

**ESSENCE OF SANKHYA PARIJNANA**

**(Knowledge of Numbers)**

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**Other Scripts by the same Author:**

**Essence of Puranas:-**

**Maha Bhagavata, Vishnu Purana, Matsya Purana, Varaha Purana, Kurma Purana, Vamana Purana, Narada Purana, Padma Purana; Shiva Purana, Linga Purana, Skanda Purana, Markandeya Purana, Devi Bhagavata; Brahma Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Nilamata Purana; Shri Kamakshi Vilasa**

**Dwadasha Divya Sahasranaama:**

**a) Devi Chaturvidha Sahasra naama: Lakshmi, Lalitha, Saraswati, Gayatri;**

**b) Chaturvidha Shiva Sahasra naama-Linga-Shiva-Brahma Puranas and Maha Bhagavata;**

**c) Trividha Vishnu and Yugala Radha-Krishna Sahasra naama-Padma-Skanda-Maha Bharata and Narada Purana.**

**Stotra Kavacha- A Shield of Prayers**

**Purana Saaraamsha**

**Select Stories from Puranas**

**Essence of Dharma Sindhu**

**Essence of Shiva Sahasra Lingarchana**

**Essence of Paraashara Smtiti**

**Essence of Pradhana Tirtha Mahima**

**Dharma Bindu**

**Essence of Upanishads : Brihadaranyaka , Katha, Tittiriya, Isha, Svetashwara of Yajur Veda- Chhandogya and Kena of Saama Veda-Atreya and Kausheetaki of Rig Veda-Mundaka, Mandukya and Prashna of Atharva Veda**

**‘Upanishad Saaraamsa’ (Quintessence of Upanishads)**

**Essence of Virat Parva of Maha Bharata\***

**Essence of Bharat Yatra Smriti\***

**Essence of Brahma Sutras\***

**Essence of Sankhya Parijnaana\***

**[Note: All the above Scriptures already released on [www. Kamakoti. Org/news](http://www.Kamakoti.Org/news) as also on Google by the respective references. The one with \* is under process]**

## **PREFACE**

Here are simple explanations of Vedic Numbers, but not indeed of Sankhya Yoga nor its Mimaamsa. General awareness of the common meanings and the power of numbers is useful to realize. But the knowledge of the numbers backed up by authoritative sources is sought to be described in this script. Ranging from one to many, the numbers selected yield intrinsic thought and comprehension. The chosen numericals thus seek to provide deeper purport.

The pieces of information are being presented and edited from various sources especially from Puranas, Upanishads, Smritis and other Scriptures of the yore. The series of Essence of Puranas etc. as published by the kamakoti.org/ articles from time to time for years now are handy as several references are made about Srishti, Deva -Devis, Pancha Bhutas, Principles of Dharma, Vidhis, Purushardhas, and so on. Since this knowledge is accessible readily, the information of the 'Sanjna Parijnana' is thus being presented, in addition to a few other sources too.

I am beholden to HH Vijayendra Saraswati of Kanchi Mutt for the unfailing encouragement and guidance in the golden task of Dharma Prachara. His solid support emboldens me to edit this Guide as a ready Reference and hope it could serve the purpose as a Manual of Numbers and their import.

I dedicate this effort to Maha Swami of Kanchi Mutt as we are ever beholden to his blessings for ever!

**VDN Rao**

**Chennai**

**August 1, 2005**

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*Tad yatha truna jalaayukaa, trinasyaantam gatwaa, anyam aakramanam aakramyaa, aatmaanam upasamharati, evam evaayam aatmaaidam shariram nihatyaa avidaam gamayitvaa, anyam aakramam aakramyaa, aatmaanaam upasamharati/* (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: IV.iv.1)

( Whenever a caterpillar reaches the edge of a blade of grass, it tends to hold another support and contracts another dream body gradually manifesting the functions of the new organs and senses; the new organs are such as to display actions of erstwhile works called Karma of the previous births and the instant actions!)

**ASATOMAASADGAMAYA MRITYORMAAMRITAMGAMAYA**

## ESSENCE OF SANKHYA PARIJNAANA

### (Knowledge of Numbers)

*Shuklaambaradharam Vishnum shashivarnam chaturbhujam, prasanna vadanam dhyaaye sarva vighnopashantaye/*

#### 1) Eka Danta:

*Agajaanana padmarkam Gajaananamaharnisham, Aneka dantam bhaktaanaam, Eka dantam upasmahe/*

The origin of Eka Danta due to Parashurama's encounter with Ganesha: After avenging his father's death and the massacre of the erring Kshatriyas, Parashurama desired to personally pay homage to Bhagavan Shiva and reached Kailasa; he witnessed Nandeeswara, Maha Kaala, Ruru Bhairava, Rudraganas and Bhuta-Preta-Piscachas but finally Ganesha stopped him. All kinds of requests, and prayers failed and Ganesha refused entry to Bhargava Rama as Devi Parvati and Shiva were engaged in privacy. Finally, the latter lifted his Parashu (axe) and tried to force his entry; Ganesha lifted his trunk, looped Parashurama with it and encircled him round and round where by Bhargava visioned Sapta Dwipas, Sapta Parvatas, Sapta Samudras and Sapta Lokas viz. Bhur-Bhuvar-Swara-Janar-Tapo-Dhruva-Gouri Lokas and Vaikuntha / and Golokas. In the process, the mighty Parashurama hit one of Ganesha's tusks with the Parashu that Maha Deva once gifted to Bhargava and the tusk fell off and blood gushed out. The resting parents of Ganesha were shocked as Kartikeya rushed and informed them. Parvati's first reaction was to kill Parashurama but being the Loka Mata or the Mother of the Universe restrained herself and addressed Parashurama as follows: 'You are born in Brahma Vamsha to one of the illustrious sons Maharshi Jamadagni and to Devi Renuka of Lakshmi 'Amsa' or alternate Form of Devi Lakshmi. How did you do this to my son! Shiva is your Guru since he taught Trailokya Vijaya Kavacha and countless Astras to you. Is this the Guru Dakshina that you thought fit to give your Guru! You could have perhaps given a better Dakshina by cutting Ganesha's head instead of breaking his tusk only! My son Ganesha has the power of destroying crores of cunning animals like you but was only playful with you; yet, you have only wantonly hurt him by breaking his tusk-not as an accident but with vengeance; you may know that he receives the foremost worship all over the Universe!' As Parvati addressed thus Parashurama felt ashamed of himself, prostrated to his Guru Shiva and Devi Parvati and the Almighty Shri Krishna the Immortal. Meanwhile a Brahmana boy was visioned who actually was Vishnu who analysed the situation; indeed there was no justification of what Parashurama did to Ganesha but Parashurama was momentarily taken aback by folly as otherwise he was also like Ganesha or Skanda! Vishnu pleaded being the Universal Parents might not read much into the happening. Vishnu also assuaged the hurt feelings of Parvati and requested her not to impose personal angles into the unhappy situation; He further said that her son had Eight names viz. Ganesha, Ekadanta, Heramba, Vighna nayaka, Lambodara, Shurpakarna, Gajavaktra and Guhaagraja! Parashurama pleaded mercy of Parvati since she was Jagan Mata or the Mother of Creation and begged of Ganesha for pardon of his indiscretion; Ganesha was graceful enough to agree of partial responsibility and the episode was closed happily. ( Source :Brahma Vaivata Purana)

## 2) Eko Narayana:

There is only one God and that is 'Narayana'; expansion of 'Naara' is water and 'ayana' is he who relaxes on water surface. The common belief is that the Universe floats on water.

## 3) Eka Nemi / Single Hub of wheel: *Tam eka nemim trivartam shodashaantam shataadhaaram vimshati pratyaraabhih ashtakaih shadbhih vishva rupaika paasham tri maarga bheda dvini mittaika moham/*

(The Supreme Lord is realised as a Single hub of a wheel, with three tires or three folds of three Gunas of Satva-Rajas-Tamas; 'shodashatantam' sixteen terminals or of five elements, five organs of Perception viz. Jnanendriyas and five organs of Action or Karmendriyas and the mind as the Leader; 'Shataadhaaram' or fifty spokes representing viz. 'viparyas' viz. misleading conclusions, 'tamas' or ignorance, 'moha' or self-love, 'maha moha' or extreme infatuation, 'taamishra' or abhorrence and 'andhataamishra' or terror; 'Vimshati pratyaraabhih' or twenty four counter spokes or the Five Basic Elements of Nature with five each of organs and senses and mind; 'Ashtaika shabdih' or six sets of eights viz. 'Prakriti' or Nature, with eight causes of five elements with, 'Manas' or Mind, 'Buddhi' or Intelligence and 'Ahamkaara' or Ego As Bhagavati Gita vide VII.4 illustrates vividly: *Bhumiraaponalo Vayuh kham Mano buddhirevacha, Ahamkaara iteeya me bhinnaa Prakritrashtadaa/*; 'Vishva rupaika paasham' or the strong rope tied to each and every being named 'Karma' or the plus and minus account'; 'tri maarga bheda' or the dominant difference of three ingredients of Life viz. 'Dharmaadharma vichakshanaa jnaanam' or the innate capability of Righteousness and its Contrariness; and 'dvini mittaika moham' or the double edged obsession of good and evil orientation both being the definite causes of rebirth! This is how the delineation of the Single focal point or the hub of the wheel of Life !) (Source: Shvetaashvatara Upanishad)

4) **Eka Kumbhodbhava Maharshis:** Sage Narada enquired of Bhagavan Shankara about the origin of Agastya Muni and Vasishtha. Maheswara explained that once Indra despatched Vayu and Agni to destroy Danavas and having successfully killed thousands of the enemies, ignored some Daityas like Taraka, Kamalaaksha, Paravasu, Kaladamshttra and Virochana as they fled away and concealed in deep Seas. The Danavas who hid themselves kept on tormenting human beings as also Devas eventually. Indra ordered that Vayu and Agni should dry up the Sea water, especially to kill dangerous Daityas like Jambhasura, but the both the Devas argued that in the process of drying up the Seas even in a minor manner there would be serious havoc caused to crores of Jeevas. Indra was annoyed at their argument and cursed them to fall down on Earth from Swarga and both the Devas entered into a 'Jala Kumbha' or Water Pitcher as a single body. Meanwhile, Sages Nara and Narayana were in Tapasya on Gandhamadana Mountain, and Indra was concerned that they might not be a threat to his chair; he despatched a few Apsaras to the Mountain along with Kamadeva but their attempts to tempt the Maharshis failed. As the Apsaras continued to be stationed there, Narayana Rishi created a damsel of exquisite attraction from his thighs and named her Urvasi; he desired that Apsaras should realize that their beauty was nothing compared to whom they could materialise as Urvasi and they could not possibly tempt Nara Narayan Maharshis, after all! Mitra (Sun God) and Varuna (Rain God) happened to see the damsel and could not resist the fall of their combined semen of Mitrarvaruna which was deposited in the same Jala Kumbha (pitcher) that fell down from the Swarga and thus Agastya was born as Kumbha Sambhava. Vasishtha too was reborn from the pitcher earlier since he felt offended when King Nimi did not properly attend to him as he visited the King and hence gave a curse to Nimi to live as 'Videha' or without body, but the King too gave a return curse; both Nimi and Vasishtha approached Lord Brahma who solved the problem by retaining Nimi's

life in his Eyes and Vasishtha to be reborn to Mitrarvaruna since the latter's semen fell in the pitcher on seeing Apsara Urvashi. Subsequently Agastya married Lopamudra, absorbed the entire Ocean in his Kamandulu to isolate the Danavas to enable Indra to kill the notorious Danavas and released it later as his urine and was thus stated to be salty!; he also razed down the ego of Vindhya Mountain by making him bend for ever thus banning the Mountain to stoop for ever till the Sage's return which never happened as he continued to stay down the Vindhyas. There was also the legend attributed to Agastya about the Daitya brothers Ilvala and Vatapi, who knew the Mrita Sanjeevani Mantra; they would assume the forms of Brahmanas and seek the passers by to tempt them to a feast of goat-meat, and after consuming the meal ask Vatapi to come out and Vapati would come out piercing through the tummy of the stranger and the brothers would enjoy his meat. But Agastya Muni was too clever to bless the good food saying 'Vatapi! Jeerno bhava' and Vatapi was fully digested even before Ilvala was able to recite the Mrita Sanjeevani Mantra! [Till date, devotees recite Lalita Sahasranama and Aditya Hridaya scripted by Agastya Muni. Vasishtha, the Brahmarshi was the arch-enemy of Rajarshi Viwswamitra ever since the latter claimed Nandini the Celestial Cow and fought a battle in which Viswamitra was defeated. The enmity continued till once both the Rishis cursed each other to become birds and finally Brahma had to intervene and convert them back as human beings].

**5) Eka Mukhaadi Rudrakshas:** The origin of Rudrakshas [dark beads of Tree, termed Elaeocarpus Ganitrus in Latin language] or Lord Siva's tears, extensively used as Prayer Rosaries, goes back to Maha Deva's killing Tripurasura, who sought to destroy the Universe and whom all the Devas, Brahma and Vishnu failed to control. Maha Deva concentrated with His eyes wide open for several years together to create a very highly potent weapon by name 'Aghora' with which to annihilate the Demon and in the process trickled tears which produced a stream from where sprang a Rudraksha Tree. The Rudraksha Seeds are of thirty eight varieties. From Lord Shiva's right eye, signifying 'Surya Netra' (Sun God), emerged from the Trees that yielded twelve kinds of yellow colour seeds; from His left eye, signifying 'Soma Netra' (Moon) came sixteen varieties of white coloured beads, and from the Lord's third eye on His forehead representing 'Agni Netra' (Fire) came ten varieties of black colour. The white variety of the beads are meant for wearing by Brahmanas, the red colour by Kshatriyas and the black coloured beads by Vaisyas and others. 'Eka Mukhi' Rudrakshas represent Siva Himself the wearing of which washes off even the worst sin of a killing a Brahmana'; two faced one represents Deva and Devi destroying two kinds of sins among 'Pancha Paatakas'; the three faced bead representing Agni Deva removes the sin of killing a woman; the four faced Rudraksha representing Lord Brahma terminates the sins of killings in general; the five faced bead is like Rudra removing sins of consuming prohibited material or places; the six faced one is the six headed Kartikeya washing off 'Brahma hatya'; the seven faced Rudraksha stands for 'Ananga' or 'Manmatha' removes the sin of stealing gold and other valuables; the eight faced bead represents Lord Vinayaka who not only removes the sins of illicit relations but also provides plenty of food, Vastras, gold and so on ; Lord Bhairava is manifested in the nine faced bead standing for Contentment and destruction of several sins; the tenth faced bead represents Janardana obliterating the ill effects of Planets and demolishing the evil impact of Spirits like Pisachas, goblins and the like; the eleven faced Rudraksha stands for Ekadasa Rudras bestowing the benefits of horse sacrifices, Vajapeya Sacrifices and gifting several cows; 'Dwadasa Adityas' or Twelve Suns [Ansa, Ariman, Bhaga, Daksha, Dhatri, Indra, Mitra, Ravi, Savitri, Surya and Yama] are denoted by the twelve faced Rudraksha which yields the advantage of Gomedha and Asvamedha Sacrifices, fearlessness from cruel animals and armed enemies, attainment of kingships, and dissolution of sins of killing elephants, horses, deer, cats, snakes, mice, frogs, asses and such other animals. It is said that

a thirteen faced Rudraksha is a great rarity representing Kartikeya and if available would absolve even patricidal and matricidal sins, attainment of ‘Ashta Siddhis’ and the capability of creating gold, silver and precious stones, thus qualifying consummate happiness. Wearing a fourteen faced Rudraksha which perhaps is an almost impossibility is like wearing Siva Himself! Meditation ( Japam) is to be performed by using a twenty seven bead, or fifty four bead or one hundred eight bead rosaries and wearing a hundred and eight rosary is a constant protection of Maha Deva Himself. *Wearing one- faced, five- faced, eleven- faced or fourteen- faced Rudrakshas is highly recommended.* He who holds thirty on neck, forty on head, six each on ears, twelve each on hands, sixteen each on arms, one each on eyes, one on hair or crown, and hundred and eight on breast totalling two hundred and fifty one become Maha Deva Himself. It is stated that wearing even one bead at the time of bathing would be meritorious and similarly at the time of death too, if a rosary of beads is worn, Lord Kartikeya would halt and lessen the impact from Yama Dootas. Medical values of wearing Rudraksha malas (rosaries) are said to be immense in warding off depression, stress, diabetes, cancer, heart and blood related diseases. Close contact of body parts like head, heart, neck, ear and hands assures protection from ill health. All vedic acts are to be accompanied by wearing Rudraksha Malas like Sacrifices, Vratas, Pujas, holy baths, Shraddhas, Solar and Lunar Eclipses, Uttarayana and Dakshinayana ‘Samkramanas’(entry timings), and Full Moon and New Moon days or Pournami and Pradhama days. However one should not touch or consume wine, meat, tobacco, onion, garlic and such impurities as also during mating, since these constitute atrocious insults to Maha Deva. However, Sage Narayana quoted Maha Deva telling Kartikeya that any human being irrespective of caste or even animals or other species carrying Rudrakshas would be immune from sins as an ass carrying a load of the beads died on way but had salvation! (Source: Devi Bhagavata) . Padma Purana too signifies the power of wearing Eka Mukhi upto Chaturdashi Mukhi Rudrakshas as follows: In a congregation of Brahmanas, Veda Vyas explained the significance of ‘Rudrakshas’, their origin and methodology of wearing them. A person wearing a Rudraksha Mala with Brahma-grandhis and performs Japa-Daana-Stotra-Mantra-Deva Puja or any other propitious Task is stated to have executed the best possible worship ever. In Satya Yuga of the yore, a fearful Danava named Tripura had Brahma Deva’s boons of invincibility against Devas and harassed them besides all virtuous human beings, Sages and other species. When Devas approached Maha Deva and described the atrocities perpetrated by the Asura, Shiva got perturbed and pulled out his powerful ‘Aajagava’ Dhanush and despatched his ‘Vikaraal’ named arrow and from his Divya Drishti (Celestial Vision) tracked Tripura down after extensive battle and killed him finally. In this tedious task, Maha Deva sweated profusely and the skin moisture of Maha Deva got materialised as a huge Tree of Rudrakshas (Eyes of Rudra). As Kartikeya asked Maha Deva about the significance of the Seeds of the Tree, the latter described that wearing a mala (garland) of Rudrakshas bestowed auspiciousness and acted like a shield against diseases, poverty, unhappiness, and discontentment in life. Those who wear Rudrakshas would immediately assume the personality of confidence, equanimity and maturity. If one wore Rudraksha on his head and died, the person concerned would immediately break the cycle of rebirths and secure salvation.

