace, you will attain supreme abode."

Saying this, the Lord disappeared. In later course, ultimately Hiranyakashipu decided to kill Prahlada himself. He tied Prahlada to a pillar and shouting abusively for God, he hit the pillar. As soon as he hit the pillar, it broke and Lord appeared from it in Narsimha incarnation. His appearance was extremely formidable with half human and half lion form. Dragging Hiranyakashipu to the threshold, He killed him with his powerful talons. After the killing of his father, Prahlada took over the throne and ruled his subjects religiously.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN LINEAGE OF KASHYAPA'S OTHER WIVES

After the death of Hiranyakashipu, Prahlada continued his lineage. Prahlada had a son, Virochan. Virochan in his turn had Bali as his son. The prowessful Bali was sent to the nether world by Vamana incarnation of Lord. Bali had one hundred sons among whom Banasur was the eldest.

Kashyapa's second wife Danu had sons like Dwimurdha, Shambar, Ayomuk, Shankushira, Kapila, Shankar, Ekchakra, Mahabahu, Tarak, Mahabal, Swarbhanu, Vrishparva, Pulom and Viprachiti. Swarbhanu had a daughter- Prabha whereas Sarmishtha, Updan, and Haishira were the daughters of Vrishparva. Vaishwanar had two daughters- Puloma and Kalka who were married to Kashyapa. From the part of Kashyapa, they gave birth to sixty thousand giants known as Paulom and Kalkeya.

Kashyapa's another wife, Tamra gave birth to six daughters- Shuki, Shyeni, Bhasi, Sugreevi, Suchi and Griddhrika. Shuki gave birth to the birds like parrots, owls and crows. Shyeni gave birth to sleep while Bhasi produced light. Griddhrika gave birth to vultures whereas Suchi produced aquatic birds. Sugreevi gave birth to equine animals like horse, camels and asses.

Vinata, one of the wives of Kashyapa gave birth to Garuda and Arun. Garuda became the vehicle of Lord Vishnu while Arun became the charioteer of the Sun. Surasa gave birth to millions of the snakes. Kadru also had great snakes like Shesha, Vasuki, Takshak, Shankhshwet, Mahapadm, Kambal, Ashwatar, Ilaputra, Nag, Karkotak, Dhananjay etc. as her sons. Krodhavasha gave birth to anger and devils. Surabhi gave birth to cows and buffaloes. Ira gave birth to the trees, creepers, and scores of grasses. Khasa gave birth to Yaksha and monsters. Muni produced elves whereas Arishta gave birth to Gandharvas.

After the annihilation of her sons, Diti once again pleased Kashyapa and sought a son who could destroy even Indra. Kashyapa granted her boon but stipulated that she would have such a son only when she observes complete sanctity during one hundred years of gestation period. Diti agreed to abide by the stipulation. Then they copulated as a result of which Diti conceived.

When Indra came to know that Diti had conceived a son who would be able to destroy even him he arrived at Kashyapa's hermitage and began to serve Diti with full devotion. He had in fact arrived there to see if by chance Diti ever violated the stipulation for then he would easily destroy the unborn child without incurring any sin. Sometime before the completion of gestation period, one day, Diti did violate the stipulation. She forgot to wash her feet after attending nature's call and retired on the bed. Indra was waiting for the moment. He at once entered Diti's

womb carrying his mace in hand. There he broke the foetus into seven pieces but still the foetus survived and began to cry loudly. Indra then broke each of those seven pieces into seven pieces more and consoled them not to cry. Those forty-nine pieces of Diti's foetus later on came to be known as Marudgana the assistants of Indra.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN THE DESCRIPTION OF UNIVERSAL ORDER

When the great sages crowned Prithu as the king of the entire earth, Brahma had also divided the kingdoms. Thus, Brahma appointed Chandrama as the ruler of all the Nakshatras, planets, Brahmins, vegetation, Yagya, penance etc. He also appointed Kubera as the ruler of the kings, Varuna as the ruler of the water bodies, Vishnu as the ruler of Adityas and Agni as the ruler of Vasus. Similarly, Daksha was appointed as the ruler of all the Prajapatis, Indra as the ruler of Marudgana and Prahlada was appointed as the ruler of the demons. Dharmaraj Yama became the ruler of Pitragana and Airavat became the ruler of all the elephants. Garuda came to rule the birds. Indra was appointed as king of the gods, Uchchaisharva as the king of the horses, Vrishabh as the king of the cows. Lion became the king of the beasts, Sheshnag of the snakes, Himalaya became the king of all the landmasses, Kapila became the king of the sages and tiger became the king of those animals that have nails and long teeth.

Thereafter, Brahma appointed Dikpals (guardians of the directions) on all corners of the earth. These Dikpals still guard the earth, which has seven continents and scores of big and small cities.

All the gods, demons, human beings, animals, birds, reptiles, in fact every living being have originated from the parts of omnipotent Lord Vishnu. Hence nobody but Lord Vishnu has the capacity to foster all the living beings on earth. That eternal God creates the world fosters it and ultimately destroys it. Thus, the Lord has four parts in the form of this entire creation. One of His parts remains unmanifested as Brahma. Second part appears like Prajapatis. Time is His third part whereas all the living beings constitute His fourth part.

Since the beginning, during the existence and till the ultimate annihilation of the universe, the process of creation continued through Brahma, Prajapatis and all other living beings. In the beginning, Brahma creates the primitive living beings. Then the process of creation is taken over by Prajapatis. When their progenies populate the world, the process of creation continues spontaneously. Without Kal, no one including Brahma, Prajapatis and all the living beings can carry out the process of creation. Sri Hari is in the base of every new creation that takes place through a pre-existing creation. The supreme abode of Lord Vishnu remains intangible.

Sri Hari bears the intangible, pure and all pervasive spirit of the universe as Kaustubh Mani. He bears the intelligence as his mace. He bears the two kinds of ego in his conch and Sharang bow. Third kind of ego is present as the wheel in His hand. Vayjayanti garland that adorns His neck represents five senses and five physical elements. He bears the sense and motor organs as the arrows and the sword that He holds is knowledge. Thus, everything is dependent on Sri Hari. He is Himself intangible but for the benefit of human being, he bears all these things as ornaments. Even the counting of time is present in Him.

God is present in all the seven worlds. He is the base of all the knowledge, our ancestor and the ancestors of our ancestors. He is present in the gods, human beings, animals, all the Vedas, Ayurveda, Purana and other religious scriptures. All the visible and invisible things in the world have Lord Vishnu in them. Nothing is different from Him. Such a feeling in the mind keeps all the miseries and physical ailments away.

PART TWO

CHAPTER ONE DESCRIPTION OF PRIYAVRAT'S LINEAGE

Maitreya says- "O sage! Now I wish to hear the description of the lineage of Priyavrata who was the son of Swayambhu Manu."

Parashar says- Priyavrata was married to the daughter of sage Kardam. They had two daughters and ten sons. Three of his sons- Medha, Agnibahu and Putra knew everything about their previous births. Hence, they did not take any interest in royal luxuries. The remaining seven sons received the domain of seven parts of the earth from their father Priyavrata who then had taken to penance at a greatly sacred place named Shalgram.

Among the eight Vasus, one was Hima. Merudevi was his wife. They had a son Rishabh. Rishabh had one hundred sons among which Bharata was the eldest. When he grew old, Rishabh transferred the onus of his kingdom on his eldest son Bharata and himself took to penance in the forest. Since then, this landmass that stretches from the snowy peaks of Himalayas to the splashing Indian Ocean is known as Bharatavarsha. Bharata had a religious minded son Sumati.

Indradyumna was the son of Sumati. Indradyumna's son was Parmeshthi. After him, the lineage of Priyavrata continued as follows- Pratihar, Pratiharta, Bhava, Udgeeth, Prastav, Prithu, Naka, Gaya, Nar, Virat, Mahavirya, Dheeman, Mahant, Manasyu, Twasta, Viraj, Raj, Shatajit. Shatajit had one hundred sons whose descendants populated the earth. They divided Bharatavarsha into nine parts.

CHAPTER TWO GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

The earth has seven great islands- Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmali, Kusha, Kronch, Shakh and Pushkar. These are surrounded by oceans having saline water, sugarcane juice, wine, ghee, curd, milk and sweet water respectively. Jambudweep is situated at the center. Situated at the center of Jambudweep is golden Sumeru Mountain (Himalayas), which is eighty-four thousand Yojans high. Towards the south of Sumeru are Himavan, Hemkut and Nishad Mountains. Towards its north are Neel and Sringi Mountains. All these mountains are two thousand Yojans high with similar expansion.

Towards the south of Sumeru Mountain, Bharatavarsha is the first landmass followed by KimPurushavarsha and Harivarsha. In the north of Sumeru Mountain, Ramayak is the first landmass followed by Hiranyamay and Uttarkuruvarsha. All these landmasses have expansion of nine thousand Yojans. At the center of these landmasses is Ilavritvarsha that bears Sumeru Mountain. On the four sides of Sumeru Mountain are four smaller mountains that seem to

support the massive Sumeru. Among these four mountains, Mandrachal Mountain is in the east and in the south is Gandhmadan. Vipul is in the west and Suparsh is in the north. All these four mountains are ten thousand Yojans high and have lofty trees of Cadamba, Jambu, Pipal and Banyan. Because of abundance of Jambu trees, this island came to be known as Jambudweep. It bears big fruits, which scatter all around upon falling on the earth. Their juice gives rise to the river Jambu. It is said that its water is capable of keeping demerits like sweat, foul smell, old age and loss of senses away from the drinker. When the juice of this fruit dries, it leaves the soil golden in colour.

Towards the east of Sumeru Mountain is Bhadrashvavarsha and towards the west is Ketumalvarsha. Midway between the two is Ilavritvarsha. On the eastern side of Meru Mountain is the forest of Chaitrarath. In the south is Gandhmadan and in the west is Vaibhraj and towards the north is the forest named Nandan. Mount Sumeru also holds four holy lakes named Arunodaya, Mahabhadra, Asitoda and Manas.

Shitambh, Kumund, Kukri, Malyavan, Vaikank are some of the peaks situated towards the eastern side of Sumeru. Towards the southern side are the peaks of Trikut, Shishir, Patang, Ruchak and Nishad. In the west are situated peaks of Shikhivasa, Vaidurya, Kapila, Gandhmadan and Jarudhi and in the north are situated the peaks of Shankhkoot, Rishabh, Hans, Nag and Kalanj.

Above the mount Meru is situated Brahmपुरi of Brahma which has an expansion of 14,000 Yojans. The Ganges that rises from the feet of Lord Vishnu circles the lunar sphere before falling in Brahmपुरi. Thence it divides into four rivers- Sita, Chakshu, Alaknanda and Bhadra that flow into four directions.

The landmasses of Bharata, Ketumal, Bhadrashva and Kuru appear like lotus leaf in shape. Among all the peaks that surround Mount Meru are present beautiful caves. There also exist beautiful towns and gardens. In these towns are situated beautiful temples of Lakshmi, Vishnu, Agni and Surya. Ravines of these mountains are populated by Gandharvas, Rakshasa, Yaksha and Danavas. Besides them, scores of religious people also live there.

Lord Vishnu stays as Hayagreev (human figure with horse head) form in Bhadrashvavarsha. In Ketumalvarsha, He is in boar form and in Bharatavarsha; He stays in turtle form. In Kuruvarsha, Lord Vishnu stays as fish. Thus Lord Vishnu is present everywhere. People of these eight landmasses are free from all kinds of sorrow, pain, emotions, hunger etc. and lead a healthy and rich life that extends up to ten or twelve thousand years. All these landmasses have seven indigenous mountains each from which hundreds of rivers rise.

CHAPTER THREE DIVISION OF BHARATA AND OTHER LANDMASSES

The landmass that is present between Himalayas and the ocean is known as Bharata. It has an expansion of 9,000 Yojans. It is populated by the descendants of Bharata. It has seven native mountains- Mahendra, Malay, Sahaya, Shuktiman, Riksha, Vindhya and Pariyatra.

Bharatavarsha has nine divisions named Indradweep, Kaseru, Tamraparn, Gamastiman, Nagdweep, Soumya, Gandharva, Varun and Yahadweep which is surrounded by the sea and has an expansion of 1000 Yojans. In the eastern part of Bharata, live Kirat whereas in the western part live Yavans. In the mid part of Bharata, live population of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras who pass their lives engage in works ascribed to their respective class.

Rivers in India- From the Himalayas rise Shatudri (Sutlej) and Chandrabhaga rivers. From Pariyatra Mountain rise Veda and Smriti rivers. Narmada and Surasa rivers rise from Vindiyachal. Tapi, Payoshani and Nirvindhya rivers rise from Riksha Mountain. Godavari, Bheemrati and Krishnaveli rivers rise from Sahaya Mountains. Kritmala and Tamraparni rivers rise from Malayachal. Trisama and Aryakulya rivers rise from Mahendragiri. Rishikulya and Kumari rivers rise from Shuktiman Mountain. All these rivers have scores of other branches and tributaries.

Four yugas namely Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapar Yuga and Kali Yuga descend on Bharatavarsha. In Bharatavarsha, sages observe penance to attain better life in another world, people organise Yagyas and offer donations to the Brahmins respectfully. In Jambudweep, Lord Vishnu is worshipped in Yagyas. Bharatavarsha is the land par excellence in Jambudweep for it is a land of action. Soul passes through millions of births, only then it finds a chance to take birth in Bharatavarsha when its pious deeds accumulate to a certain extent. Even the gods envy those people who take birth in Bharatavarsha. People in Bharatavarsha act without a desire to get fruits from their action. They dedicate their whole action to Lord Vishnu and ultimately mingle with Him.

CHAPTER FOUR DESCRIPTION OF OTHER DWEEPS

Plakshdweep- Plakshdweep has an expansion of 2,00,000 Yojans. Its ruler Meghatithi had seven sons- Shanthaya, Shishir, Sukhodaya, Anand, Shiva, Kshemak and Dhruva. Those seven princes later on came to rule Plakshdweep. Hence, Plakshdweep had seven divisions named after these seven princes. Seven mountains mark the boundaries of Plakshdweep. These are Gomed, Chandra, Narada, Dundubhi, Sobhak, Sumana and Vaibhraj. People of Plakshdweep live long and pleasant life. Seven rivers namely Anutapta, Shikhi, Vipasha, Tridiva, Aklama, Amrita and Sukrita flow in Plakshdweep. In all the islands from Plakshdweep to Shakhdweep, only Treta Yuga stays. Plaksh tree (Pakad) abound in Plakshdweep. Lord Vishnu is worshipped there as Soma.

Shalmaldweep- Vayushman was the ruler of Shalmaldweep. He too had seven sons- Shwet, Harit, Jibhoot, Rohit, Vaidyut, Manas and Suprabh. Hence Shalmaldweep was also divided into seven divisions named after these princes. A sea of sugarcane juice surrounds this island. Shalmaldweep has seven mountains which are the source of all the gemstones. Seven rivers flow in Shalmaldweep. These rivers contain innumerable kinds of medicinal herbs. Lord Vishnu is worshipped there in Vayu form. Because of the abundance of Semul (silk cotton) trees, this island came to be known as Shalmaldweep. A sea of wine surrounds this island.

Kushdweep- The ruler of Kushdweep, Jyotishman had seven sons. Their names were Venuman, Vairath, Lamban, Ghriti, Prabhakar and Kapila. The divisions of this island were named after them. This island too has seven mountains and seven rivers.

Lord Vishnu is worshipped here in Janardan form. Because of abundance of Kusha grass, this island is known as Kushdweep. A sea of ghee surrounds this island.

Kraunchdweep- The ruler of Kraunchdweep, Dyutiman had seven sons named Kushal, Mandak, Ushna, Peevar, Andhkarak, Muni and Dudhumbi. Hence the seven divisions of this island were named after these princes. This island too has seven mountains and seven main rivers with hundreds of small rivers and tributaries. Lord Vishnu is worshipped here in Rudra form through Yagyas. A sea of whey surrounds this island.

Shakhdweep- The ruler of Shakhdweep Bhavya, also had seven sons named Jalad, Kumar, Sukumar, Marichak, Kutumod, Maudaki and Mahadrum. Hence the seven divisions of this island were named after these princes; this island too has seven mountains and seven holy rivers. Lord Vishnu is worshipped here in Surya form. Because of an abundance of Shakh trees, this island got its name. A sea of milk surrounds this island.

Pushkardweep- This is the largest among all the seven islands. Its ruler Savan had two sons- Mahavir and Dhataki. Hence, this island has two divisions- Mahavirkhand and Dhatakikhand. A huge mountain named Mansotra is situated at the center of this great island. Brahma stays on a huge Banyan tree in this island. A sea of sweet water surrounds this island.

CHAPTER FIVE DESCRIPTION OF NETHER WORLDS

Earth's total height is 70,000 Yojans. In her depth, are situated seven nether worlds with a depth of 10,000 Yojans each respectively. Names of these seven nether worlds are Atal, Vital, Nital, Gamastiman, Mahatal, Satal and Patal. These nether worlds have beautiful palaces, and have lands which are white, black, red and yellow in colour with gravel, rocky and golden soil. Scores of races including Danav, Daitya, Yaksha and Nagas live there.

Once upon a time, Narada visited these nether worlds. When he returned to heaven, he told the people there that the nether world was more beautiful than heaven. He told them that ornaments of the Nagas contained precious gemstones and the womenfolk of Daitya and Danavas were an attraction even for the gods. The sun was illuminating in the nether worlds but not scorching. Similarly, the Moon only shone there but did not cause bitter cold.

Beneath the nether worlds is situated an idolised form of Lord Vishnu. It is known as Shesh. Even the demons and giants cannot describe His virtues. He has thousands of hoods each carrying a bright gemstone that illuminates the azimuths. In His presence, the demons lose their strength. His eyes are red and He wears an earring, crown, garland and blue length of cloth. Bearing the flow of Ganges, He stays like the Kailash Mountain. At the end of the Kalpa, poison emanates from His thousands of hoods and destroys all the three worlds taking the form of Rudra named Sankarshan. Nobody can find the ends of His virtues; hence He is known as Anant.

CHAPTER SIX DESCRIPTION OF HELLS

Beneath the earth and water are situated the hells into which, the sinners are thrown. Raurav, Sukar, Rodha, Tal, Vishsan, Mahajwal, Taptakumbh, Lavan, Vilohit, Rudhiramabh, Vaitarni, Krimish, Krimibhojan, Asipatravana, Krishna, Lalabhaksha, Darun, Puyuvah, Pap, Vahnijwal, Adhahshira, Sandansh, Kalsutra, Tamas, Avichi, Swabhojan, Apratishthit and Aprachi are the main hells. These are all under the domain of Yamaraj.

Those who give false witness are thrown into Raurav hell. Those who kill unborn babies and cows or destroy the villages fall into Rodha hell. Those who drink wine, kill Brahmin or steal gold fall into Sukar hell. Those who kill Kshatriya or Vaishya fall into Tal hell. Those who copulate with teacher's wife or their own sister fall in Taptakumbh hell. Those who sell women and horses fall in Taptloha hell. Those who copulate with their daughter or daughter-in-law fall into Mahajwal hell. Those who criticise the teachers and the Vedas or sell Vedas fall into Lavan hell. Those who violate social norms fall in Vilohit hell and those who envy the gods, the Brahmins and their parents fall in Krimibhaksha hell.

Those who dine first even before the parents, the gods and the guests fall into Lalabhaksha hell. Those who manufacture arrows fall in Vedhak hell. Those who manufacture swords fall in Vishsan hell. Backbiters, killers of friends and sellers of wine fall in Rudhirandh hell. Destroyers of Yagya and villages fall in Vaitarni hell.

Thus, the sinners have to suffer scores of tortures in these and many other hells. These sinners after passing their lives in the hell take birth as worms, aquatic animals and birds, terrestrial animals, human beings, religious people etc. Only those sinners who do not expiate for their sins fall into the hell. Our sages have made provisions of expiation for those sinners who feel guilty in their conscience after committing their sins. Remembrance of Lord's name is in itself the greatest expiation. Remembrance of Lord's name anytime in life destroys all the previous sins instantaneously. Hence recitation of Vasudeva's name is sure way of attaining salvation. Thus those who recite and remember Lord Vishnu's name never fall in any hell because their sins have been destroyed. Anything where one feels pleasant is heaven and opposite of it is hell.

CHAPTER SEVEN DESCRIPTION OF CELESTIAL WORLDS

Maitreya says- "O Brahmin! Kindly narrate now about the celestial worlds and the position of stars and planets there."

Parashar says- At a height of 1,00,000 Yojans above the earth is the sphere of the Sun. 1,00,000 Yojans above it is the sphere of the Moon and 1,00,000 Yojans above it is the sphere of the stars.

At a height of 2,00,000 Yojans above, the sphere of stars is Buddh (Mercury) and 2,00,000 Yojans above it is Shukra (Venus). Above Venus are Mangal (Mars), Brihaspati (Jupiter), and Shani (Saturn) at respective heights of 2,00,000 Yojans each. 1,00,000 Yojans above the Saturn

is Saptarishi and 1,00,000 Yojans above it is the sphere of Dhruva. It appears as the center of a bright ring.

One crore Yojans above Dhruva is Maharloka where sages like Bhrigu etc. live. Two crore Yojans above Maharloka is Janaloka where Brahma's sons Sanakadi Kumars live. At a height of 8,00,00,000 Yojans above Janaloka is Tapaloka live deities named Vairaj who are never consigned to flames. Twelve crore Yojans above Tapaloka is Satyaloka which is also known as Brahmaloaka. Only immortal beings live there.

CHAPTER EIGHT ORDER OF THE SUN, STARS AND CONSTELLATIONS

The Sun travels speedily across the sky like an arrow. He determines the night and the day. With the rising and setting of the Sun, one can have knowledge of the directions. Sun lights up all the places in the entire world except Brahmaloaka. Sun's rays that reach Brahmaloaka return back rendered ineffective by the radiance of Brahma. Since Mount Sumeru is situated at the north of all the islands and Varsh, hence towards the northern side of it, one part of land experiences the day while another part experiences the night all the time. The radiant Sun setting merges with fire. Hence, fire also has the power of illuminating and warming its environment.

At the beginning of Uttarayan (northward motion of the Sun), the Sun enters the zodiac of Capricorn. Travelling through Aquarius and Pisces, it reaches the equator which is at the center of the earth. Thereafter the nights begin to decrease in comparison of the days. Then travelling through Aries, Taurus and Gemini, the Sun enters Cancer to begin its southward journey.

The period of time between the day and night is dusk twilight. At that time, formidable demons try to swallow the Sun. Thus they have fierce battle with the Sun. The recitation of hymns by learned Brahmins during dusk twilight helps the Sun regain his lost radiance. With his brilliance then the demons are destroyed. Thus the Sun is a perfect form of Lord Vishnu. It shines with its inner radiance. Omkar is a symbolisation of the Sun. It is also mandatory for the Brahmins to perform evening worship. Those who do not worship in the evening hurt the Sun.

Towards the north of Saptarishi constellation, where polestar is situated, there is an abode of Lord Vishnu. Only those sages can reach there who are free from faults and whose sins and pious deeds have been attenuated. Supremely brilliant Dhruva stays in the abode of Vishnu. Every other thing is dependent upon Dhruva. All the Nakshatras also depend on Dhruva. On Nakshatras depend the clouds and on the clouds depends the rain and on the rains depend the nourishment of entire world. Thus, all the other things come to depend upon Dhruva.

The sacred Ganges which is the destroyer of every sin also rises from the abode of Lord Vishnu. Dhruva bears the Ganges on his head. Flowing through the sphere of the Moon, the Ganges falls on Mount Meru and flows in every direction to sanctify the entire world. Bathing in the water of the Ganges destroys all the sins. Offering of oblations in the waters of Ganges satiates dead ancestors for one hundred years.

Starry, chameleon-like appearance of Lord Vishnu can be seen in the night sky. A polestar is present in its tail. All the other stars, the Sun, the Moon and other planets are present on different parts of this chameleon and go round the polestar. Uttanpad's son Dhruva had pleased this chameleon-like appearance of Lord Vishnu with his penance and sought a fixed position in His tail. Even the Sun is dependent on Dhruva.

The Sun keeps on evaporating the water for eight months in a year. This evaporated water then rains for four months and nourishes the soil and produces different kinds of cereals for the nourishment of the entire world. The water that is evaporated by the Sun also nourishes the Moon. But the Moon itself does not consume that water. Instead it gives that water to the clouds. During winter season, this water released by the Moon falls on earth as snow and dew.

The Sun draws water from Akashganga (the Milky Way) also and causes it to rain on earth at once. That water is so sacred that mere touch of it destroys all the sins. The rains that fall during Nakshatras like Kritika; Rohini, Addra etc. come from the water of Akashganga.

CHAPTER NINE TWELVE NAMES OF THE SUN

In the month of Chaitra, the Sun rides his chariot as Dhata. During that period, apsara Kratusthala, sage Pulastya, Nag Vasuki, Yaksha Rathmirith, demon Heti and the Gandharva Tumaru are also present on the chariot as his assistants. In the month of Vaishakh, the Sun rides his chariot as Aryama with sage Pulah, Yaksha Rathauja, apsara Punjasthala, demon Praheti, snake Kachchhveer and Gandharva Narada as his assistants.

In the month of Jyeshtha, the Sun is known as Mitra with sage Atri, snake Takshak, demon Paurusheya, apsara Menaka, Gandharva Haha and Yaksha Rathswan as his assistants. In the month of Ashad, the Sun rides his chariot as Varuna with sage Vashishta, snake Nag, apsara Sahajanya, Gandharva Huhu, demon Ratha and Yaksha Rathachitra as his assistants.

In the month of Shravan, the Sun is known as Indra with Gandharva Vishwabasu, Yaksha Strot, snake Elaputra, sage Angira, apsara Prabhalocha and the demon Sarpi as his assistants. In the month of Bhadrapad, the Sun is known as Vivasvan. With Gandharva Ugrasena, sage Bhrigu, Yaksha, Apurana, apsara Anubhlocha, snake Shankhpal and the demon Vyaghra as his assistants.

In the month of Ashwin, the Sun is known as Pusha with Gandharva Vasuruchi, demon Vat, sage Gautam, snake Dhananjay, Yaksha Sushen and the apsara Ghritachi as his assistants. In the month of Kartik, the Sun is known as Parjanya and is assisted by the Gandharva Vishwabasu, sage Bharadwaj, snake Airavat, apsara Vishwashree, Yaksha Senjit and the demon Ap.

In the month of Margsheersh, the Sun is known as Ansh and is assisted by sage Kashyapa, Yaksha Tarkshya, snake Mahapadma, apsara Urvashi, Gandharva Chitrasen and the demon Vidyut. In the month of Paush, the Sun is known as Bhaga and is assisted by sage Kratu, Gandharva Urnayu, demon Sfurja, snake Karkotak, Yaksha Arishtnemi and apsara Purvachitti. In the month of Magh, the Sun is known as Twasta with sage Jamadagni, snake Cambal, apsara Tilottama, demon Brahmopet, Yaksha Ritajit and Gandharva Dhritarashtra.

In the month of Phagun, the Sun is known as Vishnu and is assisted by snake Ashwatar, apsara Rambha, Gandharva Suryavacha, Yaksha Shatajit, sage Vishwamitra and the demon Yagyopet. Thus having some parts of Lord Vishnu's radiance, these seven ganas stay in the sphere of the Sun for one month alternatively. They are also the cause of seasons like summer, winter and rain.

