

the manifestations of Śakti. There are idols of Durgā as standing in the lotus flower and also as mounted on the lion. Āgamas refer to nine kinds or forms of Durgā i.e. Nīlakaṅṭhī, Kṣemaṅkarī, Harasiddhī, Raudrā, Vanā, Agni, Jayā, Vindhyaśinī, and Ripunāśinī. Durgā's most terrible form is as Maḥiṣāsura-mardini, found at Mahābalipuram, Ellora and other places. Durgā is also called Caṅḍikā and Kātyāyanī. Durgā is worshipped as Nandā, Bhadrakālī, Ambā, Rājamātāngī etc.

9) *Śiva's life-period.* Thousand Caturyugas constitute one day of Brahmā. According to the Purāṇas fourteen Indras fall dead from heaven during the life time of one Brahmā. Two such life times of Brahmā form one life time of Viṣṇu; at the end of the period he too will expire. Śiva's life time is double that of Viṣṇu, according to Devī Bhāgavata, 5th Skandha. (For details see under Manvantara).

10) *Śiva and creation of the universe.* See under Creation).

11) *Māyā Śiva.* (See under Māyā śiva).

12) *Sahasranāmas (thousand names) of Śiva.* The thousand names of Śiva are mentioned mainly in Chapter 285 of Śānti Parva and Chapter 17 of Anuśāsana Parva of Mahābhārata. There are substantial differences between the two lists of names.

13) *Aśvatthāmā and Śiva.* (See under Aśvatthāmā Para 6).

14) *Rudras.* The Ekādaśarudras, viz. Mṛgavyādhā, Sarpa, Nirṛti, Ajaikapāt, Ahirbudhnyā, Pināki, Īśvara, Kapālī, Sthāṇu and Bharga are the sons of Śiva. (Ādi Parva, Chapter 66).

15) *Śivabhasma (Ashes worn by Śiva)* The Purāṇas contain many references to the great power of Śivabhasman. The following story about even Viṣṇu turning out to be a devotee of Śiva on account of the sanctity of Śivabhasma is related in Chapter 101, Pātālakhaṇḍa of Padma Purāṇa.

In the beginning or during the Brahmāpralaya (deluge) Mahāviṣṇu was lying in the great waters of the deluge. On both sides of Viṣṇu hundred universes each and on both sides of his feet and at the centre of his head twenty universes each remained attached. One universe glowed as a gem on Viṣṇu's nose. Maharṣis like Lomaśa did tapas seated on his navel. Meanwhile Viṣṇu sat in deep meditation ready for creation. But, he did not find anything and began, therefore, sobbing. Then appeared an extra-mundane light at which he got frightened and closed his eyes. Śiva, rotating in both his hands a garland each made of a crore of universes appeared before Viṣṇu. He then stood up and enquired of the visitor who he was. Śiva exhibited his form. Śiva told Viṣṇu that he had not attained sufficient wisdom for creation and also advised him to achieve enough knowledge by first taking the Varuṇa bath and then the Bhasma bath.

To this Viṣṇu answered by saying that there was nowhere water enough for him to bathe, and he, who was closely surrounded by universes, sat in water. But, it came only up to his thighs. Then Śiva said laughingly that there was enough water for Viṣṇu to bathe and cast a glance at him with his (Śiva) eye on the forehead and also his left eye. And, immediately Viṣṇu's body became very small and it began to shiver. Then Śiva said as follows:- "Oh! Viṣṇu! here is deep water. you may bathe in it. But Viṣṇu could not get into the tremendous pool created on Śiva's lap. So, he requested

Śiva for a passage to get into the pool. Śiva "Oh! Viṣṇu! Before this even though you sat in water, one crore yojanas in depth, it came only up to your thighs. But, now though you are on your legs you say you cannot enter the water. Look here, the water comes only up to my thighs. You may descend into it. I shall see to it that you can step into the water. A Vedic saying I recite will serve as the step."

Viṣṇu :- "Nobody can step on sound. One may ascend on what is material, i.e. with form; but, how could one step on that which is formless?"

Śiva:- "Why can you not get hold of that which is and ascend? You receive this great Veda."

Viṣṇu received it, but it appeared that his hands were not strong enough to hold it. Śiva smiled at the inability of Viṣṇu and asked him to get down into water by the steps made of Veda and when Viṣṇu descended the steps into the water, it came only up to his thighs. He had his bath and then asked Śiva what he should do next. Śiva:--- "What do you feel in your mind? Is it that you do not feel anything?"

Viṣṇu:- "I feel not anything."

Śiva:- "If you get sanctified by bhasmasnāna you will receive the ultimate knowledge. I shall give you the bhasma."

Śiva took a pinch of bhasma from his breast and chanting the Gāyatrī and pañcākṣara (Om namaśśivāya) mantras sprinkled it all over the body of Viṣṇu. He also said to Viṣṇu, "You live, you meditate, now what do you feel in your mind?" Viṣṇu meditated whereupon he saw a very bright light in his heart. When he told Śiva that a light was being seen by him the latter said that his knowledge was not mature enough and asked him to eat some bhasma so that it might become perfect. Viṣṇu accordingly consumed the bhasma, and lo! he, who was till then red-blue in colour became as white as pearl. He began to be called Śuklavarna (white in colour) from that day onwards.

Mahāviṣṇu felt happy and contented having seen Śiva, who asked the former what it was he saw in his mind just then. Answering that he saw the blissful form of Śiva before him Viṣṇu fell at the latter's feet. To Śiva's query as to what boon he desired to have, Viṣṇu replied that he wanted to become a devotee of Śiva and because of the greatness of the bhasma Viṣṇu thenceforward became a devotee of Śiva.

16) *Śivaliṅga (Phallus).* Worship of Śivaliṅga is a popular practice in India. The Purāṇas contain a number of stories about the importance Śivaliṅga achieved so as to make it an object of worship. Three of the more important stories are given below:

(i) Śiva wandered about the world lamenting over the death of Satidevī at the Yajña conducted by Dakṣa, and Kāmadeva followed him with his erotic arrows to exploit Śiva's sorry predicament. During his wanderings Śiva once came to the Vindhya mountain. Kāmadeva followed him there too and began attacking Śiva with his arrows and to escape from the fierce onslaught Śiva took refuge in the terrible Dāru forest. There Maharṣis with their wives lived. Śiva saluted them and requested for alms. But, the Maharṣis only kept mum. They did not like their wives saluting Śiva. Śiva went about the ārama and all the women except Arundhatī and Anasūyā, followed him overcome by lust for him. Enraged at this, munis like Bhārgava and Aṅgiras cursed