[‘Eka Mukhi’ symbolises Shiva and its Ruling Planet is Surya recommended to wear on Mondays for power, wealth and fame to ward off heart diseases and its Mantra is stated to be ‘Om Namah Shivaaya Om Hreem Namah’; ‘Dwi Mukhi’ symbolises ‘Ardha Naare -eswara’ or Shiva and Parvati with Moon as the Ruling Planet recommended to wear on Mondays for mental peace and mystic powers and its Mantra is ‘Om Namah’; ‘Tri Mukhi’ symbolises Agni and the Ruling Planet is Mars, recommended for wearing on Mondays for Physical Health, Knowledge and Divine Powers and its Mantra is: Om Kleem Namah/ Om Namah Shivaaya Namah; ‘Chatur Mukhi’ Rudraksha symbolises Brahma and the Ruling Planet is

Mercury best worn on Mondays for curing paralysis, nervous tension and mental diseases and its Mantra is : Om Hreem Namah; the ‘Pancha Mukhi’ symbolises Rudra and the Ruling Planet is Jupiter affecting Liver, Kidneys, diabetes and obesity, meant for elimination of enemies and the Mantra is: Om Hreem Namah- it is stated that apart from the wearing of Ekamukhi, Pancha Mukhi is also rated high for wearing; The ‘Shashtya Mukhi’ symbolises Kartikeya and the Ruling Planet is Venus (Shukra) meant for attaining Concentration, Confidence, Success and Family life and for the benefit for reproductive organs while the relevant Mantra is Om Hreem Hroom; Maha Lakshmi symbolises the ‘Sapta Mukhi’ and the Ruling Planet is Saturn meant to cure muscular pain and impotence which is to be borne with red thread as the desired objectives are prosperity and well being and the relevant Mantra is Om Huum Namaha; the ‘Ashta Mukhi’ Rudraksha symbolises Ganesha and the Ruling Planet is Rahu aiming at concentration and business tactics normally preferred by Vaishyas and sought to set right lung disorder and skin problem and the Mantra is Om Ganeshaya Namah; the ‘Nava Mukhi’ Rudraksha symbolises Durga and the Planetary Head is Kethu, bestowing courage, destruction of enemies and capacity to strike back and is meant for relief body pains and lung-bowel disorders, relevant Mantra being Om Hreem Hum Namah; the ‘Dasa Mukhi’ Rudraksha worn on Sundays represents Maha Vishnu symbolising Ten Avatars, pacifying all the ill-effects of Nine Planets and destroying Evil Spirits like Piscachas, Goblins, Thieves etc.the relevant Mantra being Shri Narayaneya Shri Vaishnavy Namah; Like the Eka Mukhi and the Pancha Mukhi, the Ekadasha Mukhi Rudraksha is also reckoned very potent and useful representing Ekadasha Rudras (also stated alternatively as symbolising Hanuman) bestowing knowledge, Yoga and devotion as also protecting neuro-physiology if worn on Mondays by reciting the Mantra viz. Om Shri Rudraaya Namah; the ‘Dwadasha Mukhi’ Rudraksha symbolising ‘Dwadasha Adityas’ with Surya as the Ruling Planet bestows Kingships, Leadership, courage and self-confidence, granting excellent health and great success in Life; Wearing the ‘Trayodasha Mukhi’ Rudraksha symbolising Indra and Kamadeva with Venus as the Ruling Planet provides unmistakable pleasures of life and even hypnotic powers and a ‘Chaturdasha Mukhi’ Rudraksha which is stated to be a rarity is of the class or standing of Eka Mukhi, Pancha Mukhi and Ekadasha Mukhi and represents Maha Deva Himself with Saturn as the Ruling Planet and providing the most contented Life in ‘Iham’(the Present) and ‘Param’ (After-Life) as it has to be worn by reciting the Mantra: Om Namah Sivaaya.

It is said that close contact of Rudrakshas with body parts like head, neck, heart, and hands protect the persons with medical values from depression, stress, diabetes, cancer, heart / blood related diseases!]

**6) Dwi Pakshi Katha:**The Story of two birds one seeking material joy and another lasting spiritual bliss: *Dve Suparna Sayuja sakhaaya samaanam vriksham parishasvajaate, tayoranyam pippalam svaaddhvatti anaishnan anyobhichaakasheeti/* (An analogy of two companion birds named Suparna and Sayuja is drawn sharing the same tree as one is busy eating the fruits of the tree while the other remains watching without tasting; this is just as two persons are enjoying the taste even as the other refrains. While one regales by rejoicing the sweet results of different kinds of material happiness the other person calculates and weighs the pros and cons of the karma and the resultant reactions. (Source: Mundaka Upanishad III.i.1)

**7) Prakriti rupa traya shaktis or Self Generated Energies:** Brahman is ‘Akartaa trayam’ and of ‘jeeveshwara prakriti rupa trayam Brahma’ comprising of three energies: two Self Generated Entities and the permanent- the semi permanent-and other third purely temporary. The foremost one is Unknown, the second is the ‘bhoktar-bhoga-bhogy rupam’ or the Enjoyer of Enjoyment or the the Individual Self, and

the third being the object of enjoyment. In other words Brahman is the 'akartar' or the Inactive 'Shtaanu' and 'karavyaadi samsaara rahita' the Base Source of Energy; with neither responsibilities nor duties. But the responsibilities are ably performed with the active involvement of Maya the Prakriti which however is not independent however of Brahma but controlled by Parama Purusha yet does not constitute a second to Brahman on the analogy of electricity-the switch and the lamp! ( Source: Svetaashvatara Upanishad)

**8) Tapatraya:** Adhi Bhoudika or Ailments of Physical Nature; Adhyatmika or of Mental-Psychological Nature; and Adhi Daivika or of Natural Calamities like Earth quakes, floods, lightnings etc. beyond human control. In Vishnu Purana: Maharshi Parashara described about Tapatriayas or the Three Kinds of Difficulties that all human beings are subjected to as also the means of realising the Paramartha Swarupa. The Tapatriayas originate due to Adhyatmika, Aadhi Daavika and Adhi Bhoutika reasons. Adhyatmika based Tapaas are either due to 'Shaaririka'(physical) ailments or 'Manasika' (psychological) imbalances. Shaaririka Tapaas include diseases related to head, digestive, heart, breathing, vision, limbs, skin, fevers and so on; related are the various physiological problems of blood-urinary-pelvic nature. Manasika Tapaas are related to Kama, Krodha, Bhaya, Dwesha, lobha, Moha, Vishada, Shoka, Asuya, Apamana, Irshya, Matsara etc. Adhi Bhoutika Tapaas are due to the difficulties attributed to animals, birds, Pishachaas, Serpents, Rakshasaas and poisonous related creatures like scorpions. The troubles on account of Adhidaivika nature are due to cold, heat, air, rains, drought, water, earthquakes, cyclones and so on. Additionally, the troubles are related to birth, childhood, youth, old age, ignorance, Avidya, loneliness, smell, lack of resources, poverty, immaturity, inexperience, lack of opportunity, fear of death, death itself and multiple kinds of experiences of Naraka. Maharshi Parashara emphasized that there are problems of excessive of opulence, excellent health, excessive youth, and such other excesses and some times ignorance is bliss. More so there could be Tapaas due to discriminations of sex, age, social status, experience, opportunity, family background; origin of birth viz. religion, Varnashrama and age. Disappointments in life, more specifically relating to money and fame, including their earnings, perservation and its vinasha or destruction happen to be yet source of Tapatriya.

**9) Ishana Traya:** Praneshana-the bond of Life, Dareshana or the bond of wife, Putreshana or the bond of progeny, Dhaneshana or the bond of wealth, Sukheshana or the love of happiness and contentment and Dharmeshana or the quest of Virtue; but the first three bonds of life above are the strongest ie the Ishanatrayas.

**10) Trikarana:** Any action needs to be performed by the cleanliness of mind, tongue and deed; Tri karana Shuddhi is the outcome of 'Mano Vaacha Karmana'. *Karacharana kritam vaakkaayajamvaa shravana nayanamvaa maanasamvaa, sarvametat kshamasvaa jaja jaya karunabdhye, Shri Maha Deva Shambho!*

**11) Trikalpa Kaalamaana:** The concept of Kaalamaaa or the Time Cycle is calculated on the basis of **Padardha** (Matter) and **Parithi** (Space); the sum of Space occupied and the movement of Matter determined is the **Paramaanu Samaya** (atomic time). Thus the Matter, Space and Time are measurable. The Time Units were arrived as per the mix of these Entities called Transerenus or celestial atoms and the duration of integrating these entities. The smallest unit of three transerenus is called 'triti'; hundred tritis make one vedha; three vedhas make a lava; three lavas make one nimesha or blink of an eye; three nimeshas one kshana; five nimeshas one kashta or eight seconds; fifteen kashtas one laghu or two minutes; fifteen laghus one nadika or danda; six-seven dandas one fourth of a day or night; four praharas or yamas make one day and night; two

pakshas a month; two months a Ritu /season; six months one Ayanam or two complete movements of a year by Sun; Dakshinayana is the movement of Surya from top to bottom and Uttarayana is the movement of Sun from bottom to top. 365 combinations of a day and night make a year. Normally the span of human life is hundred years. A human year is a day to Devas; Satya Yuga is stated to have a span of 4800 Deva Years; Treta Yuga 3600 Divine years; Dwapara Yuga 2400 years; Kali Yuga 1200 years; 12000 divine years one Maha Yuga; 1000 Maha Yugas make one Kalpa or a day to Brahma and two Kalpas one day and night to Brahma; Brahma's life span is 100 Brahma Years or two Pararthas; one Maha Kalpa is half of Brahma's life span; Brahma's present age is now fifty years plus; that is how our daily prayer states: Dwiteeya Parthaey! One Maha Kalpa there are a mind-boggling 311040 crore of human years. We are now in the 28<sup>th</sup> Kaliyuga of the First Day of the First Year of Sweta Varaha Kalpa, second Parartha in the reign of the Seventh Manu Vaivaswata. Kali Yuga is calculated to have commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> February 3102 BC of Julion Calendar. Each Manu rules for 71 Maha yugas. Brahma is 51 year old having lived for 155 trillion years. We are now in the Third Kalpa (Varaha Kalpa).

**12) Triguna:** Saatvika, Rajo Guna and Tamo Guna; the belief is that Brahma creates, Vishnu sustains and Shiva terminates; in other words the Tri Murtis perform Srishti-Sthiti-Samhara. Sattva is described as the fountain of Goodness and happiness in a pure form. Its colour is stated to be white standing for purity, integrity, happiness, contentment, forgiveness and faith. The Rajas Guna is stated to be red in colour and is featured as false pride, deceit, avarice, hatred and selfishness. The Tamo Guna standing for black colour is stated to feature ignorance, lack of resources, anger, fear and quarrelsomeness. There is no set identity of the Gunas but are intermingled and rapidly changeable. A person who is Good basically might spurt out into anger and pride and change over in the same breath to fear. But surely the resultant impact would be disastrous. As, Lord Krishna stated in Bhagavad Gita: *Dhyayato vishayam pumsaha sanghas theshupa jayate /Sangat sanjayatey kama kamakrodhobhi jaaythey /Krodhaha bhavati sammohaha, sammohat smrithi vibhramaha Smritir bhramsaha buddhi naso buddhi nashoth prayatyati.* (An unfulfilled desire would lead to anger. Anger leads to obsession. Obsession leads to failure of memory and focussed thinking and lack of memory leads to mental balance!) Lords Vishnu, Brahma and Siva are stated to represent Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic Gunas respectively but the description is not fully represented in their cases; there is no water-tight segregation possible in their cases as in the case of human beings too. The illustration is of a lamp, but the wick, the oil and the flame together provide light. The three materials denoted the Rajas, Satvik and Tamas Gunas, just as each or any living being could-and normally would-synthesise the Gunas.

**13) Tri Mastaka Avataara Dattaatreya:** Considered as 'Dutta' or awarded by Trimurtis and born to Sage 'Atreya' and Sati Anasuya, Dattatreya is a combined 'Avatar' (Incarnation). He was a mystic Saint called 'Avadhuta' or of the eccentric type. The word 'Ava' denotes 'bad materials' and 'dhuta' denotes 'washed away' thus meaning that he washed away all bad things. Such a Person is stated to be of Pure consciousness in human form. Depicted as a Three headed Avatar, representing the Three Gods of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva; the Three 'Gunas' of Rajasik, Satvik and Tamasik nature; Three Stages of Consciousness viz. waking, dreaming and dreamless Sleep; and the Three Time Capsules of Past, Present and Future, Dattatreya is pictured as seated in meditation along with his Shakti, under an 'Udumbara' or Tree of fulfillment of desires on a Rock- a Gyana Peetha, along with Four Dogs denoting the Four Vedas. He was considered as the Guru of 'Ashtanga Yoga' or the Eight-folded Yoga comprising Yama

(Truthfulness and Morality), Niyama (Cleanliness and discipline), Asana (Right Posture), Pranayama (Control of Life Force), Pratyahara (Withdrawal of Senses from Wordly objects and desires), Dharana (Concentration), Dhyana (Meditation) and Samadhi (Alignment of Super Consciousness with Almighty). The main Principles of 'Dattatreya-following' are Self-Realisation and of the equation of Antaratma and Paramatma; inter-relation of God and of Beings by way of Creation; overcoming Ego by Yoga and Renunciation, and Gyana or Enlightenment and the inavitality of a Guru. Even from the childhood, Dattatreya was full of 'Vairagya' (Renunciation), and his followers and admirers were several. He always desired to have privacy, introspection and aloofness and shunned adulation, popularity and proximity. That was why he avoided company and preferred staying indoors. With a view to escape from the attention of Muni Kumars, he meditated on the banks of a Sarovar incognito in disguise for innumerable years. He was inside water practising 'Ahstanga Yoga' (Eight Limbed Yoga) and finally emerged with a façade of a being a drunkard, a debauch and a degraded person devoid of morals and social values. He displayed nudity with a youthful and coquettish woman, in obscene poses, while drinking and loose-mannered fashion. Despite these efforts of being corrupt, care-less and licentious, the followers of Dattatreya did not get deterred but made great efforts to get closer to him. King Kartaveeryarjuna, the thousand armed tyrant was a great devotee of Dattatreya. His might was such that when Ranasura of Ramayana fame confronted the former, Kartaveerya was visiting the Samudras and being busy did not have time to converse with Ravana and till the trip to the Seas was concluded shoved Ramana's ten heads under his thousand hands and freed his hold only after the Sea visits! But in course of time Kartaveeryarjuna became too arrogant and even killed Maharshi Jamadagni in the latter's Ashram and tried to forcibly take away Kama dhenu. Parasurama who was the father of the great Sage Jamadagni's death was avenged by killing the mighty Kartaveerya and even as Kamadhenu disappeared. Parasurama who not only killed Kaartaveerya but attacked the entire clan of Kshatriya kings who harrassed Brahmanas and Rishis. After so avenging his father's killing Parashurama, Sage Jamadagni came alive back to life due to his own karmaphala! It was at this juncture that Kartaveerya's son Arjun approached Dattaatreya seeking his blessings and Dattatreya as advised by Mahashri Garg to visit Sahyadri to seek Dattatreya's blessings to take over his dead father's throne. Mahatma Dattatreya hinted the prospective Prince Arjuna not to emulate the example of Kartaveerya to become arrogant and meet the fate of his father. Indra was defeated by Daityas headed by Kartaveerya and finally Vishnu's incarnation as Parashuraama had to kill the oversized Karaveerya to reassert the Supremacy of Dhama in the long run although there might be temporary setbacks and in the long run, Satyameva Jayate or the Truth would triumph on the long run. Thus indeed even as Kartaveerya who assumed too much of arrogance eventually although he was originally a follower of Dattatreya, had even killed Sage Jamadagni and received his due retribution of being killed by Parashurama. In fact, Deva Guru recalled that desired that even before the battle of Devas against with Kartaveerya, Indra should immediately worship Dattatreya and seek an audience with Dattatreya. Indra approached the latter but he said that he was not in a fit condition as he was drunk in the amorous and unclean company of a woman. Being aware of the misleading statement of Dattatreya, Indra recalled though late that just as the powerful and auspicious Sun rays did not become impure by touching either a chandala or a Brahmana, the holy union of Lakshmi and Vishnu could never ever be construed as unclean and unholy! Mahatma Dattatreya smiled since He was only testing Indra's sincerity. He then asked to challenge the most leading Daityas to a Battle in His presence at His Place; the Daityas assembled (into a trap) and asked to show up in the presence of Maha Lakshmi. The Daityas were mesmerised Devi Lakshmi's form and face and even forgetting that they were challenged to a fight, became extremely passionate and when she hinted that she would like to leave to

her abode, pushed aside her servants and lifted the 'palki' on their heads. Dattatreya once again smiled and told Indra and Devas that for sure the Daityas would be defeated now as they kept Lakshmi on their head indicating that she would leave them all now. He explained that Devi Lakshmi when falls on the feet of human beings blesses them with happy homes, falls on either of the thighs bestows clothes and jewellery, on secret place blesses with life-partners, on the lap gives children, on the heart fulfills all the desires, on the neck gives ornaments on the necks, beloved distant relations and good company of women; if Lakshmi falls on the face of human beings she approves attraction and brightness of the visage, accomplishments and a literary outlook. But if Lakshmi falls on one's head, then she is ready to leave the person concerned.) Thus, Dattatreya advised Devas as a guideline for all the times that they should take up arms and attack since his vision would further weaken the Demons; also, when the Demons have committed the sin of becoming highly passionate over another person's wife, their strength would get diluted. Devas attack over the Demons was readily successful and Indra regained his Throne in Swarga Loka. Sage Garg advised Prince Arjun, to pray to Dattatreya who gave the Prince considerable confidence and courage to face the institution of Kingship by following justice yet with 'dharma' and 'nyaaya'.

**14) Tri Paada Daana to Vamana- Charity of Three Feet only! :** As King Bali of Daityas took over the reins of Trilokas from Virochana the son of Prahlada and the great Grand father of Hiranyakashipu, Devas lost power in Swarga and the mighty Mayasura and Shambara flew the Flag of Vijayanti too. Yet, the Daityas were steeply engaged in Dharmik deeds, and they were guarding the Sky providing stability all-around: There was complete absence of sinners in the Kingdom and Dharma was predominate; Dharma was established on four feet except on one; all the Deputised Kings were performing Administration ideally and all the Four Varnaas of population were observing Dharma perfectly) It was at that opportune time that the Coronation of Bali Chakravarti took place amidst the chanting of Victory by all concerned. Devi Lakshmi appeared and congratulated at Bali's Elevation to Supremacy along with her 'Amsaas' like the Devis named Hreem, Kirti, Dyuti, Prabha, Dhruvi, Kshama, Bhuti, Ruddhi, Divya, Mahamati, Shruti, Smriti, Ida, Shanti, Pushti, Kriya, and also select Apsaraas. Meanwhile, Devataas were disillusioned at their discomfiture and the climax of Bali's high status especially because of Daitya King's unchallenged success owing to his Dharma Paalana and the lack of any record of Evil deeds by Daityas; they were also denied their shares of Yahna Phalaas. They approached their mother Aditi for solace and advice and in turn she reached her husband Kashyapa Muni. Kashyapa found the situation was delicate and even Brahma might find it difficult as strictly speaking the record of Daityas was above board! Brahma advised that the only way out would be that Tapasya and Aditi would perform strict Tapasya to Vishnu Deva and seek the most difficult boon of Vishnu taking birth as their son! The Couple reached the Banks of Kshira Samudra at a holy spot called Amrita, performed austere Tapasya and 'Kaamada Vrata' for thousand years by controlling their Indriyas, observing silence and Kashyapa chanted Veda Yukta Sukta called Parama Stuti. As both Kashyapa Muni and Devi Aditi made their Soul-full Prayers, the impossible Darshan of Bhagavan Vishnu appeared and granted the wish that he would indeed assume His Incarnation with a view to reinstate Indra and Devas to Swarga and Trilokas.

