

wanted to quench his thirst at the stream. Nārada drank water from the stream disobeying Kṛṣṇa's injunction that he should bathe before drinking water, and lo! the next moment Nārada was turned into a woman and when 'she' looked around neither Kṛṣṇa nor the chariot was to be seen. She wandered about in the forest and at last reached an āśrama. When the Ṛṣi of the āśrama awoke from his samādhi he saw standing before him a beautiful woman who requested him to accept her as his disciple. He readily granted her request. The preceptor married the disciple and in due course of time she became the mother of sixty children. One day all the sixty children and their father expired together. The grief-stricken widow felt too weak to perform the obsequies of the dead. An extraordinary hunger also held her in its grips. She raised her hand to pluck a fruit from the mango tree that stood nearby but could not reach the mango above. She placed together the corpses one on the other, mounted upon the heap of dead bodies and plucked the mango-fruit. Immediately a brahmin arrived on the spot and exhorted the widow on the impropriety of taking food without bathing after the death of husband and children. Then the widow entered the stream and dived in its waters holding above water the hand in which was held the mango, and lo! it was Nārada who came out from the water. Only the hand, which had been held above water and did not therefore get wet, remained like that of a woman with bangles thereon. The brahmin, who stood there on the banks of the stream transformed himself into Kṛṣṇa. As ordered by Kṛṣṇa Nārada again dived with the whole of his body in the water when the hand also turned into that of a man. The mango held in the hand turned into an excellent Viṇā. And Kṛṣṇa told Nārada: "The Ṛṣi who lived with you as your husband and who is no more is Kālapuruṣa, and the sixty children are years Prabhava, Vibhava etc. Kṛṣṇa and Nārada then returned to Dvārakā. (Bhāgavata, 7th Skandha).

5) *Nārada met the woman called Bhakti.* When Kalikāla held the earth in its grips Nārada, on a particular occasion, went round the world viewing the evils of Kali, and he saw a young woman immersed in grief sitting on the banks of the Yamunā, the sports field of Kṛṣṇa. On both sides of her two old men were breathing in an unconscious state, and the woman, weeping was trying to restore them to consciousness. Many other women were fanning the unconscious men and trying to comfort the woman. Nārada approached the young woman when she spoke to him as follows: 'Oh! great sage, please put an end to my grief, because your words will remove all grief. I am called Bhakti and these two old men are my sons, one of whom is known as Jñāna (knowledge) and the other Vairāgya (renunciation), and they have become old due to the impact of time. The others found here are sacred rivers, who have come to serve me. But, the service of nobody will do me good.

I was born in the Drāviḍa region, grew up in Karṇāṭaka, lived here and there in Mahārāṣṭra and became old at Gujarat whereat, atheists due to the evil of Kali inflicted wounds on me for a long time so that I became very weak. I did then go with my sons to the worshipful Vṛndāvana where I regained my old form and became a young woman in the shape of a ghost. My children suffer here in an unconscious state and I have

to leave this for another place. I am so very sad that my sons have become old. Why did I become a young woman when my sons were old people? We three were touring together, and how then did this difference arise with regard to us? Is it not the proper thing for the mother to be older, and her children younger? You will please explain the reason for all these."

Nārada read out the Vedas and the Vedāngas to her, to no purpose. Then Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat Kumāra, Sanatsujāta and others (all of them the mental offsprings of Brahmā and gifted with eternal youth) asked Nārada to read out Bhāgavata to the sons of Bhakti. Nārada did so, and they became immediately young. (Padma Purāṇa, Uttarakhaṇḍa).

6) *Tested Śrī Kṛṣṇa.* Kṛṣṇa was living in Dvārakā with his 16008 wives. Nārada once wanted to know how Kṛṣṇa managed to maintain so many wives without any difficulty or quarrels among them. To test it he first went to the palace of Rukmiṇī where both Kṛṣṇa and herself welcomed and treated him duly. Nārada next visited Satyabhāmā's house where also Kṛṣṇa and herself welcomed and treated him well. In the houses of all the 16008 wives of Kṛṣṇa, Nārada had the same experience as above. He was wonder-struck at the divine powers of Kṛṣṇa and returned home praising Kṛṣṇa (Bhāgavata, 10th Skandha).

7) *Mahāviṣṇu put down Nārada's haughtiness.* Nārada had been very proud about his greatness as a musician. Viṣṇu decided to put an end to this conceit of Nārada for which purpose he took Nārada to a forest. There they saw many women, whose limbs had been cut, crying on account of insufferable pain. Mahāviṣṇu asked the women who they were and why their limbs were cut. They answered Viṣṇu that they were Rāgiṇīs, the presiding deities over the various tunes and that they were reduced to their present plight by the totally erroneous singing of the tunes by Nārada.

Nārada hung his head down in shame at the above answer of the women and he was cured of his conceit. (Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa).

8) *Hanūmān shamed Nārada.* Nārada once met Hanūmān, who sang a song for him. Enjoying the music Nārada placed his Viṇā on a rock which had been melted by the song of Hanūmān, and Nārada's Viṇā sank into the melted rock. When the singing by Hanūmān was over, the rock, as of old, became hard again and the Viṇā got stuck up with it. Hanūmān asked Nārada to melt the rock again with a song of his and take away his Viṇā. Nārada sang and sang, all to no purpose. The rock did not melt again. Then Hanūmān sang a song and the rock melted. After praising Hanūmān Nārada left the place ashamed. (Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa).

9) *Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructed Nārada about Māyā.* Nārada once requested Kṛṣṇa to teach him about Māyā (illusion) and Kṛṣṇa told him that he would be taught sometime later. Afterwards, one day while Nārada was walking about, it began to rain and he took shelter from the rain in a hut near at hand. There was a beautiful young woman in the hut and Nārada fell in love with her. Nārada lived with her for many years and a number of children were born to them. But, a flood washed the mother and children off into the sea, and Nārada was grief-stricken. Then Kṛṣṇa appeared there and asked Nārada whether he loved Māyā. Nārada confessed that he understood