CHAPTER TEN SURYA SHAKTI AND VAISHNAVI SHAKTI

Maitreya says- "Lord, if only the seven Ganas are entrusted with the job of causing cold and summer, drought and rain, what is the purpose then of the Sun's existence? "

Parashar says- It is true that Surya is one of the seven Ganas. Yet being the chief among them, it has special significance. Omnipotent supreme power of Lord Vishnu is nothing but the three Vedas. These together stay within the Sun and provide it with energy necessary to sustain the world. Their presence within the Sun remains constant irrespective of the Sun's changing names every month. In the morning, Rigveda prays the Sun with its Shrutis. In the noontime, Yajurveda prays the Sun whereas in the evening, Shrutis of Samaveda pray the Sun. Thus, Lord Vishnu always energises the Sun.

Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh are also present in trinity form. Their trinity too represents the three Vedas. At the beginning of creation, Brahma was in the form of Rigveda. During the sustenance of the universe, Lord Vishnu stays in Yajurveda form whereas at the end of the creation when Pralaya occurs, Rudra takes Samaveda form. Hence the recitation of Samaveda is considered inauspicious. Energies of the trinity stays within the Sun in synergetic form. Hence the Sun glows brilliantly and destroys the darkness.

Lord Vishnu, who represents energy of this trinity, never rises nor sets. His Vaishnavi Shakti never parts with the Sun's chariot and stays there irrespective of the changing names of the Sun with months. Thus, the Sun, which causes the formation of day and night always satiates Pitragana, Devgana and human beings. One of the Sun's rays named Sushumna nourishes the Moon during its brighter phase. Then during the darker phase, the gods drink the phases of the Moon, which are in fact, ambrosia accumulated during the brighter phase. When two days are left for the completion of darker phase, Pitragana drink the remaining two phases of the Moon. Thus, the Sun satiates the gods and the deceased ancestors.

The water that the Sun draws from earth is returned to the earth in the form of rains. This rainfall produces cereals, which nourish the entire population on earth.

CHAPTER ELEVEN DESCRIPTION OF THE NINE PLANETS

The Moon rides a chariot with three wheels. This chariot is hauled by ten horses. During its entire journey, the Moon passes through all the twenty-seven Nakshatras. These horses haul the

Moon's chariot for a complete Kalpa. With his rays, the Sun nourishes the Moon, which loses its strength because of drinking of its ambrosia by the gods.

When the gods brought even the last drop of nectar from the Moon, it enters the Sun's sphere. That day is known as Amavasya (moonless night). That day, the Moon first enters the water then the foliage of the trees, creepers etc. and ultimately enters the Sun's sphere. That is why, anybody who cuts trees or even plucks a leaf commits crime equal to killing of Brahmin. On the day of Amavasya, Pitragana drink the nectar from the Moon and feel sated. Thus, Moon sates the gods during the brighter phase and the Pitragana during darker phase. The Moon also showers its nectar on the trees, creepers and other vegetation. It also causes exhilaration for the human beings, animals, birds and creatures like insects etc.

Buddha (Mercury) is the son of the Moon. His chariot is made of fire and air and is hauled by eight horses of deep yellow colour. The chariot of Shukra (Venus) is also very splendid and is adorned by beautiful flags. Mangal (Mars) rides a golden chariot, which is born from the fire. His chariot is hauled by eight red horses. Brihaspati rides a golden chariot hauled by eight yellow horses. Shani (Saturn) is famous for slow motion. He rides a chariot which was born from the sky. The colour of his chariot's horses is also very peculiar. Rahu's chariot is brown in colour and is hauled by eight black horses. Ketu's chariot is also drawn by eight horses, which are red in colour.

Chariots of all the nine planets are tied to Dhruva. Thus, all of them traverse the same path again and again year after year. Sighting of Shishumar chakra (constellation path) in the night destroys all the sins that a human being commits during the daytime.

Water is a tangible form of Lord Vishnu. Even the earth was born out of water. Stars, all the three worlds, forests, vegetation, mountains, directions, rivers, sea and entire nature is the form of Lord Vishnu. This vivid nature thus shows omnipresence character of Lord Vishnu.

CHAPTER TWELVE LIFE SKETCH OF BHARATA

Maitreya says- "Lord! Now I wish to hear various tales from the life of King Bharata. He was born in a pious land and always contemplated on God. Even then why he failed to attain salvation? What did he do in his next birth as a Brahmin?"

Parashar says- King Bharata always contemplated on God. He stayed at Shalgram for a long time. There he used to recite the names of God and collect various materials for His worship. Other than that, he did not do anything. One day while he was taking bath in the river, a doe arrived at the opposite bank. She was in the final stage of pregnancy. While she was drinking water, a lion roared somewhere in the forest behind her. That roar frightened the doe so much that she jumped across the river to save her life. Exertion of jumping resulted in premature littering of her fawn, which fell in the river. On the other hand, the doe also could not bear the pain and died.

King Bharata rescued the just born fawn and brought it to his hermitage. Since then he began to foster the fawn with love and care. With time, Bharata's attachment grew for the fawn and

whenever it went out of sight, he would feel perplexed. Soon King Bharata deserted everything for the love of the fawn. He even left his routine worship and meditation for it would be hard to concentrate whenever the fawn was near and at times when the fawn was out of sight, it worried Bharata and hence he could not concentrate.

But the fawn could not give up its natural instincts. When it grew up, one day, it happened to sight a herd of deer and mingled with it to find a mate of its own choice and since that day, it never returned to the hermitage. Separation from the deer proved fatal for the King Bharata. While dying his mind was fully concentrating on the thoughts of the deer which he had fostered with love and care. Because of it, Bharata took his next birth as a deer. But still he remembered his past life. So he deserted his herd and found a place in Shalgram where he passed his time eating dry grass and foliage.

In his next birth, Bharata was born in a cultured Brahmin family. In this birth also, he remembered his past lives. Since birth, Bharata knew all the rituals and scriptures and saw his soul in a transcendental way. Hence, even after his thread ceremony, he did not take up his education. Even the teachers failed to incite his interest in education. Bharata roamed here and there, clad in rags and was hence insulted by fellow Brahmins and village folk.

Thus Bharata remained indifferent to the others' treatment and sustained himself on whatever little he got to eat. After the demise of his father, his brothers made him work hard in the fields but gave little to eat. Because of his inertness, he was known as JadaBharata.

One night, when JadaBharata was guarding his fields, the king's commander-in-chief, Vrishatraj caught him and took him away. The king wanted to sacrifice him before goddess Mahakali. But seeing the supreme Yogi being brought as a votive animal, goddess Mahakali expressed her wrath by decapitating the king and drank his blood.

In another incident later on, the king of Sauveer was travelling in a palanquin to visit sage Kapila for religious preaching. Incidentally, one man fell short to carry his palanquin, so the other carriers saw and caught JadaBharata to forcibly engage him in the work of carrying the palanquin. While walking, JadaBharata was taking care not to put his feet on any creature. So he was moving very slowly whereas other carriers were walking briskly. As a result of it, the palanquin was moving jerkily causing irritation to the king. The king enquired the carriers about the reasons of that jerky motion. The carriers informed him that it was because of the new recruit who is moving very slowly. The king shouted at JadaBharata- "You appear to be quite burly. Don't you have enough strength? Does a little work tire you?" JadaBharata said- "O king! Neither I am burly nor carrying your palanquin. I am neither tired nor there is any need for me to labour." The king said- "Apparently you are burly and my palanquin is also resting on your shoulder. Carrying a load always tires anybody. How are you different then from the others?"

JadaBharata said- "O king! First of all, tell me, what do you see directly? Your saying that I am carrying your palanquin is also meaningless. Now listen to what I say. Both my feet are resting on the earth. On the feet are thighs, and on the thighs is belly, on the belly are chest, shoulders and arms. Your palanquin is resting on the shoulders. What load am I carrying then? You are in the palanquin and I am on the earth are meaningless words. All the creatures, you and me are all

carried by the five basic elements. Even our virtues are controlled by our action. Only action is born out of ignorance. The soul is pure, non-degradable, calm, intangible and beyond all nature. This same soul pervades all the creatures. It neither grows nor decays. Why did you say then that I am burly? If this palanquin that is resting on my shoulders-chest-belly-thighs and feet, could be a burden for me, it could also be a burden for you. Like this, all the living beings are carrying not only this palanquin but all the mountains, trees, houses and even the earth."

Saying this, JadaBharata became silent, still carrying the palanquin. The king at once got down from the palanquin and fell at JadaBharata's feet and said- "O Brahmin! Leave this palanquin and tell me why have you taken this guise. Who are you? What is the reason of your coming here? I am eager to know about you."

JadaBharata said- "I cannot tell what I am and for the reason why I came here, I can say only that coming and going are all done so that one can experience their result. The soul takes an incarnation only to experience the joy and sorrow as per its deeds. Why are you then enquiring specifically about the reason for my coming here?"

The king said- "The soul transmigrates from one body to another only because of its action. I want to hear from you preaching regarding 'who am I cannot be told'. O Brahmin! The soul that is eternal and experiences the results of its action is I. This mark of ego is not a cause of demerit in the soul."

JadaBharata said- "You are right that words do not cause any demerit in the soul. But the ego expressed in the form of words is the reason for demerit in soul. When the same and single soul stays in everybody, possessive words are then meaningless. You are the king. This is the palanquin. They are the carriers and those are the subjects. O king! None of these words has any meaning. This palanquin is made of the wood received from some tree. So tell me what it should be called as- a palanquin or wood. Nobody says that the king is sitting on a tree. It is because of specific construction that a heap of wood has assumed the shape of a palanquin. For the purpose of action, the same soul is identified physically as a man, a woman, a cow, a goat, a horse, an elephant, a bird or a tree. But in fact, the soul is none of them. Things like wealth, king, kingdom, king's army and all other things that you possess are not fact. They are imaginations. For the subjects, you are king. For the son, you are father. For the wife, you are husband, and the father of her children. O king! Tell me, what should I address you as? Are you different from any of these nouns? Hence, always be careful while considering who am I? O king! The soul is so arranged in different roles that it is very difficult to tell specifically its real identity."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN JADABHARATA PREACHES THE KING

The king said-"O Brahmin. I was going to see sage Kapila and have the preaching regarding excellent human virtues. But now, hearing your words, I feel that I need not go any further. You are an ocean of knowledge. Kindly preach me about human virtues."

JadaBharata said- "O king! For those who worship the Lord with a desire to receive wealth and kingdom, these things are a supreme goal. For those who want to attain heaven, action in the form of forming Yagya is the goal. But the supreme virtue is to act in a selfless way without having a desire for results. A Yogi must contemplate on that transcendental soul because it is the only means to merge with that supreme soul."

If the wealth is the goal while it is spent in religious activities. If the son is the goal, the father too might have been a goal for someone. Thus, there is no supreme goal because everything exists for a time then ceases to exist. Hence the assumption of any physical thing as a supreme goal is meaningless. And consideration of soul separate from supreme soul is also futile. The soul is one, all pervasive, impartial, pure, intangible and transcendental. It is free from the cycles of birth and death. It can neither be created nor be destroyed. It is supremely omniscient. Its manifestation in different life forms is temporary and identification of soul with living beings is baseless. Soul which is present in scores of living beings is basically single and same. Once one comes to know this, he doesn't remain in darkness. Veil of ignorance then parts with him.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN TALE OF RIBHU AND NIDAGH

Hearing JadaBharata's words, the king fell in deep thoughts. JadaBharata then narrated the tale of Ribhu and Nidagh. Once upon a time, in the beautiful town of Veernagar at the bank of the river Devika, there lived Nidagh, the son of Pulastya. He was a disciple of Ribhu, the son of Brahma. Once, after a gap of one thousand years, Ribhu decided to see his disciple Nidagh. So he arrived at Veernagar. Nidagh welcomed and treated him warmly. In the night after dinner, they both sat together and Nidagh asked him if he relished the food.

Ribhu said- "O Brahmin! Only those who feel hungry are sated. I have never experienced hunger or thirst. How then can I tell you about my satisfaction? Hunger and thirst are the virtues of the physical body. Health and satisfaction are the states of mind. O Brahmin! Ask this question only to those who have these virtues, not me. Even the qualities of food like deliciousness and insipidness are meaningless because a delicious edible item loses its taste after sometime and causes irritation instead of satisfaction. Hence you should strive to develop a sense of impartiality towards delicious and insipid food items. Also sense of impartiality is essential to attain salvation."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN RIBHU PREACHES NIDAGH

One thousand years after this incident, Ribhu once again decided to see his disciple Nidagh. So he once again arrived in Veernagar. At that time, king of that town was leading a procession of his army. So there was a great crowd on the main road of the town. Nidagh was carrying some worship materials from the forest but seeing a huge crowd on the road, he stood aside waiting for its dispersion. Meanwhile, Ribhu also arrived there. Seeing Nidagh standing alone away from the crowd, Ribhu approached him and asked why he was standing there. Nidagh said- "O Brahmin! Today, the king of our town had taken out a procession. So I am standing here waiting for the dispersion of crowd so that I can reach home and offer my worship."

Ribhu asked- " It appears from your words that you know everything about your town. Kindly tell me who is the king and who are the subjects?" Nidagh said- "The one who is riding an elephant is the king and those who are following him on the ground are his subjects."

Ribhu said- "O Nidagh! You have shown me the king and the elephant together but did not show their distinguishing symptoms separately. Who is the king among them and who is the elephant?" Nidagh said- "The one who is above is the king and the one who is beneath is the elephant." Ribhu said- "Kindly elaborate what is above and what is beneath?" As soon as Ribhu finished his words, Nidagh climbed on his shoulders and said- "Look, like the king, I am above you and like the elephant, you are beneath me." Ribhu said- "If you are like the king and I am like the elephant, kindly explain to me, who are you and who am I?" Nidagh at once climbed down and fell at Ribhu's feet and said- "Certainly, you are the great sage Ribhu." Ribhu said- "Yes, I am Ribhu and I have come to preach you out of affection." Thereafter Ribhu preached Nidagh on the universality of soul and development of impartial view and left. By his preaching, Nidagh's ignorance dispersed and he began to see all the creatures equal to impartially.

O king! Like the Brahmin who attains salvation because of impartial view, you also develop an impartial view regarding soul. Then you will not see anyone separate from you. Everything in this world is a manifestation of soul.

Parashar says- "Thus preached by JadaBharata, the king of Sauveer left his partial attitude. JadaBharata too received salvation when he realised the true knowledge."

PART THREE

CHAPTER ONE DESCRIPTION OF MANVANTARAS

Maitreya says- "O Gurudev! Now I wish to hear the description of all the Manvantaras and the Manus who ruled those Manvantaras."

Parashar says- "First Manu was self-begotten. After him five more Manus occurred namely Swarochish, Uttam, Tamas, Raivat and Chakshush. All these Manus had occurred during the previous ages. The present Manu, Vaivasvat is the son of the Sun and this Manvantara is seventh."

In the Swarochish Manvantara, Paravat and Tushitgana were the gods. Vipaschit was Indra. Urjja, Stambh, Pran, Vat, Vrishabh, Nitya and Parivan were the Saptarishis. Chaitra and KimPurusha etc. were the sons of Manu.

Uttam was the Manu in Uttam Manvantara. Sushanti was Indra with Sudham, Satya, Japa, Pratardan and Vashvarti were his Ganas. Seven sons of Vashishta were Saptarishis.

In Tamas Manvantara, there were four categories of the gods namely Supar, Hari, Satya and Sudhi. Each of them had twenty-seven gods each. King Shibi was Indra during that Manvantara. Jyotirdhama, Prithu, Katya, Chaitra, Agni, Vanak and Peevar were Saptarishis.

During Raivat Manvantara, Vibhu was Indra. There were four categories of the gods namely Amitabh, Bhootrath, Vaikunth and Sumedha with fourteen gods each. Hiranyaroma, Vedsri, Urdhvabahu, Vedbahu, Sudama, Parjanya and Mahamuni were the Saptarishis. Four Manus Swarochish, Uttam, Tamas and Raivat are said to be the direct descendant of King Priyavrat.

During Chakshush Manvantara, Indra's name was Manojav. Apya, Prasoot, Bhavya, Prithuk and Lekh were the categories of gods each with eight deities. Sumedha, Viraja, Havishman, Uttam, Madhu, Atinama and Sahishnu were the Saptarishis.

During the present Manvantara, the Sun's brilliant son Shraddhdev is Manu. Aditya, Vasu and Rudra are the categories of the gods. Indra's name is Puranadar. Vashishta, Kashyapa, Atri, Jamadagni, Gautam, Vishwamitra and Bharadwaj are the Saptarishis. Present Manu has nine sons Ikshvaku, Nrig, Drisht, Sharayati, Narishyant, Nabhag, Arisht, Karush and Prishadhra.

CHAPTER TWO BIRTH OF SAVARANI MANU AND NEXT MANVANTARAS

Maitreya says- "O sage, kindly narrate about the future Manvantaras that are to come."

Parashar says- Vishwakarma's daughter Sangya was the wife of Surya. They had three children, Manu, Yama and Yamani. Sangya once felt unable to bear the radiance of Surya. So, appointing Chhaya (her shadow) in the service of Surya, she herself migrated to the forest and began to observe a penance. Surya mistook Chhaya for Sangya and copulated with her. This resulted in the birth of three children- one more Manu, Shani and Tapati. One day, getting angry for some unknown reason, Chhaya who was in the guise of Sangya cursed Yama. Only then Surya and Yama came to know about her real identity. Through meditation, Surya saw that the real Sangya was observing penance as a mare in the forest. Surya also arrived in the forest and mated with Sangya in horse form. Their mating resulted in the birth of two Ashwini kumars, Retahstrav and Revant. Thereafter, Surya brought Sangya to his abode where Vishwakarma dulled his radiance. Chhaya's son, Manu was a sibling of Manu; hence he came to be known as Savarni.

During the next Manvantara, Savarni will rule as Manu. Sutap, Amitabh and Mukhya will be the categories of gods each with twenty deities. Ditiman, Galav, Rama, Krip, Ashwatthama, Rishisring and my son, Veda Vyasa will be among the Saptarishis. By the grace of Lord Vishnu, Virochan's son Bali will occupy the throne of Indra.

Daksha Savarni will be the ninth Manu. During that Manvantara, Par, Marichgarv and Sudharma will be the three categories of the gods with twelve deities each. Adbhut will be Indra. Savan, Dyutiman, Bhavya, Vasu, Meghatithi, Jyotishman and Sata will be among the Saptarishis.

Brahma Savarni will be the tenth Manu. During that Manvantara, Sudhama and Vishuddh will be the two categories of gods with hundred deities each. Shanti will be Indra. Havishman, Sukrit, Satya, Tapomurti, Nabhag, Apratimauja and Satyaketu will be among the Saptarishis.

Dharmasavarni will be the eleventh Manu. Vihangam, Kamgam and Nirvangati will be the categories of gods each with thirty deities. Indra's name will be Vish. Nihsvar, Agniteja, Vayushman, Ghrini, Aruni, Havishman and Anagh will be among the Saptarishis.

Rudraputra Savarni will be the twelfth Manu. Ritudhama will be Indra and Harit, Rohit, Sumna, Sukarma and Surag will be the five categories of the gods each with ten deities. Tapasvi, Sutapa, Tapomurti, Taporati, Tapoghriti, Tapodyuti and Tapodhan will be among the Saptarishis.

Ruchi will be the thirteenth Manu. Sutrama, Sukarma and Sudharma will be the categories of the gods each with thirty-three deities. Devaspati will be Indra. Nirmoha, Tatvagarshi, Nishprakam, Nirutsuk, Ghriman, Avyay and Sutapa will be among the Saptarishis.

Bhaum will be the fourteenth Manu. Suchi will be Indra. Chakshush, Pavitra, Kanishth, Bhrajik and Vachavridh will be the five categories of the gods. Agnibahu, Suchi, Shukra, Magadh, Agnidhra, Yukt and Jit will be among the Saptarishis.

With the passing of these fourteen Manvantaras, a Kalpa that comprises of one thousand yugas will come to an end. In Satya Yuga, Lord Vishnu preaches about the metaphysical knowledge in Kapila's incarnation. In Treta Yuga, He destroys the evil doers and protects the world. In Dwapar Yuga, He divides the Vedas into four divisions. At the end of Kali Yuga, Lord takes Kali incarnation and inspires corrupt people to religious path. Thus, Lord Vishnu maintains order in all the four yugas and causes the creation, sustenance and ultimately destruction of the universe.

CHAPTER THREE VEDA VYASA AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BRAHMAGYAN

Maitreya says- "O Lord! How did God divide Vedas in the form of Veda Vyasa during different yugas?"

Parashar says- During each Dwapar Yuga, in every Kalpa, Lord Vishnu takes incarnation as Veda Vyasa and effects the division of Vedas for the benefit of human beings.

During every Dwapar Yuga of the present Vaivasvat Manvantara, different Vyasas have divided the Vedas twenty-eight times. During the first Dwapar, Brahma himself had divided the Vedas. During the second Dwapar, Prajapati was Veda Vyasa. During the third Dwapar, Shukracharya was Veda Vyasa. During fourth Dwapar, Brihaspati acted as Veda Vyasa.

Description of other sages who acted as Veda Vyasa during the subsequent Dwapars is as follows- Surya- fifth Veda Vyasa; Mrityu- sixth Veda Vyasa, Indra- seventh Veda Vyasa, Vashishta- eighth Veda Vyasa, Saraswat- ninth Veda Vyasa, Tridhama- tenth Veda Vyasa, Trishikh- eleventh Veda Vyasa, Bharadwaj- twelfth Veda Vyasa, Antariksh- thirteenth Veda Vyasa, Varani- fourteenth Veda Vyasa. Names of next fourteen Veda Vyasas are as follows- Trayyarun, Dhananjay, Krutunjay, Jay, Bharadwaj, Gautam, Haryatma, Vajshrava, Trinbindhu, Riksh (Valmiki), Shakti, Parashar, Jatukarn and Krishnadwaipayan. After Krishnadwaipayan, Drona's son, Ashwatthama will be the next Veda Vyasa.

CHAPTER FOUR EXPANSION OF THE BRANCHES OF RIGVEDA

At the beginning of creation, Rigveda contained all the four Vedas with hundred thousand mantras. That Rigveda helped a lot in the propagation of ten kinds of Yagyas. Then during the twenty-eighth Dwapar, my son, Krishnadwaipayana effected the division of Rigveda in four Vedas. At the same time, he also trained four of his distinguished disciples in the study of Vedas. Each one of them was interested with the study of one particular Veda for infinite period of time. Accordingly, sage Pail mastered in Rigveda, Vaishampayan in Yajurveda, Jaimini in Samaveda and Sumantu in Atharvaveda. With the four Vedas, practice of Chaturhotra also came into being. Chaturhotra is now the main guiding feature of all kinds of Yagyas. Vyasa also established the Karmas of Adhvarayu by Yajurveda, of Hota by Rigveda, of Udgata by Samaveda and of Brahma by Atharvaveda.

Sage Pail divided Rigveda into two divisions and taught them to two of his disciples- Indrapramiti and Vashkal. In his term, Vashkal divided his branch into four sub-branches and taught them to his disciples. Indrapramiti taught his branch of Rigveda to his talented son, sage Mandukeya. Thus branches and sub-branches of Rigveda grew substantially. In this tradition, Shakalyavedamitra learnt a Samhita and divided it into five sub-branches. One of his disciples named Shakpurn created three Samhitas whereas his another disciple created Nirukta Grantha. Vashkal created three Samhitas and taught them to Kalayani, Gargya and Tathaja.

CHAPTER FIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE BRANCHES OF YAJURVEDA

A disciple of Veda Vyasa named Vaishampayan created twenty-seven branches of Yajurveda and taught them to his disciples. He had a disciple Yagyavalkya who was the son of Brahmarat. At that time, all the sages together constituted a rule that whoever did not join their group within seven days on Mahameru would be held as a sinner equal to killing a Brahmin. Only Vaishampayan had violated that ruling. The curse of the sages did come true when Vaishampayan killed his sleeping nephew accidentally. Then he asked his disciples to do away with his sin.

Yagyavalkya said- "Lord! All these Brahmins are extremely dull. I will alone do away with your sin." These boastful words infuriated Vaishampayan. He said- "You are insulting these Brahmins so at once, regurgitate whatever I have taught you." Yagyavalkya said- "Lord! I uttered these words out of devotion for you. Still you wish me to regurgitate what you have taught me. Here it is! Saying this, Yagyavalkya vomited out all the Shrutis of Yajurveda. Other disciples of Vaishampayan pecked them in the form of partridges. Since then, they came to be known as Taitriya Brahmins. Holding his breath, Yagyavalkya then started the worship of the Sun with a desire to regain Yajurveda.

Pleased by his prayers, Surya appeared before him in horse form and asked him to seek a boon. Yagyavalkya requested Surya to preach him those Shrutis of Yajurveda, which were not known

even to his teacher, Vaishampayan. Surya preached him those Shrutis of Yajurveda, which were known as Ayatyam. The Brahmins who read these Shrutis came to be known as Vaji. Nowadays, there are fifteen sub-branches of these Vaji Shrutis, which were initially expounded by sage Yagyavalkya.

CHAPTER SIX BRANCHES OF SAMAVEDA AND EIGHTEEN PURANAS

Sage Jaimini, a disciple of Veda Vyasa, effected branches of Samaveda. Sage Jaimini had a son, Sumantu. Sumantu in turn had a son, Sukarma. Both of them studied a branch of Samaveda each. Sukarma divided his branch of Samaveda into sub-branches and taught them to his two disciples- Kaushalya Hiranyanabh and Paushpinji. Hiranyanabh had five hundred disciples. Upon receiving the knowledge of Samaveda branch from Hiranyanabh, these disciples came to be known as Prachya Samag. Disciples of Paushpinji also effected divisions in Samaveda that they received from their teacher. One more disciple of Hiranyanabh named Kriti taught twenty-four Samhitas of Samaveda to his disciples.

Sage Sumant taught Atharvaveda to his disciple Kabandh. Kabandh divided it into two parts and taught them to Devdarsh and Pathya respectively. A disciple of Pathya named Shaunak divided his Samhita into two parts and gave one of them to his disciple Vabhru and another to Saindhav. Saindhav's disciple Munjakesh divided his Samhita into three parts. Presently, five Samhitas of Atharvaveda namely Nakshatrakalpa, Vedakalpa, Samhitakalpa, Angiraskalpa and Shantikalpa are considered authentic.

Still unsatisfied by his achievement, sage Veda Vyasa created Purana Samhita and taught them to his famous disciple Romaharshan Suta. The Samhita that was created by Romaharshan was the base of three Samhitas- Akritvrana, Savarni and Shanspayan created by Kashyapagotriya Brahmins. Vishnu Purana is in a way a summation of these four Samhitas. There are in all eighteen Puranas. In chronological order, these are as follows- Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Vaishnav Purana, Shiva Purana, Bhagvat Purana. Narada Purana, Markandeya Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Brahmavaivart Purana, Linga Purana, Varaha Purana, Skanda Purana, Vamana Purana, Kurma Purana, Matsya Purana, Garuda Purana and Brahmand Purana.

CHAPTER SEVEN YAMAGITA

Maitreya says- "Lord! At the end of a life span, all the people come to be controlled by Yamaraj. When they are bound to undergo scores of suffering in different kinds of hells. Kindly narrate about such action by which a human being gets free from the noose of Yamaraj."

Parashar says- Youngest among the Pandavas, Nakul had once put the same question before Pitamaha Bhisma. I am narrating what once Bhisma had narrated to Nakul. Before sending Yamaraj advises his agents to stay away from the devotee of Lord Krishna.