As Aditi got conceived and Bhagavan Vishnu agreed to do so, Prithvi got tremored, Mountains were shaken, and Sapta Samudras were agitated with wobbles of waves and there was strangeness all-around! Bali Chakravarti felt that there were considerable changes in the Nature as mountains were trembling and high Sea tides were on new high and more so Daityas were

experiencing paleness and loss of their normal instincts of courage, assertiveness and egoism. Bali approached his grand father Prahlada and asked for the causes of these omens and premonitions. Parama Bhakta Prahlada deeply meditated Bhagavan Srihari and visualised the latter in the Garbha of Devi Aditi and had fleeting scenes of Ashtaadasha Vasus, Ekadasha Rudras, Dwadasha Adityas, two Ashvini Kumaraas, Forty Nine Maruts, Sandhyas, Vishwa Devas, Gandharvas, Nagas, Rakshasaas, his Son Virochana, Bali Chakravarti, Jambha, Kujumbha, Narakasura, Baana, and several other Daityas, Pancha Bhutas, Seas, Mountains, Rivers, Satpa Dwipaas, Brahma, Shiva, Nava Grahas, Daksha and other Prajapatis, Sapta Rishis and so on. Prahlada gave a heavy exhalation and conveyed the details what all he visioned and said that the Greatest Narayana in would soon be descending on Earth in his incarnation as Vamana Deva! Bali could not comprehend the full import of what Prahlada underlined and expressed his surprise whether Vamana Deva could be ever comparable with the Senior most Rakshasaas like Viprachitta, Shibi, Sankha, Ayamshanku, Hayashira, Ashwa Shira, Bhangha kaara, Maha Hanu, Kakkuraaksha and Durjaya. As Bali talked in such thoughtless comparisons with Paramatma and some examples of Danavas however mighty they might be, Parhlada got highly infuriated and shouted at Bali that there could not be bigger immature fool and hollow minded; he said that Bali's evil frame of mind would certainly lead the entire Vamsha of Daityas to doom. Bali! I have not come across a King of this kind who is evil-minded and dull-witted that could blame the Devaadhi Deva, Maha Bhaga, Sarva Vyaapi Vaasudeva; the names of the Daityas that you have taken as the so-called Mighty as also of Brahma and Devas were created by that Paramatma; indeed with just one 'Amsha' of myriad of his Amshaas, he created the whole Charaacharaas and Samasta Vibhutis or Manifestations including you, me, Daityas, Parvataas, Vrikshaas, Rivers, Forests, Samudraas, Sapta Dwipas, and so on and He is Sarva-Vandya, Sarva-Vyapi, and Sarva-Vidita; would there be a Vivekaheen-Murkha-Durbuddhi like you who would pass judgments on Him! What-ever are the reasons due to which you are faulting your Guru/ your father, or his father who is me or the Parama Guru who is Paramatma might be best known to you! Your talking slightly against Narayana is by far the worst since it tantamounts to cutting my head and it is to set right those feelings of pride and egotism that I am giving you a 'Shaap' / Curse that soon you would be dislocated from your Kingdom, Aishwarya, and ego.

Chakravarti Bali was distraught and distressed at this most unfortunate happening of Prahlada's curse and was ashamed of himself for his rash, thoughtless and sinful belittling of Bhagavan's uniqueness which had understandably stirred up the anger of a legendary Bhakta of the unparalleled stature of Prahlada. He confessed that there was a total loss of his mental faculties when he conversed at that time due to superciliousness and over-enthusiasm of having defeated Devas which propelled his traits of arrogance; indeed his remarks had correctly hurt his grand father who was fully justified in giving him an irreparable curse but far worse than the curse, his behaviour which hurt elders, like Prahlada, who built a reputation of the family as Narayana Bhaktas, was sullied in the memory of future generations. This was humiliating to the Vamsha that he was squarely responsible! He begged of Prahlaada's forgiveness which he did not deserve and would feel repentant ever day and night. Prahlaada appreciated Bali's remorse and said that he was incensed up at that moment and the anger led him to obsession which lost his mental equilibrium that caused the pronouncement of the curse, for which he felt extremely sad. But a lesson was provided to Bali and fully converted him as a Parama Bhakta of Narayana. Mean while, Devi Aditi delivered a lovely male child in short stature when Nature assumed a blossomed freshness that was rare, the Gagana Mandala was clean without any trace of pollution and Vayu was pleasantly soft and nicely odoured quite unfamiliar in the human world. The proud

parents invited Brahma to perform Jaatakarma and Namakarana as **Vamana Murti**. As Bhagavan Hrishiksha was prayed to by Brahma, the former smiled and said that in the past Indra and Devas and Kashyapa Muni as also Devi Aditi paid their homages and recited Stotras to him and he assured that he would assume the incarnation of Vamana Murti; he further assured that he would have Indra and Devatas reinstated as Trilokaadhipatis soon. In course of time Brahma offered Krishna Mrigacharma to Bhagavan and Brihaspati performed Upanayana and Yagnopaveeta dharana; Marichi Maharshi gifted Palaasha danda, Visishtha gave kamandalu, Angira Muni gave a Silk Vastra, Pulaha Muni gave a mat as Aasana, and various other Munis taught the Vatu the purport of Omkaara, Vedas, Shastras, Sankhya Yoga, Darshana Yuktis etc. Having been trained in all these disciplines, Vamana Deva had one fine morning left for the Yagna Shaala of Bali Chakravarti as the latter was executing a Sacred Yagna while carrying his mat, danda /stick, chhatra / umbrella and kamandulu / water vessel. Danava Guru Shukracharya was aware that Vishnu Deva in the form of Vamana Murti was arriving at the Yagna and briefed Bali Chakravarti to be extremely careful as Vishnu was a brave and highly talented person to put words in the mouths of the opponents. The Guru reminded Chakravarti that the latter denied the age-old practice of rights to yagna's shares to Devataas and that Vamana Murti might as well ask for the revival of the practice but those shares were now enjoying by Danava Chiefs. Bali replied to Danava Guru that in case Vishnu in the incarnation of Vamana Murti came and requested for any thing then how could a King say 'no' to it! Bali told the Danava Guru: Brahmanaachaarya! How could I deny any body requesting me for a favour! And if that Supreme Deva asked me for a charity, then what else would be the alternative! While Parameswara received the fruits of Vrataas, Upavaasaas, and so on from one and all, and if that Parameswara himself asked a boon from me, could there be a greater fortune to me! When even an ordinary person approached me for a favour, then too that could not be denied by a King; then when Narayana himself asked for it, could such an opportunity presented itself, this chance could never indeed be missed. Even if there are difficulties in executing a charity, the value of charity would get multiplied and 'Veera purushaas' would never deter from performing the deed. Having said the above, Bali asked Shukraachaarya: *Yatagjnaatwaa Munisreshtha!Daanavighna karenamey, Naiva Bhavyam Jagannaatheey Govidey samupastitheey!* ( By understanding the above, Munisreshtha! Please do not create 'Daana Vighnaas' or hurdles in the execution of the Charity!).

As Vamana Deva arrived at the Yagna shaala, Bali welcomed him, offered 'Arghya', 'Aasana', Puja and offered him limitless gold, jewellery, elephants, horses, cows, women, clothes, bunches of villages or townships or whatever would be his wish! Vamana Deva replied smilingly: ***Mamagnisharanaarthaaya dehi Rajan Padatrayam, Suvarnagraamaratnaadi tadarthibhyah pradeeyataam/*** (Raja! Please provide to me three feet of land to enable me to set up an Agni-Shaala). Bali said that after all three feet would be nothing as he could ask for a lakh of feet which could be given away, but Vamana Deva replied that he was indeed satisfied with that much of Bhumi and if the King were to offer more he might as well provide to the other needy! Bali Chakravarti readily agreed not understanding the implication and as the deed of Daana was being executed and Vamana Deva extended his hand to the King and expanded his Vamana Rupa gradually immediately: Vamana Murti displayed his Virat Swarupa: Chandra and Surya were his two Eyes, Shy was his head, Prithvi his feet, Pishachaas were his foot-fingers, Gruhyakaas were his hand fingers, Vishwa Deva Ganaas were in his jaanus /knees, Sadhyas were his janghaas, Yakshaas were his nails, Apsarsaas were his palm lines, Nakshatras were his Eye sight, Surya kiranans were his hairs, Stars were his body hairs, Maharshiganaas were in the hair

roots, Vidishas were his hands, Dishaas were his ears, Ashwini Kumars were his faculty of hearing, Vayu was his nose, Chandra Deva was his joking faculty, Dharma Deva was his thinking capacity, Satya was his voice and Saraswati was his tongue, Deva Mata Aditi was his neck, Vidya was his valiyaas or long poles; Pushas were his eye brows, Swarga dwar was his anus, Vaishvanara his face, Prajapati his vrushanaas, Param Brahma was his heart, Kashyapa Muni was his Pumstwa, Vasu Devata was his back, Marutganaas were his Sandhis, Rudra was his Vakshasthala, Mahaarnavaa was his Dhairya, Gangharvas were in his stomach; Lakshmi, Medha, Dhruvi, Kaanti and all Vidyaas were in his 'Kati Pradesha'; the luster and radiance in the total Universe as also the Tapo teja or the power of meditation was the reflection of the magnificence of Natayana; Vedas and Sceiptures and the huge Yagnaas and the Sacred Deeds of the Virtuous like Maharshis and Brahmanas were all inside in his 'kukshi' or belly. On viewing the Paramatma's 'Virat Swarupa', the so called 'Mahaasuraas' referred to earlier in ignorance by Chakravarti Bali before Prahlada's curse to him got burnt off like flies before a gigantic out berak of Fire! Having thus occupied the Universe in totality including the sub-terrain Sapta Paatalaas, Vamana Deva stated that since Bali took the water in his hand and donated the THREE FEET of Land, and blessed him to be the King of the Sapta Paatalaas and granted him long life till the end of Manvantara of the on-going Vaisawata Manu. He also blessed Bali that all the 'Homa Phalas' at the time of Shraddhas to be performed even by Brahmanas, besides incomplete and defective Vratas, Agni Kaaryaas without ghee, and Kusha grass roots as also the daanas without detachment would belong to Bali and his followers.

Whosoever hears of this narration of Vamana Charitra and Mahatmya would have no 'Adhi-Vyadhis' or external and internal problems and be freed from sins; Brahmanas would attain Veda Prapti, Kshatriyas of Victories, Vaishyas of Dhana Samruddhi and Shudras enjoy happiness; As they read or hear of Prahlada-Bali Samvada or of Bali and Vishnu Charitra, one would aviod situations of Official hindrances and achieve the desired goals of life. (Vamana Purana)

**15) Tri-Puraasura Vadha:** As Skanda Deva killed Tarakasura, the three sons of the latter viz. Vidyunmaali, Kamalaaksha and Tarakaksha were united and performed relentless Tapasya to Brahma seeking invincibility. As Brahma clarified that none among the Beings were immortal, they scaled down their wishes to the following: they would build three flying 'Puraas' or Cities which could move about freely in the World and individually none of the Nagaris could ever be destroyed but only in a group simultaneously. Indeed this was a peculiar boon that was asked by the Danava brothers, but Brahma agreed all the same. The famed Daitya Builder Mayasura created three Nagaris, viz. a Golden one in Swarga Loka for Tarakaksha, a Silver Nagari for Kamalaksha in Antariksha and a Loha Nagari in Bhuloka for Vidyunmala; all secured fortresses which were impregnable even by Devas and other celestial Beings, let alone others like Manavas. The Nagaris were luxurious with all the comforts of Swarga with Kalpataru Gardens in place and Pancha Bhutas of Earth-Water-Illumination-Air and Sky under control; Gandharvas and Kinnaras were at service with sonorous music and song while Apsaras were made to dance at command. The Tripurasuras harassed Devaganas and threw them out of Swarga and their respective abodes. They approached Bhagavan Vishnu who created innumerable Shaktis but the army of the Asuras destroyed the Shaktis; Vishnu realised that not only the Tarakaaksha and brothers but all the follower Daityas had the unique feature of Maheswara Linga worship as per prescribed procedure and thus became difficult to control by the Vishnu Senas. Vishnu then created a Mayaawi Purusha who quietly entered the Tripuras and having impressed the Daityas with his knowledge of Shastras and Siddhis misled them successfully to neglect 'Shroutra Smartas' and Shiv Linga Puja. They also left the Varnashtam Dharmas, belittled women which caused Lakshmi to gradually desert them and relapsed to Adharma. That was the opportune time for Vishnu to approach Maha Deva and prayed to him. As Devas and Vishnu visioned 'Trishulapaani Shankar' relaxing with Devi Parvati and Mahatma Nandi, they saw that 'Bhuta bhavishya Swami' whose eyes were

red like 'Agni kundas' and physique was shimmering with thousand Suns with a pleasant countenance ornamented with a Bala Purna Chandra. Having pleased Parama Shiva thus, Devas explained the gravity and seriousness of the crisis created by the Tripura Daityas who not only unseated and tormented Devas and Celestial Entities but were also sending shock-waves all over the Universe, humiliating Sages, frightening women and children, making mass-scale carnage and blood bath of humanity and uprooting Dharma and age-old Values and Principles. Parameshwara infused confidence into the demoralised Devas and asked them to construct an exceptional chariot with unique specifications: Prithvi as the Ratha / Chariot, Meru and Mandara Mountains as axles, Surya and Chandra as Chakras made of gold and silver respectively, the Four Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Sama and Atharva acted as the horses; Shukra, Brihaspati, Budha, Mangal, and Shanaischara seated on the Ratha ready to charge; the famous serpents viz. Takshaka, Karkotaka, Dhanajaya and Padmadwaya acted as the strings which were tied to the horses; most poisonous snakes like Surasa, Devashuni, Sarama, Kadru, Vinata, Shuchi, Trusha, and Bubhuksha were used as arrows; Mrutyu, Brahmahatya, Gohatya, Balahatya and Prajaabhaya were loaded on the Chariot so that they get activated as maces; Omkara and Vashatkara were the symbols on the Ratha; Sinivali, Kuhu, Raaka and Anumati - the 'Adhishtana' / in charge Deities of Chaturdashi, Amavasya, Suddha Purnima, Pratipadika Purnima respectively were used as auxiliary strings to the horses; the dhanush made of six 'ritus' / seasons which is safeguarded by Devi Ambika herself never to be broken; the specific arrow with which to kill the Tripurasura was strengthened by Vishnu, Soma and Agni and its head propelled by Agni and Chandra by its rear and Vishnu Maya smeared all over; and the extreme poison of Nagaraja Vasuki was loaded to ensure stability and speed of the arrow; Vayu was made in charge of the high velocity of the Chariot and finally Brahma was the Charioteer and Sesha Naag was made in charge of the personal security of Brahma as also of the Chariot. Yama Raja with his buffalo, Kubera on his serpent, Indra on Iravata, Ganeswara by his Mushika Vahana, Karikeya on his Peacock, Nandeshwara with his Shula running behind and sides of the Ratha were in full preparedness. Maharshis Bhrgu, Bharadwaja, Vasishtha, Goutama, Kratu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Marichi, Atri, Angira, Parashara, and Agastya were there too at the kick-start of the Battle to recite Veda Vachanas and Shiv Stutis. The Pramatha ganas were ready to charge as the army against the opponents- all swarmed around the Rath. Meanwhile, Sage Narada reached the Tripuras and tried his best to mend his ways, give back Indrapuri to Devas and avoid the worst ever battle in which the indestructible Tripuras would be destroyed along with the Three Demons as Maha Deva himself was approaching these Places with full preparation. Instead of talking peace, the Demons alerted their vast armies, and prepared for turning their defensive positions to that of an offence. On the instruction of Shankara Deva, Indra took his enormous army and attacked Tripura. As the Deva Sena made a highly offensive assault in full force, what with the revenge and frustration experienced by them for long as they were out of power as also owing to the excellent backing of Maheswara, they seized the best part of Tripuras. While quite a few Danavas sought to escape for their lives through the exit gates of Tripuras, Pramatha ganas calculated that the enemies would try to sneak out at those points and butchered thousands of Danavas. The remaining Danavas inside the Trinagaris were utterly confused by contradictory shouts that Taraka died or Shiva was defeated. In that melee, a strong contingent of Danavas quickly regrouped their men and material to make offensive attacks under the leadership of Vidyunmali and Maya. Ganeswara divided Tripuras in three regions as Nandeswara was attacking Vudyunmali, while he was in position against Maya. Meanwhile, Vidyunmali threw a 'Parigha' on Nandi who was hurt and the enraged three 'Parshadaganas' named Ghantaakarna, Shankukarna and Mahakaal retaliated; they assumed the Forms of Ganeswara and assailed Vidyunmali by making the roars of lions. Even while the Parswaganas were about to leap on Vidyunmali, the hurt Nandikeswara hurled a Rudra Shakti on the demon who fell down like a mountain. There was utter silence among Danavas who were stunned and retreated. But, the highly cunning and crafty Mayasura chased the Ganas of Ganeswara to divert attention of his own men from the fallen Vidyunmali to the Ganesha ganas. Mayasura created rains of Agni, crocodiles, snakes, huge mountains, lions, tigers, trees, black deers, eight-legged 'Sharabhas' / a species of oversized deer, torrential rain and powerful sand storms. As Taraka came into the battle field, Devas too appeared in full force, including Yamaraja, Varuna, Bhaskara, Kartikeya heading a Deva Sena of a Crore, with Indra, Shanaischara, Chandra, and Rudras. The 'Maayavi' Mayaasura created several Wells full of herbal juices for invigoration and Danavas were in high spirits as

their body strength increased manifold. But Keshava took the form of 'Vrishabha' and drank up the juice along with Devas and dried up the wells and Devas occupied the Tripuras finally. Mayasura and other Daityas were forced to hide in the Sea. That was the decisive moment when there was an all-out battle on the seashores. Shankara divided the 'Tridevamaya' arrow into three parts and released it at the Pushya Yoga time when Tripuras were destroyed in one go. Devas then went ecstatic and the huge shouts of Victory to Maha Deva resounded across the Sky from where Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang hymns of praises, Apsaras danced and Maharshis recited Vedas and Shiva Stotras. Brahma praised Parama Shiva in a chorus too.[Source :Linga Purana]

**16) Tri Shakti:** Brahma, Vaishnavi, Rudrani: Lord Brahma led a delegation of Devas and reached Kailash when Rudra Deva and Devi were sharing a lighter moment. The reason of the visit was that a Demon named Andhaka defeated Devas badly and ousted them from Swargaloka. Brahma requested Narayan too to join at Kailasa to face the emergency. As the Trinity pondered over the crisis rather seriously and their vision crossed each others' eyes, there appeared a *Tri Shakti* whom the Trinity named as *Tri Kala* who would administer the entire Universe. Since She was the embodiment of Tri Gunas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas, She would be known by that name as *Tri Guna*; since Her physique and appearance alternate with the three colours of white, red and black, She would be called *Tri Varna* also. Among the Tri Shaktis so manifested, one Swarupa was extremely beautiful and benevolent as a personification of propitiousness to be engaged in the task of 'Brahma Srishti' as **Brahmi Devi**. Another characterization of Tri Shakti was endowed with the quality of an administrator in the most dignified and poised demeanor, signifying valour and Vishnu Maya was named **Vaishno Devi**. With a fearful visage and physique, ready to pounce on the wicked and the Evil, the third Image with a Trident seated on a tiger was called **Rudrani Devi** as 'Vishva Samharini' or the Destroyer of the Universe. Brahma Devi who was Svetha Varna or fair complexioned, lustrous and lotus eyed became a 'Yogini' with the permission of Brahma on 'Sveth Parvat' or the White Mountain. Eventually this Devi of Satva Guna became popular as Saraksharamayi, Ekakshara, Vageesha, Sarasvati, Vidyeshvari, Vedavati, Amritakshara, Jnanavidhi, Vibhavari Devi, Vishalini, and Soumya. Vaishno Devi who manifested from Vishnu too left with His consent for Mandarachal for Tapasya. Rudrani left for Neel Parvat or Blue Mountain to perform Tapasya after Rudra Deva's approval. The Tri Shaktis were thus ready for facing exigencies whenever they were recalled from the respective Lords such as when Sarasvati was asked to help in the task of Creation etc. More than the normal duties as were assigned to them, the Tri-Shakties were ever ready to supplement the efforts of their respective Lords as collective endeavors were called for, such as the destruction of mighty Demons as Andhaka. ( Source : Varaha Purana)

**17) Trishula-Sudarshana Chakra:** *Chakradhaari Shiva Shuladhaari Govinda/* This maxim declares the True Identity of Vishnu Maheshwara!

Maha Daitya Jalodbhava secured invincibility from Brahma consequent on the Daitya's tapas for thousands of years; neither the curses of Brahma nor of Agni/ Jala among Pancha Bhutas could withstand his might. The Daitya tormented the Beings of the Srishti, especially Maharshis and there was an over-all threat to their existence. Devas approached Vishnu Deva and the latter accompanied by Mahadeva attacked the Demon who hid himself in the deep waters of Madhumati. As both the Bhagavans arrived at the banks of the River, Jalodbhava disappeared and scaled the heights of Himalayas; having scented the presence of the Daitya on the Himalayan peaks, Vishnu and Shankara destroyed the Daitya instantly and thus materialised the Sacred River **Vitasta** in Kashmira Region and that was where Bhakta Prahlada worshipped: *Yatreshwara Devasarasya Vishnoh praadaadrathaanga pravara ayudham vai, Yena*

*prachiccheda Tridhaiva Shankaram Jignaasa maanostra balam Mahatma/* ( It was at the Bhrungatunga Tirtha that Bhagavan Shambhu gifted a Mahaastra Chakra to Vishnu and the latter assessed its supreme power slicing the Astra into three parts creating a Trishula or a Trident).