Yamaraj is lord of all the human beings except Vaishnavas. Only Lord Vishnu is able to control Yamaraj. About the devotee of Lord Vishnu, Yamaraj says - He who does not deviate from his

duties even in severest of crisis, who does not steal the wealth of others and kill animals is undoubtedly a devotee of Lord Vishnu. He who bears Lord Vishnu in his heart is a devotee of Lord Vishnu. He who is free from all kinds of ego and illusions and always wishes well for the others with pure and peaceful heart is a devotee of Lord Vishnu. Thus those who always contemplate on Lord Vishnu don't even fear death. Yama, Yamadoot, Yamapash, Yamagana and even tortures of Yama are unable to hurt them.

CHAPTER EIGHT DUTIES OF FOUR CLASSES OF SOCIETY

Maitreya says - "Lord! How should one worship Lord Vishnu? Kindly describe it to me.

Parashar says- King Sagar had asked the same thing from sage Aurv. I am narrating what sage Aurv had preached him.

Only those who fulfil their responsibilities and discharge their duties as per their class can worship Lord Vishnu. Those who shun activities like criticising others, backbiting, womanising, stealing others' wealth and violence; those who do not torture others and are always ready to serve the gods, Brahmins and teachers are able to please Lord Vishnu. Similarly, one should be always conscious regarding his duties as per his class.

Accordingly, a Brahmin should carry out Yagyas, study scriptures and should not ever try to hurt anybody. A Kshatriya must organise Yagyas and study scriptures. He should also make donations to Brahmins and take weapons in order to protect the earth. A Vaishya must earn his livelihood through cattle rearing, commerce and agriculture. Besides he should also organise Yagyas make donations and study scriptures. A Shudra is expected to earn his livelihood through handicrafts. Saluting learned people is equal to organising Yagya for a Shudra. A Shudra may also make donations and oblations to appease his dead ancestors.

In the time of emergency, a Brahmin may shift to the occupations meant for Kshatriya and Vaishya. A Kshatriya may take the occupation of a Vaishya during emergency but none of them should ever take to the occupation of Shudra.

CHAPTER NINE DESCRIPTION OF DIFFERENT ASHRAMAS

Since birth till death, human life passes through different stages. For the purpose of simplicity in following these stages, our sages have made provisions for four stages or ashramas in life namely Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanprastha and Sanyas.

Upanayana Sanskara (thread ceremony) marks the beginning of education for the children born in Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya classes. For this purpose, a disciple must stay in his teacher's hermitage and observe celibacy strictly. There, he must serve his teacher and worship Surya and Agni. The disciple is expected never to disobey his teacher. Activities should be according to the

teacher's guidelines. He should also make arrangements for the daily worship of his teacher in the way of collecting different materials like Havan samagri, water, Kusha, flowers etc.

After the completion of education and paying all the dues, the disciple is ready to start second stage of his life that is Grihastha ashrama. For this he should first find a suitable girl from his class and make merry. During this stage, he should earn his livelihood by occupations ascribed for his class. He should please the gods by Yagyas, his ancestors by oblations, Prajapatis by producing children, spectres by offering sacrifices of cereals and society by love. Even the ascetic and celibates depend on married people for their daily bread. Hence married life or Grihastha ashrama is stated to be excellent among all the ashramas. A Grihastha must welcome and warmly treat the guests who arrive unexpectedly. Such a household from where a guest returns desperately never succeeds in religious matters. All the worship and Yagyas offered in such a household go futile. Hence it is not proper for the householder to show ego and abuse a guest otherwise he will have to expiate for it later.

A person must always be on alert to recognise the time when it is apt to take Vanprastha. When the children grow and begin to hold the responsibility of the household, one enters the third stage i.e. Vanprastha ashrama. So, leaving his wife in the shelter of his children or taking her with him, one should migrate to the forest and live a simple life sustaining on whatever little is available from the nature. This stage must be passed observing severe penance and restraining one's senses. Sanyas ashrama is the fourth stage of life. One should give up all activities related to Dharma, Artha and Kama in this stage. He should keep an impartial view for all and cultivate a feeling of love for all the creatures. He should not hurt anybody by his words, actions or even thoughts. He should not stay in a village or town for more than five days. He should sustain his life on alms.

CHAPTER TEN CUSTOMS AND CONSECRATIONS

At the time of childbirth, it is the father's responsibility to carry out certain customs and consecrations for the child. First of all, Jatakarma Sanskara is carried out by which the newly born baby is included in the family. During this custom, a Brahmin couple is fed. It is also necessary for the couple that they should sit facing east while feeding. Thereafter, the parents should offer oblations to appease the gods and dead ancestors. Lumps made of barley flour, curd and berries should be offered as oblations. Similar consecrations are carried out at the time of children's marriage.

On the tenth day after the birth, the naming ceremony is carried out. Different castes and religion have different traditions regarding naming the newly born child. It is commonly seen that most of the children are named after the deities and gods. Still one should see that the name should not be meaningless, abusive or inauspicious. Practice of selecting exceptionally long and difficult to pronounce names should also be avoided.

The second stage in a child's life is when he or she begins education. In ancient times, thread ceremony used to be carried out and the children were sent to their teacher's hermitage for education. In modern age, thread ceremony is followed more or less in similar way as it used to be in the past. But children are not sent to Gurukul for education any more. After completing

education, a person should get married and run his own life. In the past, there had been elaborate rituals for the selection of suitable bride. Elders of the house used to select a proper match for the boy. Their choice in most cases depended on many attributes and bodily features of the girl. But in modern age, with increased interaction among the people, it is not possible to follow each and every custom related to selection of bride. Still one should take care not to marry in his mother's lineage for up to fifth generation and in his father's lineage up to seventh generation.

CHAPTER ELEVEN DESCRIPTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

A married man knows the importance of following a righteous discourse. Married life is like a penance in which a couple gives birth and raises next generation. A married man is expected to get up early in the morning and contemplate on religious things. It helps him to follow righteous discourse. He is expected to attend nature's call in natural environment away from his house. Soil is considered the best means to wash hands. It should be followed by cleansing of the body. He should then offer oblations wearing fresh clothes to sages, deities and his dead ancestors. Offering oblations to the Sun, worship of tutelary god and other deities follows then.

If the household is having some cattle, the head of the family should himself milk them and then wait for the guest. If and when a guest arrives, the head of the family must offer him a seat respectfully and treat him well with delicious food and pleasant talk. In Indian tradition, a guest is regarded equal to a deity. He should take food only after feeding the guest. Evening time has also elaborate rituals for a married man. First of all, after finishing daily chores, a married man must worship with peaceful mind. It is also good for his health to take food early in the evening and retire to a wooden bedstead. Night time is considered suitable period for enjoying carnal pleasure. Here too, a married man should enjoy intimacy with his wife only.

CHAPTER TWELVE SANCTIFICATION AFTER BIRTH AND DEATH

Life on earth is like an infinite ocean in which birth appears like a bubble and death marks the bursting of that bubble after which it exists no more. Atmosphere of a household is said to be defiled when a birth or death occurs in it. There are different sanctifying customs to be carried out on both these occasions. After the birth of a son, the father should offer oblations to please the gods and his ancestors after taking a bath.

When a death occurs in a household, close relatives should take bath and carry the cadaver adorned with flowers and garlands outside the village or well-demarcated cremation ground for cremation. As per the religious tradition of the deceased, the body should either be consigned to the flames or buried. Then the relatives should again take bath in the pond or river facing south and offer watery oblations to the dead person. Since that day, Pindadan (offering sweet balls made of barley flour, sesame seeds, jaggery and honey) should be done for ten days. On the fourth day of the cremation, ashes should be collected for immersion in holy places of pilgrimage.

The person who had carried out the cremation must abstain from intimacy for thirteen days. Outsiders are also barred from eating cereals from such a household where a death has occurred. For the different classes of Hindu society, this sanctifying period varies. For Brahmins, it is ten days, for Kshatriyas, it is twelve days, for Vaishyas, it is fifteen days and for Shudras, this period has been fixed for one month. On the same day in every subsequent month, oblations should be offered to the dead for one year.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN DAYS FOR MONTHLY OBLATIONS

A Shradha carried out with devotion pleases the entire world including human beings, Brahma, Indra, Rudra, Ashwini Kumars, Surya, Agni, Vasugana, Marudgana, Vishwadeva, Pitragana, birds, animals, reptiles, sages and of course the dead ancestors. Moonless and eighth day in the darker phase of every lunar month are considered the best days for offering oblations to the dead ancestors.

Apart from these two, third day in the brighter phase of Vaishakh, ninth day in brighter phase of Kartik, thirteenth day in the darker phase of Bhadrapad and Amavasya of Magh are also considered excellent. During lunar and solar eclipses also, oblations should be made with water and sesame seeds. If Shatabhisha Nakshatra occurs on Amavasya of Magh, it is considered an excellent conjugation for offering oblations to dead ancestors. Bathing in rivers like Ganga, Sutlej, Yamuna, Vipasha, Saraswati, Gomti, Godavari etc. while making oblations is also said to be extremely benefiting. It is not necessary also to show great pomp and show while making oblations. If one doesn't have enough money to offer oblations properly, he may simply pray the Sun saying that 'he is not fortunate enough to have wealth'. Thus, his ancestors would be pleased by his devotion alone.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN METHOD FOR OBLATIONS

While making oblations to the dead ancestors, one should feed his near and dear ones as well as learned Brahmins who respect their parents. Intimacy with women is barred for those who have taken food in an oblation. Any guest who happens to arrive unexpectedly and uninvited should be treated well. Before feeding, plain cereals should be offered thrice to the fire reciting following hymns. AGNAYE KAVYA VAHANAYE SWAHA | SOMAY PITRAMATE SWAHA | VAIVASVATAY SWAHA ||

Remaining cereals then should be served with the food to the Brahmins and some parts should also be cast on earth and water should be offered on them.

After the feast, the Brahmins should be seen off with respect. The host should then take food along with his family. Anger over enthusiasm and walking on the street is forbidden for the host during oblation period.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN DO'S AND DON'TS DURING OBLATION

Oblation with flesh of fish, rabbit, mongoose, hog, deer, gram flour and cereals cause extreme satisfaction for the ancestors. But in modern Kali Yuga, all types of flesh are forbidden in oblation rituals. Only cereals, milk, honey, etc. are allowed. Offering of oblation in Gaya (a place of pilgrimage in Bihar) is said to save all the ancestors. Barley, wheat, rice, sesame seeds, peas, and mustard are the common cereals and grains used in oblations.

Offering of oblation is a sacred affair. During the procedure, care should be taken that an eunuch, Chandala, sinner, imposter, patient, cock, dog, a naked person, monkey, pigs, a woman in menses, and anybody in whose house a death or birth has occurred don't see the performer otherwise neither the deities nor the ancestors would accept the oblations. Water used in oblation should also be free from odour and foam. Milk of camel, sheep, doe and buffalo should not be used in oblations. Before beginning the ritual, drive out the evil spirits from the selected piece of land. It should be cut off from outside influences through enclosures.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN THE BATTLE OF GODS AND DEMONS

Rig, Sama and Yajurveda are like the clothes of Hindu society. Those who give them up are in fact naked. This statement is endorsed by the following tale.

Once upon a time, a battle occurred between the demons and the gods. It lasted for one hundred years at the end of which period, the demons defeated the gods. The humiliated gods reached Ksheersagar and prayed Lord Vishnu. Pleased by their prayers, Lord Vishnu appeared before the gods. All the gods greeted Him and said- "O Lord! In sheer violation of Brahma's dictate, formidable demons have kidnapped even our due shares offered in the oblations. Protect us from the onslaught of the demons. We cannot fill them because they abide by their religion. Kindly show us a way to kill the demons."

Hearing the pleas of the gods, Lord Vishnu produced Mayamoha from His body and giving them to the gods, said- "Mayamoha will cause illusion in the minds of the demons. The illusion will influence the demons to violate the path shown by the Vedas. You can kill them after that". Saying this, the Lord disappeared. The gods took Mayamoha and reached the abode of the demons.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN DIALOGUE OF MAYAMOHA WITH DEMONS

Mayamoha was produced in a naked form. It reached the bank of Narmada and saw the demons observing penance there. The naked Mayamoha then approached them and said in a sweet voice- " O demons! What is the purpose of your penance?" The demons said- "We are observing

penance to achieve the metaphysical world." Mayamoha said- "If you long for salvation, do as I suggest. Follow the religion which is like an open gate to salvation." With such sweet talk, Mayamoha began to illumine the demons' mind. Mayamoha confused them further saying- "O demons, if you long for salvation or a place in the heaven, give up sacrificing animals and attain enlightenment. It is wrong notion to say that violence is the religious path. Offering of oblations in fire is also childish. Even an animal which eats green grass is better than Indra who is obliged to eat wood despite attaining that position after hundreds of great Yagyas. If an animal which is sacrificed in Yagya attains heaven, performer of Yagya would have killed his own father."

Thus with these witty talks, Mayamoha deviated the demons from the righteous path because of which they lost interest in Vedas. Once it was achieved, the gods attacked the demons with full preparations. Ultimately, many demons were killed whereas those who remained came to be known as naked because they no longer followed the teachings of Vedas. Thus, anybody who does not practice the teachings of Vedas in his life is known as naked. Those who do not take to Vanprastha or Sanyas after the completion of Grihastha ashrama are naked.

Tale of Shatadhanu- In the ancient times there was a king named Shatadhanu. His queen Shaivya was a righteous and religious woman. The king and the queen had worshipped Lord Vishnu observing severe penance. On the full moon day in the month of Kartik when the king and queen came out of the Ganges after taking bath, they happened to sight an imposter Brahmin who was coming from the opposite direction. The Brahmin was a friend of the king's teacher. So, the king treated the Brahmin with respect. But his chaste wife did not show any respect for the imposter and kept silent all through the talk. She then had a sight of the Sun to expiate for the meeting with an imposter. On their return to the palace the king and the queen worshipped Lord Vishnu with proper rituals.

In due course, the king died. The queen also committed Sati. Since the king had committed the sin of talking to an imposter during his penance the king had committed the sin of talking to an imposter during his penance, he took birth in a dog form whereas queen Shaivya took birth as the daughter of a Kashi king. She was extremely beautiful and knew everything about her previous birth. When her father decided to marry her off, she requestfully refused for she knew that her previous birth husband was roaming the streets and lanes of Vidisha in a dog form.

The princess of Kashi then reached Vidisha and found out that dog was in fact King Shatadhanu. She fed the dog with delicious food eating which the dog began to wag its tail and show humility before the princess. The princess saluted the dog and narrated the whole thing to it that it was because of his sin of talking to an imposter during penance that he had to take birth as a dog.

Thus, reminded by the princess, the dog contemplated for long on the events of his previous birth. He grew so sad that he gave up the dog form on the outskirts of the town. In his next birth however he was born as a jackal. Again the princess came to know that the jackal was King Shatadhanu and asked him whether he continued to talk to the imposter after their conversation in the previous birth? Only then, King Shatadhanu came to realise his mistake. He then observed fast till death. But in his next birth, he was born as a wolf. Again the princess reminded him of his previous birth. The king's became a vulture in his next birth. After that, he took birth in crow form and then as a peacock. During that time, King Janaka was organising an Ashwamedha

Yagya. In the yagya, the peacock was also given a ceremonial bath by the princess. During the bath, the princess reminded the peacock (King Shatadhanu) of his previous birth, the peacock too died and took next birth as the son of King Janaka.

It was only after the birth of King Janaka's son that the princess told her father to organise a Swayamvara for her. In the Swayamvara, the prince also arrived. The princess accepted him respectfully as her husband.

PART FOUR

CHAPTER ONE DESCRIPTION OF VAIVASVAT MANU'S LINEAGE

Lineage of Vaivasvat Manu finds its origin at Brahma. Brahma was the first to appear from Lord Vishnu who is the primitive cause for the whole creation. From the right hand thumb of Brahma, Daksha Prajapati appeared. Daksha produced Aditi and Aditi produced Vivasvan. Manu was the son of Vivasvan. Ikshvaku, Nrig, Grishth, Sharayati, Narishyant, Pranshu, Nabhag, Dishta, Karup and Prishadhra are the ten sons of Manu.

With a desire for a son Manu organised a Yagya to please the deities Mitra and Varuna. But during the Yagya because of a wrong resolution of oblator, a daughter named Ila was born to them. But by the grace of Mitra-Varuna, she got masculine appearance and a name Sudyumna. In later course by the wrath of Lord Shiva, Sudyumna was converted into a woman. In woman form when Sudyumna was roaming near the hermitage of Buddha, the son of Chandrama, her beauty infatuated Buddha. As a result of their union, a son Pururava was born. Even after the birth of Pururava, Sudyumna could not give up his temptation to be a man again. Hence, learned sages organised a Yagya for Sudyumna and got him converted into a man again. In masculine form, Sudyumna produced three sons- Utkal, Gaya and Vinat. Manu had presented a town named Prathishtha to Sudyumna, which he later on presented to Pururava.

Pururava's progenies spread in all directions and acquired Kshatriya caste. Manu's son, Prishadhra became a Shudra because of killing a cow of his teacher. Manu's another son, Karush produced an exceptionally strong Kshatriya named Karush. Lineage of Dishta grew as follows- Nabhag, Balbandhan, Kirtiman, Vatsapreeti, Pranshu, Prajapati, Khanitra, Chakshush, Vimbha, Vivimbhak, Khaninetra, Ativibhuti, Karandham, Avikshit, Marut.

Marut had a son, Narishyant. Lineage of Narishyant grew as follows- Dama, Rajvardhan, Suvridhi, Keval, Sughritti, Nara, Chandra, Keval, Bandhuman, Veghvan, Buddha, Trinvindu. Trinvindu had a daughter Ilavila and a son Vishal. Vishal in later course founded Vishala.

Lineage of Vishal grew as follows- Hemchandra, Chandra, Dhumraksh, Srinjay, Sahadev, Krishasva, Somadutta, Janmejaya, Sumati.

Manu' son Sharayati had a daughter Sukanya who was married to sage Chyavan in peculiar circumstances. Anart was the son of Sharayati. Anart had a son Raivat who founded his capital at Kushasthali and ruled his kingdom on earth. Raivat had one hundred sons, the eldest among whom was Kakudmi. He had a daughter Revati. Raivat took Revati with him and approached

Brahma who asked about a suitable match for her. At that time, Gandharvas were singing near Brahma. Raivat listened to their songs intently and forgot about the passage of time. Many ages passed like that but Raivat felt as if only an hour had passed. When the Gandharvas stopped singing, Raivat once again asked Brahma about a suitable match for Revati. Brahma asked Raivat about his own choices first. Raivat counted the names of many deserving princes and kings all of whom belonged to earth.

Brahma said smiling- "No one even in the progeny of these people is alive on earth because here listening to the Gandharvas songs you have passed four ages. Presently even the age of eighteenth Manu is about to end on earth and Kali Yuga is about to start." These words frightened Raivat who greeted Brahma and asked- "O Lord! Now tell me whom should I marry Revati to?" Brahma said- "That unborn all pervasive Parmeshwar Lord Vishnu had taken an incarnation on earth. O king! Your capital at Kushasthali which was equal to Indra's abode Amravati is now Dwarkapuri. In that Dwarkapuri, stays Baldev who is a part of Lord Vishnu. Marry this daughter to him because she is a jewel among the women folk and Baldev is praised all over the world by all. Hence only he deserves to be your son-in-law."

Hearing the verdict of Brahma, Prajapati Raivat descended on the earth and saw that an amazing transformation had taken place in the appearance of people who were now smaller in stature, ugly, dull and devoid of strength. Even his capital Kushasthali had acquired a new appearance and was now known as Dwarkapuri. Raivat found out Baldev and married his granddaughter Revati to him. But Revati appeared quite large and taller in stature than Baldev because of age difference. Baldev pressed her slightly with anterior part of his plough and she assumed a stature equal to normal women. After marrying Revati to Baldev, Raivat migrated to the Himalayas to observe penance.

CHAPTER TWO DESCRIPTION OF IKSHVAKU'S LINEAGE

Ikshvaku was born from the nostril of Manu as a result of sudden sneezing. Ikshvaku had hundred sons among whom Vikukshi, Nimi and Danda were prominent. Once Ikshvaku organised a Shradha. For the purpose of feeding Brahmins, he ordered his son Vikukshi to bring fresh meat of wild animals. Taking his bow and arrows, Vikukshi set out for the forest and hunted many deer and rabbits. Towards noon, he felt tired and hungry and hence ate one rabbit from the stock. Then he reached the capital and handed over the remaining flesh to his father.

But the sage Vashishta who was conducting the Shradha revealed the truth to Manu. Thus Vikukshi got the name of Shashad and was expelled by his father. Shashad in later course had a son, Puranajay.

In the past a fierce battle had taken place between the demons and the gods. The demons defeated the gods who approached Lord Vishnu for help. Lord Vishnu said-"I am aware of your desire. I will appear in the body of Shashad's son Puranajay to kill the demons. But it is your responsibility to convince him for the battle."

The gods approached Puranajay and requested-"O great among the Kshatriyas! Kindly help us to defeat our enemies." Puranajay said-"Shatkratu is Indra. If I fight the battle riding his shoulder, I will be able to kill the demons."

The gods accepted his condition. Indra took the guise of the bull riding which Puranajay killed the demons because Lord Vishnu had partially arrived in his body. Since then Puranajay got the name Kakutsth. He had a son Aneyna. Lineage of Aneyna grew as follows- Aneyna, Prithu, Vishtrabhva, Chandrayuvnashva, Shavasta. Shavasta founded the town of Shavasti (modern Shravasti). Lineage of Shavasta continued as follows- Shavasta, Vrihadashva, Kuvalayashva, Dridashva, Tandrashva, Kapilashva.

For a long time, Yuvanashva did not have a child. So, he organised a Putreshti Yagya in the auspices of learned sages. The Yagya lasted for a whole day. At midnight when the Yagya ended, sages fell asleep because of tiredness keeping the urn of Yagya water near the altar. The water had been empowered with sacred mantras. Meanwhile the thirsty king came there and drank that water from the urn. When the sages awakened, they enquired about the water in the urn. Yuvanashva told them that he had himself drunk it. The sages told that as the water had been empowered with sacred mantras and was meant for the queen in order to make her conceive. Hence the king instead of the queen will conceive now. As a result Yuvanashva conceived and in due course gave birth to a child from his right armpit. But the child's birth did not kill the king. The baby was Mandhata. In due course Mandhata ruled the entire earth, which was divided into seven islands.

Mandhata married Bindumati, the daughter of Shatabindu. They had three sons- Purukutsa, Ambareesh, and Muchukunda. They also had fifty daughters. When all the daughters grew young a sage Saubhari arrived in the palace and requested Mandhata to marry one of his daughters to him. The sage appeared old and frail. So, Mandhata hesitated and tried to send him off making many excuses. The sage assured him about his physical abilities. But still the king felt hesitant and said-"O sage, it is our tradition that we marry our daughter only to he whom our daughter chooses as her husband. Your request is beyond our desires."

Hearing Mandhata's word sage considered for a moment and said-"All right O king! Kindly instruct the eunuch who guards the quarters of your daughters to escort me there." Fearing a curse from the sage, Mandhata instructed the eunuchs to escort him into the quarters of his daughters. While entering the quarters, the sage assumed the appearance of an extremely handsome Gandharva. So, when he arrived there, a row started among the girls as to who would choose him as her husband first. Each one of them claimed that she had first chosen him. Thus all the daughters of Mandhata chose sage Saubhari as their husband.

When the eunuchs informed the king about this development, he fell in deep thoughts how it could happen. But still he was bound by his promise so he had no choice but to marry all his daughters to sage Saubhari. Marrying all the fifty girls, sage Saubhari brought them to his hermitage. Calling Vishwakarma, he instructed him to build separate castles for each of his wives. In no time, Vishwakarma erected fifty beautiful palaces in a row. Each one of them had ample spacious and airy rooms, surrounded by beautiful gardens. Since then, all the girls

occupied those palaces and began to live there. Every kind of luxury and food was available to them.

One day, drawn by the love for his daughters, King Mandhata decided to visit Saubhari's ashrama. But in place of ashrama, he found a row of beautiful palaces. There, he met his daughters and enquired about their well being. The daughters informed him that they were happy to live with the sage and that their husband was capable enough to provide them with all the luxuries. But still they remembered their native place. Each of the girl also expressed one grief that her husband enjoyed intimacy with her at all times and did not share time with her other sisters. These words of the girls surprised the king. Ultimately he met Saubhari and worshipping him he said-"O lord! It is the result of your severe penance that you are able to keep all the fifty girls happy." Staying there for a few days, the king returned.

In due course, the daughters of Mandhata gave birth to one hundred and fifty sons. Those sons grew up and produced their progeny. At that time sage Saubhari thought- 'I have seen the birth of my sons. Now they have their own sons. If I stay there, I will long to see my great-grandchildren. Desires do not end till death. Acquiring a human body is in itself a great sorrow. I have received enough in life, enjoyed intimacy with fifty princesses. If I keep more desires, I will receive nothing but sorrow. Hence I should take to the penance of Lord Vishnu.'

Thinking that way, sage Saubhari migrated to the forest along with his fifty wives. There they conducted Yagyas and passed their time worshipping Lord Vishnu.

CHAPTER THREE MANDHATA, TRISHANKU, AND SAGAR

Once upon a time Gandharvas of collective name Mauneya defeated the Nagas and snatched all their wealth and powers. The Nagas prayed Lord Vishnu to rescue them. Lord Vishnu told them that he would appear in Mandhata's son Purukutsa and kill the Gandharvas. Afterwards Narmada brought Purukutsa to Rasatal where Lord Vishnu appeared in his body. Thus having the strength of Lord Vishnu, Purukutsa defeated and killed the Gandharvas. Pleased by the action of Narmada, the Nagas blessed her with a boon that whoever remembered her would have no fear of snake venom and Purukutsa that he would have an immortal son.

Purukutsa and Narmada had a son Trasadasyu. Lineage of Trasadasyu continued as follows- Trasadasyu, Anaranya, Vrihadashva, Haryashva, Hasta, Sumana, Tridhanva, Trayaruni and Satyavrat. Satyavrat became famous as Trishanku in later course. By the curse of a sage, Trishanku had become a Chandala. Once a drought occurred for twelve long years. During that drought, to get rid from this condition of Chandala and feed sage Vishwamitra, Trishanku used to tie a whole skinned deer to a Banyan tree on the bank of the river Ganges. Pleased by his selfless service, sage Vishwamitra sent Trishanku to the heaven with his ephemeral body.

Lineage of Trishanku grew as follows- Trishanku, Harishchandra, Rohitashva, Harit, Chanchu, Vijay, and Vasudev. Vijay had a son Ruruk. Ruruk's son was Vrik who had a son Bahu. Bahu had two queens. After a long time of their marriage, Bahu's queen consort conceived a son. But

the circumstances took a strange turn. Bahu's enemies together attacked his kingdom and defeated him. The defeated king migrated to the forest along with his queens and began to live at the hermitage of sage Aurv. Very soon, King Bahu died of old age. His queen consort also wanted to commit Sati but sage Aurv prevented her from doing so. After sometime getting envious of her fortune, the other queen deceitfully fed her with poison. But the poison could not harm the foetus, which stayed unborn for a period of seven years because of poison's effect.

Staying at the hermitage of sage Aurv, the queen consort gave birth to a son. Since the child was born with the effect of the poison, Sage Aurv named him as Sagar. Sagar began to grow in the hermitage in natural surroundings. One day he asked his mother about his father. The queen narrated the whole incident to him. Sagar then and there took an oath to exterminate the Kshatriyas who had been the cause of his father's death. Acting as per his oath, Sagar destroyed Haihaya Kshatriyas whereas Shak Kshatriyas got their heads shaven out of fear. Since those Kshatriyas had given up their religion, hence Brahmins boycotted them. As a result they became Malechchha. Thereafter King Sagar returned to his capital and ruled the earth.

CHAPTER FOUR DESCRIPTION OF SURYAVANSH

King Sagar had two queens, Sumati, the daughter of Kashyapa and Keshini, the daughter of Vidarbha's king. Keshini had a son Asmanjas whereas Sumati had sixty thousand sons. Anshuman was the son of Asmanjas. Asmanjas was very whimsical since his childhood. Even in his youth, he did not change his behaviour. Hence King Sagar had abandoned Asmanjas. But the things did not improve for Sagar because even his sixty thousand sons followed the footsteps of Asmanjas.

The gods one-day approached sage Kapila who was a partial incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Greeting him, they said- "If the sixty thousand sons of Sagar continued on their whimsical way, the earth would not remain suitable for living." Sage Kapila assured the gods that the sixty thousand sons of Sagar would meet their fate very soon. By the instigation of sage Kapila, King Sagar organised an Ashwamedha Yagya.

The sixty thousand princes also followed the horse guarding it. But somehow Indra managed to kidnap the horse and tethered it at the hermitage of sage Kapila. The sixty thousand princes searched for the horse and following the footprints, they also reached the hermitage. There they found the horse and also a sage in deep meditation. Thinking that the sage might have been responsible for abduction of the horse they began to abuse him. As soon as sage Kapila disturbed by the abuses opened his eyes, a flame appeared and incinerated all the sixty thousand princes. When King Sagar came to know about this incident, he sent Anshuman to bring back that horse. Anshuman also reached the hermitage and greeted sage Kapila with respect. Pleased by his politeness, sage Kapila blessed Anshuman and instructed him to take the horse away with him. He also asked him to seek a boon. As the boon, Anshuman only sought the salvation for his sixty thousand dead uncles. Sage Kapila assured Anshuman that his ancestors would certainly attain to the heaven but only after a long wait and that his grandson Bhagirath would bring the Ganges onto the earth and that the Ganges' waters would wash the ashes of his ancestors to the ocean and cause their salvation.

Thus blessed by the sage Kapila, Anshuman returned to the capital with the horse in order to help his grandfather finish the Yagya. Anshuman had a son Dileep. Dileep's son was Bhagirath who observed severe penance and pleased Ganga to descend on the earth. Since the Ganges had descended on earth because of Bhagirath's penance, she also got a name Bhagirathi.

The lineage of Bhagirath grew as follows- Bhagirath, Suhotra, Shruti, Nabhag, Ambareesh, Sindhudweep, Ayutayu, Rituparn, Sarvakam, Sudas, and Saudas.

One day, King Saudas went hunting in the forests. There he spotted a pair of tigers. They were actually a tiger and a tigress in mating. Saudas killed one of them by his arrow, while the other turned into a demon and threatening of an avenger disappeared from the scene.

In due course, King Saudas organised a Yagya in the auspices of sage Vashishta. Towards the end of Yagya, sage Vashishta went away to take bath. Meanwhile the same demon arrived there in the guise of Vashishta and expressed his desire to eat non-vegetarian food. Then the demon arrived before the king in the guise of the cook. The king ordered him to cook meat for the sage. The cook cooked human flesh and served it before the sage. Sage Vashishta knew that the food contained human flesh. He cursed the king in anger to be a demon. Within three days, King Saudas became a demon and began to roam in the forests. Since then he ate humans only.

One day, Saudas in demon form saw Muni who was in the process of mating his wife. The demon caught and ate the Muni neglecting all the cries and wailing of his wife. The Brahmani angrily cursed the demon that as her husband had been killed while he was about to sate his carnal lust similarly he would also die right in the same process.

King Saudas remained in the demon's form for twelve more years. After that he recovered from the curse and began to rule like a pious king. One day, King Saudas saw the queen in an amorous condition and an impulse of carnal pleasure ran within his body. He made advances to satisfy his lust but the queen who knew everything about the curse stopped him reminding him of the curse. Since then the king stuck to celibacy. Since the king had no son, he allowed his queen Madayanti to conceive a child with the help of sage Vashishta. The queen did conceive but the foetus remained unborn for seven years at length. At last the irritated queen hit her foetus with a stone. This resulted in the birth of a child at once. The child was named Ashmak. The lineage of Ashmak grew as follows: Ashmak, Moolak, Dasharath, Ilivil, Vishvasah, and Khatwang. Khatwang had killed many formidable demons fighting by the side of the gods. Pleased by his gallantry, the gods wanted to grant him a boon. Khatwang wanted to know how long he would live more. The gods told him that he would live for one Muhurta more. Hearing this, Khatwang came back on earth and prayed Lord Vishnu to take him in His refuge. At last he was annihilated with Lord Vishnu.

Lineage of Khatwang grew as follows-Khatwang, Deerghbahu, Raghu, Aja, and Dasharath. King Dasharath had three queens who gave birth to four sons- Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughana.

Rama was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. His life too had a lot of ups and downs. After being trained in archery, He and Lakshmana spent most of their boyhood time in the hermitage of sage

Vishwamitra guarding his Yagyas from the demons. After that when Vishwamitra was taking them to Mithila Lord Rama saved Ahilya who had been converted into a stone by the curse of her husband sage Gautam. In Mithila, Lord Rama broke the bow of Lord Shiva and won Sita as His wife. When they returned to Ayodhya, King Dasharath decided to crown Rama as the new king. But misguided by Manthara, queen Kaikeyee stubbornly sought that her son Bharata should be crowned as the new king whereas Rama should be sent on an exile for fourteen years. Bounded by his promises that he had made to Kaikeyee earlier, King Dasharath had no choice but to accept her demands.

Thus to keep His father's words, Lord Rama accepted the exile. Sita and Lakshmana also followed His steps. In the forests, the demon king Ravana deceitfully abducted Sita. It was followed by meeting of Rama with Hanuman and Sugriva, killing of Bali- Sugriva's brother, finding of Sita by Hanuman in Lanka, bridging of the sea that separated Lanka, fierce battle with the demons and ultimately killing of Ravana by Lord Rama. After the completion of exile period Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya and ruled there for twelve years.

Lord Rama had two sons- Lava and Kusha. Lineage of Kusha grew as follows- Kusha, Atithi, Nishadh, Anal, Nabh, Pundareek, Kshemadhanwa, Devaneek, Ahinaka, Ruru, Pariyatrak, Deval, Vanchal, Ulka, Vajranabha, Shankhan, Yushhitashva, Vishvasaha, Hiranyanam, Pushya, Dhruvasandhi, Sudarshan, Agnivarn, Shighrag, Maru, Prasushrut, Susandhi, Amarsh, Sahaswan and Vishvabhav. Vishvabhav had a son Brihdal who was killed by Abhimanyu in the battle of Mahabharata.

CHAPTER FIVE TALE OF NIMI AND DESCRIPTION OF HIS LINEAGE

Ikshvaku's son Nimi once decided to organise a Yagya that was to last for one thousand years. He also wanted the sage Vashishta to guide the Yagya. But Indra had already booked Vashishta for a period of five hundred years. So sage Vashishta expressed his inability to conduct any other Yagya till the completion of that period and requested the king to wait till he was free from Indra's obligations. Nimi kept quite at that time. Taking his silence as an approval, the sage began the Yagya for Indra. But the king meanwhile started Yagya in the auspices of other sages like Gautam etc.

At the completion of Yagya for Indra, sage Vashishta hurried back to the earth to conduct Yagya for King Nimi. But here he found that a Yagya was already in progression. This infuriated the sage to the extent that he poured down curse on Nimi, who was sleeping at that time, to lose his body at once. When the king learned about the curse and that he was cursed in sleep, he cursed the sage in retaliation to lose his body at once before giving up his own body. By the curse of Nimi, Vashishta's body was destroyed but he himself entered the semen of Mitra-Varuna. Thereafter, one day Mitra-Varuna happened to see the apsara Urvashi. Her amorous beauty caused the ejaculation of his semen spontaneously. With ejaculated semen, sage Vashishta also came out and acquired a new body.

On the other hand, at end of Yagya when the gods appeared to accept their due share from the offerings, the sages prayed them to grant Nimi some boon. Nimi however sought nothing in boon but expressed his desire to stay in eyes of the people forever. The gods granted that desire. Before that nobody had ever blinked his eyes. Blinking of eyes came into practice because Nimi stays there. In order to save the kingdom from anarchy, the sages churned the dead body of Nimi with a stick of Bombax tree and produced a son. That son came to known as Janaka. Since he was born from the dead body of his father, the boy also came to be known as Vaideha. Lineage of Janaka continued as follows: Janaka, Udavasu, Nandivardhan, Suketu, Devrat, Brihadukth, Mahaveerya, Sudhriti, Dhrishtketu, Haryashva, Manu, Prateet, Kritrath, Devbheed, Vibudh, Mahadhriti, Kritraj, Maharoma, Suvarnaroma, Hrsyaroma and Seerdhvaj. With a desire of a son, Seerdhvaj was once ploughing the earth when he stumbled upon a pitcher. In the pitcher, he found a beautiful baby whom he named as Sita.

CHAPTER SIX DESCRIPTION OF SOMA VANSI AND TALE OF PURURAVA

The creator of the world, Brahma had a son named Atri. Chandrama was the son of Atri. Once Chandrama organised a Rajsuya Yagya and received great powers. Afterwards blinded by his powers, Chandrama kidnapped Tara, the wife of Brihaspati. Even his grandfather Brahma tried to dissuade him from committing such a grave crime but Chandrama was not to listen to anybody. Because his hostility with Brihaspati, the teacher of the demons Shukra was also assisting Chandrama. At that moment of need, only Rudra came forward to help Brihaspati. A fierce battle followed between Chandrama and Rudra. The gods were helping Brihaspati while because of Shukra, the demons fought from the side of Chandrama. Soon the battle assumed the proportion of a war that perplexed the entire world. At last, Lord Vishnu mediated to end the battle and helped Brihaspati to get his wife back. By that time Tara had conceived a child. Seeing her condition Brihaspati instigated Tara to abort the baby. Tara aborted the baby amidst some shrubs but it did not die. Instead, his brilliance dulled even the radiance of the gods.

The baby was so beautiful that both Brihaspati and Chandrama were eager to accept him. To settle the matter, Brahma asked Tara about the paternity of the child. Feeling shy, Tara revealed that Chandrama was the father of the child. Then Brahma himself adopted the child and named him as Buddha.

When he grew young, Buddha produced Pururava from Illa. Pururava was very magnanimous and handsome. Once an apsara Urvashi happened to see him and at once fell in love. She then approached Pururava. Her beauty enchanted Pururava also. He requested the apsara to stay with him. But Urvashi stipulated that she might stay with him if he agreed to follow her two conditions that he would never drive the two sheep, which were like her children away from her bed and that he would never undress before her in visible light. Pururava accepted both the conditions. Since then Pururava began to live with Urvashi. Together they enjoyed their physical intimacy for sixty thousand years. Their love grew so much that even Urvashi forgot those heavenly comforts that she used to enjoy once. Because of her absence, even the heaven appeared more dreaded than hell.

At last, one Vishvasu who knew about the conditions stole one sheep from their bedroom and flew away. Hearing the cries of the sheep, Urvashi got up in anxiety and shouted who was stealing her son. But Pururava pretended as if asleep for the fear of being seen naked. As the fuss grew further, he could no more contain himself and ran after the thief. Right at that moment, the Gandharvas produced intense lightning illuminating the whole scene. As a result, Urvashi saw Pururava in a naked state and at once left his palace to her heavenly abode for now both of her conditions had been violated. Pururava could not tolerate the separation of Urvashi. He began to roam here and there in that bare condition like a mad. Thus roaming he reached at Kamal Sarovar in Kurukshetra where he saw Urvashi with four other elves. Seeing Urvashi Pururava began to behave madly. It was impossible for him to control his sensual desires even in the presence of other elves. But Urvashi stopped him saying that she was expecting an issue and after a year, she will give birth to his child. She also promised at that time she will stay with him for a night.

After a year King Pururava once again reached that place where Urvashi handed over his son Ayu. As per her promise she also stayed with Pururava for a night and consequently in later course gave birth to five more sons. Urvashi informed Pururava that because of their love Gandharvas wished to bless him with a boon. Pururava sought a life-long union with Urvashi. Gandharvas presented him with an altar and instructed to conduct regular Yagyas properly. Then all of his desires would come true, the Gandharvas assured Pururava. But King Pururava left that altar in the forest and returned to his capital. At mid-night, he awakened suddenly as if from a trance and hurried to the forest to recover his altar. But the altar was no more there; it had transformed into a peepal tree. Pururava got that tree felled and brought it to his capital where the carpenters made Arani (a wooden implement used in ancient India to produce fire) from its wood. Since then Pururava conducted regular Yagyas with the help of that Arani and attained to the Gandharvaloka where he was never separated from Urvashi again.

CHAPTER SEVEN BIRTH OF JAMADAGNI AND VISHWAMITRA

Pururava had six sons- Ayu, Amavasu, Vishvasu, Shrutayu, Shatayu and Ayutayu. Amavasu had a son Bhima and Bhima in turn had a son Kanchan. Jahnu was the son of Kanchan's son, Suhotra. At the time of Ganga's descend on earth, when Jahnu saw his hermitage inundated, he drank all her water. He released the Ganges only when the Devrishis prayed him. Since then Ganges also came to be known as Jahnavi, the daughter of Jahnu.

Lineage of Jahnu grew as follows- Jahnu, Sumant, Ajak, Balakashva and Kusha. Kusha had four sons- Kushamb, Kushnam, Adhurtraja and Vasu. Kushamb observed severe penance with a desire to have a son like Indra. Pleased by his penance, Indra himself took birth as his son. He came to be known as Kaushik. Kaushik had a daughter named Satyavati who got married to Richeek. Sage Richeek prepared kheer in two parts- one for his wife Satyavati and another for Satyavati's mother. Instructing Satyavati, he went to the forest.

When Satyavati and her mother were about to eat the kheer, her mother exchanged her part of kheer with that of her daughter saying that her son had to foster the world while the son of the

sage had nothing to do with wealth and all that. Satyavati agreed to that and ate that part of kheer, which was reserved for her mother whereas her mother ate Satyavati's part. When Richeek returned from the forest, he noticed formidable changes in the body of his wife. He understood that she had eaten her mother's part of the kheer. Angrily the sage predicted that she would have a son who would be Kshatriya-like in virtues whereas her mother would have Brahmin-like son. Satyavati begged pardon and requested the sage to change his prediction saying that the crime was committed by mistake and that she would be happy to have a Kshatriya-like grandson but not a son. At her request the sage changed his prediction.

As per the prediction, Satyavati gave birth to Jamadagni whereas her mother gave birth to Vishwamitra. After giving birth to Jamadagni turned into a river named Kaushiki.

In later course, as a partial incarnation of Lord Vishnu, Parashurama took birth as the son of sage Jamadagni.

CHAPTER EIGHT DESCRIPTION OF KASHYA VANSH

Pururava's son Ayu had been married to Rahu's daughter. They had five sons- Nahush, Kshatravridh, Rambh, Vraji and Aneya. Suhotra was the son of Kshatravridh. He had three sons- Kashya, Kash and Gritsamad. Shaunak was the son of Gritsamad whereas Kasheya was the son of Kashya. Lineage of Kasheya grew as- Kasheya, Rashtra, Dirdhakapa, and Dhanvantari. Dhanvantari's body was free from all the physical faults like ageing and diseases.

Dhanvantari's lineage grew as- Dhanvantari, Ketuman, Bheemrath, Dibodas and Pratardan. Pratardan was also known as Shatrujit because of his conquering his enemies. Since he had acquired a horse named Kulavay hence he also came to be known as Kulvayashva. Pratardan had a son named Alarka who enjoyed his rule on earth for sixty-six thousand years.

Lineage of Alarka continued as follows- Sannati, Sunith, Suketu, Dharmaketu, Satyaketu, Vibhu, Suvibhu, Sukumar, Dhristhaketu, Vitihotra, Bharga and Bhargbhumi. It was progeny of Bhargbhumi who gave rise to four classes of people.

CHAPTER NINE DESCRIPTION OF KING RAJI AND HIS SONS

King Raji had five hundred prowessive sons. Once at the beginning of battle between the demons and the gods, they appeared before Brahma and enquired as to which part would win. Brahma said that only that part would win which would be aided by King Raji. First the demons approached Raji and requested him to fight from their side. King Raji stipulated that he would fight only when the demons agreed to appoint him as their Indra. The demons told him that Prahlada was their Indra and returned. Then the gods also approached King Raji and requested him to take their side. Raji put the same condition before them also to which the gods agreed.

In a fierce battle and aided by King Raji, the gods defeated the demons. After their victory, Indra bowed before King Raji and expressed his desire to present him with the kingdom of heaven.

Thus King Raji became Indra. After the demise of Raji, Narada instigated his sons to acquire the rule of heaven. All the five hundred sons of Raji approached Indra and requested him to give them the rule of heaven but Indra refused plainly. At that Raji's sons dethroned Indra forcibly and themselves became Indra. After much time had passed, Indra approached Brihaspati and prayed him to help him regain the rule of heaven. Brihaspati assured him that he would soon establish him at the throne.

Afterwards Brihaspati created illusions in the minds of Raji's sons. He also conducted many Yagyas to increase the radiance of Indra. Guided by the illusions, Raji's sons began to behave in anti-religious ways. Then Indra easily killed them all and regained his designation.

CHAPTER TEN TALE OF YAYATI

Nahush had six sons- Yati, Yayati, Sanyati, Ayati, Viyati and Kriti. Yayati had two wives, Devyani, the daughter of Shukracharya and Sharmishtha, the daughter of Vrishparva. Devyani gave birth to Yadu and Turvasu whereas Sharmishtha gave birth to Druhayu, Anu and Puru. Because of a curse of Shukracharya old age had descended on Yayati prematurely.

Yayati then requested his eldest son Yadu to exchange his youth with his old age but Yadu refused. Then Yayati requested each of his sons one by one but all of them refused plainly for the fear of getting old prematurely.

At last Yayati's youngest son Puru gladly accepted his request and gave him his youth. Regaining the youth, Yayati once again indulged in carnal pleasures with both his queens. But everyday his desire for pleasures increased like a fire flared up by ghee. After one thousand years Yayati realised his mistake and decided to expiate for his sin. Thus, Yayati returned Puru his youth and acquired his old age once again. Then crowning Puru as the king, he took an exile to the forest.

CHAPTER ELEVEN YADU VANSI AND TALE OF SAHASTRARJUNA

Yayati's eldest son Yadu had four sons- Sahastrajit, Kroshtu, Nala and Nahush. Sahastrajit had a son Shatajit who had three sons Haihaya, Hehaya and Venuhaya. Lineage of Haihaya grew as- Dharma, Dharmanetra, Kunti, Sahajit, Mahishman, Bhadrashrenya, Durdabh and Dhanak. Dhanak had four sons- Kritveerya, Kritagni, Kritdharma and Kritauja. Kritveerya had a prowessive son Arjuna. Arjuna had worshipped Dattatreya and by his blessings acquired one thousand arms. Since then he came to be known as Sahastrarjuna. Dattatreya had blessed him with many other boons like rule of entire earth, fostering of his subjects in religious ways and killing by some human being famous in all the three worlds. At that time, there was no other king equal to Sahastrarjuna in virtues. He ruled the entire earth for eighty-five thousand years.

Once Sahastrarjuna was enjoying his past time on the waters of Narmada when he happened to have an encounter with Ravana, the king of Lanka. Sahastrarjuna captured Ravana easily and imprisoned him at an isolated place in his kingdom. With time ego of SahastrArjuna had crossed

all limits. He began to terrorise the sages and other religious people. When his atrocities increased beyond tolerance level, Lord Vishnu took a partial incarnation as Parashurama, the son of sage Jamadagni and Renuka. As per the prediction of sage Richeek, Parashurama grew with Kshatriya - like virtues. He had in fact taken incarnation to relieve the earth from the atrocities of egoist kings. Parashurama had received arms training from none other than Lord Shiva. He was very obedient to his father and had beheaded his own mother by the Parashu (axe) that he had received from Lord Shiva at the dictate of his father. In due course Parashurama not only got Ravana released from captivity but also killed Sahastrarjuna.

Sahastrarjuna had one hundred sons among whom Shur, Shursena, Vrishasena, Madhu and Jayadhvaj were prominent. Jayadhvaj had a son Taljunga. Taljunga had one hundred sons among whom Vitihotra and Bharata were prominent. Bharata again had one hundred sons whereas Madhu also had hundred sons among whom Vrishni was prominent. After the name of their forefather Yadu, this clan came to be known as Yaduvansha.

CHAPTER TWELVE DESCRIPTION OF KROSHTU VANSH

Lineage of Kroshtu grew as follows- Kroshtu, Dhvajnivan, Swati, Rushanku, Chitrarath, Rashibindu. Rashibindu had one lakh queens and ten lakh sons among whom Prithusharva, Prithukarma, Prithukirti, Prithuyasha, Prithujay and Prithushan were prominent. In their lineage later on occurred a king named Jyamadh. He was so dedicated to his wife Shaivya that despite being childless, he did not dare to marry other women because of her fear. Once, Jyamadh took part in a fierce battle in which he defeated all his enemies. While he was about to return, he heard pitiable cries of a woman. He saw a beautiful young lady who was crying for her protection. Jyamadh was so infatuated by her beauty that he took her to his kingdom. When they reached at the gate of the palace, the king saw that the queen Shaivya was waiting for him along with a big crowd. When Shaivya saw a beautiful young lady sitting beside the king on the chariot, she began to shout at him. The horrified king tried to explain that the young lady was his daughter-in-law. The queen shouted even louder that when they did not have a son, whence the daughter-in-law came. But the king explained that he had selected a wife for her would-be son. As the effect of their conversation queen Shaivya soon conceived and gave birth to a son in spite of her advancing age. They named the son as Vidarbh. In due course of time, Vidarbh got married to that lady whom his father had brought home earlier. They had three sons- Krath, Kaushik and Romapad. Romapad had received preaching from Narada. Lineage of Krath grew as follows- Krath, Kunti, Ghrishti, Nighriti, Dashard, Vyoma, Jimoot, Vikriti, Bheemrath, Navrath, Dasharath, Shakuni, Karambhi, Devrat, Devakshatra, Madhu, Kumarvansh, Anu, Kurumitra, Anshu, Satvak. Satvak was the forefather of a clan that was named after him.

PART FIVE

CHAPTER ONE PURU VANSH

The lineage of Puru grew as Puru, Janmejaya, Prachinvan, Praveer, Manasyu, Abhayad, Sudayu, Bahugat, Sanyati, Ahamyati, Raudrashva. Raudrashva had ten sons among whom Riteshu was

the most prominent. Riteshu had three sons among whom Apratirath was most prominent. Lineage of Apratirath is as follows- Apratirath, Aileen, Dushyant and Bharata. King Dushyant had fallen in love with Shakuntala, the daughter of sage Vishwamitra and apsara Menaka.

They got married secretly in the forest and after a few days, King Dushyant returned to his kingdom promising Shakuntala that he would call her as soon as he reached his palace. He had given Shakuntala his ring as a memento. But while Shakuntala was crossing the river on her way to the palace, the ring slipped from her finger and was swallowed by a fish. In the absence of the ring, King Dushyant refused to identify Shakuntala. So, she returned to the hermitage of sage Vishwamitra and gave birth to a child who later on became famous as Bharata.

Bharata had been very prowessive since his childhood. His first meeting with King Dushyant was also very dramatical. It is said that once King Dushyant was hunting in the forest and he saw a boy who was counting the teeth of a lion. Impressed by the bravery of the boy, the king enquired about his parentage and reached the hermitage where sage Vishwamitra narrated him the whole story. Meanwhile a fisherman had also recovered the ring from the fish and handed it to the king who had thus recalled the whole story. In the hermitage, King Dushyant came to see Shakuntala and he candidly accepted her and his son Bharata. Bharata had three queens and nine children. Since none of the children resembled him in features, he expressed his doubts about their paternity. Fearing the wrath of Bharata, his queens killed all the children. Then with a desire to have a son, Bharata organised a Marutsoma Yagya. As a result he got Bharadwaj as his son. Bharadwaj's second name was Vitath. His lineage grew as follows- Vitath, Manyu.

Manyu had many sons like Brihatkshatra, Mahaveer, Nara, Garg etc. Their lineage grew as follows Nara, Sanskriti, Gurupreeti and Rantidev. Garg had a son Shini who became famous as Gargya and Shainya also. Mahaveer lineage is as follows- Durukshay, Trayyaruni, Pushkarinya and Kapi. In the lineage of Brihatkshatra occurred a king Hasti who founded the city of Hastinapur. Hasti had three sons- Ajmirh, Dwijmirh and Purumirh. Among the sons of Ajmirh were included Panchals and a daughter Ahilya. Ahilya was married to sage Gautam. They had a son Shatanand. Satyaghriti was the son of Shatanand. Once Satyaghriti happened to sight the extremely amorous and beautiful apsara Urvashi. Her mere sight was enough to cause the ejaculation of his semen, which fell on a reed and divided into two parts. From these two parts were born a boy Krip and a girl Kripi. King Shantanu discovered Krip and Kripi in the forest and brought them to his palace. In later course, Kripi was married to Dronacharya, the teacher of Kauravas and Pandavas. Ashwatthama was the son of Dronacharya. One of the kings named Kuru in the lineage of Ajmirh established the sacred region of Kurukshetra.

CHAPTER TWO DESCRIPTION OF KURU VANSH

In the lineage of Kuru, there occurred a King Prateep. He had three sons- Devapi, Shantanu and Vahlik. Devapi had taken an abode in the forest in his childhood. Hence Shantanu came to become a king after their father Prateep.

Once in the kingdom of King Shantanu, there was no rainfall for twelve years. Perplexed by the continuous drought-like situation, Shantanu consulted learned Brahmins. Brahmins informed him that he had no genuine right on the kingdom, which in fact belonged to his brother Devapi.

They also told him that as long as Devapi was not fallen from his supreme position, the drought would continue. Alternatively, handing over the kingdom to Devapi might also result in the end of the drought. Then Shantanu's minister Ashmasari appointed certain Brahmins who always spoke in anti-Vedas ways. Their continuous preaching disinclined Devapi's mind from Vedas. On the other hand one day, King Shantanu proceeded towards the forest along with Brahmins and his courtiers to hand over the kingdom to Devapi. There the Brahmins tried to convince Devapi to accept the onus of the kingdom. They were sighting anecdotes from the Vedas to corroborate their argument. But Devapi criticised Vedas and spoke in anti-religious ways. At that Brahmins instructed the king to return to the kingdom, as there was no use to convince Devapi. They also assured Shantanu that since Devapi had been disinclined from Vedas, he had lost his right to the kingdom and the famine would also come to an end.

Shantanu's younger brother Vahlik had a son Somadutta. Bhuri, Bhurishrava and Shalya were the sons of Somadutta. In later course Shantanu got married to Ganga and had a son Bhisma. From his second wife Satyawati, Shantanu had two sons- Chitrangad and Vichitraveerya. Chitrangad was killed by a Gandharva whereas younger Vichitraveerya was married to the princesses of Kashi, Ambika and Ambalika. He was so busy in carnal pleasures with his two wives that soon he contracted tuberculosis and died. Despite their indulgence in carnal pleasures, Ambika and Ambalika could not bear a child from Vichitraveerya. Hence in order to continue their lineage, Satyawati inspired Ambika and Ambalika to appear naked before Veda Vyasa and beget a child. Since Ambika closed her eyes while she appeared naked before Veda Vyasa, she begot a blind son, Dhritarashtra. Similarly, Ambalika grew pale when she appeared naked before Veda Vyasa. Hence she begot a son Pandu who was congenitally afflicted with jaundice. Not satisfied by the outcome, Satyawati once again persuaded Ambika and Ambalika to appear naked before Veda Vyasa. But the queens sent a maidservant Vinita before Veda Vyasa. Vinita appeared naked before Veda Vyasa without any fear or shyness. Hence she begot an extremely wise son Vidura. In later course Dhritarashtra got married to Gandhari, the princess of Kandahar whereas Pandu received two wives Kunti, the daughter of Shoorsen and Madri, the princess of Madra. Dhritarashtra had one hundred sons and a daughter Dushala. Duryodhan was the eldest among the one hundred sons of Dhritarashtra. Pandu on the other hand had five sons among whom Yudhisthira was the eldest.