Pulastya Maharshi informed Narada about the background of Sudarshana Chakra and Trishula as follows: A Veda Vedanga Brahmana called Veetamanyu and his virtuous wife Aayetri gave birth to Upamanyu; the couple were so poor that Aatreyi administred ground rice powder and water as milk to the son for years together and as one day in another Brahmana's house Upamanyu tasted real milk as 'Ksheeraanna' and insisted in the house too to have it daily; the mother replied with tears in her eyes: *Umapatou Pashupatou Shuladhaarini Shankarey, Aprasannow Virupaashey krutam Ksheerena bhojanam/ Yadeecchasi payo bhoktum sadyah pushtikaram suta, Tad - aaraadhya Devesham Virupaaksham Trishulinam/ Tamsmitushtey Jagadvyaamni Sarvakalyani daayini, praaptemruta- paayityam kimpunah Ksheera bhojanam/*

(Son! Since Maha Deva Shankara who is also called Umapati, Pashupati, Shuladhari Shankara and Virupaksha was not kind to us, how could we get Ksheeraanna /real milk and rice? If you insist so, then you have to sincerely worship Virupaksha. My lad! If you could please him, then why only Ksheeraanna ; even Amrit would be available to all of us!). Then Upamanyu asked his mother as to who that Virupaksha was! She explained that there was a Mahasura King called Shridaama who created havoc to the World killing Munis, Brahmanas and even children; he defeated Devas and threw them out of Swargaloka, harassed Devi Lakshmi and even chased Vishnu to forcefully take away his Srivatsa Jewel. Vishnu prayed to Virupaksha and the latter gifted Sudarshana Chakra with which was like a fiery Kalachakra:

*Kaalachakra nibham chakram Shankaro Vishnumabraveet, Varaayudhoyam Devesha Sarvaayudha nibharhanah, Sudarshanou dwaadashaarah Pashnaabhi dhruyugo javee/ Aaraasamthaaswamee chaasya Devaa Maasaascha Raashayah, Sishtaanaam rakhsanaarthaaya samshिता rutavascha shat/ Agnih Somastatha Mitro Varunotha Shacheepatih, Indragnee chaapuatho vishvey Prajaapataya eva cha/ Hanumaamchaatha Balavaan Devo Dhanvantarastithaa, Tapaschaiva Tapasyascha Dweaadashoutey pratishthitaah, Chaitraadyaah Phaalgunaantascha Maasaastatra pratishthitaah/*

(The Sudarshana Chakra was like the frightening Kalachakra that Shankara gifted to Vishnu which had twelve compartments, six 'naabhis' or hinges, two Yugas of validity, top speed and instant smasher of any kind of 'Aaudhaas' of enemies. The Chakra was essentially to rescue virtuous Beings and in the compartments were situated Devatas, Rashis, Six Ritus or Seasons, Agni, Soma, Varuna, Mitra, Indra, Vishvadeva, Prajapati, the mighty Hanuman, Dhanvantari Deva, Tapasya and the Twelve Months from Chaitra to Phalguna). As Shankara described the Chakra as 'Amogha' or Singularly Effective, Vishnu liked to test its Uniqueness and Effectiveness and thus made a test-run on Maha Deva himself! Then Vishnu let the chakra aiming Maha Deva, who no doubt escaped but sliced off Visvesha, Yagnesha and Yagna yaajaka; as Vishnu was stunned that the sliced Shiva 'Amshas' or Alternate Shaktis viz. Hiranyaksha, Suvarnaaksha and Virupaksha since these Amshas of Mahadeva were only Kalyana Karini Shaktis or of auspicious features, but not of destroying features; therefore the Chakra was fundamentally of destruction mode and would not adversely affect Shiva's propitious charecteristics in any way! Having assured Vishnu thus, Mahadeva asked Janardana to act forthwith and destroy the Asura Sridaama and as he did so the entire Universe secured relief from. Also, Upamanyu took his mother's advice to worship in right earnest and Parama Shiva blessed the boy to drink not only Ksheeraanna but Elixir too! ( Source: Vamana Purana)

**18) Triveni Sangama:** On the conclusion of Maha Bharata Battle at Kurukshetra, Yudhishtara was crowned as the King, but a huge feeling of remorse haunted him as he was responsible for the killings of close relatives like grandfather-figures, Gurus, uncles, his own elder brother, first cousins and their sons apart from countless soldiers. He then expressed his wish to atone for the killings and requested Mahatma Markandeya to suggest the best way out perform 'Prayaschitta' or formal expiation as per Vedic course. Markandeya readily suggested Prayaga Tirtha Darshana for the purpose of penance and reparation. He stated that the Kshetra was protected against Evils by some sixty thousand Bows and Arrows in favour of Ganga and by Sabita Deva riding seven horses protecting River Yamuna while Devi Saraswati was flowing as 'Antarvaahini' or under ground-current at this famed Triveni Sangamam or the Confluence of the Three Rivers of Ganga-Yamuna-Saraswati. Markandeya also affirmed that Indra Deva along with Devas stayed at the Prayaga Kshetra and Vishnu himself protected the Prayaga Mandali. Further, Maha Deva himself secured Prayaga and the 'Vata Vriksha' or the Banyan Tree on its River-Banks. Indeed, a person who might have committed even a minute sin was not eligible to Moksha but let alone him or her committing high proportion of sins could be qualified for Salvation instantly: *Prayaagam smaranaa - masya Sarvamaayaati Sankshamam, Darshanaat tasya Tirthasya naama samkirtinaadapi, Mrittikaa labhanaad vaapi Narah Paapaat Pramuchyatey/* (Prayaga Smarana or the very thought of Prayaga would suffice to unleash sins; Prayaga Darshana, Naama Samkirtana, or even a touch of the dust of Prayaga would destroy serious sins. There are Five Kundaas in the Confluence of Prayaga and each one of them were excellent points of Purification. If by mischance, a human being were to suffer diseases, taken to the 'Triveni Sangama' and died there, then transportation of Sun-Radiant Like Vimanas to Parama Pada. Markandeya stated further that Pitru oriented or even Self-oriented deeds must be accompanied by charities in the intermediate place of Ganga and Yamuna and such charities would have multiplier effect. Charity of a Kapila Cow with golden or silver covered horns and with clothing all over its body would have the Punya of accomplishing Rudra loka for thousand years! Markandeya warned those reaching Prayaga by a Vrishabha as they would be liable to reach Narakas. But auspicious deeds like weddings in the intermediate region of Ganga and Yamuna Sangam would avoid Narakas and assure joy for long long time. A person performing Snaana and severe / difficult Vrataas at the Sangam would reap the benefit of Ashwamedha and Rajasuya Yagnaas. Along with the banks of Yamuna and Ganga are countless Tirthaas, each of which had a description to provide; for instance, Yamuna's southern side two Maha Nagas called Kambal and Ashwatara who were Parama Bhaktas of Maha Deva stayed and sacred snaanaas at that Tirtha would wash off Maha Paapas. On Ganga's eastern side there was a famed Sarva Saamudra Gahvara or Cave and those who could stay there for three days and nights observing Brahmacharya and mental control would secure Ashvamedha Yagna Punya. Another Tirtha named 'Hamsaprapatana' near Pratishtanapura and the belief was that Apsara Urvashi landed there by her Hamsa and bathing there would fetch Yagna Phala. Then there was a very Sacred Koti Tirtha where if a person died then he or she would spend Swarga Loka for a crore of years. Siddha Kshetra on Ganga banks near Prayaga is reputed as the one which provided salvation to human beings on Earth, to those in Pataala Lokas and also to Devas in Higher Lokas, thus the Tirtha was reputed as Tripathaga. Maharshi Markandeya emphasised Sangama Snaana in Magha Month for three days as that would secure passage to Higher Lokas. Another revelation was that those who could perform 'Karishagni Seva' or Tapasya within a circle of flames of dried cow-dung at the Sangama Place would preserve one's 'Sarvaangaas' in tact without illnesses through out their lives with physical fitness! Yet another Tirtha is on the northern side of River Yamuna called 'Runa Vimochana' or freedom from indebtedness. ( Source: Kurma Purana)

**19) Trividha Rishis:** Brahmarshi, Devarshi, Rajarshi; Sanaka-Sanandana-Sanaatana- Sanatkumaras are Brahmarshis; Devarshis include Vasishthaadi other Rishis, and Vishvamitra, Janakadis are Rajarshis.

**20) Tri Margas for Moksha:** Jnaana, Karma and Upasana

**21) Trividha Kankshaas** or three Natural Aspirations: Kanta, Kanaka and Keerti or Physical -Material-

Fame

**22) Tryagnis:** The fires are of Kama /Lust, Krodha or Anger, Kshudha or Hunger

**23) Trividha Snaan:** *Nityam naimittikam kaamyamiti karma tridhaa matam, Tividham taccha vakshyaami grihastyaa--vadharyataam/* ( There are three kinds of Snanas as explained by Veda Vyasa viz. Nitya Naimittika and Kaamyam for Grihasthas). Nitya Snaana is the prerequisite of Nitya Karmaacharana viz. Sandhya Vandana, Homa kriya and so on as prescribed. Similarly, the Madhyaahnika and Saayam kaala snanaas are a must to qualify the daily duties. Madhyaahnika snaana especially in running waters is done with kusha-tila-phalas while reciting appropriate mantras is beneficial. Ratri snanas are purpose-less. Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vaishyas need to recite mantras while women need not do so. Veda Vyasa explains in his Smriti: *Snaanambdaivataih kuryaat paavanaishchaapi manam, Mantraih praamstriraayamya Souraishchaarkam vilokayet/* ( Snaanas are better performed with appropriate marjana Mantras like : *Apohishthamayo bhuvah ta na oorje dadhatana, Maheranaaya chashase yo vah shivatamorasah, Tasya bhajayateha nah, Usateeriva Matarah, Tasmaa arangama vah yasya bhajayateha nah usateeriva Matarah, Tasmaa arangamaamavah yasya kshayaya jinvatam, Apojanyatah nah/ Om Bhurbhuva -ssuvah/*). Vyasa further explains: *Tikshthan sthitvaa tu Gayatreem tatgah swadhyayaaarambhet, Ruchaanyacha Yajushaam Saamnaayaamatharvanangirasaamapi/ Itahasapuraanaam vedopanishidaam Dwijah, Saktyaa samyak pattenithamalpa mantra madhyamalpamapamapyasamaanaat/* (While standing and reciting Gayatri, the dwija at the bath might commence Swadhyaya albeit in parts of the three Vedas!). There are also standard instructions like Grahana snaana, Pitru Karya snaana, Tirtha Snaana, Snaanas by the touch of Rajaswala, Shava yatra and Smashana visits and so on. Now, Agneya Purana classified Kaamyam Snaana, Malaapakarshana Snaana and Kriyaanga Snaana too among the Naimittika Snaan. Kaamyam Snaana in Holy River on Pushya Janma Nakshatra, besides Vyatipaata Vaidhruti Amavasya timings yields the benefit of satisfying seven generations of Pitru Devatas. Chaitra Bahula Chaturdashi Ganga Snana or near in any Sacred river where a Shiva Temple is situated would yield Kailasa Nivasa. Pushkarini Snaana on Kartika Pournami or Prayaga Snaana on Maagha Pournami would wash off all the Sins of the past. Hasta nakshatra yukta Jyeshtha Shuddha Dwadasi Ganga snaana too has similar phala of total sin destruction. Surya grahana on Maagha Shuddha Saptami snaana in the early morning yields Maha Phala. On Chaitra Shukla Ashtami snaana in running flow of any river if coincides with a Wednesday and Punarvasu would bestow Ashwamedha phala. Kartika snaanaas during the entire month to be followed by Japa- homa karyas with purity of heart and faith would destroy the long standing fund of sins for sure. Similarly snaanas during the months coinciding Tula-Makara-Mesha Rashis, daily pratih kala snanaas would yield similar results, especially observing Brahmacharya Vrata. Pratih snaanas during the four month period of Ashadha till Kartika coupled with Anna daana concluding Vishnu Vrata there- after should certainly bestow Vishnu Sayujya. Tila Snaana on any day yields offers fruitful results. Maagha snaanas in Punya Tirthas are highly fulfilling with desires as emphasized in Dharma Shastras and Puranas. Some do's and don'ts of Malaapakarsha Snaan are as follows: Abhyanga snaanas or oil baths are prohibited on Sundays as also meat eating on Tuesdays and Fridays, Stree sambhoga on wednesdays are prohibited; Jyotisha Shastra emphasizes that Sundays, Pournami-Amavasya-Chaturdashi-Ashtamis and on Solar Eclipse days, Taila Sparsha and oil baths be avoided unless such baths are tempered with scents or of cooked oils. Tila oil should be always avoided for oil baths.

**24) Chaturvidha Balaas:** The might of Baahu or Physical, the strength of Manas or Mind, Dhana or of Money Power and Bandhu or of strong hold of relatives constitute Chatur vidha balaas.

**25) Chaturvidha Purusharthas:** Human ambitions are essentially four viz. Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Moksha or Virtue- Material Contentment- Prosperous Living and Liberation

**26) Chatur Dhaamas:**Most hallowed places of Bharat are signified at Badari in Uttara, Dwaraka in the West, Jagannaath Puri in the East and Rameshwara in the extreme South.

**27) Chatur Maha Shati Peethas:** As a part of Markandeya Purana's Vidya Khanda, King Suratha prostrated before Maharshi Markandeya explained that in the entire Bhu Mandala spread over fifty crore yojanas, there indeed were sixty four thousand 'Maha Peethaas' ( Abodes) of Devi of which sixty Peethas were Superior; fifty of these were the selected ones but twenty four ones were further selected; among these closely selected Peethaas were eighteen in number but finally Three of the Outstanding Peethaas were **Kamaraja Peetha** which was also known as 'Vaakbhava Kutaa' or of Vaakbhava Beeja – *Aim*, which was worshipped by Bhagavan Hayagriva; the second one was called **Jaalandhara Peetha** which was Madhya Kutaa or of Manmadha Beeja-*Kleem*, which was worshipped by Bhrigu Maharshi; this was called as 'Jwala Mukhi Kshetra' [ some call it as the Jwala Mukhi Temple in the Area of Mannur near Ongole in Andhra Pradesh and some others opine that this is in Assam as the Temple of the same name]; the third one was called **Oद्याना Peetha** known as the Shakti Kutaa of the Shakti Beeja-*Souh*, which was worshipped by Veda Vyasa Maharshi in Kamarupa Region [stated to be in Assam]. Of these Three Outstanding Peethaas called the Tri Peethas, the Kamaraja Peetha is stated to be in **Kanchipura** in Dakshina Bharat situated near the Sea towards East and this Samudra was blessed that there were no restrictions of bathing in it irrespective of day and night and would be eligible for 'Vishnu Pada Prapti'. To the Nirruti ( South West) of the Eastern Sea within a sixty yojana distance was a Sacred River called River *Dakshimna Pinakini* ; the Shiva Dhanush or Shiva's Bow which was lying on Bhumi (Ground) was lifted by Bhrigu Maharshi and as he lifted it up there sprang a River named by the Maharshi as Pinakini and blessed the River that whosoever bathed in it would be freed from all his/her sins and would attain Vishnu Loka. To the Vayavya (North West) of the Eastern Sea was situated within a seven Yojana distance, a Sanctified *Shilaahrada* or a Rocky Water Body where Lord Hanuman washed 'Sanjeevini Oushadhi'(Indigenous Medicine) and enabled Lord Lakshmana to get revived in the latter's battle with Indrajit the son of the Ramayana Epic's King Ravana; this Tirtha was blessed to any person bathing in the Holy Water would live long and then achieve Vishnu Loka. To the Ishana (North East) of the Eastern Side of the Shilaahrada was situated *Swami Pushkarini Tirtha* which indeed was River Viraja; in the days of yore Bhagavan Narayana desired to wed Padmavati and on assuming the Form of a Siddha Muni directed each of his disciples to bring in the waters of various Tirthas which was basically converted as Viraja River, eventually named as Swami Pushkarinki; those who would bathe in this consecrated Tirtha would enjoy fulfillment of life.(Source: Kamakshi Vilasa, Markandeya Purana)

**28) Chaturvidha Varnas:** Four specialised Castes of the Hindu Belief are of Four Principal Orientation viz.: Brahmanas to perform Daana (Charity), Adhyayana (Learning), Adhyapana (Teaching) and Yajna; in addition Kshatriyas are to ensure the security of the Society internally and externally, and be responsible for Peace, Finances and Administration. Vaishyas have to duties of trade, commerce, agriculture, and cattle, in addition to daan, adhyayan and yagnas. Others are responsible to assist in the services of other communities , especially to soldiers, cattle care and retailing.

Mentioning the major Principles of Righteous Living, Veda Vyasa described **Varnaashram Dharmas** as follows: About **Brahmanas**: *Dayaadaana tapo Deva Yagna Swaadhaaya tatparaihi, Nityodaki bhavedydwipraha kuryaacchaagni parigraham/* Brahmanas are required to practise Daana, Daya, Tapas, Deva-Pitru Yagnas, Swaadhyaya; they should be ‘Nityodakis’ or undaunted by Snaanas irrespective of seasons and ‘Agnopaasakas’ or engaged in the practice of Agni Karyaas. They might perform Yagnas on behalf of others also to eke their livelihood. They should teach Vedas to sishyas / students and could accept ‘Daana Pratigraha’ as a part of their ‘Shat Karmas’ as prescribed. *Sarvalokahitam-kuryaanaahitam-kasyachid-Dwijaah, MaitriSamasta-tatveshu Brahmannyoshta mamam dhanam/* (Brahmanas are required to work for the general welfare and well being of the Society as a totality and indeed this should be the basic Dharma of any Brahmana.) **Kshatriyas**: This class is to defend and administer the Society, promote its interests, facilitate Yagnas and the Virtuous Tasks; punish the Evil interests and ensure peace and prosperity. **Vaishyas**: This class has to perform Pashu paalana, Vaanijya, Krishi / Vyavasaaya or farming; equally importantly Vaishyas have to perform certain duties of Yadhyana, Yagna, Daana, Dharma, Nitya Naimittika Karmas, Anushthaana, Brahmana Poshana and Kraya Vikraya. **Other classes** are expected to serve the earlier Varnaas in the execution of their respective duties and at the same time observe Sarva Bhuta Daya, politeness, diligence, truthfulness, patience, capacity to withstand the vagaries of seasons, friendliness and equanimity. Veda Vyasa also mentioned ‘Aapaddharmaas’ of Brahmanas rendering Kshatriya Dharmas, Kshatriyas assuming the duties of Vaishyas and so on. [Maha Bhagavata Purana provided escape clauses in the context of Varnaashrama Dharma: *Yasya yallakshanam drusyata tat teniva vinirdisat/* In other words: the aspects of aptitude and practice may be endorsed; as such the Principles are of general regulative nature while in practice, the updated considerations of ‘Desha-Kaala-Maana Paristhithis’ would indeed prevail]. Referring to **Varna Sankarana** or slippages of VarnaDharma, Veda Vyasa quoted Shiva: *BrahmanyamDevi dushpraaptam Visargaadbrahmanam Shubhey, Kshatriyo Vaishya Shudroavaa Nisargaaditimaymatih Karmanaadushkryuteyneh Sthanaadrushyatisadwijah, Shreshtham Varnamanupraapyata smaadaakshipyete punah/ Sthito Brahmamdharmerna Brahmanyamupajeevati, Kshatriyo vaadha Vaishyovaa Brahma bhuyam sa gacchati/Yasya Vipratwamutsrujya Kshatra dharmannishavatey, Brahmanyatsa pari bhrashtah Kshatra yonau Prajaayatey/* (Devi! Brahmanatwa is not easy to attain and it was my arrangement to let human beings be created as per their ‘Swabhavaas’ or characteristics. But some Brahmanas leave their natural instincts and slip down in their actions; they tend to adopt Kshatriya Dharma and thus get born as Kshatriyas); in the same manner, Vaishyas also slip down as Shudras. *Yastu Shudraha swadharmena Jnaanaa Vijnaana vaancchuchih, Dharmajno Dharma niratah sadharma phalamasnutey/* (Shudra might be as a Shudra himself adopt the Dharma of Brahmana and pursue Jnaana-Vijaana- Vidhana then he would get Brahmatwa Siddhi) and pursue Jnaana-Vijaana- Vidhana then he would get Brahmatwa Siddhi). Brahma’s decision as per Brahma-Vaakya or Veda pramana is that Brahmanas ought not to consume Ugraanna, Ganaanna, Shraaddhaanna and Shudraanna and if a Brahmana while dying had that kind of Anna in his Jathara / belly would be destined to be reborn as a Shudra; conversely, a Shudra who attained Brahmanatwa in his ongoing life had the type of Brahmana Bhojana as his jatharaagni would be reborn as a Brahmana and that would be Mahadeva’s dispensation: *Yasyaannaavaseshena jathareymriyatey Dwijah, Taam Taam yonim vrajedvipro yasyaannamupajeevati!* (Whatever may be the Varna in which a person dies with that kind of Jatharaagni has in his /her belly, that person would be reborn with the typical characteristics of that Varna!). The reported view that Parama Shiva expressed-as conveyed by Veda Vyasa was: *Na yonirnaapi samskaaro na Shrutirnacha santatih,*