All the five sons of Pandu were born with the help of five gods- Dharma, Vayu, Indra and Ashwini Kumars because Pandu was carrying a curse that he would die if he ever tried to copulate. Pandu's five sons- Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakul and Sahadev came to be known as Pandavas. Five Pandavas were married to Draupadi, the daughter of Panchal King Drupad. From Draupadi each of the Pandavas had a son. Their names were Prativindya from Yudhisthira, Shrutsen from Bhima, Shrutkirti from Arjuna, Shrutaneek from Nakul and Shrutkarma from Sahadev. Besides them Yudhisthira had a son Devak from Yaudheyi. From Hidimba, Bhima had a son Ghatotkachch and from Kashi a son Sarvak. From Vijaya, Sahadev had a son Suhotra whereas from Renumati, Nakul had a son Nirmitra. Arjuna was the most prowessive among the Pandavas. Apart from Draupadi he had three more wives- Ulupi who belonged to the Nagas, Chitrangada, the princess of Manipur and Subhadra, the sister of Lord Krishna. From these three wives Arjuna had three sons-Iravan from Ulupi, Vabhruvahan from Chitrangada and Abhimanyu from Subhadra. In the battle of Mahabharata all these sons of the Pandavas fought valiantly and

sacrificed their lives. It was Abhimanyu's son Parikshit who continued the lineage of Pandavas and ruled the earth till right now.

CHAPTER THREE INCARNATION OF LORD KRISHNA

Vasudev, the son of Shoorsen was married to Devaki, the daughter of Devak. On that occasion of their marriage, Devaki's cousin Kansa was driving their chariot. At that time, a celestial voice declared that the eighth son of Devaki would kill Kansa. Kansa in the excitement was ready to kill Devaki ten and there but Vasudev convinced him saying that he would himself hand over all his children to him. Thus assured by Vasudev, Kansa dropped the idea of killing Devaki.

When the marriage of Vasudev and Devaki was taking place, Prithvi approached Brahma in the guise of a cow. She complained to Brahma that population of mean-minded people was increasing and that she was not more able to bear the burden of their anti-religious deeds. Prithvi said- "O Lord! The same demon Kalnemi whom Lord Vishnu had killed in his previous birth has taken incarnation of Kansa, the son of Ugrasena. Many other fearsome demons Arishth, Dhenuk, Keshi, Pralamb, Sunda, Banasura and many more have taken over the rule and tormenting the religious people in many ways. They keep million strong forces. I am unable to bear their burden. So kindly do something to get me rid of this burden."

Hearing the words of Prithvi, Brahma said to the gods- "Prithvi speaks the truth. Indeed she is carrying too much burden. Let us all go to the shore of Ksheersagar and pray Lord Vishnu and intimate Him about all this matter." Then accompanied by the gods, Brahma arrived at the coast of Ksheersagar and prayed Lord Vishnu. Pleased by their prayer, Lord Vishnu appeared before them in His universal form and said- "Brahma! Believe my words and be assured that whatever you and these gods desire shall realise." Thus assured by the Lord all the gods and Brahma prayed once again. Pleased by their prayer, Lord Vishnu plucked a black and a white hair from his head and said-"Both these hair of mine shall take incarnation on earth and remove the miseries that the people face there. All of you take partial incarnation on earth to attenuate the strength of the demons. This black hair of mine shall take birth as the eighth son of Devaki and kill Kansa who is an re-incarnation of Kalnemi."

While this conversation was on, Devarshi Narada appeared before Kansa and informed him that Lord Vishnu would take birth as the eighth son of Devaki. Hearing the words of Narada, Kansa angrily put Vasudev and Devaki behind the bars. There in his abode, Lord Vishnu instructed Mahamaya (personified illusion) to implant the six foetuses who were in Patal in the womb of Devaki, one by one. He knew that all of them would be killed by Kansa. Then he instructed Mahamaya to implant his part Shesha who would appear as the seventh issue of Devaki, in the womb of Rohini, the second wife of Vasudev so that he could appear as her son instead of Devaki's. Lord instructed Mahamaya to appear in the womb of Yashoda in Gokul while He Himself would appear as the eighth issue of Devaki. He also told Mahamaya that He would take birth on the eighth day of the darker phase in the month of Bhadrapad while she would take birth on the ninth day and that immediately after His birth, Vasudev would himself carry Him to Gokul and leaving me beside Yashoda, he would carry her back to Mathura.

CHAPTER FOUR APPEARANCE OF LORD IN DEVAKI'S WOMB

As per the dictate of Lord Vishnu, YogaMAYA implanted six fetuses in the womb of Devaki. All the six children were killed by Kansa immediately after their birth. Yogamaya transplanted the seventh issue of Devaki into the womb of Rohini who was residing at that time in Gokul. Then Lord Himself appeared as the eighth issue of Devaki. Since the time of His arrival, radiance of Devaki increased manifold. At the same time, Yogamaya also appeared as an issue of Yashoda in Gokul. Seeing the arrival of Lord Himself as the eighth issue of Devaki, the gods prayed Him with devotion.

Then on the eighth day in the darker phase of Bhadrapad, Lord took birth. At the time of His birth, the wind suspended its motion. The reverse attained extremely purified state whereas dense clouds gathered in the sky and caused drizzling. Seeing the child born with auspicious Swastik mark on his chest, Vasudev recognised Him and prayed Him. At the same time, he and Devaki also feared that Kansa would kill their eighth son also. So, they prayed the Lord to hide His divine appearance. Lord assured them that their ordeals would end soon.

Then Vasudev put the child in a winnowing basket and started his journey on foot to Gokul carrying the winnowing basket on his head. Because of the influence of Yogamaya, all the guards fell asleep while the gates of the prison opened automatically. It was raining heavily at that time. So when Vasudev reached in the open, Sheshnag spread its hood over him to shade the Lord from rain. In Gokul, Nand's wife Yashoda too gave birth to a girl child but because of Yogamaya's influence she did not know anything about the birth. Vasudev arrived there and putting Lord beside the sleeping Yashoda, he took her baby and returned to his prison in Mathura.

As soon as the baby reached in the prison, she began to cry loudly. Her cries awakened the guards who ran to inform Kansa about the child's birth. Kansa at once arrived there and snatching the baby from Devaki's lap, he dashed her on the wall. But before he could throw the baby, she slipped from his grip and taking eight armed Jagdamba's appearance, established in the air. Laughing loudly then, mother Jagdamba said- "O Kansa! You cannot kill me. Your killer has taken birth. Lord Hari had been your death in your previous births. In this birth also He will kill you. So from now on, make efforts for your benefit only. Saying this Jagdamba vanished. Worried by the words of Yogamaya, Kansa called a meeting of his prominent demons and said - "These evil gods have hatched a conspiracy to kill me. But being a brave man, I do not take these gods into account. You have yourself witnessed how Indra fled before the shower of my arrows. You would also remember how the clouds rained heavily in my kingdom when Indra had forbidden them from raining on a kingdom and I had pierced them with my arrows.

All the things on earth except my father-in-law Jarasandh bow before me in fear. I don't care for the gods. Even their efforts to kill me make me laugh. But still I must not take the word of Jagdamba lightly that my killer had taken birth. We should therefore kill all the children who have taken birth within the past few days." Instructing the demons Kansa approached Vasudev and Devaki in the prison and released them apologising his cruel action in the way of killing their innocent children.

CHAPTER FIVE KILLING OF PUTANA AND OF OTHER DEMONS

When Vasudev was released from the prison, Nand visited Mathura on some official trip. He also came to see Vasudev. Vasudev greeted him for the birth of a son and instructed him to return to Gokul as soon as possible. He also requested Nand to look after the son of Rohini as his own son. After meeting Vasudev when Nand was returning, many kinds of thoughts were disturbing him. In the Gokul while Nand was away, an ogress Putana had stolen the little Krishna in the night and was breast-feeding him with her poisoned milk. But little Krishna sucked even her life through her breast. Making a loud noise and assuming a huge body, Putana fell on earth and died. Only then the village folk came to know about the incident. They also saw little Krishna sitting in the lap of Putana.

The frightened Yashoda swept little Krishna with the tail of a cow to do away with all the bad omens. The other cowherds also prayed Lord Vishnu to protect the child from all calamities.

KILLING OF SHAKA

When Lord Krishna was twenty-seven days old, a festival was organised in Gokul. Mata Yashoda bathed the baby while the Brahmins recited hymns. Yashoda saw that baby was feeling sleepy, so putting him in a cradle, she left it under a cart. The cart was loaded with pitchers of milk, curd and butter. After sometime, lord Krishna awoke and began to cry for a feed. But amidst festivities, Yashoda could not hear his cries.

Meanwhile a demon Shakatasur rode the cart wishing to press the cart and thereby kill the Lord. But before he could act, the Lord touched the cart with His feet and lo and behold! The cart turned over and all the utensils kept on it came crashing down. Even the demon was crushed to death under the cart. Other boys, who were playing nearby, informed the Gopis (ladiesfolk) that the little Kanhaiya had turned over the loaded cart, but they did not believe the kids. Yashoda ran in horror and lifted the baby in her lap. The Brahmins recited pacifying hymns then. Thereafter the baby was bathed again with sanctified water. A feast of Brahmins followed then. Ultimately they were seen off with many gifts.

SALVATION OF TRINAVART

Once Mata Yashoda was playing with the baby lord in her home. All of a sudden she felt as if the baby was getting disproportionately heavy. Soon, she felt herself unable to bear the child anymore. So she left the child on the ground and began to pray Purushaottam Lord Rama. Soon afterwards she forgot about the event, but all was not over yet. Trinavart, a demon minister of Kansa, had arrived in Gokul as a fierce cyclone. He covered entire Gokul with dust and blinded the people temporarily. For a moment people could not see anything and during that moment Trinavart blew the baby in air with him. When the dust settled, Yashoda did not find the baby Krishna where she had left him. She felt extremely sorry and fell on ground in depression. Other womenfolk also gathered round her. They too began to cry not seeing baby Krishna there.

In the form of cyclone, the demon Trinavart had blown baby Krishna with him; but he too could not bear his heavy burden. So he began to lose his velocity. Lord Krishna caught him by neck. The demon died in a few moments and his dead body fell in Vraj. And Yashoda got a new lease of life when she saw baby Krishna safe and sound. Nand and other Gopas too were overjoyed.

NAMING OF LORD KRISHNA

Once, the supreme ascetic Gargacharya arrived in Gokul. He was the ancestral teacher of Yaduvanshis. Nand joyfully welcomed and treated the hermit. Then he requested him to carry out the ritual of naming and suggest suitable names for both of his sons. Acharya Garg said, "O Nand, everyone knows that I am the ancestral teacher of the Yadavas. If I carry out the naming ritual for these boys, people will understand that they are Devaki's sons." So Nand requested Gargacharya to name his sons secretly. Gargacharya accepted his request and carried out the naming rituals secretly in Nand's cattle shed.

Garg said: "This son of Rohini will cause by his virtue, great pleasures for his near and dear ones. So his second name will be Rama. And because of excessive strength, people will call him as Bala also. Since he will unite the people also, so one of his names would be Sankarshan."

Thereafter, Garg said pointing to Yashodanandan. He has taken incarnation in every age. In the past ages, he had taken white, red and yellow complexions respectively. This time he has taken dark complexion, so he will be known as Krishna. Once he has been the son of Vasudev, so people will call him as Vasudev also. He will cause salvation of all of you, and great joy for the fellow Gopas and cows. With his help, you will overcome even the severe crises. O Nand, This boy will be equal to Narayana in virtues, wealth, beauty, fame and influence. Foster this child with care and earnestness." Thus naming the boys as per their virtues, Garg returned to his hermitage.

CHILDHOOD OF LORD KRISHNA

The time passed in Gokul as usual. Balarama and Krishna too grew normally. Soon they began to walk on knees and palms. With their childish plays they both amused men and women folk of Gokul. Everyone took special care of them and looked after them to save them from any possible danger. Ladysfolk were especially careful about them.

Soon afterwards, both the kids began to walk trottingly. Now their movement no longer confined within the boundary of their home. Because of his special virtues, Krishna began to lead other kids of his age group whereas his elder brother Balarama was somewhat serious in nature. Krishna specially enjoyed teasing the girls and milkmaids of Gokul. Often he would eat stealing their milk, curd and butter. At other times, He did not hesitate even to break their pitchers. In such situations the ladyfolk used to gather in Nand's home to complain against Krishna. And every time Yashoda promised them to punish Krishna. But every time, when she proceeded to punish him, she forgot everything before his sweet, innocent smile.

One day, Balarama complained against Krishna, "Ma, the little Kanhaiya has eaten mud. Worried about Krishna's health, Yashoda scolded at him: "Tell me, O mischievous Krishna, why did you eat mud". At that moment, little Krishna's eyes were moving with fear. He made an excuse: "No Ma, I have not eaten any mud. They are telling you a lie. If you don't believe, me see yourself." Saying this, Krishna opened his little mouth. Yashoda peeped into his mouth and what she saw there amazed her. She could not believe it. The entire universe was visible in his

little mouth. Yashoda saw strange places, entire Vraj and even herself in the little mouth of Krishna. She felt dizzy. With his illusionary powers, Lord wiped out the memory of this incidence from the mind of Yashoda, and she again immersed in love with her child.

UKHAL BANDHAN AND SALVATION OF YAMALARJUNA

Once, wishing to feed Krishna with butter, Yashoda began to churn milk in the morning. Very soon, Krishna too awakened and not finding the mother on her bed, He set out to search her. Soon He found her in the courtyard where she was churning the milk. He began to insist for breast feeding at once. So Yashoda stopped churning and began to breast feed Krishna. Affection played on her face. Suddenly the milk kept on the fire pot began to boil. Yashoda left Krishna in order to attend the boiling milk. But the unstriated Krishna filled with anger and broke the pitcher of curd. Then he went inside and began to eat butter, when Yashoda came back; she understood the matter and began to search him with a stick in her hand. After eating butter himself, Krishna was now feeding the monkeys with it. Seeing the mother come in hot pursuit, Krishna jumped over the mortar and ran away. Yashoda chased him, but soon felt tired because of her bulky body.

Thereafter, Yashoda proceeded to tie Krishna as a punishment. She got a rope and tried to tie Krishna. But the rope fell short by two fingers. She joined many ropes together but the result was same. Every time the ropes fell short by two fingers. Soon, Yashoda was bathing in sweat. When Krishna saw his mother in depression, he himself tied in the ropes. Tethering little Krishna to a heavy mortar, Yashoda engaged in usual household tasks. Tethered to the mortar, Krishna glanced at the two Arjuna trees, which were standing on the gate like two sentries. He resolved to save them.

Maitreya asked Parashar about the trees. Parashar said: "The lord of wealth Kubera had two sons Nalkubar and Manigreev. One day they were enjoying the sweet company of pretty women on the bank of Mandakini River. Just by coincidence, Devarshi Narada arrived there. Out of Shyness, the women folk at once covered themselves, but both the sons of Kubera stood boldly without feeling any shame. Indignant Narada cursed them to become trees and stay in that form for one hundred years. Narada showed kindness as well that despite being in tree forms, they would have the memory of God alive and would be saved by Lord Sri Krishna. Thus, to keep the words of his supreme devotee Narada, Lord dragged the mortar to the two Arjuna trees. He walked in such a way that the mortar got stuck between the trees. Krishna then pulled the mortar and in no time the trees were uprooted. Two divine men appeared from the uprooted trees and bowed at the feet of Krishna and prayed him with pure hearts. Then they departed to their heavenly abode.

MIGRATION TO VRINDAVANA

The uprooted Arjuna trees fell with thundering sound. All the people shivered with fear and felt as if lightning had struck somewhere. All the elders including Nand met together and discussed the matter. Unanimously they concluded that, of late disturbance had increased in Gokul and the

circumstances were no longer conducive to raise the kids like Balarama and Krishna there. So they unanimously decided to leave Gokul and migrate to a verdant place named Vrindavana. In their opinion, Vrindavana had ample vegetation and fertility to support them and their cattle.

Thus, on an auspicious day, the entire population of Gokul set out for Vrindavana. They packed their households on bullock carts and drove their cattle in herds and started in convoy. In Vrindavana they built their houses and started their life once again.

Parashar says: "The verdant environment of Vrindavana, Govardhan mountain and crystal clear waters and sandy banks of Yamuna river together filled the hearts of Balarama and Krishna with joy. Along with the fellow cowherds, they began diverse kinds of plays there.

SALVATION OF VATSASUR

One day, Balarama and Krishna were grazing their cattle on the bank of Yamuna River. A demon, meanwhile, took the guise of a calf and mixed with the herd. Obviously, he had malicious intentions. Lord Krishna had already seen the demon taking calf's guise and mixing up with the herd. He signalled Balarama and they together reached near the calf. The calf appeared particularly healthy, so Krishna and Balarama mockingly saw it with admiring eyes. Suddenly they held the calf with its hind legs and tail twirling it in air they threw it in the sky. When the demon died, they threw him on a Kath (wood-apple) tree.

SALVATION OF BAKASUR

One day, all the cowherds took their cattle to a large pond to let them drink water. There they saw a huge creature sitting like a hillock on the bank. They were frightened by its appearance. The creature was in fact a demon named Bakasur who had arrived there in the guise of a storke. He was himself very strong and had a long pointed bill. As soon as the cowherds drew near him, The storke hastily picked up Krishna and swallowed him. Other cowherds including Balarama were stupefied. They could not believe their eyes. But inside the beak, Lord Krishna made him extremely hot and caused severe burning in demon's throat. So the demon could not swallow Krishna and regurgitated him, and began to hit him with his strong beak. But Lord held his beak with both his hands and tore the demon's mouth apart. And as soon as the demon died, a ripple of joy surged among the cowherds.

SALVATION OF AGHASUR

One day, Krishna planned a picnic near Nandanvan. So rising early in the morning, He awakened his fellow cowherds sounding a horn. Together, all the cowherds, and their cattle went to the forest. There, on the bank of Yamuna River they began to play joyfully. Nandanvan was in fact an abode of the demon Aghasur. Kansa had sent him there. Seeing the boys playing, he felt extremely jealous. Knowing that Krishna had killed his brother Bakasur and sister Pootana, it seemed an ideal moment for the demon to avenge the death of his siblings. Thinking thus, the demon took guise of python and lay in the way and opening his mouth like an opening of a cave. The cowherds too fell in his trap. Thus driven by curiosity, all the cowherds entered the demon

mouth one by one. When Lord Krishna saw that his friends had entered demon's mouth. He too entered it to protect them.

Aghasur wanted to masticate the cowherds including lord Krishna; but the lord increased his body and choked demon throat. Now the breath of demon stopped. His eyes rolled over and at last his life left his body through Brahmrandhra (cosmic pore). With his ambrosial eye, Lord resurrected these dead fellows and their cattle and together they came out of the demon's mouth. As soon as the demon died, a divine flame emerged from the python's mouth. It waited there sometime for God. And when lord Krishna came out, the flame mingled with him.

ATTACHMENT OF BRAHMA, STEALING OF CATTLE AND COWHERDS

Parashar says: The cowherds told the tale of Aghasur's salvation to their parents only after a year of the incidence. During that period of one year, Lord Krishna multiplied himself and took the guise of his fellow cowherd and their stock of cattle to remove the illusion of Brahma, who was the cause of the following incidence.

After Aghasur's life mingled with God, Lord Krishna came with His fellow cowherd on the bank of Yamuna. They left their cattle to graze freely and they sat together to take their lunch. All of the cowherds tasted one-another's food, as they wanted to feed Krishna with the tasty food. Meanwhile surprised by Aghasur's salvation, Brahma too had arrived there and saw Krishna eating food defiled by the cowherds. With that sight, Brahma grew suspicious if Krishna was indeed an incarnation of lord. Thus driven by the illusion and to test the authenticity of lord's incarnation, Brahma kidnapped all the cattle first and when Krishna went out to search the cattle Brahma kidnapped and concealed the cowherds also. Soon lord Krishna understood the craftiness of Brahma, so he multiplied himself into his fellow cowherds and cattle. Replicas resembled truly to the cowherds in appearance, complexion, nature, activities, voice, sticks and even in costumes. The replicas remain in existence for complete one year.

Back there, when Brahma returned after hiding the cowherds and the cattle, he was stunned to see the cowherds and cattle as usual. Brahma was feeling dizzy when lord bestowed his grace on him. Brahma saw Narayana in every dust particle. Brahma therefore bowed his head at the feet of lord and said: "O lord, I submit before you. You can be won only with devotion and not by ego. No one can know your omnipresent appearance. Thus praying and worshipping lord Narayana, Brahma returned to his abode. The cowherds remained separated from God for one year. But they felt as if only half a second had passed because of the illusionary influence of God. That is why they related the incidence of Aghasur's killing to their parents only after a year it took place.

SALVATION OF DHENUKASUR

When Krishna and Balarama entered sixth year of their ages, they got the permission to take the cattle out for grazing. Along with their fellow cowherds the two brothers too began to take their cattle to Vrindavana. Thus they sanctified the earth of Vrindavana with their pious feet. Seeing

the beauty of Vrindavana, with beautiful, colourful flowers and sweet fruits, Lord Krishna felt overjoyed. He then used to graze his cattle at the foothills of Govardhan and on the banks of Yamuna River. Playing flute was his favourite pass time. One day Krishna's beloved friend Sudama said: "Kanhaiya, there is a beautiful forest name Talvana. It has uncountable numbers of trees laden with ripe fruits. But a formidable demon Dhenukasur guards that forest. He is very strong. So no one goes there; even animals and birds shun that place. But we are tempted to eat those sweet delicious fruits. If you and Dau (Balarama) wish, we may go there and eat those delicious fruits."

Thus hearing this, Krishna and Balarama guided all of them to Talvana. There they shook the trees and in no time a heap of ripe, delicious fruits gathered under the trees. All the cowherds began to eat fruits. While eating, they were also making lot of noises. Disturbed by the sound of fruits falling and noise of the cowherds, the demon Dhenukasur arrived there as a donkey. He was braying loudly and tried to hit Balarama, but Balarama caught him by his hind legs and threw him in the air. The demon died in an instance. Since that day, everyone visited Talvana fearlessly and the cattle grazed there freely.

GRACE ON KALIYA THE NAGA

One day, Bala-Krishna arrived on the banks of Yamuna with their friends. Balarama was not with them that day. The water of the river Yamuna was intoxicated by the poison of Kaliya- the Naga. It was exceptionally hot that day and all the cowherds and cattle were very thirsty. So without giving any thought, they all drank the water from Yamuna and died. But Lord Krishna resurrected them by his ambrosial sight.

Then Lord Krishna decided to purify the waters of Yamuna. Thus tying a cloth round his waist, Krishna climbed a Cadamba tree and jumped into the river. In the water the lord started playing and splashing water. Soon the waves began to rise high. When Kaliya- the Naga heard the noise. He got extremely angry and appeared before Krishna.

He saw a beautiful, tender, dark complexioned boy playing joyfully in the waters. He stung him and tied him in his spirals. Tied in the spirals of Kaliya, lord became absolutely motionless. Seeing Krishna in death like situation, all the cowherds and even the cows felt very sorry. Just then lord freed himself from the hold of Kaliya. Then a game of hide and seek began between them. Lord dodged the Naga for a long time. Thereafter he rode on Kaliya's hood and began to dance there.

The followers of God, like Gandharvas etc. began to play Mridang, Dhol etc. to give him a company. Tired from the blows of lord's feet, Kaliya soon began to vomit blood. Naga's wives began to pray God, "O lord, your incarnation is to punish the evil ones for their sins. You have shown your grace on us also. We are fortunate to have a sight and touch of your feet. Pity O lord. This Naga can no longer bear your momentum. He will die. We are all your slaves. Kaliya is our lord. Kindly forgive him." With kindness, lord released Kaliya, who prayed thus: O lord in your creation we snakes represent Tamoguna (dark virtues). We are confused by your illusions." Lord dictated Kaliya to migrate with his family to Ramanakdweep. Since then water of Yamuna became pure for humans and animals.

DRINKING OF DAVANAL (FOREST FIRE)

After defeating Kaliya, Lord Krishna and all other people of Vraj felt extremely tired. They were very hungry and thirsty also. So they did not go back to Vrindavana, but stayed on the bank of Yamuna in the night. Because of intense heat of summer, surrounding forests had been Srivelled. At midnight those Srivelled forests caught fire and the sleeping people were engulfed by it. They awakened startled and took shelter at Krishna. Seeing their horrified appearance, Lord Krishna drank the infernal forest fire and thus saved the lives of innocent people who had rested their lives at him with faith.

SALVATION OF PRALAMBASUR

One day, Balarama and Krishna were playfully grazing their cattle along with other cowherds in the forests. When a demon Pralamb arrived there with an intention of kidnapping Krishna and Balarama. The demon had come in the guise of a cowherd, but the God easily recognised him. They accepted his proposal of friendship, but were thinking about the way for his salvation. God thereafter summoned all his friends and said: "Pals, today we shall divide ourselves in to two teams and play joyfully. Thus the teams were divided and each team chose Krishna and Balarama as its captain respectively. It was stipulated that the members of defeated team would carry the members of winner team on their back up to the place pointed by them. Thus the game began and soon both the teams reached a secluded place.

At one time, the team headed by Balarama won. So the members of Krishna's team were to carry them on their back. Demon Pralambasur offered Balarama a ride on his back. Balarama agreed to ride on the demon's back; but as soon as he rode on the demon's back, the demon galloped. But he could not go far for not being able to bear Balarama's weight. Then the demon regained his huge formidable size and tried to escape by flying. First Balarama felt terrorised but soon he realised his real powers and hit on the demon's head with a powerful fist. The blow shattered demon's head and he fell on earth dead like a huge mountain.

Parashar says: "Most of the time of Lord Krishna's boyhood passed in Vrindavana. There He grazed cattle and played flute. His flute had a divine, enchanting sound. The Gopis used to gather around Him drawn by the enchanting tunes."

They also heard the enchanting Venugeet that fills one hearts with the memory of Bhagvat. One of the girls said to her friend: "O dear friend, having the privilege of seeing Lords beauty and receiving His kindness is the real salvation. Another girl said: "O friend, what penance this flute had observed that it has got a closer contact with lips of Nandnandan (an epithet for Krishna). Even the siblings of this flute, trees and other vegetation's are pleased with its fortune and are hence showering their leaves and flowers on him." One more said: "O friend, look, even Bhagvati Lakshmi has left her luxurious abode in Vaikunth and arrived in Vrindavana to have a look of lord Devakinandan." A Gopi expressed her jealousy: "Even this doe is better than us, O friends, look how engrossed is she looking at God that her eyes are not blinking."

Hearing the sweet enchanting tunes of flute even the heavenly elves gather in the sky over Vrindavana. They also see the beauty of lord Krishna and showered the flowers of their braids on

him. Even the cows forgot grazing when then heard the enchanting music of flute. The calves too forgot drinking milk and began to look at lord Krishna with joy. This is the real devotion for lord Krishna. You have to forget yourself in order to find him. Condition of girls of Vrindavana was exactly the same. After having the sight of lord Krishna they remembered nothing; not even the way back to home. They stood in the forests in a trance, completely tired, unaware of their self.

A girl said pointing to the fauna: "Look O friends, look at these birds. Do you know that these birds were the saints and sages in their previous births. In this birth also they are sitting in a state of trance. Look they have forgotten their knowledge hearing the sweet enchanting music of the flute. And look at Yamuna. She is also unable to contain her exhilaration. She is eagerly splashing her waves to wash Lord's feet. Yet another girl said: "Look friends the clouds cannot see their lord scorching in the sun. So they have covered the sun and shaded Lord Krishna. Now they are drizzling as if showering petals." A girl said: "Friends, look, these Bheelanis are better than us. They have such a strong urge of Krishna's sight that when Govind returns home, they smear their body with dusts of his feet. Blessed is this mountain which has dedicated its entire self in the feet of Brajnandan and feels overjoyed. It is his supreme devotee. Kanhaiya has infused even non-living things with life by his sweet tunes of flute.

STEALING OF CLOTHES

The unmarried girls of Vrindavana felt as if their lives were dedicated to Lord Krishna. Each of them wished heartily to have lord Krishna as her husband. So in order to get their desire fulfilled, all of the spinster girls of Vraj began to take bath in Yamuna early in morning of Hemant season and worshipped goddess Katyayani. When Madan Mohan learned that the unmarried girls wished to marry him. He went to see them at dawn. The girls were bathing naked in the river; their clothes were kept on the bank. Lord Krishna stealthy took those clothes and climbed on a Kadamba tree. Lord had not stolen their clothes with malicious intentions. He had stolen them to remove their flaws and make them realise their real appearance that they were not mere girls, but pure souls. Without realisation of the real self, one can not experience the God.

The girls were, in fact, the hymns of Vedas, Sadhana, Siddhis, Sages and Brahmvidyas (Vedas) themselves that took the guise of girls to enjoy the vicinity of God. God removed their clothes that symbolised lust. Because of the lords grace they all were able to enjoy God's company.

Parashar says: "O Maitreya, Thus Lord Krishna removed the shyness of the girls of Vraj through His sweet talks. He derided at them, made them dance like puppets and even stole their clothes when they were bathing naked, but they did not deter his actions. Instead they felt overjoyed by the close presence of their beloved Kanha."

LIFTING OF GOVARDHAN

Parashar says: One day, Balarama and Krishna saw that many delicious kind of sweetmeats were being cooked at home. With curiosity and politeness, they asked Nand and other elders: "Father, which festival are you preparing for? Which god will be worshipped? What purpose will such

worship serve? Nand Baba explained: "Sons Devraj Indra is the god of clouds. It is because of Indra's grace that we get rain. So these materials are being prepared to worship Indra.

Krishna said: Father every creature in the world enjoys comforts or suffers as per his fate. None of the gods can change the results. Action is primary in the world. One gets the results as per his actions. Even Indra is God as a result of his action. Anyone, who performs one hundred Ashvamegh Yagyas, becomes Indra. But even after performing crores of Ashvamegh Yagyas one can not stay in Vraj. It is the duty of Indra to cause rain. So it will rain even if you don't worship Indra. But to feed the poors and satisfy them with clothes and other gifts is real worship. By their blessing, we shall be happier. I desire that with all these materials we should worship Giriraj Govardhan and distribute the Prasad among the poors. With which their souls will be sated and will have the grace of God.

Thus Lord Krishna told his father that all the people should worship unitedly and unitedly they should receive Prasad. If you are ready to do as per my desire, its all right, otherwise I will not worship your haughty god, nor receive his Prasad.

WORSHIP OF GOVARDHAN AND INDIGNATION OF INDRA

Thus convinced by Kanhaiya's wise reasoning, all the Gopas agreed to him. Nand Baba said, "O Krishna, we are making all these preparation for you only and we will do as you say. We will worship Govardhan. For us Govardhan is also like a god. It gives us grass, water, and fuel etc., which are necessary for our lives. Thus with lord's consent, they dropped their plan to worship Indra and resolved to worship Govardhan faithfully.

On the Purnima (full moon) day in the month of Kartik (November) all the Gopas (people of Vraj region) gathered near mount Govardhan. During the night all of them circumambulated the mountain. Lord invoked the Ganges by his wish and bathed Govardhan with her water. Then they put vermilion on it, offered basil-leaves, flowers etc and worshipped it. Brahmins recited hymns in its praise. To make the people believe in their rituals, Lord Krishna himself appeared on the mountain in huge form and exclaimed: "I am Giriraj (the king of the mountain) and began to eat the offerings. But as a child, He was still among the villagers who faithfully bowed before the mountain. Among them, the child Krishna said: "look, what a surprise Giriraj has appeared himself and bestowed his grace on us. He has accepted our worship." There after all the Gopas distributed Prasad among themselves and felt supremely satisfied.

When Indra learned that the Gopas had stopped worshipping him, he grew outrageous. In anger, he ordered the clouds to rain torrentially over Vraj and cause heavy flood in Vraj region. In no time dense clouds gathered over Vraj. Soon there was lightning, thunder, darkness and storm all around. Then it began to rain torrentially. All the people took refuge at Lord Krishna and prayed him to save them from the anger of Indra. Lord Krishna said: "Those who regard me as their, are mine and I am theirs, So there is no need to worry for you."

Saying this, Lord lifted Giriraj on his little finger and called all the people of Vraj along with their cattle under the lee of Govardhan. Then he ordered his wheel Sudarshan to absorb the water of the clouds so that not even a single drop could fall on earth. Thus for seven days continuously Lord balanced Govardhan on the little finger. Thus Lord Krishna also came to be known as Giridhari. People who had gathered around him, just kept on seeing Lord's moon-like face and hence did not feel thirsty or hungry. In fact the comforts those people got during those seven days are beyond verbal description. Lord held Govardhan on one hand, and conch in the other, while with the remaining two hands He began to play this flute. Hearing the tunes of his flute, all the people of Vraj began to dance with joy. After the rains stopped, all of them returned to their homes.

When Indra learned about the happenings in Vraj, he soon realised his mistake. Indra himself reached Vraj and begged Lord for His pardon. Then he gave Lord a ceremonial bath with the milk of Surabhi. For protecting the cows, the Lord also got one more name "Govind".

RASS LEELA

Parashar related to Maitreya the tale of Kamadev's humiliation. The purpose of describing this tale is just that common people should reflect on the selfless love of Gopis for Lord Krishna and experience the love of God for them as well.

After conquering Brahma and other gods, ego of Kamadev had surged to great heights. He, therefore, requested God to quench his thirst for war. God invited Kamadev to visit Vrindavana on the night of Sharad Purnima (Full moon night) in the season that precedes winter, and told him that on that divine night He would enjoy the company of crores of Gopis. "If I have slightest passion for any of them, you will win, otherwise you will lose."

That night Lord Krishna added more divinity, more brilliance to it with a resolution of Ras with the help of Yogmaya (personified illusion). It was a perfect night for the purpose - flowers bloomed in Vrindavana, full moon shone, and gentle, cool breeze blew from the banks of river Yamuna. Amidst this stimulating ambience Lord Krishna began to play an enchanting tune on his flute. The tune attracted Gopis, their passion surged to its zenith and under the influence of love for Lord Krishna and as if in trance, all of them ran to meet their beloved Kanhaiya leaving all their fear, bondage, patience and shyness behind. Some of them were intercepted by their husbands and dragged back to home. But only their physical bodies stayed put, their souls reached Vrindavana.

In Vrindavana on the bank of Yamuna, Gopis saw Vrindavana Vihari (epithet for Krishna) near their familiar Cadamba tree. Yogmaya adorned all the Gopis from tip to toe. In fact those Gopis were not ordinary women.

Maitreya asks: "Gopis had not regarded Krishna as Parabrahma. What was the basis for their passion then?"

Parashar says: When a wretched person like Shishupal, who always abused lord Krishna could find supreme position, there should be no doubt for Gopis who had such a profound passion for Lord." So Gopis arrived and gathered around Lord Krishna.

To test their devotion and to enhance the honor of Kamadev, Krishna said to them: "O Gopis, the pure ones, it is not fit for you to stay here at this hour of night. Go and serve your husbands. Your duties must be first to your husband's children and cows. They will be waiting for you eagerly. Go and console them. You can gain me by hearing, reciting, seeing etc. You need not sit here. Go to your homes."

Gopis, however said: "Govind, we have come to you leaving all the mundane lusts behind. Now going back is like ruining our lives. It is the greatest misfortune if someone returns to mundane affairs even after being at your feet." These words that reflected divine feelings of Gopis pleased Lord. He began to enjoy their company. But a feeling of ego began to creep in the minds of Gopis because of lord's closeness. They began to assume themselves as highly fortunate. To remove their ego, Lord disappeared right among them.

PITIABLE CONDITION OF GOPIS IN KRISHNA'S ABSENCE

After the disappearance of Krishna, Gopis were perplexed. Their hearts burned with desire. They had dedicated their entire selves in the feet of Lord. They were entirely merged in the love of Krishna. Thus driven by passion, Gopis began to search Lord Krishna. They asked trees, creepers and vegetation for the whereabouts of their beloved. They then spotted His footprints at one place. Footprints of Radha were also there. 'Indeed He would have carried her, that great fortunate one, on His shoulders.' They thought. Lord had indeed, after disappearing from amidst Gopis, taken Radha to an isolated place. She had then began to think herself superior to other Gopis. So at one place, she said: "O Lord, I can't walk now. My tender feet are tired. Kindly carry me on your shoulders to wherever you wish." At her request, Lord Krishna agreed to carry her on his shoulder. But as soon as she proceeded to ride, Lord disappeared from there also. Now, Radha began to cry and wail and fainted. At the same time, other Gopis also reached there and found Radha lying unconscious on the ground. All of them including Radha then returned to the bank of Yamuna and began to wait for Krishna's appearance.

RE-APPEARANCE OF LORD KRISHNA AMONG GOPIS

When the beloved Gopis burst into tears, Krishna's patience gave away. His heart melted at their condition and He appeared amidst them. A sweet smile played on his beautiful face. He wore a garland of fresh Vijayanti flowers and yellow clothes. His beauty could have moved even Kamadev. Seeing their beloved Kanha once again amidst them, Gopis got a new lease of life. All of them began to embrace Lord Krishna and thus quench the fire of separation that was burning their bodies.

Thereafter, along with the beauties of Vraj, Lord Krishna came to the bank of Yamuna. Gopis put their queries before him for solution. Lord Krishna said: "O beloved Gopis, I do not

reciprocate to the desire of my beloved ones for physical love. Because of it their conscience remains always engrossed in me. Hence, I take to hiding even after meeting so that you could feel complete imbiberment in me.

MAHARAS

From the words of Lord Krishna, Gopis forgot the pains of separation. From the closeness of their beloved, their lives were successful now. With those Gopis, Lord Krishna started Maharas on the pious banks of river Yamuna. All the gods gathered in sky to witness that divine festival. Gopis were even more fortunate than Lakshmi. But even amidst crores of Gopis, who were eager to devote their everything to Him, Lord Krishna completely refrained from desires, feelings and even actions. Thus Lord Krishna defeated even Kamadev and removed his ego.

SALVATION OF SUDARSHAN AND SHANKHCHUR

Parashar says: Once on the occasion of Shivaratri, Nand Baba and all other Gopas drove their carts with families and reached Ambikavana on a pilgrimage tour. There they took bath in the river Saraswati and with devotion worshiped lord Shiva and Parvati. They also observed day long fast and decided to pass their night on the bank of Saraswati. But a huge python inhabited that place. During the night the python emerged and caught hold of Nand's leg. Nandbaba cried loudly. All the Gopas gathered around him. He cried again: "Kanhaiya, this snake is all set to strangulate me. Save me."

Lord Krishna touched the python with his feet and instantaneously the python vanished. In its place appeared a divine-looking human being. He said: "O Lord, I was a Vidyadhar named Sudarshan. I was so much obsessed with my beauty, youth, luxury and comforts that I used to insult others. One day I had derided at the ugly appearance of the sage Angira. So indignantly he cursed me to become a python. But, pleased by my realisation of mistake, he had told that when God himself would touch me, I would regain my original appearance." Thereafter, Sudarshan went round the God, worshiped Him and with his permission, departed to his abode.

On another occasion, Lord Krishna arrived in Vrindavana during Vasant Ritu (spring Season). There He took part in Vasantik Ras (Ras of spring season) with the Gopis. During Ras itself, a demon Shankhchur tried to escape away kidnapping some of the Gopis. A stampede resulted among Gopis. Hearing their noise, Lord Krishna ran after the demon, carrying a huge Sal (Shorea) tree in his hands. In no time He overtook the demon and killed him by just one blow. He picked up the gem from demon's head and handed it to Balarama.

SALVATION OF ARISHTASUR

Once, Kansa sent a demon Arishtasur to Vrindavana. The demon arrived there in a bull's guise. That huge bull came to Vrindavana and began to terrorise the people with his loud sound. Seeing the bull, Balarama said to Krishna: "Kanhaiya, I have never seen such a huge bull before." All the people began to cry for help. Lord Krishna consoled them and challenged the bull demon: "O fool, why are you terrorising these cows and cowherds? I am going to shatter your ego." The

challenge from Krishna pinched the demon. Tapping his hooves angrily, the demon attacked God. He wished to gore Him, but Krishna held his horns and pushed him back. Then kicking the demon Krishna killed him in no time.

KANSA SENDS AKRURA

After the killing of Arishtasur, Devarshi Narada visited Kansa and asked: "O Kansa, the girl who had slipped from your hand was in fact the daughter of Yashoda. Krishna and Balarama, who are staying in Vrindavana, are in fact the sons of Devaki and Rohini respectively. Because of your fear, Vasudev has kept them under the supervision of his friend Nand. Those two boys have killed the demons sent by you." Hearing these words, Kansa shook with anger and put Vasudev and Devaki in prison again. Thereafter he called his minister Akrura and asked him to set out at once for Gokul. He said to Akrura: "Akruraji, you are an old friend and well-wisher of mine, Go to Gokul and bring the sons of Vasudev, who are staying at Nand's home. Invite them to visit Mathura, to witness the festivities of Dhanush-Yagya." Akrura understood Kansa's intentions, but feared that if he refused, that demon would kill him. So he decided to visit Gokul, and also have the opportunity of seeing God. He was feeling overwhelmed by the mere thought of it. Next day, he set out on a grand chariot to meet his supreme Lord in Gokul.

Meditating in the feet of Lord, Akrura was heading towards Vrindavana. He was feeling himself as the most fortunate one for he was sure to have a sight of Lord. Thus obsessed with many kinds of devotional feelings, Akrura alighted from the chariot at the border of Vrindavana and started walking. He found it unjust to ride a chariot on the land of Vrindavana where Lord Krishna treaded. By the time, he reached Vrindavana, Lord Krishna and Balarama had returned home after grazing their cattle. Seeing them, Akrura fell at their feet. Both the brothers raised Akrura and addressed him as "Chacha" (uncle), and escorted him into the house.

Akrura was given a warm welcome and treatment there. After the dinner, they assembled in Nand's drawing room. Nand inquired about the reason of his sudden arrival. Akrura said: "Kansa is organising a wrestling competition in Mathura. He has invited all the big and small kings to the competitions. He has invited you with Krishna and Balarama as well. Beautiful Mathura is worth seeing. Gullible Nand felt pleased by Akrura's talking and said: "King Kansa has shown a great honor to me. He has sent invitation only to other kings, but has sent his minister to call me and a golden chariot for my kids." So it was announced in Gokul that all the people would go to Mathura the next day and witness the festivities there.

DEPARTURE OF KRISHNA AND BALARAMA FOR MATHURA

When the Gopis heard about Krishna leaving Gokul to visit Mathura, they began to wail and cry. They were getting so much restless by the news that, they felt, their lives would end before the sunrise. They started imprecating fate that it had no kindness. First it provided them with a closer contact with their beloved Kanha, now it was causing a long separation from him. Some of Gopis even begged for death, they felt it better than living without Kanha. All the Gopis kept on crying and wailing nightlong. Mother Yashoda awoke early in the morning next day. She churned out

butter and adding Misri (sugar candies), she took it to Krishna to feed him. But there she found that both Krishna and Balarama were getting ready to set out for Mathura. They held mother's feet and said: "Pardon us, O mother, we are going to Mathura." These words disturbed Yashoda. She ran and fell at Akrura's feet and said: "I am your slave.

O Akrura, please do not take my beloved sons to Mathura. They are inseparable from my heart. Why Kansa has summoned them to Mathura?

O Akrura, go and tell him to take everything from us, but spare our sons. We are also ready to live in jail, but can't lose our beloved sons." Akrura consoled Yashoda. "Bhabhi (sister-in-law), don't worry. These two brothers are going to Mathura to witness the festivities there and will return soon to comfort your heart." Yashoda said: "Akruraji, Mathura is a town of gold and both of my sons are too young yet to be needed there for any reason."

Touching the feet of Nand and Yashoda, both the brothers said: "Father, mother, we will definitely return. Presently we wish to see the grandeur of Mathura." Meanwhile all the Gopis and Gopas had gathered there. Crying and wailing, the Gopis said: "You are very Cruel, O Akrura, who named you as Akrura. You have come here to lacerate our hearts." Second Gopi said: "No friend, it is not a fault of Akrura. Our complaints are with Shyamsundar. We left everything, our husbands, children, our homes and dedicated our entire selves in your service. And now you are deserting us so ruthlessly. We have no support for our life except you, O Madhusadan." Saying this, all the Gopis burst into tears again.

All the Gopas, including Sridama surrounded the chariot and said: "O Krishna we had not even dreamt that you would desert us so ruthlessly. O Kanhaiya we have seen with our eyes that even Indra, Varuna, Sanakadi and Brahma bow before you. But we have never regarded you as God. We regarded you as our friend. Are you angry with us? O my childhood friend Kanhaiya, we request you, we will never abuse you in future. If you were intending to go, why did you, then save us from the infernal forest fire. Why did you save from the deluging rains? We cannot live without you. Tell us O benevolent friend, when will you return."

Lord Krishna consoled them all and took many of them with Him. The chariot began to move. As long as the flag of the chariot remained visible, people kept on crying and wailing. Even the eyes of Akrura filled with tears. Lord asked him: "Kaka, why are you weeping?" Akrura replied: "O Lord, Kansa is the great sinner. I feel he will try to torment you by all means. So, my heart says, that I should take you back to Vrindavana, because if Kansa did any harm to you, their spirits will curse me for ever."

AKRURA HAS A SIGHT OF LORD IN FOUR-ARMED FORM

Hearing Akrura's words, Lord understood that when he had arrived in Vraj, he was afflicted with a feeling of majesty. But now, it has been replaced by affection now. He therefore decided to remove his dilemma. Thus, Lord said to him: "Kaka, Mathura is still some distance away. So you take a bath in Yamuna. We brothers are waiting for you in the chariot."

As soon as Akrura took a dip in Yamuna, Lord showed him a sight of His abode Vaikunth and his Narayana's appearance in which, he was holding conch, wheel, mace and lotus in each of his four hands and was lying on the bed of Sheshnaga. With folded hands, Akrura prayed to lord: "O lord, you are the reason for the existence of Brahma and the Universe. O Lord, I pray at your feet again and again. Now I recognise you. You are the one who took the incarnations of Matsya, Kachchap, Varaha, Narasinha, Vamana, Rama etc. Thus after bath and worship, Akrura returned to the chariot. Lord Krishna understood that now a devotional feeling had arisen in the mind of Akrura for Narayana. Lord asked: "Your condition seems miserable. Did you see anything extraordinary under water?" Akrura said: "O Lord, now bestow your grace on me. Kindly come to my home and accept my hospitality."

ARRIVAL IN MATHURA AND GRACE ON KUBJA

After the departure of Akrura, Nandbaba too set out for Mathura along with the Gopas. On the way itself, they caught up with Krishna and Balarama. All of them then reached Mathura together. There they stayed in a garden. After sometime, with Nand's permission, both the brothers set out to see the city of Mathura. Mathura was indeed a beautiful town. All the residents of Mathura thronged on roads, roofs and attices to have a sight of Krishna and Balarama.

On the way, they met a pretty but hunched woman. She introduced herself as Kubja, the maid of Kansa. Her duty was to smear the members of the royal family with sandalwood paste. God asked her if she would smear him with sandal paste. Kubja said: "O Manmohan, I see no one more fitting than you for the sandal paste." Thus she smeared Lord Krishna's forehead with saffron. On Dau's forehead she smeared musk containing sandal paste, other Gopas smeared all the remaining sandal paste on their heads. Lord Krishna then, put His feet on Kubja's and holding her chin gave her head a slight jerk. And in no time, Kubja's hunch was gone and she turned into a pretty woman. She begged lord for His love. The Lord promised her a meeting in future, and proceeded ahead.

BREAKING OF THE BOW AND KILLING ELEPHANT

After saving Kubja, Lord Krishna and other Gopas moved ahead. At a place they saw a huge bow kept on a high stage. Many strong men were guarding it. Lord Krishna entered the canopy and easily lifted the bow and broke it into pieces. There was a big applause from all around. Dau said: "Krishna, now the crowd will increase here, so let us escape in time. Thus, both the brothers and their friends beat a retreat to their camp. There they rested for night. There in Mathura, breaking of the bow had frightened Kansa. He could not sleep during the night. Even in his dreams, he saw nothing, but Krishna everywhere around him.

Early in the morning, Kansa summoned his minister and ordered him to make Kuvalayaped, the elephant to stand in the center of the main gate. He thought that the elephant would kill both the boys if they dared to enter the fort through main gate. Back there in the garden, Krishna and Balarama set out in wrestlers guise for the fort. At the gate, seeing an elephant blocking the passage, they asked mahout loudly: "O Mahout, why have you made the elephant stand in the

center of the gate. Move it either ahead or back." But instead of moving the elephant out of the passage, the mahout steered it right on them. But before elephant could attack them, Balarama caught its trunk, while Krishna caught its tail. Both the brothers then dragged the elephant out of the gate and lofted it in the air. The elephant fell on the ground with a loud thud and died on the spot.

SALVATION OF WRESTLERS

Kansa felt very nervous by the news of elephant's killing. Before he could take stock of the situation, Lord Krishna and Balarama arrived in the amphi-theatre. The spectators present in the amphitheatre saw Lord as per their feelings. The menfolk saw Lord Krishna as a Jewel among the men. Womenfolk saw him as an incarnation of Kamadev. Cowherds saw their natural friend in Lord, while to Kansa He appeared as his death. But to his mother and father, Devaki and Vasudev and to Nand, Krishna and Balarama appeared as small kids. Sages and ascetics saw nothing but metaphysical coming in boys' guise. Learned ones sighted His cosmic form while to Yadavas He appeared as their tutelary God. As soon as Lord Krishna and Balarama arrived in the ring, the wrestlers, who were already present there, stood up like springs. A wrestler Chanur dragged Krishna and one named Mushtik dragged Balarama into the ring. They said to them: "Both of you and we are the subjects of the great king Kansa. It is our duty to please our king with our art and skill. More over we will receive many rewards also."

Krishna said: "O wrestlers, you please fight among yourselves. We are boys yet, so we shall witness your fight from a distance." Chanur said: "No you are neither boy nor teenagers. You are stronger than the strongest. You have just killed an elephant which was stronger than thousand elephants." Thus, both the brothers were compelled to wrestle with the royal wrestlers. Balarama beat Mushtik on the ground so hard that he died at once on the spot. Krishna similarly killed second wrestler Chanur. All the remaining wrestlers met similar fate one by one. The massive crowd present there applauded them joyfully.

SALVATION OF KANSA

Seeing the shameful defeat of his wrestlers, Kansa infuriated with anger and proclaimed: "Tie all the opponents; tie Ugrasen, Devaki, Vasudev and Nand in ropes and bring them before me." Lord Krishna could not tolerate this and in a single jump, He reached on the stage where Kansa was present. Lord Krishna caught him by hair and said: "O Kansa, once you have caught a helpless woman by hair, I have avenged that insult. Now you will receive the fruits for your atrocities." Saying this, Lord began to twirl Kansa catching him by hair, and threw him down from the stage. Then Lord jumped once again and landed on the chest of Kansa. Kansa died instantaneously. Thus, Kansa who was an incarnation of the demon Kalnemi received salvation. Lord Krishna then, released his parents from the prison and crowned his maternal grand father Ugrasen as the king of Mathura.

YAGYOPAVIT OF KRISHNA AND BALARAMA

After the successful completion of all the royal ceremonies, the consecration of Krishna and Balarama was carried out. Thereafter, they came to stay at the hermitage of sage Sandipani for formal education. Extraordinarily brilliant Krishna successfully learned all the knowledge in short period of time. Then, as Guru Dakshina (paying respect to the teacher) Krishna brought back his dead sons from the abode of Yamaraj. Taking convocation bath, thereafter, Lord Krishna returned to Mathura. There, though living among royal luxuries and grandeur Lord Krishna remained indifferent. Memory of his sentimental, beloved devotees friend and other people of Vraj kept on pricking him.

SENDING UDDHAVA AS MESSENGER

Savant Uddhava, the son of Yadava's minister Brihaspati was an intimate friend of Lord Krishna. Only he had the permission to enter Lord's sanctum. Seeing his friend Krishna in remorse, Uddhava asked: "Mathuranath, you seem to be upset. What is troubling you?" Lord Krishna replied: "Uddhava, I feel perplexed. I remember my days in Vrindavana. Please go to Vrindavana and get the news regarding Gopis there. Also give them my message." Thus Lord Krishna donned Uddhava in his attire and sent him to Vraj in his chariot.

There he stayed at Nand's home. At night, Uddhava enquired about Nand and Yashoda's well being and about Vraj in general. That whole night passed in chatting.

BHRAMAR GEET

Next day, when the Gopis got the news of Uddhava's arrival, they thronged in and around Nand's residence. They recognised the chariot parked in front of the gate. It was the same chariot on which Krishna and Balarama had departed for Mathura. First they thought that their beloved Krishna had returned.

But someone informed that it was Uddhava, Krishna's Savant friend, who had come to preach them about metaphysical knowledge. Soon afterwards, Uddhava came out and spoke out loud: "O Gopis, listen to the preaching of Uddhava." But instead of listening to him, Gopis covered their ears. Feeling insulted, Uddhava expressed his dissatisfaction over their behaviour. Gopis said to him: "O gentleman, firstly we are not familiar with you, secondly we have no capacity to hear your preaching. Yes if you wish to give us a message of our most beloved; thousand of ears are eager to hear that." Uddhava then introduced himself as the intimate friend of Lord Krishna.

Knowing his identity Gopis welcome and treated Uddhava warmly. Uddhava then began to say again: "O Gopis, the person, whom you are declaring as your beloved friend, in fact recognises no mother, no father and no other relation. He has no form, no colour and no body. He is above all, non-existing all pervasive and the giver of joy. He is never separate from his devotee and beloved ones. All of you, too, feel the presence of that Supreme Being and be happy forever." Gopis said: "Uddhava, as long as Ghanashyam stayed with us, we saw endless virtues in him. But only within six months of his stay in Mathura, you wiped out all of his virtues and turned him virtueless.

Tell us with which mouth did he eat butter, with which hand did he break our pitchers, with which feet did he pasture cows in the forests and with which feet did he dance on the hood of Kaliya. Was he another Krishna?"

Harsh reaction of the Gopis startled Uddhava. He began to think where he had been caught. His knowledge of Vedanta was proving ineffective on the Gopis who were sunk in so much love. On the other hand, Gopis too were feeling embarrassed for treating the guest bitterly. But they were also not prepared to listen to such preaching that condemned love. Moreover, they had let out their long accumulating feeling.