***Kaaranaani Dwijasttvasya vrutthamevatu vidheeyatey/*** (It is not by birth, upbringing, knowledge of Vedas and by the Offspring that a person possesses, but Brahmanatwa is a decisive factor merely on one's own behavior, conduct and actions)! (Source: Brahma Purana)

**29) Chaturashramas:** Brahmacharya- Grihastha-Vanaprastha- Sanyasa. A Brahmachari moves to his Guru's residence and follows a disciplined routine like 'Swadhyaya' (Study the self), 'Agni Susrusha', 'Snaana', 'Bhikshatana' (Soliciting food grains by moving around), assisting Guru in the tasks assigned, learning from him, and after achieving the stage of Perfection, for seeking the permission of the Guru entering 'Grihastashram' through Vedic Wedding, earning by one's own earning capacity and fortune, look after wife and children, parents, other dependents, destitutes, animals, birds etc; perform daily rituals of Pancha Yagnas Viz. Deva Yagna (Worship of 'Ishta Devata' or Deity of choice); Brahma Yagna (Study of Vedas, Scriptures and religious books to enhance Divine Knowledge); Pitra Yagna (Contemplating of the Teachings of Fore-fathers, Family Gurus, Sages and well-wishers to preserve family traditions); Bhuta Yagna (Extending help and sympathy to the needy, including animals and other species); and Nara Yagna (respect to elders, ladies, and co-human beings to maintain social and cultural ties). The Grihastis (House Holders) must also give away charities according to one's ability and aptitude. He should also satisfy Athithis (Guests), relatives and servants, again as per maximum possibility. In fact Athithi Yagna is an important off-shoot of Nara Yagna, as turning away Atithis who turn up unannounced need to be fully cared for, since their curses take away a good stock of the 'Punya' and more over the sins of Atithis are passed on to the hosts! Thus after the daily Yagnas are executed earnestly, the Grihastis redeem their debts and augment the stock of their virtues. Thereafter the Grihasti (House-holder) gets old and retires from active life and would enter Vanaprastha Ashram by ensuring upkeep of health and worship to Almighty, as a stepping stone to the next Ashram of Sanyasa (Renunciation).

**30) Chaturvidha Paashas :** or human bindings are four viz. Asha-Moha-Maya-Karma viz. Possessiveness-Infatuation-Make Belief-Excessive Involvement

**31) Chaturvidha Upaayaas:** or Means to an End viz. Saama-Daana-Bheda-Danda or Counselling-tempting by material benefits, divide and rule and final recourse is to punish

**32) Chaturvidha Veda Mahilas / Vedic Seeker Strees of fame:** Ghosha, Lopamudra, Maitreyi, Gargi: **Ghosha** was the grand daughter of Dirgha Tama and Devi Pakshivat, both being the worshippers of Ashvini Devatas or the Celestial Physicians; Ghosha who remained a spinster as he had leprosy too worshipped the twin Ashwinis and authored Hymns of Praise with the desire of curing her disease and bestowing conjugal happiness and excelled herself as a Great Seeker; **Lopamudra** was the wife of Agastya Muni who originally created her by his Mantra Siddhi and gave away as the daughter of the King of Vidarbha; she attained extraordinary knowledge of Rig Veda and entered into enquiries with the Muni and finally the latter was so impressed and accepted as his life partner with the distinction of scripting Hymns that defined the rights and duties of men and women as equal partners of family life; **Maitreyi** was the wife of Yagyavalkya who also had another wife named Katyayani a pious woman but Maitreyi had the unique distinction of Rig Veda dedicating some ten stanzas accredited to her fund of knowledge and acquired the epithet of being a Brahma Vaadini which enhanced the husband's erudition; once when Yagyavalkya decided to renounce his Ashram into Sanyasa, Katyayani opted for wealth but Maitreyi opted for wealth and Immortality and the latter secured the same; **Gargi** had the distinction of dominating a Vidvat Sabha at a Brahma Yagnya performed by Videha the Formless King Janaka the

Rajarshi and embarrassed Yagnyavalya Muni with confusing queries about Amta and Paramatma such as: 'where is the layer above the Sky and below the Earth stated in Scriptures as the symbol of the Past-Present and Future situated?'

**33) Chaturvidha Strees** or four kinds of females: Padmini-Hamsini- Shankhini-Chittani/ one track minded.

**34) Chaturmurtis:** or the Four Forms described as Virat Swarupa-Sutraatma-Avyakrata-Turiya

**35) Chatur Vyuhaas:** viz. Vaasudeva-Sankarshana-Pradyumna-Aniruddha; also explained as Sharira Purusha, Chhandasa Purusha- Veda Purusha and Maha Purusha.

**36) Chatur baahu:** Bhagavan in human form originally had four hands, but at the time of birth of Krishna, Devaki requested the Lord to assume only two hands lest Kamsa might locate the child easily in the latter's search on door to door basis as alerted by Akasha Vani at the birth of the Eighth Child;

**37) Chatur gati:** Bhagavan established Chatur Varnas, Chatur Dashas of Baalya-Koumaara-Youvana-Varthakyas as also Chatur Yogaavasthas or Yoga Stages viz. Indrapada-Brahma pada-Kaivalya-Moksha.

**38) Chaturatma :** He is stated to possess four types of Antahkarana or Inner Consciousness viz. Manas-Buddhi-Ahamkara- Chitta; Chatur Bhavah or Four Aspirations of Life viz. Dharma-Artha-Kaama-Moksha;

**39) Chaturvedavit:** or Mastery of Chatur Vedas as He was the Originator of Vedas; Ekapaad or He fills in the Universe with just one foot; Samaavartah or He alone rotates the Wheel of Samaasra; Anivrittatma or Bhagavan is Static and Unmoving but the Universe rotates around him.

**40) Chaturvidha Jeeva / Vaishvanara Sthiti:** Mandukyopanishad elaborates four states of Prototype Human existence viz. Jaagrita-Swapna-Supta-Turiya: *Jaagrita sthaano bahisprajnah saptaanga ekovimshati mukhah sthula bhug Vaishvaanarah prathama paadah/* ((The first quarter is of Vaishvaanara whose sphere of activity is in the *Jaagarita sthaana* or the State of Wakefulness. He enjoys the *Bahirprajna* or the awareness of the happenings around in relation to the objects on the open Society as he is equipped with *saptaangas* or seven limbs to see, hear, smell and breathe, move about, feel, generate and clear out and above all think. Chhandogya Upanishad vide V.xviii.2 explains about the consciousness of the objects outside as indeed that of an imagery of Agnihotra or Vaishvanara Sacrifice as in the case of Vaishvanara Self: 'Heaven as head, Surya as the eyes, Air as Praana, Sky as the middle portion of the body, water as the bladder, Earth as the two feet, sacrificial altar as the chest, kusha grass as his hair; Garhapatyagni as his heart; Aavaahaarya Pachana Agni as the mind, and Aavavaneeya Agni or that into food as oblation as his mouth. Thus He the Viashvanara Self is possessed of *Saptaangas*. Now, He is also possessive of *ekonavimshati mukhah* or nineteen mouths-viz. 'pancha jnanendriyas' or five senses of perception and 'pancha karmendriyas' or five organs of action, besides 'pancha praanas' of 'praana-apaana-udaana-vyaana-samaana' as also the mind again comprising the faculty of thinking- intellect-ego and wisdom or what one calls as judgment. Thus Viashvanara is known as 'Vishva' or the enjoyer of what all the Universe is capable of offering by way of pleasures and experiences and 'Nara' or the leader of the organs and mind backed up by the Vital Forces! Now the Self Consciousness, or the Composite Self in short, is the Virat Svarupa or the composite form of all the gross bodies and the Unique Symbol of what all Universe is made of-maintained by- and -periodically destroyed too , giving way to another cycle

of the Time capsule. Indeed the Virat Svarupa is a designation of self manifestation and the self-prescribed, even as the Supreme remains yet unknown! *Svapna sthaanontah prajnah saptaanga ekonavimshati mukhah pravivikta bhuk taijasa dviteeya paadah/* ('Taijasa' is the second quarter and its sphere of activity is the dream state or sub-consciousness. Its consciousness is in-rooted or inward bound and looking within; it is possessed of seven body limbs and nineteen mouths, and is capable of experiencing the joy of subtle objects. This Taijasa which is essentially stationed in 'svapna sthaana' is no doubt active otherwise too but since there are direct means of awareness by way of mental vibrations, it is dormant excepting in the dream stage when it gets activated. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad aptly explains vide IV.iii.9 : An individual possesses two places of stay viz. his present birth and the next birth, while there is a dream stage which is an interval of the two. Now, over and above the waking and dream states there are two worlds between which the individual-self bears resemblance to knowledge or awareness in the unbroken series of deaths and births. In the waking state the individual self gets mixed up with the purpose of body organs and their functions, awareness or intelligence, the mind and thoughts and the extraneous influences as also the action-reaction syndrome. But in the dream stage the organs and senses remain inoperative and the self gets disintegrated except with the mind. Actual sufferings and of joys are experienced in reality of the wakeful state while in the dream state such experiences are merely imagined due to the activity of mind. During the sleep, the Self takes along the material of the everhappening experiences of the world and tears himself apart to build his own world of 'so called' reality since existence itself is unreal. One might however wonder after all the sense objects are experienced in dreams just as in the case of waking state then how could one deduce that the organs do not function too! In the next stanza the reply is given: In the dream stage, the individual self creates his own world, puts his body aside and creates himself with chariots, horses, highways for the chariots. In actuality, he might not have pleasures, enjoyments, fame and name, material prosperity, swimming pools, tanks and rivers or whatever unfulfilled desires; contrarily at the same time, he might imagine fears and failures, defeats and even deaths. After all, the individual is the agent of making unreal things real; his wishes as horses and apprehensions as possibilities. It is through the light of the Self that he sits, moves about, works and returns. The Pure Intelligence termed as the light of the Self would thus illuminate that body and its organs through the mind and allows the acts to function accordingly as per the latter's dictates, since the Self is but an Agent! Thus returning to the concept of 'Taijasa', the mind assumes *Antah prajna* or sub-consciousness becoming aware of the internal objects and these appear as real.) *Yatra supto na kam chana kaamam kaamayate na kam chana svapnam pashyati tat sushuptam, sushupta sthaana ekeebhutah prajnaa ghana evaanandamayo hi ananda bhuk chetho mukhah prajnaa ghana evaanadamayo hi ananda bhuk chetho mukhah prajnah triteeya paadah/* (The state of 'Sushupti' is of dense and deep sleep as differentiated from mere slumber in a state that is neither normal nor of dreams, desires, fears, feelings. This is the fulfilled state of 'prajna' being the third sphere of the Self when awareness is overpowered and unable to differentiate things, happenings and 'realities'. In this dreamless sleep, the person concerned becomes undivided as of a *Prajnaana ghana* or of an undifferentiated mass of over all consciousness and as *-ekeebhutah* -since he is the specific host of duality as of the states of waking, dream, and other states of mental vibrations. This state verges on being *ananda bhuk* or of bliss. In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad vide IV.iii.32, Maharshi Yajnyavalkya explains to Emperor Janaka: 'That person becomes transparent like the flow of water as the Seeker has no duality what so ever. There is indeed no witness but a single witness of the Self becoming the Supreme being free from the limiting attachments or appendages of body, organs, and senses that is Braman Itself without a second! That is its highest accomplishment, this is the Supreme Bliss! Indeed, just one particle of that Bliss keeps the

Universe ticking! Thus having achieved the outstanding bliss, the person in 'sushupta' state becomes *cheto mukha* experiencing the experimental and experiential status even during 'prajnatva' or at the two way door of consciousness and deep sleep.) *Esha sarveshvarah esha sarvajnaah, eshontaryaami, esha yonih sarvasya prabhavaapyayau hi bhutaanaam*/( Most certainly, this Prajnatva even in normalcy is embedded in the Experiencer of Sushupti as he is now called *Sarveswara* or the Unique Lord of all. He is then the Supreme Brahman Himself! He is the Omni -scient, Omni present and Omni potent of all as the Creator-Sustainer-Destroyer of the Universe. Chhandogya Upanishad vide VI.vii-1&2 in reference to the conversation of Uddalaka Aaruni teaches his son Svetaketu: the latter should learn from him about deep sleep; he would then be considered that his mind entered his individual consciousness or Soul as though the person entered into a mirror in the form of a reflection, or like the reflection of Sun in water. It is in that state, his individual self is identical with his mind and the thought process gets adjusted to varying situations, besides all his actions like hearing, seeing, talking, running, enjoying or lamenting, singing, crying, becoming jealous or liberal etc. are all enacted as per the dictates of his dreams. In that dream situation, the mind flies in various directions as though a bird or even a kite is tied to a string which indeed is like the Praana the vital force! Mind is what surpasses the Praana but is deeply rooted into it! Having thus explained, the Prajna Svarupa is manifested as the *Antaryaami, Yonih, Sarvasya, Prabhava-apyayau bhutaanaam* or as the Inner Controller and Regulator, the Singular Source of Creation and Dissolution)

**41) Chatur Vedas:** Originally there was only one Unique Veda from the face of Lord Brahma but Vyasa Maharshi felt that the Single Veda covering all the aspects of Existence would be difficult to absorb by the successive generations and hence facilitated the division into Chatur Vedas viz. Rik-Yajur-Saama-Atharvana. Vedas are the beacon lights to search the ways and means to achieve the 'Purusharthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The four Vedas viz. Rig, Yajur, Saama and Atharva Vedas put together are stated to total one lakh Mantras. Rigveda contains two distinct 'Shaakhaas' or branches, viz. 'Sankhyayana' and 'Ashvala -ayana' and together contains one thousand Mantras, while Rigvediya Brahmana Bhaga contains two thousand Mantras. Maharshis like Shri Krishna Dwaipayana took Rigveda as 'Pramana' (Standard) Veda. Yajur Veda contains nineteen thousand Mantras. Of these, the Brahmana Grandhas have one thousand Mantras and the Shaakhas have one thousand six hundred and eight Mantras. In Yajurveda the main Shaakhaas are 'Kanvi', 'Maadhyanandini', 'Kathi', 'Maadhy Kathi', 'Maitraayani', 'Taittireeya' and 'Vaishampaaniya'. Saama Veda has two main Shakhas viz. 'Kouthuma' and 'Aatharvaayani' or Raamaayaniya' and these contain 'Veda', 'Aaranyaka', 'Uktha' and 'Vuuh' 'Gaanaas' or Verses. Saama Veda has nine thousand four hundred twenty five Mantras-all stated to be related to Brahma. Atharva Veda has Rishi-oriented Shaakhaas like Sumantu, Jaajali, Shlokaayani, Shounaka, Pippalaad and Munjakesha. These contain sixteen thousand Mantras and hundred 'Upanishads'. The Shaakha differentiation of Vedas and of Itihaasaas and Puraanas was stated to have been done by Vishnu Himself and were of Vishnu Swarupa. Vyaasa preached Puranas to Lomaharshana and to Suta by way of 'Purana Pravachana'. The main 'Sishyas' of Vyasa were Sumati, Agnivarcha, Shimshapaayan, Kritavrata and Saavarni. Shimshapaayan and others were engaged in constructing 'Samhitaas'. (Source: Agni Purana) Vishnu Purana explains in detail about Veda Vriksha, Veda Vyaasas, Veda vibhajana, Vedangas and Purana, Vidyas. Maharshi Parashara presented an analysis of Vedas to Maitreya Maha Muni as to how various Veda Vyaasas of different Yugas attempted divisions of Vedas. He compared Vedas as a Maha Vriksha comprising Veda Shaakhaas (Branches) in thousands and it would be impossible to declare classifications as they vary by Yugas, Times and Situations. Even in