Meanwhile a bumblebee perched at Radha's feet mistaking them for lotus. Pointing to it, all the Gopis said: "Beware O bumblebee, beware if you dare to touch the feet of our Radha. It appears that you are a disciple of Krishna. There is now no secret regarding the virtues and actions of your friend. But it is good that he and you tied in friendship. You are black and your friend has a black heart. Virtues of both of you are same.

First He imbibed us in His love; then left us ruthlessly forever. He is not sorry for us. But why does Lakshmi serve in those feet? She must be careful, lest she should be deceived like us. O bumblebee you also appear to be a polymath who has come here to preach us. But you won't get an audience in Braj. You should better go to Mathura.

There is one Kubja go and relate your tale to her. You will receive ample donations from her. What will you get from the Gopis here? They have already lost their mental balance, because of separation from the beloved Krishna. If you have come to ask, why we loved Krishna. O bumblebee, we have no knowledge. But we know that our love for Krishna was not a mistake. Even the goddess Lakshmi does not leave His feet for a moment. Why should we leave his feet then? But O bumblebee, have you really come to convince us. When He could not come out of shame, He sent you to console us - the deaf and dumb Gopis. But be careful if you put your head at the feet of Radha.

Get away, we have already seen enough of flattery and flirtation of your friend. Deserting our affection for ephemeral things, we loved that eternal one. But He too abandoned us. Can you guess about our condition? Tell us, O Uddhava, shall we ever get the sight of Sri Krishna again?

Hearing the tragic tale of the Gopis, Uddhava too felt very sorry for them. He felt as if Mathuranath, lord Krishna was indeed neglecting those Gopis. Uddhava stayed in Vrindavana for six months. There he saw every place, every spot where lord Krishna had played once. When he was returning to Mathura, mother Yashoda presented him with butter, Radha gave him the flute. Thus immersed in the love and overwhelmed by its feelings, Uddhava reached Mathura. He said to Krishna: "Lord, the real appearance of love, that I saw in Vrindavana is the only truth." Sri Krishna said: "Uddhava, You are weeping. Just look at me." Uddhava looked at him with wide, opened eyes. In every single hair of Lord, there existed Gopis. Uddhava was indeed a Savant. But Lord had sent him to Braj only to be taught a lesson of love.

After the death of Kansa his widowed queens Asti and Prapti returned to their father Jarasandh's home and informed him that Krishna and Balarama had killed their husband Kansa. Infuriated by

the news, Jarasandh at once launched a massive attack on Mathura. The people of Mathura were frightened by the strength of Jarasandh's army. Lord Krishna too fell in deep thought. Just then, divine weapons and chariots appeared from the heaven. Both the brothers took the weapons and boarded their chariots. Then they fought a fierce battle and slayed all the army of Jarasandh.

Balarama furiously caught Jarasandh and was about to kill him. But Lord Krishna stopped him. They then released Jarasandh and let him go unhurt. Jarasandh felt ashamed that Krishna released him because of his helpless condition.

Parashar says: Despite his shameful defeat, Jarasandh attacked Mathura seventeen times with huge armies. But every time, the Lord defeated him and released him in kindness. And every time Jarasandh felt more humiliated."

At last, instead of attacking Mathura himself, Jarasandh sent Kalyavan to defeat Sri Krishna. Kalyavan launched an attack on Mathura with one crore strong Malechchh army. This time Lord Krishna decided to vacate Mathura instead of countering the attack. He got Dwarkapuri constructed by Vishwakarma and settled all the people of Mathura there. Then, unarmed, Lord Krishna walked past Kalyavan. Pointed by Narada, Kalyavan at once recognised Krishna and gave Him a chase. He also challenged Him, but the Lord did not listen to his challenges and kept moving with face turned away. Kalyavan chased Him for long, but could not catch up.

Ultimately Lord Krishna entered a cave. Kalyavan too followed Him into the cave. In the cave Lord Krishna saw that someone was sleeping there. So He covered the man with his yellow length of cloth and himself hid inside the cave. Kalyavan too arrived there and saw the sleeping man. He mistook him for Krishna and said: "Krishna, you might have thought that braves do not attack on sleeping people. So I will first wake you up and then kill you." Saying thus Kalyavan kicked the sleeping man hard. However, as soon as the man awakened and glanced at Kalyavan, Kalyavan got incinerated at once.

TALE OF MUCHKUND

Maitreya asked: "Gurudev, who was that sleeping man?"

Parashar says: "O king, that sleeping man was Muchkund, the son of the king Mandhata. The gods had sought his assistance in their war against the demon during the Satya Yuga. With Muchkund's help, the gods had defeated the demons and thus pleased had asked him to seek a boon. Muchkund then had sought a boon of seeing God in tangible form. The gods had assured him that he would have a sight of God in Dwapar Yuga. Since Dwapar Yuga was still far away, so Muchkund had asked: "What should I do till then?" The gods asked him to sleep somewhere and blessed him with a boon that whoever waked him up would be incinerated at once, by his glance. Thus, in order to get Kalyavan incinerated and show Muchkund with his Divine form, Lord had gone to that spot where Muchkund was sleeping.

Muchkund got the sight of God in Chaturbhuj form; and sought a boon of continuous devotion for three births. Thus, Lord defeated Malechchh army and captured all their wealth. He also defeated Jarasandh and caused great joy for the people of Dwarka.

The king of Anart, Raivat got his daughter Revati married to Balarama with the blessing of Brahma.

MESSAGE OF RUKMANI FOR LORD KRISHNA

Parashar says: "Bhismak was the king of Vidarbh. He had five sons and a daughter Rukmani. Rukmi, the eldest son of Bhismak, had fixed his sister's engagement with Shishupal, the prince of Chaidi. Narada did not like this development. He went to Kundanpur, the capital of Vidarbh and said in the court of Bhismak: O King, I am coming from Dwarka." Bhismak said! "O great Sage, I have never heard about any city named Dwarka". Thus, in the court of Bhismak, Narada narrated about the life of Lord Krishna and the grandeur of Dwarka. Bhismak heard the tale with full attention. His daughter Rukmani too enjoyed the tale.

But Rukmi had a strong opposition against Lord Krishna. Ignoring the wish of his father, he was not ready to get his sister married to Lord Krishna. On the appointed day, Shishupal appeared there, in a procession, to get married with Rukmani.

But Rukmani was determined to marry Lord Krishna. She sent a love letter to Krishna through a loyal Brahmin and declared a fast unto death. Lord Krishna read her letter, which said: "O Trilokinath, since the moment, these ears have heard about your virtues, actions, character and plays, my soul experiences divine peace. O Achyut, my mind is dedicated in your feet. O great among the men, this Rukmani has dedicated herself in your feet. Now it is up to you to see that no jackal could take away the lion's share." The Brahmin, the carrier of the letter, returned to Kundanpur with an assurance from Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna too called the charioteer and set out at once for Kundanpur. There in Kundanpur, Rukmani after getting the assurance from the Brahmin was thus waiting for Lord' Krishna's arrival.

Preparations for Rukmani's marriage with Shishupal were on with full swing in Kundanpur. All the houses, streets and lanes were cleaned and sprinkled with scented water. All the men and women folk donned new clothes and ornaments. King Bhismak worshipped his ancestors and gods and welcomed the Brahmins liberally. Extremely beautiful princess Rukmani was given ceremonial bath and donned with auspicious clothes and bracelets.

The king of Chedi, Damaghosh got the auspicious rites for the marriage of his son Shishupal, performed by Brahmins. All the Baratis (people in marriage procession) were given grand reception. Many great kings like Shalv, Jarasandh, Dantvaktra, Vidurath and Paundrak were present in the marriage procession. They had come with their armies with an intention of fighting Krishna and Balarama. After Krishna's departure, Balarama too set out for Kundanpur with chaturangini (with four wings) army, for he had known about their opponents' preparedness.

Rukmani was eagerly awaiting Lord Krishna's arrival. She had received the news that Dwarakanath (Krishna) had resolved to take her away. She was feeling overwhelmed in her heart. Seeing Lord Krishna arrived intently in the marriage ceremonies of his daughter, king Bhismak welcomed him. Seeing him, even the common people of Vidarbh prayed "May our princess Rukmani get Sri Krishna as her husband. At the same time, Rukmani emerged from her palace to go to the temple of Ambikadevi, soldiers were guarding her. In the temple, Rukmani

prayed peacefully: "O Mother Ambika I greet you and Ganapati, who is sitting in your lap. I seek your blessing that may my wish be fulfilled and may I receive Sri Krishna as my husband."

On her way back, Rukmani was walking very slowly for she was awaiting Lord's arrival, which was due in any moment. Just then, Lord Krishna appeared before her. Before she could ride her chariot Lord lifted her from amidst the crowd. And in the presence of hundreds of kings, Krishna and Balarama eloped away with Rukmani.

KRISHNA DEFEATS RUKMI AND MARRIES RUKMANI

Hearing the news that Krishna has eloped with Rukmani, Rukmi and all other kings present there boiled with anger. Accompanied by their huge armies, they decided to give them a chase. Thus chased by them, Yaduvanshis stopped and encountered the kings boldly. With a true ambition to win, brave Yadav soldiers defeated the enemies. All the kings like Jarasandh fled for their lives. Rukmi had resolved that without getting Rukmani released from Krishna's captivity, he would not show his face in Kundanpur. He chased Lord Krishna for long. But Dwarakanath defeated him and got his head shaved. Thus defeating all the kings, Lord Krishna brought Rukmani to Dwarka. There they got married formally. All the people of Dwarka celebrated festivities for many days. People presented them with lot of precious gifts. All the people were in great joy to see Lakshmi as Rukmani with her husband Lord Krishna.

BIRTH OF PRADYUMN, KILLING OF SHABARASUR

Kamadev was a part of lord himself. After getting incinerated by Rudra, Kamadev took refuge in the supreme lord to get an incarnation once more. Thus, Kamadev was born as Rukmani's first son Pradyumn. But just after his birth, Pradyumn was kidnapped by a demon Shambarasur. The demon dropped the baby into the sea, where a huge fish swallowed him in whole. Coincidentally the fish was caught by the fishers and presented to the kitchen of Shambarasur. When the cooks cut the fish open, an extremely beautiful baby emerged. Mayawati, the governess of the kitchen, felt overjoyed to see the baby. She began to rear the baby with love and affection. Once Narada arrived in the kitchen and said: "Mayawati, do you know who is in your lap? " "No, O Devarshi, I found him from the belly of a fish," said Mayawati. Devarshi Narada said: "He is your husband Kamadev and you are his wife Rati. In this birth, he has appeared as Pradyumn the son of Krishna. Hearing this, Mayawati saluted Narada with respect. Since then she regarded Pradyumn as her husband and served him accordingly. When Pradyumn matured. Mayawati reminded him about his real appearance. Pradyumn, thereafter, killed Shambarasur and got married with Mayawati. Then the couple arrived in Dwarka.

TALE OF SYAMANTAK THE GEM AND ITS THEFT

A person named Satrajit was a great devotee of Lord Suryanarayana. Pleased by his devotion, Suryadev presented him a gem called Syamantak. The gem had radiance equal to the Sun. Bearing that gem, Satrajit arrived in Lord's court. By the radiance of his gem, all the people and the courtiers mistook him for Suryadev and stood in his regard. But the Lord recognised him and asked his courtiers to be calm. Then to Satrajit, Lord Said: "Satrajit, your gem is really very

beautiful. Nana (maternal grandfather) Ugrasen is the king of this region. If you present this gem to him, it will be very good. But Satrajit refused to present that gem. One day, later on, Satrajit's brother Prasenjit went hunting, wearing the gem in his neck. In the forest a lion killed him and snatched the gem. The lion was in turn killed by the bear king Jambvant. Jambvant took the gem to his cave and gave it to his children to play with. When Prasenjit did not return from hunting, Satrajit felt sorry and accused Krishna that He had killed his brother for the gem. When Lord Krishna heard that he was being blamed for the mishap, He himself went to the forests. There he found the dead body of Prasenjit, but there was no sign of gem around the cadaver. He found only footprints of a lion leaving from there. Following the footprints, He discovered the dead lion and the footprints of a great bear. Following the footprints, He reached in the cave where Jambvant's daughter Jambvati was playing with the gem.

As soon as Lord Krishna proceeded to take the gem, Jambvant arrived. A fierce duel resulted between them. They continued to fight for twenty-six days without truce. On the twenty-seventh day Jambvant requested Lord! "Please wait O Lord." Lord said: "Do you want to take rest?" "No", said Jambvant, "I have recognised you. You are none other than Lord Narayana Himself. Nobody else has the power to defeat me." Lord appeared before Jambvant as Sri Rama. Jambvant prayed and worshipped Him. He was feeling guilty that he dared to fight Lord. Lord said that He had arrived there for the gem only. Jambvant gave him the gem and also his daughter Jambvati. Lord Krishna returned the gem to Satrajit and married Jambvati formally.

KRISHNA'S OTHER MARRIAGES

1.) Lord Krishna summoned Satrajit to His court and in the presence of the king Ugrasen, related the sequence of incidents that took place in the jungle. Satrajit felt ashamed. With a feeling of repentance he took the gem. He was getting afraid also that he made enmity with lord Krishna without reason. Hence to expiate his crime, Satrajit thought of presenting the gem Syamantak and his daughter Satyabhama to Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna accepted Satyabhama as his wife but returned the gem to Satrajit saying: "It is a gift of lord Suryadev. Keep it with you. You are required to deposit the gold that you get from it, in the royal treasure."

Akrura and Kritvarma were not pleased with the marriage of Satyabhama. So they got Satrajit killed by Shatadhanva. Shatadhanva killed Satrajit in his sleep and absconded with the gem. Lord Krishna was then away in Hastinapur. Satyabhama too reached there and informed Krishna about her father's assassination. With Balarama, Lord Krishna chased Shatadhanva. But even after killing him, they could not trace the gem. Shatadhanva had given the gem to Akrura to keep till his return. But after the death of Shatadhanva, frightened Akrura came to stay in Kashi. From the effect of the gem Akrura performed many grand Yagyas there. Lord Krishna summoned Akrura from Kashi. After welcoming and treating him in the court, Lord Krishna asked him about the gem. Akrura showed the gem in the court. But Lord returned the gem to Akrura.

2.) Once Lord Krishna visited Indraprasth to see Pandavas. There riding a chariot with Arjuna, He came to the forests. On the bank of river Yamuna a pretty woman was observing penance. By the instinct of God, Arjuna drew near her and asked for her identity. She said: "I am Kalindi, the daughter of Suryadev. I am penancing here in order to get married with Lord Krishna." Lord Krishna got Kalindi boarded on the chariot and got married to her formally.

3.) Mitrvinda was the sister of Vind Anuvind the king of Ujjain. She had a desire to get Lord Krishna as her husband. But her brother, Vind Anuvind was a follower of Duryodhan. So he stopped his sister Mitrvinda from getting married to Krishna. But Krishna eloped with Mitrvinda from the court and got married to her formally later on.

4.) Satya was the daughter of Nagnjit, the king of Kaushal. She was extremely beautiful lady. The king had resolved that he would marry his daughter only to him who would defeat his seven most formidable oxen. Many princes has tried their luck since then but failed. When Lord Krishna heard about that, He reached Kaushal with his army. The king of Kaushal welcomed and treated him well, and told him about his resolution. Lord Krishna then took seven guises and in no time defeated his seven formidable oxen. Gladly the king married his daughter Satya to Lord Krishna.

5.) Parashar says: "Parikshit, Lord Krishna's aunt (father's sister) Shrutkirti was married in the kingdom of Kaikauja. Bhadra was the daughter of Shrutkirti. Bhadra's brothers like Santardan etc. themselves had got their sister married to Lord Krishna.

6.) Lakshmana was the daughter of the king of Madra. She was very beautiful and meritorious. Lord Krishna abducted her all alone from the Swayamvara organised for her marriage. Later, Lord Krishna married to her formally.

SALVATION OF BHAUMASUR

Pragjyotishpur was the capital of the demon Bhaumasur. He was very strong and powerful. He had snatched the canopy of Varuna, earrings of Aditi the mother of the gods, and Maniparvat of the gods on Meru. Apart from these, he had also captured sixteen thousand and one hundred princesses as well.

Devraj Indra himself visited Dwarka and prayed Lord Krishna to get them rid of Bhaumasur's atrocities. With the dear wife Satyabhama and riding his vehicle Garuda. Lord Krishna arrived in the capital of Bhaumasur. But to enter Pragjyotishpur was an impossible task. But with the blows of his mace and arrows, Lord Krishna easily broke the hills, destroyed strategic positions and cut the snares with sword. By his wheel he destroyed the walls of fire, water and air. With the loud sound of conch, Lord Krishna rendered the machines, installed there, useless.

Ultimately, Krishna destroyed the rampart of the citadel. Disturbed by the noise, the five-headed demon Mur ran with a trident to kill Krishna. But with a single shot of his arrow, Lord Krishna broke his trident and cut his head with his wheel. Soldiers and commanders of Bhaumasur were also killed. Bhaumasur then came himself to fight. He had donned a shining crown and was wearing big earrings. With his wheel, Lord Krishna cut the demon's head. As soon as He beheaded the demon, the gods showered flowers on Lord Krishna and worshipped Him. Even the mother earth came and put a garland of five colours around lord's neck. She also presented to him the earrings of Aditi, canopy of Varuna, and a great gem. At the request of earth, Lord Krishna assured Bhaumasur's son Bhagdatt freedom from his fears.

7.) After slaying Bhaumasur, Lord Krishna entered his palace. There He released the sixteen thousand one hundred captive princesses. The princesses were very much impressed by Lord Krishna. They had all accepted in their mind, Lord Krishna as their husband. Lord Krishna too bowed before their love and accepted them as his wives and arranged to send them to Dwarka.

PRADYUMN'S MARRIAGE WITH RUKMVATI

Rukmvati was the daughter of Rukmi, the brother of Rukmani. When a Swayamvara was organised for her, she saw Pradyumn. She was so impressed by him that she chose him as her husband. But it was not acceptable to other princes. They tried to stop their marriage. But defeating them all, Pradyumn abducted Rukmvati and married her formally. Then to please his sister Rukmani, Rukmi got his granddaughter Rochana married to Rukmani's grandsons Anirudh.

MARRIAGE OF USHA-ANIRUDH

The son of the demon king Bali, Banasur was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. Banasur ruled over the kingdom Shonitpur. By the grace of Lord Shiva, he had received thousand arms. Even all the gods including Indra used to serve him. Thus blinded by his physical strength, Banasur sought a boon from Lord to meet a match for his strength. Lord Shiva said: "O fool, your thirst for war shall be quenched when your flag is broken."

Banasur had a daughter named Usha. Once she had a dream in which Anirudh was making love with her. She was very much perplexed by the dream. After a few days with the help of her friend Chitralkha, Anirudh sneaked into her palace. He stayed there and enjoyed the company of Usha for long. But Anirudh's clandestine stay could not remain hidden from the eyes of Banasura. So he put Anirudh in prison. There in Dwarka, everyone was worried by Anirudh's long absence.

It was Narada, who ultimately revealed the fact that Anirudh was in the prison of Banasur. Hearing the news, Lord Krishna launched an attack on Banasur. His armies surrounded Shonitpur. During Ghurabandi the flag of Banasur's palace fell. Lord Shankar arrived to assist Banasur. Lord Krishna cut all the arms of Banasur. At the request of Shiva, he left only four of his arms intact. Banasur bowed his head before Lord Krishna and brought Anirudh and Usha respectfully before Him. With them Lord Krishna returned to Dwarka where formal marriage of Usha and Anirudh took place.

TALE OF THE KING NRIG

Once, Lord Krishna's sons visited the forests. There they saw a huge Chameleon fallen in a large, deep well. They tried to pull it out but in vain. The princes, therefore, returned to the palace and related this strange episode to Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna too came to the well and with His left hand, easily pulled the Chameleon out.

As soon as the chameleon came out, it turned into a divine god and began to worship Krishna. He said: "O Lord Krishna, I am Nrig. The king Ikshvaku was my father. In my life, I had donated

uncountable numbers of cows to the Brahmins. But once a cow, donated by me, returned to my cowshed. By mistake I made a resolution to donate it to another Brahmin. My action led to a dispute between the two Brahmins, and my wisdom failed to settle their dispute. Both the Brahmins went away unsatisfied, but I met this fate after death. Since then, I had been in this well in the form of a chameleon. Now, by the graceful touch of your hands, O Lord, I have received salvation." King Nrig then went around Lord Krishna and returned to his heavenly abode."

SALVATION OF PAUNDRAK

Once Balarama and Krishna had gone to Braj to see Nandbaba there. Meanwhile the king Paundrak of Karush sent an envoy to lord Krishna with a message that said: 'I am Lord Vasudev.' Paundrak's envoy arrived in the court and read out the message: "To bestow my grace on the people, I have taken an incarnation. You have falsely named yourself as Vasudev and bore my insignia. Take my refuge or face the battle." Hearing the message of Paundrak, Ugrasen and other courtiers began to laugh. Lord Krishna asked the envoy to inform Paundrak that He would launch His wheel on him and his army.

Receiving the message Paundrak launched an attack on Dwarka with two Akshauhini armies. The king of Kashi was a friend of Paundrak. He too came to his assistance with three Akshauhini armies. Paundrak had disguised as Vasudev and was bearing artificial conch, wheel, mace and lotus and. He had also adorned Swastika, Kaustubh etc. All the people began to laugh at Paundrak's clown like attire.

In no time, Lord Krishna stripped him of all his adornments. His wheel cut his head. Then with an arrow Lord Krishna cut the head of the king of Kashi. His head fell in front of his palace's gate. SuDakshain, the son of the Kashi king, organised a grand Yagya to avenge his father's killing. An ogress, Kritya emerged from the Yagya and began to burn Dwarka. All the people prayed Krishna to protect them. Lord Krishna assured them to be fearless and ordered His wheel Sudarshan to kill Kritya. Sudarshan extinguished the fire, killed Kritya and destroyed Kashi. Then it returned to Lord Krishna's finger.

SALVATION OF DWIVID

There was once a monkey named Dwivid. He was the friend of Bhaumasur. When Dwivid heard about Bhaumasur's killing by Sri Krishna, he began to cause large-scale destruction in the kingdom. His disruptive activities in the country began to terrorise the subjects of Lord Krishna. Once hearing sweet music, the monkey was drawn towards the Raivtak Mountain. There he saw Balarama amidst beautiful young women. The monkey began to behave indecently. Angered by his indecency, Balarama hit him with his pestle, named Sunand, and killed the monkey.

MARRIAGE OF SAMB

Samb was the son of Lord Krishna and born to Jambvati. He had Kidnapped Lakshmana, the daughter of Duryodhan from her Swayamvara. Infuriated Kauravas chased them and, with

difficulty, they caught Samb and tied him. When the Yaduvanshis got the news, they began preparations to launch an attack on Kauravas. Balarama pacified them and reached Hastinapur alone. There he received a warm welcome from the Kauravas. Balarama said to them: "It is an order of the king Ugrasen that you should see Samb off with his newly wedded wife." Hearing Balarama's words Kauravas got angry and began to deride Yaduvanshis. Infuriated by Kauravas derision, Balarama trained his pestle and plough. He intended to turn over the town of Hastinapur into the river Yamuna. When the city began to shake, Kauravas felt perplexed and begged Balarama for his pardon. Balarama assured them to be fearless and returned to Dwarka with Samb and his newly wedded wife Lakshmana.

KINGS IN CAPTIVITY SEEK KRISHNA'S HELP TO KILL JARASANDH

Once Lord Krishna was holding His court when an emissary arrived in the court. The kings who were held captive forcibly by Jarasandh had sent him. The emissary related the miseries of those kings to Lord Krishna. Through the emissary, the kings had requested: "O Lord of the world, Kindly get us free from our miseries. We are in your refuge. We desire your sight. Kindly bestow us with your grace." Lord Krishna sent the emissary off with assurance of timely action. Meanwhile, Devarshi Narada arrived in the court and informed the Lord of Yudhisthira's intention to organise a grand Rajsuy Yagya and his cordial invitation for the Lord to attend the ceremony. Lord asked his friend Uddhava for an advice as to where He ought to go first - to Indraprasth in Rajsuy Yagya or to liberate the king from the captivity of Jarasandh. Uddhava advised Lord to go to Indraprasth first. There He would be able to serve both the purposes.

Uddhava's advice was in the interest of all. Everyone supported it. Taking permission from His priest and teachers, Lord Krishna set out on a chariot with the whole family to reach Indraprasth. In Indraprasth, Pandavas accorded Lord Krishna with warm-hearted felicitations. By the dictate of Lord Krishna, Mayasur built a divine looking court for Yudhisthira. The courtroom was a marvellous piece of architecture. The shining, smooth, floor of it appeared like water, while water bodies presented a look like marble floors.

During Yudhisthira's Rajsuy Yagya, all the Pandavas set out in all the directions to conquer the kings and expand the boundaries of their kingdom. Warriors like Bhima, Arjuna defeated great kings all around and extended the boundaries of Yudhisthira's empire. But to defeat Jarasandh, - Bhima, Arjuna and Lord Krishna went in the guise Brahmins. They reached Jarasandh capital Girivraj and prayed him for donations. Jarasandh promised to give them the things of their desires. Lord Krishna then introduced them and begged Jarasandh for a duel with any of them. Jarasandh accepted to fight a duel with Bhima. He gave Bhima a mace and both of them came out to the outskirts of the town, where they began their duel. Both of them were equally strong and equally brave and well pitted.

Twenty-seven days passed, but their duel remained inconclusive. On the twenty-eighth day, during the fight, Lord Krishna signalled Bhima a way to kill Jarasandh. He took a small twig in his hands and tore it apart into two. Bhima understood the signal and beating Jarasandh on ground, he tore him apart in two pieces and threw them in opposite directions. Thus came the

end of evil Jarasandh. Lord Krishna and Arjuna heartily greeted Bhima for his success. They then enthroned Jarasandh's son Sahadev and also got the captive kings released.

SALVATION OF SHISHUPAL

King Yudhisthira had invited great Vedic Brahmins and Acharayas on the occasion. Persons from Kauravas side like Drona, Bhishma, Kripacharya, Dhritarashtra, Vidura and Duryodhan etc. were too invited to witness the celebrations. Even Brahma, Shiv, Indra, Gandharvas, Vidyadhar had too arrived. But before the Yagya could start a dispute cropped up among the great sages as to who ought to be worshipped first in the Yagya.

In the opinion of Sahadev (youngest of the Pandava brothers, not the son of Jarasandh), Lord Krishna deserved the first worship. Every one supported him. Only Shishupal could not tolerate the decision.

He stood up and said: "In the presence of such great ascetics, savants, polymaths and sages, how can this cowherd deserve the first worship." Despite Shishupal bitter remarks Lord Krishna kept quiet. But Shishupal did not. Encouraged by Lord Krishna's silence he began to attack the kings, who stood by Lord Krishna's side, with sword. He was simultaneously abusing Lord Krishna also. Lord Krishna had assured Shishupal of this forgiveness for up to one hundred sins. But now Shishupal's sins have crossed that permitted number. So, quieting all, Lord Krishna cut his head with His wheel. As soon as the dead body of Shishupal fell on the ground, a flame emerged from it and merged with Lord Krishna. Shukdev says: "O Parikshit, feelings of hostility had been accumulating in the heart of Shishupal for his past three births against Lord Krishna. It was because of these intense hostile feelings that Shishupal met salvation eventually.

After the salvation of Shishupal, ceremonies and rituals of Yagya proceeded unabated. At the end king Yudhisthira presented all those present there with fitting gifts and took ceremonial bath. At the request of Pandavas, Lord Krishna stayed in Indraprasth for many months.