Dwapara Yuga there were variations as noticed in different Manvantaras. But one fact appeared to be clear that Bhagavan Vishnu created Veda Vyasaas of his own 'Amsha' or Alternatives who kept in view the contexts and exigencies of Loka Kalyana made the best possible variations from the Single Veda now in Four 'Shakhaas'. In the evolution of the twenty eight Dwapara Yugas, as many Vyasaas emerged from the positions of Brahma, Prajapati, Shukracharya, Brihaspati, Surya, Mrityu, Indra, Vasishtha, Sarasvata, Tridhama, Trishikha, Bharadwaja, Antariksha, Varni, Traiyaruna, Dhananjaya, Kratigjna, Jaya, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Haryatma, Vaajashravaa Muni, Somavamsha's Trina Bindu, Riksha, / Valmiki, Shakti, Jatukarna and the latest Krishna Dwaipayana (the son of Maharshi Parashara). The Maharshi stated that after his son Krishna Dwaipayana, the next Vyasa would be Ashwatthaama. Having prefaced thus about the Evolution of Veda Vyasaas, Parasara Maharshi defined and conceptualised the 'Avinaashi Ekaakshara Mantra' O Mas Brahma. This Pranava Brahma represents Bhuloka-Bhuvarka-Swarloka; that Pranava Brahma also represents Ruk-Yajur- Saama and Atharvana Shakhas of the Paramaika Veda Vriksha. **Rig Veda Shakha:** As prompted by Lord Brahma, Mahatma Krishna Dwaipaayana Vyasa took the assistance of four of his disciples to fully assimilate the Totality of the Single Veda and entrusted the task to Maha Munis viz. Paila in regard to Rig Veda, Vaishampayana to Yajur Veda, Jaimini to Saama Veda and Sumantu to Atharva Veda; besides Vyasa entrusted the task of Itihasas and Puranas to Maha Muni Lomaharshana. In the days of yore, there was only Yajur Veda and that was divided as four Vedas on the basis of 'Yagna-anushthana Vyavasta' or the Procedures of Performing Yagnas and the Chyatur hotra Vidhi was as follows: Yajur Veda Vidhi by Adhvaryu, Ruk Veda Vidhi by Hota, Sama Veda Vidhi by Udgata and Atharva Veda Karma by Brahma. Subsequently, Vyasa did the editing of Ruk and Yajur Vedas and part-scripting of Sama Veda; through Atharva Veda, Vyasa then established the Raja Karma and Brahma Karma. Thus Vyasa had done the distribution of the Chatur Vedas in the form of Four Veda Vrikshas from the Maha Veda Vriksha. As regards the Rig Veda Vriksha, Maharshi Paila divided this Veda into two Shaakhaas and made his Sishyas Indraprimiti and Bashkala responsible to read them. Bashkala made further division into four Upa Shakhaas which in turn were subdivided among four further Sishyas viz. Bodhya, Agni maadhak, Yajnyavalkya and Parashara (ie the present Purana Karta of Vishnu Purana). Further on, Indraprimiti taught his son Manduka Muni. In this Parampara (link) of Sishya-Prasishyaas, Shakalya Veda Mitra scripted Samhitaas or Annotations and sub divided the same among five further sub-branches and taught these to Mudgala, Gomukha, Vaatsya and Shaaliya. Yet another of his pupils called Shakapurna prepared three Veda Samhitas and a fourth Grandha on 'Nirukta'. And thus the Sishyas carried on the Samhitas further. **Yajur Veda Shakha:** Maharshi Vaishampayana who was entrusted Yajur Veda by Veda Vyasa converted the Shakha into a Tree which got twenty seven Shakhas. One of the most intelligent Sishyas of the Maharshi was called Yagnavalkya. Once the Guru could not reach a Meet of all the co-Students at an appointed time and date failing which the punishment was to be Brahma hatya pataka; the Guru and requested his Sishyas to perform a Vrata as an atonement. But the egoistic Yagnavalkya boasted that he alone was enough to perform the Vrata and the enraged Vaishampayana cursed Yagnavalkya and asked him to vomit whatever was learnt by him since he talked as though he was Supreme and others were useless! Yagnavalkya apologised no doubt but Guru did not relent; although the former said that he himself could do the Vrata out of veneration and devotion to his Guru but did not out of arrogance nor out of spite for his co-students! Any way, Yagnavalkya pulled out Yajurveda in the form of a blood-stained Murti and left the Guru. The Sishyas consumed the remains of what Yagnavalkya vomitted by assuming the forms of 'Tithiris' or partridges and hence that part of Veda is called Tithiriya! Yagnavalkya then extolled Surya Deva stating: *Namassavitrey dwaaraaya Mukteyramita tejasey, Rugyajussaama bhutaaya Trayee dhaamney cha tey Namah/---* and as the latter

appeared before the Muni in the form of an 'Ashvya' horse and bestowed to him the Yajur Veda in Vajapa / form thus called Vajapa Yajur Veda, which even Vaishampayana was not conversant with!(*Yaagnyavalkyastadaa praaha pranipaty Divaakaram, Yajumshi taani mey dehi yaani santi na mey Gurou!*) The Vaaja Shrutis that Kanva and other Maharshis realised were of as many as fifteen Shaakhaas which indeed were of Yagna-valkya's own 'Pravritti' or distinction. **Saama Veda Shaakha:** Jaimini's son Sumantu and his son Sukarma dealt with one each of the branches of Sama Veda. Then Sukarma made thousand sub branches of Sama Veda and taught some to KausalyaHiranya Nabha and the rest to another Sishya named Paushpanji. Hiryanabha had five hundred Sishyas and they learnt Udeechya Saamaga. Hiranya naabha also propagated Praachya Saamaga. Paushpanji had four main Sishyas viz. Lokaakshi, Naudhami, Kakshivaan and Laangali and these and their next generations popularised their own Samhitas. Hiryanabha's yet another disciple Maha Muni Kriti and his pupils taught twenty four Samhitaas further. **Adharva Veda Shaakha:** Sumantu Muni taught Atharva Veda to his pupil Kabandha and the latter taught one branch of Atharva Veda to each to Deva darsha and Patthya. Deva Darsha's sishyas were Megha, Brahmabali, Shoaulkaayani and Pippala. Pathya's students were Jaabaali, Kumudaadi and Shounaka and they were responsible to segregate Samhitaas. Shounaka sub-divided his Samhitas to Vibhru and Saindhava. The latter's sishya Munjikesha further distributed his Samhitaas into five Kalpaas named Nakshatra Kalpa, Veda Kalpa, Samhita Kalpa, Angirasa Kalpa and Shanti Kalpa; it is stated that the 'Ruchaas' or Hymns of these Kalpaas are among the popular Vikalpas. **Puranas:** Purana Visharada Veda Vyasa made a format of various Purana Samhitas viz. Akhayana, Upaakhyaana, Gaathaa, and Kalpa Shuddhi. Lomaharshana Suta was the most acclaimed Sishya whom Vyasa made him study in depth. Suta's pupils were Sumati, Agnivarcha, Mitraayu, Shaamsapaayana, Akrutavarna, and Saavarni; Lomaharshana construed his works on their Samhitas. Parashara Maharshi stated that the Vishnu Purana Samhitaas were scripted on these bases. Among the Eighteen Puranas the foremost was stated to be Brahma Purana, followed by Paadmya, Vaishnava, Shaiva, Bhagavata, Naaradeeya, Markandeya, Agneya, Bhavishyata, Brahma Vaivarta, Lainga, Vaaraaha, Skanda, Vaamana, Kourma, Maatsya, Gaaruda, and Brahmada Purana. Munis scripted several Upa-Puranaas too. Among all these, descriptions were invariably made about Srishti, Pralaya, Devataadi Vamshaas, Manvantaraas, Raja Vamsha Charitraas and so on. Sarga, Prati Sarga, Vamsha, and Manvantaraadi varnanaas are invariably covered in the Works of Vaishnava Orientation. **Vidyas:** Maharshi Parashara enumerated fourteen Vidyas viz. Shat Vedangas, Four Vedas, Meemaamsa, Nyaya, Puraana and Dharma Shastra. In addition four more main Vidyas were to be included viz. Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandhrva, and Artha Shastra. Among Rishis, there are three major categories viz. Brahmashis, Devashis and Rajarshis.

**42) Pancha Bhutas:** Five Elements viz. Prithivi-Aapas- Tejas- Vayu-Akasha or Earth-Water- Fire-Air / Wind- Sky.

**43) Pancha Bhuta Lingas:** Ekamreshwara at Kanchi-Bhu Linga; Jambukeashwar Linga-Aapas or Water Linga; Tiruvannamalai -Tejas or Fire Linga; Kalahasti: Vayu Linga; Chidambaram: Akasha Linga Representing the Pancha Bhutas or the Five Elements of Prithivi (Earth), Aapas (Water), Tejas (Radiance), Vayu (Air) and Akasha (Sky), Five Lingas were manifested as follows: Prithvi Linga as Ekamreshwara with Kamakshi as his consort at Kanchipuram in Taminnadu; Jala (Water) Linga as Jambukeshwara with Akhilandeswari as his consort at Tiruvanaikaval in Trichinapalli, Tamilnadu; Tejo Linga as Arunachaleshwara with Unnamalai Devi as his consort at Tiruvannamalai again in Tamilnadu; Vayu Linga as Kalahasteswara with Devi Jnana Prasoonamba as his consort at Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh and Akasha Linga as Vaidya Natেশwara / Nataraja along with Devi Shivakami at

Chidambaram in Tamilnadu. The Prithvi Linga called Ekamreshwara manifested on its own to enable Bala Kamakshi to perform Tapasya in the vicinity of a Ekamra Vriksha or a Mango Tree in Kanchi Kshetra. The Linga is of hand size of the shape of a Plantain Tree flower signifying the imprints of the bracelets of Mahadeva's embrace of Devi Parvati! The legend of the manifestation of the Linga was that as crores of Shaktis who claimed equality to Parvati, Mahadeva smiled and all the Shaktis got disrobed and Parvati closed his three eyes so that he did not have to see their nudity. But when Mahadeva's eyes were closed there was Pralaya and 'Surya Chandradi Devas' disappeared. Parvati was stunned and regretted her indiscretion which actually was an extraordinary sin as the entire Universe was extinguished! Parvati fell on Shiva's feet and he asked her to take the Swarupa of a Bala and perform Tapasya in Kasi first as Katyayani the adopted baby of Katya Muni; at the time of famine in Varanasi, Bala provided food all the population of Kasi and got the encomium as Devi Annapurna. Subsequently Bala shifted to Kanchi as directed by Mahadeva and did Tapasya under the Ekamara Vriksha at Kanchipura and grew up as Kamakshi; that indeed was the background of the Ekamreshwara Linga. The Jala Linga at Jambukeshwara manifested on its own under a Jambhu tree in forest in Tiruvanai -kaval near Chandra Tirtha a tributary of River Kaveri. The legend was that there were two members of Shiva Ganas called Pushpadanta and Malyava who were cursed to become an elephant and a spider; they both worshipped the Jala Linga in their own ways; the elephant with flowers and bathing the Linga with its trunk while the spider ensured that tree leaves would not fall on the Linga by spinning a web. The elephant complained that the spider made the Place dirty above the Linga and the spider defended that the falling of tree leaves would convert dirtier. In the quarrel that followed both died and Shiva granted Kingship to the Spider in its next birth and the elephant was reborn again in the same form and the King built several Shiva Temples including the Jambulinga Temple in which the Shiva Linga was partly submerged in water. Arunachaleshwara Linga in Tiruvannamalai has the legend that both Brahma and Vishnu found an 'Agni Stambha' or a huge Pillar of Fire and their efforts to know its beginning and end proved futile. Brahma performed Manasika Puja or worship in mind and so did Vishnu; pleased by their devotion granted them the boon to convert the endless Agni Stambha to a miniaturized Linga which could be worshipped not only by Devas but human beings also. Interestingly, even at the Pralaya or the Great Dissolution the Land of Arunachaleshwara was in tact. The Arunachala Mountain Range has Pancha Mukhas or the Five Faces of Lord Rudra viz. Tatpurusha, Aghora, Sadyojata, Vamana Deva and Ishana. It is strongly believed that a full 'Pradakshina' or circumambulation of the fourteen km distance of the Mountain would be as good as a Pradakshina of Maha Deva himself. A huge mass of devotees push around the Mountain barefooted on every full moon night and the Pournami of Chaitra Month happens to be very special culminating into a ten day festival of 'Kartika Deepa Darshana' when a mammoth lamp is lit in an open vessel with three tonnes of ghee atop the mountain. Shri Kalahasteswara Linga too was stated to be a Swayambhu or Self-Generated on the banks of River Swarnamukhi some 36 km away from Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. This is essentially a Vayu Linga and successive Kings of Chola, Raya, Pallava and Pandya Vamshas made enormous contributions of the Buildings of this famed Shiva Linga. The Temple has the Legend that Three Species of God's creation viz. a Spider called Shri, a Snake called Kaala and an Elephant called Hasti were very devout followers of the Swayambhu Linga; Shri the Spider weaved cobwebs on the top of the Linga as Kala the serpent placed Gems on the Top of the Linga and the Hasti collected waters from the Sarovaras and by throwing sharp currents of water worshipped by way of 'Abhishekas' or washings of water. Thus the Spider-Snake-Elephant trio worshipped Shiva on their own thus justifying their Actions. Another Story of Kalahasti related to a legend of Bhakta Kannappa a hunter who offered his hunt as Naivedya or offering every day. One day the Linga showed three eyes weeping and bleeding

blood. Kannappa had extreme anguish and cut and fixed one of his own eyes to that of Maha Deva. As the latter's second eye too commenced crying, Kannappa never hesitated and fixed his second eye on Maha Deva's face. That was the heightend faith of Kannappa. Maha Deva appeared and restored the eyes of Kannappa and desired that he should be near to the Linga and eversince he joined the band of sixty three Nayanars in the vicinity of Kalahasteswara. The Kalahasti Temple is reputed to ward off Rahu-Ketu Doshas or deficiencies of Graha Dosha, Sarpa Dosha or of unmarried women or women of barrenness. Shri Nateshwara (Akasha) Linga at Chidambaram in Tamilnadu is famed for the 'Chidambara Rahasyam' or the Secret of 'Shunya' or 'Nothingness' of the Universe signifying 'Akasha' and the Ever-Repetitive Cyclical Process of Srishti-Sthiti-Laya or Creation-Preservation-Termination. The legend is that Adi Sessa, the bed of Lord Vishnu, desired to witness the Cosmic Dance of Maha Deva and came down to Earth as Patanjali or the one who descended. A high devotee of Shiva called Vyaghrapada who prayed to Mahadeva to grant him the powerful paws of a tiger with which to pluck the leaves of Bilwa Trees for worship also desired to witness Shiva's Cosmic Dance. Maha Deva along with Devi Shiva Kami gave an appointment to Patanjali and Vyaghrapada to witness the Unique Shiva Tandava or the Cosmic Dance of Shiva. Lord Vishnu as well as Brahma and Devas went into ecstasy as they were fortunate to vision the spectacle of the Tandava.

**44) Pancha Bhakshyas:** Following are the Pancha Bhakshya or fried and other savoury or sweet food items, Bhojya basic eatables like cereals, Lehya or those consumed with the use of tongue, choshya or consumed by using lips and paaneeayas or drinkables.

**45) Pancha Kanyas:** Mythologically stated there are Pancha Kanyas whose worship assures the washing of sins; these were Mandodari, Ahalya, Draupadi, Kunti and Tara; these illustrious women represented Pancha Bhutas; during Devi Durga Nava Raatri Pujas Kanya worship of girls before the state of puberty is still observed each day as representing Durga Devi herself ; Kumaris from the age of one year to Sixteen are known as Sandhya, Saraswati, Tridha, Kalika, Shubhaga, Uma, Malini, Kubjika, Kaala Sandarbha, Aparajita, Rudrani, Bhairavi, Maha Lakshmi, Peetha Nayaki, Kshetrajna and Ambika.

**46) Pancha Kashis:** Vishveswara at Varanasi, Gupta Kashi from Rudra Prayag to Kedarnath, Uttara Kashi near Yamunotri, Dakshina Kashi or Tenkashi in Tamilnadu, and Shiva Kashi in Tamilnadu again.

**47) Pancha Koshas:** or Five Sheaths of Human Body called Annamaya (Physical Energy), Praanamaya (Vital Energy), Manomaya (Mental Faculty), Vigyanamaya (Buddhi or Sharpness of Discrimination) and Ananda maya (Bliss)

**48) Pancha Kedar:** Kedarnath, Madhyeshwara Kedar at Ushimutt; Tunganath Kedar, Rudranath Kedar, and Kapileshwar Kedar

**49) Pancha Gangas:** Ganga, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, and Tungabhadra

**50) Panchagavyaas:** *Gomutram gomayam ksheeram sarpih kushodakam, Nirdrushtam pancha - gavyantu pavitram papa naashanam/* (Cow's sacred urine, dung, milk, curd and ghee besides kushajala constitute the Panchagavyas which uproot multiple sins). These items are to be mixed in the prescribed proportion of one pala or eight tolas of urine, three palas of curd, one pala of ghee, half-ring finger measure of gomaya, one-seventh of the mix to be added by one pala of 'kushodaka'. *Gayatraa gruhya gomutram gandhadwaareti gomayam, Aapyaayasweti cha ksheeram Dadhikraavneti vai dadhi/ tejosi*

*shukramotyaaajyam Devasya twaa kushodakam, Panchagavyaamruchaa putam syapayedagni sannidhou/ Aapohishtheti chaalodya maa nastoketi manrtayet/(Explanation of the above is as follows: Cow's urine along with Gayatri mantra; cow dung with Gandhadwaaraam dhuraadarsheem nitya pushtaam kareeshineem Ishwareegum Sarva bhutaanaam taamihopahvayeshriyam/ Cow's milk: Aa pyaayasva sametute te vishwatayh soma vrishniyam, bhavaa vaajasya sangadhe/ Cow's curd: Dadhikravanno akaarisham jishnorasvasya vajina, Surabhi no mukhaa karat Prana ayoogumshi taarishat/ Cow's ghee: Tejosi shukramasi jyotirasi Devovah savitotpunaatwacchidrena pavitrena vasoh Suryasya rashmibhih/ Kushodakam: Devasya twaa savituh prasave Ashwinoh baahubhyaam pushno hastaabhyaam/ All these are mixed reciting: Aapohishthaa mayobhuvah taana urjyedadhaatana maheranaaya chakshuse yovasshiva tamorasah tasyabhajayatehanah ushiteeriva maatarah tasmaa aranga maamavo yasya kshayaaya jinvadha apojana yathaachanah/ Then perform 'abhi mantra' to the mix and recite: Maana-stoke tanaye maana ayushimaano goshumaano ashwureerishah veeraanmaano Rudrabhaamito vadheer havishyanto namasaa vidhematey/)* Later on, the upper portion of the mix likened to a parrot of bright green of about the size of seven kusha grass pieces be lifted up and be offered to Homaagni with the Mantras of Rig Veda like Iravati, Ivam Vishnurvi chakramey, Maana nasteke tanaye etc. and the remaining portion be consumed by the Karta by reciting Pranava Mantra. On entering the body of the Karta, the Pancha Gavya should dissolve his hardened mass of sins from his bones, blood stream and skin pores like the offerening made to Agni Deva by of the Homa thus performed! *Pavitram trishu Lokeshu Devataabhiradhishthitam, Varunaschiva domutrey gomaye Havyavahanah, Dadhin Vaayuh Samudrishtah Somah ksheere dhruvey Ravih/* ( The Devas who are present in all the Tri-Lokas are represented in the Pancha gavya as follows viz. Varuna in Go mootra, Agni in cow dung, Vayu in the curd, Chandra in the milk and Surya Deva in the ghee!)

**51) Pancha Nath:** Badarinath, Ranganath at Shrirangam, Jagannaath at Puri, Dwarakanath of Gujarat, and Govardhan nath of Nathwara.

**52) Pancha Maha Paatakas:** Stree hatya, Bhruna / Shishu hathya, Brahmana hatya, Go hatya and Guru hatya / Guru Bharya Gamana.

**53) Pancharaamas:** Pancha Shiva Kshetras viz. Bheemeshwara Linga of 60 feet high, at Ramachandrapuram, East Godavari Distt.; Amareshwara Linga of 9 ft. height at Amaravati on Guntur Distt; Kheesraaramam with Ksheera Ramalingeswara installed by Shri Rama and Devi Sita at Palakollu in West Godavati Distt; Somaraama at Bhimavaram, West Godavari Distt. set up by Chandra Deva,; and Kumara Bhima Rama installed by Kala Bhairava at Samarakota in East Godavari Distt. all on Andhra Pradesh.

**54) Pancha Brahmas:** Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Ishana, Sada Shiva

**55) Pancha Pandavas with Draupadi as single wife!** Background: Indra killed Trishira, the son of powerful Twashta Brahma. The latter went into a rage Twashta went into a rage and plucked a strand of hair from his head and offered it in the homa kunda (Fire Pit) by his mantrik power and created the mighty Vritrasura whose mission was to kill Indra, who had already lost his sheen since he committed a Brahmana. Indra deputed the Sapta Rishis to strike a deal with Vritra so that he would not put Indra to immediate danger; but Vritra was killed unawares by Indra. These actions angered the community of Rakshasas resulting in continuous warfare against Devas and Prithvi felt great burden of the atrocities by the demons. Prithvi appealed to Indra and the Deities who in turn took the forms of Pandavas: Yadindradeham cha

Tejasthanmumocha Swayam Vrishah, Kunthyamjaatho Mahatejaastatho Raja Yudhishtarah/ Balam mumocha Pavanastatho Bhimo vyajaayat, Shakraveeryardhata chaiva jajney Paarthom Dhananjayah/ Utpanno Yamalou Maadriyam Shaka Rupou Mahadyuti, Panchadhaa Bhagavannityamavateernah Shatukratuh/Tasyotpanna Mahabhaaga Patni KrishnaHutaashanat, Shakrasyaikasya sa Patni Krishna naanyascha kasyachit/ Yogeewaraah shareeraani Kurvati bahulaanyapi, Panchaanaameka Patnitwamityetatkathitham tava/ (Dharmaraja himself from the body of Indra deposited his virility into Kunti from which was created Yudhishtara. The Deity of Wind viz. Pavan deposited Indra's radiance into Kunti as a result of which Bhima was born. Indra gave away half of his 'Shakti' to Kunti and Dhananjaya was thus born. Indra's virility was transferred through the two Ashwani Kumars to Devi Maadri and was born the pair of Nakul and Sahadeva. Indra's 'Amshas' (alternatives) were manifested among all the five Pandava brothers clearly. Moreover, Indra's wife Shachi Devi as Yagnaseni was created from 'Agni' and hence Draupadi was Indra's own better half. Yogeswar Purush Indra could divide his own radiance into as many parts as per his volition. Hence, it was amply justified that Draupadi was indeed the common wife of the five Pandavas as asserted by the Holy Birds to Sage Jaimini in response to the Sage's doubt. (Source: Markandeya Purana)

**56) Pancha Vaktra Shiva** or the Representation of Five Faces of Shiva : Aghora looking Southwards, Ishaana looking North East, Tat Purusha visioning East, Vamadeva who is North-Faced and Sadyojata facing the West. Sadyojaata represents Shrishti Shakti or of Creation, Vama Deva represents Sthiti Shakti or of Sustenance, Aghora represents Samhara Shakti or of dissolution, Tatpurusha represents Tirodhana Shakti or the power of Concealment and 'punah srishti' or creation again and Ishana represents Anugraha Shakti or of the Power of Blessing.