SALVATION OF SHALV

Shukdev says: "Parikshit, now listen to the tale of how Lord Krishna caused salvation for Shalv. Shalv was the childhood friend of Shishupal and had attended the marriage of Rukmani as a member of Shishupal's wedding party. At that time, Yaduvanshis had defeated them all including Jarasandh and Shalv. Right at that moment, Shalv had resolved to destroy Yaduvanshis and began worshipping Gods of the gods Pashupati (Shiv). Lord Ashutosh Shiva was pleased with him. As a boon, Shalv had got an aeroplane that was invincible even for the gods, demons, humans, Nagas, etc and was particularly formidable for Yaduvanshis. By the dictate of Lord Shiva, the demon Maya constructed such an aeroplane of iron. The aeroplane named Saubh was as big as a city and was difficult to be spotted or caught. It could move as fast as one's wishes. Soon after getting the aeroplane, Shalv launched an attack of Dwarka.

Surrounding Dwarka, Shalv began to destroy buildings and houses there. Seeing the people terrorised, Pradyumn consoled them to be fearless and he set out on a chariot to counter Shalv.

He pierced Shalv with arrows. But Shalva's minister Dyumana attacked Pradyumna with a mace. By the blow of the mace, Pradyumn lost his consciousness. But soon he came around and began to slay Shalv's forces. The fierce battle continued for twenty-seven days. Lord Krishna was away then in Indraprasth Yagya. But He was sure that in his absence Kshatriya kings of Shishupal side would be attacking on Dwarka.

Lord Krishna reached Dwarka and saw a fierce battle between Pradyumn and Shalv. Seeing Lord Krishna arrive, Shalv began to attack Him with sharp arrows. Lord Krishna hit Shalv with a powerful blow of mace and he began to spit blood from his mouth. He then tried to show many illusions and showered Lord Krishna with weapons. But Lord Krishna wounded Shalv with his arrows, broke his aeroplane with his mace. Very soon thereafter the aeroplane plunged in to the sea. Shalv then attacked Lord Krishna with mace but Lord Krishna cut his head with Sudarshan wheel. Seeing his end, all the gods showered flowers on Krishna.

SALVATION OF DANTVAKTRA AND VIDURATH

After the killing of Shishupal, Shalv etc. Dantvaktra arrived in the battlefield carrying a mace. When Lord Krishna saw him coming, He too jumped down from the chariot and barked his movement with a mace. Dantvaktra tried to humiliate God with his abuses and hit him on head with his mace. Lord Krishna easily bore the blow of mace and hit Dantvaktra's chest with his mace named Kaumodaki. Dantvaktra's heart tore apart by the blow and he fell dead.

Vidurath was the brother of Dantvaktra. He came in the field with sword and shield to avenge his brother's death. Seeing him ready to launch an attack, Lord Krishna cut Vidurath's head with his wheel. Thus, Lord Krishna entered Dwarka only after killing Shalv, Dantvaktra and Vidurath. All the gods and other inhabitants of heaven showered flowers on Him.

SUDAMA: THE LORD KRISHNA'S FRIEND

During his stay as a disciple at the hermitage of sage Sandipani, Lord Krishna had a Brahmin friend named Sudama. He was very indifferent in nature with no desires for the material things. After their education, Lord Krishna came to Dwarka while Sudama, who had no any inclination for accumulating material wealth, got married and began to pass his life with his wife Susheela in abject poverty. One day his wife Susheela said: "O lord, your friend Krishna is the king of Dwarka. He is very benevolent to Brahmins and his devotees. If you go to see him, he will understand your miseries and grant you a lot of wealth." But Sudama plainly refused saying: "Devi, I have chosen the path of devotion for self upliftment and not for the wealth." Susheela, however, kept of insisting: "All right, don't go for the wealth. But at least you can go to see your old friend. Sudama accepted this proposition, thinking that only the sight of Lord yields supreme benefit to the devotee. But he wanted something as a gift to present to his old friend. At this, his wife tied four handfuls of raw rice in a bundle.

With that humble gift, Sudama set out for Dwarka. His poverty was at its helm. But he kept on reciting Lord Krishna's name all along the way. After walking for some distance, Sudama felt thirsty. He drank water, quenched his thirst and thanked God that He at least does give water to

drink. Sudama kept on walking the whole day. In the evening, he kept the bundle of rice under his head as a pillow and slept.

Now it was Lord Krishna's turn to show His gratitude for the devotee. When Sudama awoke in the morning, he found himself right in front of Lord Krishna's palace. At first he could not believe his eyes; but the people told him that he was in Dwarka and standing right before the lord's palace. Sudama requested the gatekeeper to inform Lord Krishna that his childhood friend Sudama had come. Lord Krishna was sitting in the company of Rukmani when the gatekeeper delivered the message. As soon as Lord Krishna learned about Sudama's arrival, He stood up and ran helter-skelter to welcome his childhood friend. At the gate He cordially embraced Sudama and escorted him into his private chamber and made him sit on the throne.

Krishna and queen Rukmani both washed Sudama's feet one by one. By the mere touch of his friend, Krishna was feeling overjoyed. His eyes filled with tears. He and Sudama were holding each other's hands. Their hearts were beating with the memories of their period as disciples at the hermitage of Sandipani. For long, none of them could utter a word. At last Sudama said: "O Jagadguru Krishna, I have the fortune of being your friend. What remains for me to do?"

Lord Krishna said: "Brother, have you brought for me something sent by my sister-in-law? I love to accept even the pettiest thing presented with affection." At Krishna's words, Sudama felt ashamed and he did not reveal the four handfuls of raw rice that he had brought as gift. With shame, Sudama began to look at the ground. Lord Krishna knew everything that his dear friend Sudama had never remembered him with a desire for wealth. This time too he has come at the insistence of his wife. 'Hence, I will give him the wealth that is rare even for the gods,' thought Lord Krishna and snatched the bundle of raw rice and opened it with great respect. He put one handful of it in his mouth. When Lord proceeded to take next handful, queen Rukmani held his hand and prayed: "O Vishvambhar (fosterer of the world) for the prosperity of entire world this one handful is sufficient."

Sudama stayed that night in the palace of Sri Krishna. There he experienced the comfort of Vaikunth (abode of God). Staying there for many days, Sudama at last, took leave of Sri Krishna and set out for his home. Lord Krishna did not give Sudama anything apparently nor did Sudama asked for His favour. He was travelling overwhelmed by a divine sense of devotion and felt that Krishna might have not given him wealth lest he should forget Him.

Thus, sunk in myriad kinds of thoughts, Sudama reached his home. But at the place, where his dilapidated hut stood once there was now a divine palace surrounded by verdant gardens. The floors of the palace were embedded with precious gems and stones. Standing at the gate, Sudama felt confused, when his wife Susheela came out with scented water to welcome him. Tears were rolling on her cheeks. With love she greeted Sudama and escorted him inside the palace. Sudama was still reflecting over the God's grace and praying: "May I have the friendship of lord in every birth, may my affection increase for Lord Krishna's feet. I don't want wealth." Since then, Sudama enjoyed the comforts of the palace as the bounty of Lord Krishna bestowed upon him by none other than the Lord Krishna himself. His devotion increased day by day.

MEETING OF LORD KRISHNA WITH GOPIS

Shukdev says: "O Parikshit, Lord Krishna was passing his time with pleasure in Dwarka. A total solar eclipse happened to fall during that period. People from all over India thronged in Kurukshetra to take a dip in sacred Ganges on that great occasion. All the Yaduvanshis too arrived there. When Vrajvasis (inhabitants of Vraj) learned about Krishna and Balarama's arrival in Kurukshetra, they too assembled there.

During the festival, Lord Krishna met His foster-father Nand and other cowherds who were his childhood friends. Lord Krishna met the Gopis also who had been pining for his sight since long. They enjoyed the meeting and kept on chatting for long. Overwhelmed by love and joy, Vasudev embraced Nand. Lord Krishna and Balarama respectfully greeted mother Yashoda and father Nand. They too embraced Krishna and Balarama cordially.

Gopis were specially overwhelmed by Lord Krishna's sight. They had no other desire but to have a sight of Lord Krishna. That day their long cherished dream had come true. Gopis imbued the captivating appearance of Lord Krishna and experienced the joy of embracing Him. Krishna met all the Gopis and embraced them. He inquired about their well being and preached them with spiritual knowledge. By the virtue of that knowledge, feeling of living disappeared among the Gopis and they merged with God forever.

ORGANISATION OF YAGYA BY VASUDEV

Devarshi Narada, Vyasa and many other great sages arrived in Kurukshetra to have a sight of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna welcomed them all. Then Vasudev greeted them and enquired about way for his self-upliftment. Laughingly, Narada said: "Vasudev, a person, already living at the bank of the Ganges, discards her holy water and goes to other places of pilgrimage for his purification.

In the presence of Krishna and Balarama, the sages said: "You regard the indescribable, eternal, Sachchidanand Sri Krishna as your son, and seek the way of your self upliftment from us. O Vasudev, recognise Him. Take to His refuge, only He can save you." Vasudev got the meaning of sage's words and began to develop feelings of devotion for his son. Every human being has obligation for the gods, sages and his ancestors. The sages got a Yagya performed in Kurukshetra by Vasudev to free him from the obligation for gods.

REVISTING OF DEVAKI'S SIX SONS

In Dwarka, Krishna and Balarama used to greet their parent's first daily in the morning. Now Vasudev had recognised His identity. So after their return from Kurukshetra, when Krishna and Balarama went as usual to greet their parents, Vasudev greeted them first. Lord Krishna then preached his father about the metaphysical knowledge. With that knowledge, Vasudev began to see Krishna everywhere.

Mother Devaki was also present there. Memory of her six children, who were killed by Kansa, was still afresh in her mind. She had heard that Krishna had fetched the dead son of Sandipani from Yamloka. So she prayed to them " You both are venerable even to the gods. Kindly grant

me my desire. Show me my six sons who were killed by Kansa. By their mother's dictate and helped by Yogmaya, both the brothers reached Satal Loka.

The demon king Bali welcomed them there and offered them a seat, and washed their feet. King Bali then asked God what could he do for Him. Lord said: O demon king, in Swayambhu Manvantara, six sons were born to Urna the wife of Prajapati Marichi. They were all gods. They had once seen Brahma trying to copulate with his own daughter and hence derided at him. Indignant Brahma had then cursed them to take birth in demon incarnation. They therefore were born as the sons of Hiranyakashipu.

In the present era, Yogmaya had made them born as Devaki's sons who were killed by Kansa. They are all now in your Loka. Mother Devaki is mourning for them, so we shall take them with us. They will thus be freed from the curse and go to their heavenly abode." Thus Lord Krishna and Balarama brought those six babies to Dwarka and handed them to mother Devaki. Seeing her babies again, Devaki's heart filled with love for her sons. Milk began to flood her breasts. She breast-fed them. Drinking the milk, all the babies received salvation. They then departed to their heavenly abode.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE OF SUBHADRA AND ARJUNA

King Parikshit asked: "Gurudev, how did my grandfather Arjuna and grandmother Subhadra got married? I want to hear this tale. Kindly narrate it to me."

Shukdev said: Parikshit once travelling on a pilgrimage tour, Arjuna reached in Prabhas region. There he learned that Balarama was desirous of marrying his sister Subhadra to Duryodhan. But Vasudev and Krishna were not in the favour of this marriage. So, a strong urge took hold in his mind to get Subhadra as his wife. Acting as per the urge, Arjuna reached Dwarka in the guise of Vaishnav sage. It was rainy season then, so with an excuse of Chaturmasya Vrata (four months long fast), Arjuna stayed in Dwarka. During his stay, Balarama served and looked after him very well. But neither Balarama nor any other inmates of the palace could recognise Arjuna.

Once Balarama invited Arjuna to his home. There he offered good, delicious food to Arjuna. Subhadra too served him well. There, they fell in love with each other. Later on, boarding a chariot, Subhadra went out of the palace for a joy ride. At the outskirts of the town, Arjuna was awaiting for her. He had already taken permission of Devaki, Vasudev and Krishna. Subhadra too had silently nodded her acceptance.

So that evening Arjuna and Subhadra eloped from Dwarka. The news of Subhadra eloping with Arjuna first outraged Balarama. But Lord Krishna and other near and dear ones convinced and pacified him.

RELEASE OF SHIVA FROM CRISIS

Maitreya asked: "Gurudev, those among the gods, human beings and the demons, who worship Lord Shiva, get wealth very soon. But those, who worship Lord Narayana, remain afflicted with scarcity. What is the reason for that?"

In reply, Lord Krishna had said: "O Yudhisthira, I take away all the wealth from those whom I bestow my grace. When they are poor, their relatives desert them. I even render their efforts useless when they try to earn money. Thus being unsuccessful repeatedly, the people develop an attitude of indifference for wealth. Then they begin to take shelter as my devotee and mingle with me. Only then, I bestow my full grace on them and they receive me as Sachchidanand Parabrahma. Thus, pleasing me through my worship is extremely difficult. Hence, ordinary people give me up and worship other deities, which are in fact different forms of me. Lord Shiva is Ashutosh and bestows his devotees quickly with grace. He gives wealth and other riches to his devotees. But once they get wealth, the devotees become despotic and even forget the God who had blessed them."

Once upon a time, there was a demon Vrikasur. He had pleased Lord Shiva and sought a boon that the person, upon whose head the demon put his hand, should be incinerated at once. Lord Shiva granted the boon without considering the consequences. But as soon as the demon got this supernatural power, he ran to incinerate Lord Shiva first. The demon was eyeing Gauri Parvati, so he was determined to eliminate Lord Shiva. Now afraid of his own boon, Lord Shiva ran for his life, with the demon following him in hot pursuit. At last Shiva reached in Vaikunth and told Lord Vishnu about his crisis. Lord at once illumined the demon and made him put his hand, on his own head. By the virtue of the boon, the demon was incinerated in no time and thus Lord Shiva could be saved.

TESTING OF TRINITY

Once upon a time, all the sages assembled on the bank of Saraswati River. A dispute erupted among them as to who among the trinity was the greatest. By consensus they appointed sage Bhrigu to test the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. Bhrigu reached to Brahma, but did not greet him. Brahma got infuriated but since the sage Bhrigu was his son, He did not curse him. Then Bhrigu visited Shiva. Lord Shiva proceeded to embrace the sage. But instead of accepting Shiva's welcome, the sage began to abuse Him, saying: "You violate the dignity of Vedas, so I will not meet with you." Angry Shiva raised his trident to kill him, but Bhagvati stopped Him. At last Bhrigu reached Vaikunth to see Lord Vishnu.

Lord Vishnu was lying with head in the lap of Lakshmi. Bhrigu kicked hard at His chest. But instead of getting angry, Lord Vishnu got up, bowed his head before the sage and begged pardon: "O Sage, pardon me, I could not welcome you at once, at your arrival. Your feet are soft, I hope they are not hurt. All my sins have been washed by the touch of your feet." Bhrigu felt very pleased by the serious talks of Lord Vishnu. His heart felt overwhelmed with excess of devotion. He returned to the assembly of the sages and narrated his experience. Since then Lord Vishnu is regarded as the Supreme and giver of peace and fearlessness.

REVIVAL OF BRAHMN'S DEAD CHILDREN

There in Dwarka lived a Brahmin. When the first son was born to his wife, it died immediately after birth. The Brahmin took his dead son to the royal court and complained: "My Son has died because of anti-Brahmin and licentious actions of the king." One by one, thus, eight sons were born to the Brahmin couple; but they all died immediately after birth. And the Brahmin kept on dumping his dead sons at the gate of the royal palace.

When his ninth son was born, and died, Arjuna was also there in Dwarka. He made a promise to the Brahmins: I shall guard your son or commit self-immolation. At the time of next delivery, the agitated Brahmin came to Arjuna. Training his bow and arrows, Arjuna made all arrangements to protect Brahmin's tenth son. Sanctified by many mantras, Arjuna's arrows constructed a fence around the labour room. A child took birth; but it too died after some time. Brahmin, then, cursed Arjuna.

Arjuna scouted through all the three worlds and even the netherworlds in search of the Brahmin's dead son, but he could not find him anywhere. Ultimately accepting his failure and as per his promise, Arjuna proceeded to immolate himself.

Meanwhile, Lord Krishna too learned about Arjuna's vow and stopped him from self-immolation. Thereafter, riding a divine chariot, Lord Krishna set out with Arjuna, towards west. Beyond the limits of cosmos. They reached the abode of Lord Vasudev in Tripadvibhuti. There Arjuna saw that Lord was present in Purushaottam's appearance. Sri Krishna and Arjuna greeted Him.

Lord Purushaottam said in a serious voice: "O Krishna and Arjuna, only to have a sight of both of you, I brought the Brahmin's sons to me. Both of you had taken incarnation on earth from my part to protect the religion. All the demons have been slain by now. Now you too return to me.

Sri Krishna and Arjuna again greeted Lord Purushaottam and returned on earth with all the sons of the Brahmin. Arjuna was greatly surprised to see the supreme abode of Lord Purushaottam. He felt that whatever strength a living being had, it been all by Sri Krishna's grace. Like common, ordinary people, the Lord Krishna stayed on earth enjoying mundane comforts, performed Yagyas like kings, behaved like idealistic people; deterred His subjects and slayed evil kings to re-establish religion on earth.

CHAPTER SIX THE SAGES CURSE YADUVANSHIS

Parashar said: "As the time passed, Yaduvanshis grew stronger and more influential. Now no longer did they like the welcoming and treating of the great sages by Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna knew about their disliking, but secretly He was pleased by this change in Yaduvanshi's behaviour, for He knew that by disregarding the saints and the scriptures, they would meet their end sooner.

Once the Yaduvanshis clothed Jambvati's son Samb in a woman's attire and, showing him to the sages asked mockingly: "Maharaja, this is our sister-in-law. She is an expecting mother. She feels shy to ask but tell us what will be born to her?"

Through their unfailing vision, the Sages knew the reality and said: "Fools, a pestle shall be born to her and that pestle shall exterminate the entire Yaduvansha. Now all the Yaduvanshis were perplexed by sages' prediction, and approached their king Ugrasen. But, even the king was helpless now because he could not change the words the pious sages. In due course, a pestle was born to Samb. Frightened of an imminent fate, Yaduvanshis crushed the pestle into a fine powder and threw it into the sea. Only a nail remained, that also was thrown into the sea where a fish swallowed it. A fisher caught the fish and cut it open and found the nail. He gave it to a hunter. The hunter fixed the nail in the head of his arrow. On the other hand, the sea waves washed the powder of the pestle ashore where it germinated and grew as luxuriant grasses. Later on, once all the Yaduvanshis assembled at the seashore for a picnic where they drank wine and began to fight with one another under intoxication. Soon their quarrel grew so high that they pulled out the grasses, which were growing there, to use as the arms. With the grasses the Yaduvanshis beat one another to death.

NARADA PREACHES VASUDEV ABOUT BHAGAVAT

Once Narada arrived in Dwarka. Vasudev prayed him and requested to provide him with pious company of Bhagvat Dharma. Narada said: "O king, once upon a time, nine great sages arrived in the court of the king Janaka. King Janaka had put the same curiosity before them also. I will narrate the conversation that followed there between the sages and the king."

First of all, the first Yogishwar Kavi said: "O king Janaka, dedication is the first duty (Dharma) of a Vaishnav. He should devote everything - his actions, fruits of actions and even himself, at the feet of Lord. He ought to hear about Lord's virtues. Such a devotee shall be indifferent to the worldly affairs and shall laugh, dance or sing occasionally and sanctified all the three worlds." The king then asked about the characteristics of the Lord's devotees. Another Yogeshwara Hari said: "A true devotee of the Lord remains unaffected by feelings like hunger, thirst, life, death, labour, pain, fear and desire. Such a devotee is the excellent kind of Bhagvat. Even the wealth of all the three worlds cannot shake the faith of such a devotee, because Lord Sri Hari himself stays in his heart."

"What is illusion?" A Yogeshwara Antariksh replied: "King, an illusion is also God's play. Having a possessive feeling about mundane is illusion. Thinking in terms of 'I', 'Me', 'Mine', 'My', 'You', 'Your' is also illusion. If one can have such an affection for God as he has for worldly things, one can easily surmount the illusion."

King Janaka then asked about the method of worshipping Lord. A Yogeshwara, Karbhajan said: "O king, the Lord had a fair complexion in Satya Yuga. People used to receive Him through methods like meditation, reconciliation, etc. In Treta Yuga, the Lord had reddish complexion and Yagyas were the main means to achieve Him. In Dwapar Yuga, the Lord had yellowish complexion and He could be pleased through worships. In the present Kali Yuga, Lord has dark complexion and one can receive Him through means like recitation, narration and hearing of His name and plays.

Thus, Narada preached Vasudev about Bhagvat Dharma. Now the heart and mind of Vasudev were thoroughly clean and pure.

KRISHNA DEPARTS TO HIS ABODE AND DESTRUCTION OF YADUS

To remind Lord Krishna about the moment of His departure, Brahma arrived in Dwarka accompanied by all the gods. He prayed to Him: "O Lord, you have completed your duty of what we had once requested you. Now, You please return to your abode. Lord said: "On the seventh day from now, Dwarka shall submerge in the sea and Yadavas shall fight among themselves to death. I too shall depart then. The arrow of a hunter shall be the cause of my departure."

When Uddhava learned that Lord Krishna was about to wind up His plays, he approached Him and said: "I understand, O Lord, that this all is happening by your wish. But I cannot part for a moment from your feet. Hence, take me also with you to your abode." Lord Krishna said: "Uddhava, I will not go anywhere. My entire brilliance will be present in Srimad Bhagvat. You stay here preaching Bhagvat Dharma." Saying thus, lord preached Uddhava about the Gita Jnana through the tale of Avadhoot.

Lord Krishna narrated thus: "Uddhava, Once, our ancestor Yadu happened to see Lord Dattatreya in a forest. Lord was indulged in the supreme joy in the guise of Avadhoot. Yadu asked him about the reasons for his whimsical state." Avadhoot had said: "O king, making the various animals, birds, insects etc as my teacher, I have learned about spirituality from them. That is why I am free from mourning and attachment. Earth, air, sky, water, fire, the moon the sun, pigeon, python, sea, grasshopper, bumblebee, honey bee, elephant, extractor of honey, deer, fish, prostitute, osprey, boy, girls, arrow-maker, snake, spider and wasp are all my teachers. I took refuge at these twenty-four teachers and learned from their behaviour.

I learned forgiveness from earth, purity from the sky, holiness and cleanliness from the water, innocence and renunciation from the fire; indifference from the air, to remain unaffected by circumstances from moon, abdication from the Sun, incoherence from the pigeon, dependence upon fate and remain effortless from the python, to remain always happy and serious from the sea, to be under the control of sense organs and hence meet total destruction from the grasshopper, acquiring of virtues from bumblebee, fault in cumulating from honey bee, to abstain sensuous talks from the deer, to eliminate greed from the fish, sorrow in hope and happiness in desperation from the prostitute, to feel happy in uncertainty from osprey, dispute among many from the girls, concentration from the arrow-maker, to roam alone and detachment from a particular place from the snake, virtues of the creator Lord from the spider, and I learned similarity from the wasp."

In the guise of Avadhoot, Lord Dattatreya says: "O king, I learned wisdom and apathy from my body also, because life, death, life and death again are inseparably intertwined with it. Hence the net result of loving this body is nothing but sorrow. Thus our own body also helps us to learn about metaphysical knowledge.

Lord Krishna also explained Uddhava regarding futility of physical and heavenly luxuries. This human body is like a tree, on which two birds - Jivatma and Paramatma (microcosm and supreme soul) - have taken shelter. Two fruits - happiness and sorrow - appear on it. Jivatma

(microcosm) eats these fruits while Paramatma (supreme soul) stays as an indifferent onlooker. There are three kinds of Jiva - Baddha (Bound), Bhakta (devotee) and Mukta (liberated). Baddh Jivas (bound souls) are those who indulge in sensual pleasures and those who dislike pious company. Mukta Jiva (liberated souls) are those who are free from attachment and bindings. Bhaktas (devotees) are those who meditate on me and dedicate their everything in my feet and have love for my virtues. My devotee is kind, free from flaws, tolerant, has feeling of fraternity for all and controls his desires.

BHIKSHU GEET

Lord Krishna said: "Uddhava, in the world, there is indeed a dearth of such tolerant people who can tolerate bitter remarks of evil ones. In this context there is a tale of a greedy Brahmin who lived in Ujjain. That Brahmin had been badly tormented by the evil people after he had lost his wealth. But still the Brahmin did not lose his patience and regarding his present state as a result of his previous birth's deeds, he expressed his feelings thus:

These people are not the cause of my miseries; neither the gods, nor body, even planets and time, can be blamed for my miseries. Scriptures and learned ones held the mind itself guilty of one's miseries. It is the mind that runs the cycle of the world and makes every kind of efforts.

In the absence of mind, even the soul is rendered motionless. When one accepts the dictates of the mind and indulges in sensual pleasures, soul too comes to be bound with them. The ultimate outcome of all the spiritual efforts like celibacy, study of Vedas etc. and abidance to pious actions is the concentration of mind. Concentration of mind and is abstainment from sensual pleasures are the primary conditions for attainment of Paramayoga (supreme meditation). Thus Lord Krishna preached Uddhava about Jnana Gita. Uddhava too took Bhagvat (which is a form of the Lord) with honor and departed for Badrikashrama.

PART SIX

DESCRIPTION OF DYNASTIES IN KALI YUGA

Parashar describes about the dynasties that would occur in Kali Yuga. Ripunjay or Puranajay would be the last king of Brihadrath dynasty. The kings of Nand dynasty would succeed this dynasty. Then a diplomat Brahmin, named Chanakya, would exterminate this dynasty and enthrone Chandragupta Maurya. In Maurya dynasty, a great king would occur by the name of Ashokvardhan. After him, Yavans would rule then for six hundred and forty years. Their rule would be succeeded by the governance of the fair-complexioned foreigners, who would rule for one hundred and sixty years. Thereafter, there would be no king and no subjects because people from all the classes would come forward to rule.

The ruler would be selected by the majority votes. There would be no any thing like holiness. Cows would grow thin like nannies. People would not marry, as per their castes. Greed, selfishness and sex would be the base of marriage life. In adverse conditions, spouses would

desert each other. There would be nothing like duty, responsibility and conduct. Hair would be the main item of adornment for the women.

People would not have the knowledge of religious scriptures in Kali Yuga. Talkativeness would be identified with knowledge. Only those would be regarded as clever, who could pick others' pockets. Children would not regard or pay due respect to their parents. Children would maintain relations with parents till their marriage only, not after that. Boys would not touch the feet of their own parents, but would pay full respect to their father and mother-in-law. Brother-in-law would be dearer to them than their own brother. Parashar says: Kali Yuga is the mine of faults, but it has only one great virtue - that the people will acquire divine position only by reciting Lord's name. Recitation of Lord's name, regardless of intention and motivation-- whether it is love, derision, laziness or maliceness- would destroy one's sins.

But the sinister people would do even the most difficult tasks in Kali Yuga, but they would not recite Lord's name. They would not have an interest in the Lord. Their interests would be more in sensuous things like sound, touch, beauty, scent etc.

The Paramagati (supreme salvation) that people could receive by ten thousand years of meditation in Satya Yuga; by performing Yagya for hundred years in Treta Yuga and by worshipping Lord's idol for ten years in Dwapar, that supreme salvation is easily available for people in Kali Yuga simply by reciting Lord's name for one day and one night continuously. But still, in Kali Yuga people would not have faith in Lord's name. It is their misfortune.