**57) Pancha Sarovaras:** Bindu Sarovara at Siddhapur as also Narayana Sarovara , Kutch both from Gujarat; Pampa Sarovara near Mysore, Pushkara at Rajasthan and Manasa Sarovara in Tibet.

**58) Panchanga:** Panchanga signifies the following aspects comprehensively viz. Tithi, Vaara, Nakshatra, Yoga, Karana

**59) Panchagnis:** The Panchagnis are Garhyapatya Agni for cooking in homes-Aavahaniya to invoke Surya Deva-Dakshinagni or Atmospheric Agni in the form of Lightnings or that which is invoked in Dakshina disha, Saabya and Avaastya for Vedic Purposes; Agnis various Synonyms include Anala, Bhuriteja, Chitra bhanu, Havya vahana, Hutaashana, Jaateveda, Jwala, Parthiva, Paavaka, Plavanga, Rudra garva, Hiranya krita, Shikhee, Vaishwanara, Vibhavasva and so on; Sapta Jihvas or tongues of Agni are stated to be Hiranya, Kanaka, Rakta, Arakta, Suprabha, Bahurupa, Satee; another version is Vishva murti, Sphalini, Dhumavarna, Manojava, Lohitasya, Karaalasya and Kaali; the Agni Swarupas for performing offerings are as follows viz. for Nitya Karma the type of Agni is called Prabha-Pushpa homa / Bahurupa-Anna and Kheera homa / Krishna Agni- Ikshu homa/ Paraaga-Padm homa/ Suvarna or Lohita-Bilwa homa /Shweta-Tila homa/ Dhumni-Kaashtha or wooden pieces of various trees / Karaalika-Pitru homa/Lohitasya and Deva homa /Manojava; (Narada-Markandeya-Bhavishya Puranas)

Katha Upanishad while detailing the Five Fires emphasises the deeds of virtue, need for control of body organs and senses to seek the identity of inner Consciousness and the Supreme. *Ritam pibantau sukrutasya lokeguhaam pravishtau parame paraadhye, Chaayaa tapau brahmavido vadanti panchagnayo ye chatrinaachiketaah/* (Both the Self and the Supreme are stated to be encased in the secret cavity of one's own heart as the two shades of illumination: one who enjoys of good 'Karma' or the fruits of acts of

virtue and another the Supreme himself! Those seekers worship the **Panchaagnis or Five Fires** viz. Garhapatya, Aahavaneeya, Dakshinaagni, Sabhya and Aavasatya representing Heaven, Cloud, Earth, Man and Woman, as also perform the Naachiketa Sacrifice thrice; they also enjoy the resultant fruits of deeds. These two kinds of entities who do or do not do so are well defined: those who drink the juice of Truth as flown from ‘Sukruta’ or works of virtue and the others who do not; these are the ‘chhatriah yaanti’ or those distinguished under the regal symbols of Umbrellas! Now, the Supreme is encased in the heart’s cavity as also as Omnipresent all over the length and breadth of the Universe; that is ‘Parame paraardhe’ or the Uniqueness Beyond!)

Kaushitaki Upanishad commends Inner Fire Sacrifice: *Athaatah samyamaanam praatardanam aantaram agnihotram iti aachakshate, yaavad vai purusho bhaashate na taavat praanitam shaknoti, praanam tadaa vaachi juhote, yaavad vai purushah praaniti na taavad bhashitam shaknoti, vaacham tadaa praane juhote, ete anante amrite aahuti jaagrachha svapan cha santatam juhote; atha yaa anyaaa aahutayountavatsyah taah karmanyoo hi bhavanti taddhaasmaitat purve vidvaamshognihotrma na juhavaanchakruh/* (Having described the format of the Sacrifice by way of oblations into Agni as ‘Baahya saadhana’ or external sacrifice in favour of purifying Vaak-Praana-Drishti-Shravana-Mano-Prajnaas, Pratardana Maharshi recommends the medium of fulfillment of desires viz. by invoking the ‘Antaraagni’ or igniting the Inner Fire and observing total self restraint. Indeed a person would then sacrifice speech while breathing, and sacrifice breathing while during in speech. These are two unending immortal oblations that one is offering continuously whether walking or sleeping. This is the reason why some Seers of the yore preferred not to resort to offer Agnihotra Sacrifices but mainly resort to inner sacrifices. [This is not however the Ashtanga Yoga comprising Yama or observing moral code, niyama or self purification, asana or proper seating posture, pranayama or breath control, pratyahara or withdrawal of mind from senses, dhyana or concentration, dhyana ie deep meditation, and samadhi or union with object of meditation]

**60) Panchaangis:** Gayatri is of Panchangi Swarupini viz. *PARA* or the Absolute Supreme- *Vyuha* or in the Forms of Vaasudeva, Samkarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha- *Vibhava* or in the Form of Incarnations-*Haarda* or present in the hearts of those who assimilate the Existence and Meaning of Paramatma- *Archa* or worship in whatever form either of Niraakara or Aakara manifested in Idols and by means of Bhakti, Prapatti or Rituals ie Karma or Jnaana or Vairagya through Tapas, Yoga etc.

**61) Pancha Jeeva Pravahas or Five Flows of Life:** *Panchashrotombumn panachayoni ugra vakraam pancha praanormim pancha buddhyaadi moolam panchaavartam pancha dukkhaugha vegam pancha shad bhedaam pancha parvam adheemah/* (The ephemeral Universal Existence and the Ultimate Truth and Reality of Parameshvara are realised by way of five some means viz the Five Flows or streams of Life from five sources which are too swift to control and overwhelming. The powerful currents of the waves or the Pancha Praanas or the Five Vital Energies of Praana-Apaana-Vyaana-Udaana-Samanas with defined functions dominating the very existence of each Being. The roots of the functions are five perceptions that each of the physical organs emanate. The ‘panchaavartaam’ or the five currents of mighty force tend to impact ‘pancha dhukhaugha vegaam’ or five intense and swifty floods of painful twinges which are spread out as fifty magnified forms of severity and sharpness with five branches of perceptions experienced! These are stated to be Ignorance, pride, fear of life and constant fear). (Source: Svetaashvatara Upanishad)

**62) Pancha Shikha:** Pancha Shika or the five tufts on the top of the head ie is the Place of the Cerebral Nucleus (Sahasrara) representing intellect, memory, farsightedness, duty and knowledge-another explanation is that a Brahmana by birth attains the status of a Dwija or twice-born once the Five Duties are taken up viz. Gayatri Dhyana and Japa-Yagnopaveeta-**Pancha Shikha-** Yagnya- and Veda Pathana and most significantly the practice of Brahmacharya or Celibacy

**63) Panchendriyas:** a) Pancha Jnanendriyas viz. Ghrana-Rasa- Chakshu-Shrotra-Twak or smell, taste, see, hear and touch b) Pancha Karmendriyas viz. nose-tongue- eyes- ears- skin respectively and c) Pancha Tanmatras: Light, sound, taste, smell and consciousness

**64) Pancha Naada:** Naada or what caused the Union of Purusha and Prakriti; Naada variations are: the Panchamaya Naada or the Source of Subtle Sound, Sukshmamayi Naada or the Minutest Sound, Pashyanti Naada or the Perceptible Inner Sound or Voice, Medhyamayi or the Intellectual Sound and Vaikhari or the Articulated Sound; again Naada encompasses Five Features viz. Samanyaya or Togetherness of Prakriti and Purusha-Maya and Reality, Sambandha or relationship, Kshobaka or Inducer / Activator; and Kshobhya or the Activated and Kshobana or the Activity or the nion referred to earlier. In brief, Naada is the resultant of Connection-Inducement, Exciter, Excited and Union.

**65) Pancha Vigjnana:** *Panchasvadhikaraneshu adhilokamadhi jyautishama adhividhyam adhi prajam adhyaatmam, eta mahaassahitaa ityaachakshate, athaadhilokam, prithivi purva rupam, dyour uttararupam, aakaashah sandhih/* (May we be blessed with 'brahma varchas' or spiritual brightness enabling us to meditate the 'Panchashu adhikaranaas' or five means of Vigjnaana or knowledge viz. 'adhilokam' or Tri Lokas, 'adhi jyautisham' or about the degree of splendour of each of the Worlds, 'adhividyam' or the distinctive knowldge of each of the Lokas and their Unifying Spirit, 'adhiprajam' or about the Spiritual patterns of the inhabitants of the Lokas and 'adhyatmam' or of physical strengths and weaknesses. Normally three categories are mentioned as 'Adhibhoutikam' or External Body based, 'Adhyatmikam' or inner psychological based features and 'Adhi Daivikam' or God made blessings or problems affecting individuals; but in this case, reference is made to five factors referring to the totality of the Universe! Hence the expression above is 'purva param' and 'uttaraa param' or the expressions related to an individual or in the Universal context. Hence the word 'Athaadhilokam' or the totality of Univeres is referred to! In this Uttara rupam, mention is made first to 'dyuah-aakasha and sandhi' or heaven, sky and the Intermediate Region of 'Sandhih'. (Source: Taittiriya Upanishad)

**66) Shat bhavas:** Shanti Bhava or the Attitude of Peacefulness as practised by ages; Daya Bhava or of the Feeling of a Master to a Servant; Sakhya Bhava or the attitude of friends and supporters; Vatsala bhava or of a parent to progeny; Mathura bhava of Love and Belonging; and Tanmaya Bhava or of Spell

**67) Arishad vargas:** or Shat Gunas: Kaama or Desire, Krodha or Anger, Lobha or Avarice, Moha or Infatuation, Mada or Ego, Matsara or Jealousy.

**68) Shat Chakras:** Moolaadhara, Swadhishtana, Manipura, Anaahita, Visuddha, Agjnaa from bottom to top of backbone;[and Sahasrara there beyond]. Devi Bhagavata Purana describes about physiological cum psychological analysis of human body, especially of various Nadis (Life webs) and Chakras. The word 'Nad' means streams; in the context of Yoga, Nadis are channels of Kundalini Energy as also of connectors of nerves or 'Snayus'. The subtle yoga channels of energy from mind as well as 'Chitta' or consciousness of the self are through various physiological cords, vessels/tubes, nerves, muscles, arteries

and veins. There are 350,000 Nadis in human body(Ayurveda) mentioned 7,50, 000 Nadis) but the principal nadis are fourteen viz.Sushumna, Ida, Pingala,Gandhari, Hastajihva, Yashasvini, Pusha, Alambusha, Kuhu, Shankini, Payasvini, Sarasvati, Varuni and Yashodhara. The most important Nadis however are the first three above. Sushumna is at the center of the spinal cord and is of the nature of Moon, Sun and Agni or Fire. It originates from Sacral plexus or a network of nerves at the spinal base upto the head at the top; it is from *Moola Adhara Chakra* and terminating at Sahsarara Chakra. Normally, Sushumna is inactive except when pranayama is performed. ‘Ida’ nadi is to the left of Sushumna, representing moon providing nectar like energy and ‘Pingala’ nadi is to the right side of Sushumna providing male like power. There is a cobweb like formation in the innermost area of Sushumna, called Vichitra or Chitrini Bhulinga Nadi, the centre of which is the seat of Ichha Shakti ( Energy of Desire), ‘Jnana Shakti’ ( Energy of Knowledge) and ‘Kriya Shakti’ (Energy of Action). The middle portion of the Bhulinga nadi has the luminosity of several Suns, above which is the Maya Bija Haratma representing the sound like ‘Ha’. Thereabove is ‘Kula Kundalini’ representing Serpent Fire of red colour. Outside the Kundalini is the ‘Adhara Nilaya’ of yellow lotus colour denoting four letters viz. Va, Saa, Sa, Sa; this is the base or Moola Adhara supported by six lotus formations. Beyond the Moola Adhara is the *Manipura Chakra* of cloud lightning colour comprising ten lotus petals representing ten letters da, dha, na, ta, tha, da, dha, na, pa, pha. This Mani Padma is the dwelling spot of Vishnu. Beyond the Mani Padma is ‘*Anahata Padma*’ with twelve petals representing Kha, Ga, Gha, ma, cha, chha, ja, jha, Iya, ta, tha. In the middle is Banalingam, giving out the sound of Sabda Brahma. Therafter is *Rudra Chakra* which represents, sixteen letters : a, a’, i, i’, u, u’, ri, ri’, li, lri, e, ai, o, ar, am, ah. It is in this place that ‘Jeevatma’ gets purified into ‘Paramatma’ and hence known as ‘*Visuddha Chakra*’. Further beyond is ‘*Ajna Chakra*’ in between the two eyebrows where the ‘self’ resides representing two letters ha, and ksha, one commanding another or Paramatma commanding Jeevatma. Even above is the ‘*Kailasa Chakra*’ which Yogis call as *Rodhini Chakra* the central point is the ‘Bindu Sthan’. In other words, a perfect Yogi has to perform Puraka, Pranayama, fix the mind on Mooladhara lotus, contract and arouse Kundalini Shakti by lifting by ‘Vayu’ between anus and genitals, pierce through the Adi Swayam Linga through various lotus petals and lotuses as described above, reach Sahasrara or thousand petal lotus and Bindu Chakra by the Union of Prakriti and Purusha. Could there be another example of the breaking of barriers as delineated in ‘Lalitha Sahasranama’ as follows!‘*Mooladharaika nilaya,Brahma Grandhi vibhedini/ Manipurantharuditha Vishnu grandhi vibhedini/ Ajna Chakrantharakstha Rudragrandhi vibhedini/ Sahasraambujarudha/ Sudha Sarabhi Varshinii / Tatillatha Samaruchih Shatchakropathi Samsthita / Mahasakthih Kundalini/ bisathanthu taniyasi/* ( Lalita Sahasra Nama describes about the practice of ‘Avayava Yoga’ or Limb-wise yoga practice to Shad Arishad Vargas or Six major enemies of Kaama-krodha-moha-lobha-mada-matsaras and eight stepped Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana Samadhi)

**69) Shat Karma:** *Shatkarmaabhirou nityam Devaatithi pujakah, Huta sheshaantu bhungagno Brahmano naavaseedati/ Sandhyaa snaanam japo homo Devataanamcha pujanam, Vishwa Devaatithi yaamcha shatkarmaani diney diney/*(Regular observance of six essential duties every day, besides Deva Puja and Atithi Seva and eating Yagna Sesha or the left overs of Yagnas would pull down a Brahmana to descend to lower worlds. The six duties are specified as Sandhya Vandana, atleast twice a day, Snaana that precedes ‘Bahyaantara Shuchi’ or Cleanliness of the body and mind, Japa, Homa, Devaarchana or Deva Puja, Atithi Seva or paying respects and attention to the guests who are already familiar or unknown especially the unknown. On waking up at Brahma Muhurta or four ghadias before Sun Rise, Devata

Smrarana; prathama darshana of Shrotrias, cows, Agni, and avoidance of sinners, digambaras, and beggars; Ablutions with yagnopa -veeta worn around the left ear; praatah snaana as bathing in the morning absolves the evil effects of bad thoughts, deeds and dreams in the bed; recitals of Jala devata/ Aaruna mantras in the course of the bathing; pratah snaanantara Deva Rishi Pitru Tarpana; Vastra dharana; and Vibhudi-Gandha-Kumkuma dharana on the forehead.

**70) Shanmukhotpatti or the birth of Shanmukha:** Years after Shiva Parvati Kalyana, Bhagavan Shiva teased Parvati: Devi! As your physical colour is rather dark and mine is fair; it looks that a dark serpent is circling a chandana tree; or like the shining moon is against the background of a dark cloud against a shining sky! Understandably, Parvati was not amused, and in fact, badly hurt, when Shankara made these remarks even as a joke. Instantly, she left out home and proceeded to perform ‘Tapasya’ to Brahma for a number of years to change her body colour. Any amount of pleading and supplication by Shiva did not change her mind. Meanwhile, the son of Andhakasura and the brother of Bakasura called ‘Aadi’ performed strict ‘Tapas’ to Brahma Deva and asked for the boon of ‘Amaratwa’ or immunity from death. As Brahma could not grant this advantage, Aadi amended the request that he should be able to convert his Body Form as per his wish; Brahma agreed provided that the Daitya could do so only twice. As Veerak was guarding the Entry Point of Shankara and as it was not possible to enter ‘Shiva dwar’, Aadi converted his Form as a snake and entered Shankara’s abode through an under ground hole and slithered in; thereafter Aadi assumed the Form of Devi Parvati, approached Maha Deva and pretended that she had given up Tapasya as the severity of meditation just to change of body colour from ‘Krishna Varna’ to ‘Gaura Varna’ was not worth the strict regimen. Parama Shiva was happy initially that she changed her mind and returned back to him. But on second thoughts and knowing that Parvati would not take a flippant decision to return without achieving her objective, he suspected the fake Parvati and killed the ‘Mayavi’ Daitya. The original Parvati Devi’s Tapasya pleased Brahma Deva and blessed her to change her body colour as she pleased either as of Gaura ( white)Varna or of Shyama Varna; Parvati returned home to Maha Deva but the unwitting Veeraka, the ‘Dwarapalaka’ refused her entry to her own house! As any amount of convincing did not help Veeraka, Devi Gauri was tired out to reason him and finally gave a ‘Shaap’ that he would be born as a human and after the duration of the curse would return to her again. Parama Shiva was so excited as Gauri entered his interior bed room that a delegation of Devas headed by Indra was turned out saying that he was busy. Indra detailed Agni Deva to take the form of a parrot and peep in through a window as to what was happening inside their bed-chamber. Exactly at that time, the parrot peeped in when Shiva-Parvati were actually in Ekanta; Shiva noticed the parrot and recognised Agni. He scolded Agni and said now that he created ‘Vighna’ (obstacle) between him and Parvati and hence he might as well rectify the situation by drinking up his virility. The highly explosive drops shining like molten gold punctured Agni’s belly and got spread over the Maha Sarovar nearby. Several lotus flowers which got sprouted all over in the deep waters emitted strong and fragrant scents and the intoxication affected ‘Krittikas’ who happened to bathe in the Sarovar; the Krittikas desired to take the lotus leaves home but Devi Parvati jocularly remarked to the Krittikas that she could take the drops of water on the lotus leaves as well. In turn Krittikas joked that they would take the water home, provided the child born of the water consumed by them should have equal right to the motherhood of the boy so born! As the deal was struck between Krittikas and Parvati, the Krittika damsels gave the lotus leaves as also the water drops to Parvati. Subsequently, Devi Parvati drank up the water around the lotuses and from her right and left ‘kukshis’ gave birth to two male children later united into one and the child who had the extraordinary radiance of Surya Deva; each of the Six Krittikas shaped up one head each of the

child; thus the boy was named 'Kumara' by Parvati; 'Kartikeya', 'Shanmukha', 'Shadvakra' by the Kritikas and as 'Vishakha' or the different 'Shakhas'/ branches of the lotus leaves that carried the golden drops. On Chaitra Shukla Shashthi, the child was declared as the 'Deva Senapati'/ the Commander-in-Chief of Devas. Vishnu gifted varieties of 'Ayudhas'/ Arms and 'Astras' or Mantrik Arrows. Kubera presented him a lakh-strong of yaksha army. Vayu Deva gave him a 'Mayura Vahana'/ Peacock Carrier, while Twashta Prajapati gifted a toy in the form of a Cock which could change its form as the boy wished. All the Devas presented souvenirs, prostrated before Skanda and extolled him. *Namah Kumaaraaya Mahaa Prabhaaya Skandaayacha Skandita daanavaaya, Navaarka Vidyutdyutaye Namostutey, Namostutey Shanmukha Kaamarupa/ Pinadwi nanaabharanaaya Bhartrey Namoraney Daarudaaranaaya, Namostu teyrka pratima prabhaya, Namostu Guhyaaya Guhyaaya tubhyam/ Namostu Thrailokya bhaayaapahaaya, Namostutey Baala kripaa paraaya, Namor Vishaalaamala lochanaaya, Namor Vishaakhaaya Maha Vrataaya/ Namor Namastestu Manoharaaya, Namor namastestu Ranokataaya, Namor Mayurojjwala vaahanaaya, Namostu Keyura dharaayatubhyam/ Namor Dhrutodagna pataakiney Namor Namah Prabaavapranataaya testu, Namor Namastey Varaveerya shaalininey, Kripaaparo no bhava Bhavyamurtey/ Kripaaparaa Yagnapatim cha stutwaa, Viromirowam twamaraadhi paadyaah, Yevam tadaa Shadwadanam tu sendraa mudaa santhushta Guhastataastaan/* (Our Greetings to You, Kamarupa Shanmukha! You are Kumara, the radiant son of Maha Shiva and the destroyer of Danavas; your physical form is the glow of rising sun and of the heat of Agni; you are appropriately adorned, the Army Chief of Devas; the dreadful on the battle front; Guhya Rupa, the abolisher of fear in Trilokas in the Form of a Child; gifted with broad and clear eyes; Vishaakhaa! Our reverences to you as the practitioner of Maha Vratas; you are a terror in battle fields although of pleasant visage otherwise; you have a peacock as your carrier and wear a Keyura / wrist bangles; the high flier of flags; the bestower of boons to devotees; the high profile symbol of courage and strength; you possess a Magnificent Form. This was how Indra and Devas extolled Skanda.) ( Source: Matsya and Padma Puranas)

**71) Shat Vedangas:** Siksha, Vyakarana, Kalpa Grandha, Nirukta, Chhandas, and Jyotisha. *Siksha* is essentially about Sangeeta or Music the Swara Shastra viz. Sapta Swaras, Gramas or scale or gamut in music, Murchanas or intonations/modulations, ten Gunas, Padas (letters); Kalpa grantha comprises kalpas of Nakshatra or Chandra-Nakshatra movement; Veda for attaining Purushardhas viz. Dharma-Artha- Kaama-Moksha; Samhita about Tatwa Darshi, Mantras Chhandas etc; Angirasa Kalpa about abhichara vidhi vidhana like procedures of magic, charms, benevolent or malevolent karma kaanda and finally Shanti Kalpa, Mantras, Procedures, to ward off dangers, and usher in good tidings from Celestial, Terrestrial, extra terrestrial sources. Griha Kalpa too is significant like Homa Prakriyas, Mudras, Mangala Snaanaas, Abhishekas, Pujas for Deva-Devis and Nava Grahas etc. Vyakarana Shastra is about grammar, vibhaktis or cases, vachanas, naama - sarvanaamas, Pratyaya, Samaasa, Karakas. Nirukta is derived and rhetoric or artificial interpretation seeking to bring out the hidden meaning of Vedas; viz. 'nir' connoting the comprehensive sense that is sought to be conveyed and 'ukta' states that which is revealed more than what is concealed. Chhandas Shastra is stated as the feet of Vedas, being 'Vaidik' and 'Loukik'; Gayatri-Brihati-Ushnik-Jagati-Trishthup- Anushthup -Pankti being the Chhando Vidhi and the various combinations of 'Ganas' varied basically with 'ya-maa-taa-raa-ja-baa-na-sa-la-ga' and poetry made there of in three letter combinations; the ruling deities of the Ganas are: Ya gana (Water), Ma gana (Prithvi), Ta gana (Sky), Ra gana (Agni/ fire), Ja gana (Surya), Bha gana (Chandra), Na gana (Ayu or Life/health) and Sa gana (Vaayu). Jyotisha Shastra is all about Siddantha Ganita, Jaataka/ hora, and Samhita. The

means of Jyotisha are Panchanga Sadhana by way of Thithi-Vaara-Nakshatra-Karana-Yoga; Grahana Sadhana of Solar/ Lunar Eclipses, besides Dik-Sadhana. Jaataka Skandha is the Science of Raashi-Shad Varga, 'Maitri Bhaavaabhaavaas' and Graha-Nakshatra compatibilities.

**72) Shat Ritus:** Ritus or Seasons approximately coincide with Chaitra-Vaishakha or end March to the last weeks of May when festivals like Ugadi, Shri Rama Navami, and Vaishakhi are celebrated. Greeshma Ritu or Summer during April-July during Jyeshtha-Ashadha when festivals like Ratha Yatra and Guru Purnima are observed and Dakshinayana or the Solar downtrend commences. Varsha Ritu or monsoon coincides with Shravana-Bhadrapadas or the last portions of July-September when Mangala Gauri and Vara Lakshmi Vratas, Raksha Bandhan, Krishna Ashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi and Onam are celebrated. Sharad Ritu or Autumn Season coinciding with Ashvin-Kartika months extending portions of September to November being mild weather the famed Sharannava Ratri and Depaavali are celebrated. Hemanta Ritu or pre-winter Season coinciding with Margaseersha and the last days of November-January, the festivals of Vasanta Panchami, Shiva Ratri and Holi are observed; and finally Shishira Ritu or winter coinciding with Maagha-Phalguna months during the last quarter of January to March is the time of Vasanta Panchami, Shiva Ratri and Holi. The Chandra maana procedure varies in the sense that the cycle of Seasons starts from the first day of Chaitra commencing from Ugadi.

**73) Sapta Jihvas:** or of the Seven Tongued Agni Swarupa- Viz. Kali, Karaali, Manojava, Sulohita, Sudhumra varna, Ugra or Sphulingini, and Pradeepti.

**74) Sapta Pativratas:** Ahalya, Draupadi, Sita, Tara, Mandodari, Anasuya and Sumati: An explanation of a Parivrata refers to **Ahalya** though she slept with Indra but she had her husband Muni Gautama was genuinely on her mind and when turned into a stone due to Gautama's Shaap Rama purified her too for her dereliction due to her ignorance; **Draupadi** though she married Pancha Pandavas since all the Pandavas were of the Amsha of Indra whose virility was distributed to Devi Kunti through Yama Dharmaraja to beget Yudhishtara, Vayu Deva to beget Bhima, Arjuna from his (Indra's) own and Ashwini Kumars from Devi Maadri as Nakula and Sahadeva apart from the fact that Draupadi was Indra's better half viz Sachi Devi who was originally Yagneshani the daughter of Agni as clarified in Markandeya Purana; Devi **Sita** despite Ravana's pressure tactics had only Rama always; Devi **Tara** the wife of Vaali but the Tradition of Kishkindha allowed Sugriva to marry after Vaali's death as approved by Rama himself and **Mandodari** of course was a fixation on Ravana'sura despite his infatuation with Sita; **Anasuya** the wife of Atri and the the illustrious Kardama Prajapati; **Sumati** who was an outstanding Pativrata who adored her husband a Leper and even prostrated before a woman whom her husband desired to sleep with];

**75) Sapta Chhandas / Sapta Suryaashvaas:** Gayatri, Pankti, Anushtup, Brihati, Viraj, Trishthup, and Jagati.

**76) Sapta Sarasvati:** Suprabha at Pushkar, Kanchanakshi at Naimisha, Vishala at Gaya, Manorama at North Kosala, Odhavati at Kurukshetra, Surenu at Haridwar and Vimalodaka on Himalayas.

**77) Sapta Ganga:** Bhagirathi, Vriddha Ganga, Kalindi, Saraswati, Kaveri, Narmada and Veni.

**78) Sapta Punya Nadees:** Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Kaveri, Narmada and Sindhu.

**79) Sapta Jihvas or Seven Tongues of Flames:** *Kaali Karaali cha Manojava cha ulohita yaa cha Sudhumravarnaa, Sphulingini Vishvarupicha Devi Lolaayamaanaa iti Sapta Jihvaah/* The Sapta- Jihvaas or the Seven Tongues of Fire Flames are Kaali (black), Karaali ( ferocious), Manojava ( Speed of Mind), Sulohita (extremely red hot), Sudhumra varna ( coloured like thick smoke), Sphulingini ( emitting cracky sparks) and Vishvaruchi ( blazing all around); these are the ‘lolaayamaana- agnis’ or the ever moving flames of speed and spread!

**80) Sapta Kshetras:** Kurukshetra, Harihara Kshetra neat Sonpur in Bihar, Prabhasa Kshetra / Veeraval in Gujarat, Renuka Kshetra near Mathura, UP; Bhriгу Kshetra in Bharuch, Gujarat, Purushottama Kshetra or Jagannath Puri and Sukara Kshetra or Sorom.

**81) Sapta Lokas:** a) Bhuloka, Bhuvarka, Swaroka, Maharoka, Janaroka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka. b) Sapta Dwipas: Jambu, Plaksha, Salmaali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkala ; c) Sapta Patalaas : Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala. a) As a part of the Cosmic Egg beyond the Lokaloka, the description is as follows: *Lokaardha samhita Loka niraalokastu bhahyatah, Lokavistaaramatram tu dhyuloh sarvataa bahih/ Paricchinnah samantaascha udakenaavrutastu sah, Alokaatparataschaapi hyandamaavritya tishthati/ Andastyaantastwamey Lokaah Saptadwipaascha Modini, Bhurlokotha Bhuvarkalah Swarlokostha Mahastathaa/ Janastapastathaa Satyametaavaam lokasangrahaah,, Etavaaneva Vigjneyo Lokaantaschaiva yah Parah/* (All the Lokas which possess illumination are within the ambit of knowledge and the rest are all unknown and full of darkness; that portion which is circumscribed all around by water was within the Golden Egg and is stated to contain the Bhur-Bhuvar-Swar-Mahar-Jana-Satya-Tapo Lokas. Knowledge of those Lokas is not clear. One could only guess that these Lokas were lit up by Chandra at the beginning of Shukla Paksha in the West in the shape of a Pot just as Brahmanda was also surmised as an Egg.) The Brahmanda was stated to have surrounded by solidified water called ‘Ghanodadhi’ which was held by ‘Vanoda’ or a mass of solidified water and was encircled by Illumination all round in the shape of a Fiery Iron Ball, and Akasha or Ether grasps the Ganodadhi. *Bhutaadischa tathaakaasham Bhutaadischaapyasau Mahaan, Mahamcha sopyanantena hyavaktena tu dhaaryatey/ Anantam aparyiyaktam dashadhaa Sukdshamevacha, Anantamakrutaa tmaanaadi nidhanam cha yat/ Anityam Parataghoram anaalambam -anaamayam, Naikayojanasahastram Vipakashtamana avrutam/* (The Bhutaadi or The Cosmic Ego or Maha Ahamkara or simply stated as Ghana Vaata or Solidified Air supported by Akaashaa was called the Infinite Principle or Mahaan; it was that Ayyakta or Unknown, Ananta or Endless, Aghora or Uncontaminated, Niraadhara or Unsupported, Avikara (Featureless), Sukshma (Subtle) and Avikarana (Unchanged and Undistorted).

b) Sapta Dwipas : Jambu, Plaksha, Salmaali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkala. **Jambu Dwipa:** To the Southern side of Meru Mountain and the North of Nishadha, there was a huge and age-long Jambu Tree called Sudarshana whose Jambu Fruits (Rose Apple) constantly trickled in a River which turned in the same colour and taste of water. The Tree was stated to be of eleven hundred Yojanas high. The significance of that Tree, fruits and juice was such that Siddhas and Charunas got readily attracted it and the juice bestowed to them the qualities of Youth and excellent health causing neither old age nor death. The fruit also produced a kind of Gold called Jambunada which was used as ornaments to Devas. The Jambu River flowed all around Meru and became the biggest attraction or Yaksha, Gandharva, Apsara, Rakshasa, Piscachaas too. Kailasa Mountain was another fascination of the Region. Kubera the Chief of Yakshas and Apsaras were stated to reside on the Mountain which was also the home of herbs and

medicines, apart from wild and cruel animals. Parama Shiva is stated to reside on Kailasha along with Devi Parvati and had been a hallowed Parvata. Manasa Sarovara had been the most consecrated Lake where Siddha Ganas had always believed that bathig in the Lake and Parikrama of the Mountain were most certain steps to attaining Kailaasa / Ishwara Prapti. **Plaksha Dwipa:** is double the size of Jambu Dwipa's one lakh yojanas under the Chief called Mehatidikh who had seven sons and the Kingship was surrounded by Seven major Mountains and Seven Rivers with the traits typical of Treta Yuga. Its inhabitants pray to Bhagavan Vishnu in the form of Chandra Deva. Compared to the salty taste of Sea water between Jambudwipa and Plaksha Dwipa, the taste was of Ikshu(Sugar cane juice) in the of intermediate region of Plaksha and Shalmala whose Chief was Vapushman and the latter's size was double that of Plaksha. Here again there are seven mountains with mines of jewels / precious stones and seven Rivers and in this Dwipa Lord Vishnu is prayed in the form of Vayu Deva. Like in Plaksha Dwipa, the inhabitants of **Salmala Dwipa** too, Varnashrama is followed and the colours of persons in these Varnas are Kapila, Aruna, Peeta and Krishna are for Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras respectively. Sura (Wine) Samudra earmarks the inter-region of Salmala and **Kusha Dwipa** whose size was double that of Salmala and Kusha's King is Jyotishman and the inhabitants are human beings practicing Varanashrama as also Daityas, Danavas, Devatas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Kinnaras and a great mix of Brahma's creation. They all pray to the Multi Faced Janardana. Ghrita Samudra (Classified Butter) partitions the Kusha and Krouncha Dwipas; the size of the Krouncha is double that of Kusha. Rituman is the King of **Krouncha** where again Varnashrama is observed and the counter-part Varnas are Pushkala, Pushkara, Dhanya and Khyata corresponding to Brahmanas etc. Rudra Swarupa Janardana is the Deity revered in this Dwipa. Between Krauncha and **Shaka** Dwipas is the Dadhimandoda Samudra and the King of Shaka is Mahatma Bhavya, again with Seven Mountains and Seven Major Rivers as also seven Princes, where Siddhas and Gandharvas inhabit. Maga, Mahadha, Manasa and Mandaga are the corresponding Chaturvarnas. All the inhabitants of this Dwipa pray to Surya Swarupi Vishnu. From Shaka to **Pushkara**, the intermediate Samudra is of Ksheera and Pushkara which is double of Shaka is size is headed by Stravana and since it is a huge Dwipa, the King divided it to Mahavira Varsha and Dhataki varsha and the sons of the King awarded the two in their names after the two parts under his over-all control. These territories are mainly inhabited by human beings who have longevity of ten thousand years, devoid of illnesses and worries and of jealousies, fears, egos and crookedness; these humans as superior as Devas and Daityas and they are all devoid of Varnashrama as all the inhabitants are of equal status. The dividing line of Pushkara is surrounded by sweet water atop of which is **Lokaloka** Parvata, beyond which is stated to be of complete darkness; in fact, the Border of Pushkara of ten thousand yojanas, there were neither species nor life.).

c) Sapt Atholokaas/ Sapt Patalas: As Bhudevi the Divine Goddess is the Mother of all Living Beings, 'Aapas' or water is stated to be endless and so are Vayu, Agni and Akasha. Underneath Bhumi are the Nether Worlds viz. Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Rasatala, Mahatala and Patala. The soil in Atala is stated to be of black soil, of Vitala the ground was of palewhite, Sutala of blue, Talatala of yellow colour, Rasatala of gravel covered ground, Mahatala of Rocky Ground and of Patala of Gold. The Palaces of Asuras of Namuchi the enemy of Mahendra, besides of other demons like Mahananda, Kabandha, Bhima, Suladanta, Dhanjaya, Nagendra were all glittering examples of opulence and material happiness in Atala and other Lokas. In Sutala were the noted Daitya-Rakshasa-Serpent Kings like Mahajambha, Karbandha, Hayagriva, Nikumbha, Bhima, Suladanta, Dhananjaya, Nagendra, Kalia and so on. Shankha, Gomukha, Kakutpada, Asvatara, Kambala, Takshaka stayed at Vitala; Prahlada, Taraka,

Puranjana etc were in Rasatala; Kalanemi, Gajakarna were in Mahatala; and among other illustrious serpents Maha Sesha was in Patala. Sesha Deva with his mighty and huge physique with thousand hoods ornamented with outstanding diamonds emitting unprecedented effulgence is stated to bear the brunt of the Entire Universe from Urthva Lokas, Bhumi and the Nether worlds and worshipped by Devas, Danavas, Siddhas and all other celestial beings alike! The Adholokas are called Bilwa Swarga which provided unparalleled physical and material happiness unavailable in Swarga even. The invaluable 'Manis' (diamonds) like those worn on the hoods of the huge serpents provided such illumination to all Nether Lokas. The population of these Lokas are stated to lead such unbelievable luxuries and joy that it is stated that the radiance and heat of Surya nor the coolness of Chandra were not missed there. The inhabitants of Bilwa Swarga always revelled in delicacies of food and wine with sophistication and style of living as they were least concerned of day-to-day difficulties; they spent long spells of time in bathing, swimming in scented Sarovaras and Ponds and Vishnu's Tamoguna was in full display at the Bilwa Swarga!) ( Source Brahmana Purana)

**82) Sapta Punya Tirthas:** *Ayodhya Mathuraa Maaya Kashi Kaanchi hyavantikaa, Puri Dwaravati chaiva Saptaitaah Moksha daayikaah/* The seven outstanding Punya Tirthas that readily offer Moksha are Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya Puri, Kaashi, Kanchi, Avantika, Puri and Dwaraka,

**83) Sapta Samudras:** Lavana or Salt, Ikshurasa or Sugarcane juice, Sura or Wine, Ghrita or Classified Butter, Dahi or Curd, Ksheera or Milk and Suswada or Sweet Water;

**84) Sapta Parvatas:** Sumeru , Kai las, Malaya, Himalaya, Udyachala, Agastyachala, Suvela and Gandhamadana;

**85) Saptadri/ Seven Hills:** Anjanadri, Garudadri, Narayanadri, Neeladri, Seshadri, Venkatadri and Vrishabhadri to approach Lord Venkateshwara

**86) Sapta Kratu:** S hodassi, Ukta, Purushi, Agnishtoma, Aptaryama, Atiratra, Vajapeya, and Goshava

**87) Sapta Sadhana:** Sapta Sadhana: or righteous paths of Realising Brahman by Sadhanas-viz. Karma Yoga, or disinterested physical control-Bhakti or the Path of Love-Rajasa Yoga or Psychic Control-and Jnaana Yoga or by the power of Spiritual Knowledge or Awareness.

**88) Sapta Swaras:** Shadaja-Sa, Chatuskriti -Ri, Rishabha, Antara-Ga or Gandhara, Shuddha-Ma: Madhyama, Panchama - Pa, Chatuskruti-Dha: Daivata, Kakaali-Ni: Nishaada. It is stated Shankara's ornaments are represented as follows: Sa for Sarpa, Ri for Rudra, Ga for Ganga, Ma for Mrida or provider of joy; Pa for Pushpa, Dha for Damaru, and Ni for Nishkara. This is 'Shankaraabharana Raaga', for instance.

**89) Ashtanga Yogas:** Ashtanga Yoga briefly constitutes the Eight Steps of Yama or Morality, Niyama or Discipline, Asana or the Right Posture of Seating, Pranayama or the Control of Life Force, Pratyahara or Withdrawal of Senses from Worldly Desires, Dharana or Hold-Up of Concentration, Dhyana or Focussed Meditation and finally the Samadhi or Alignment of the Self with the Supreme. To control the activities or goings on in the mind is Yoga. The Ashtanga or Eight-Limbed Yoga comprises of Yama-Niyama- Aasana- Pranaayama- Pratyahara-Dharana-Dhyana-Samadhi. Yama is denoted by good

behaviour comprising Ahimsa (Non-Violence), Satya (Truth), Asteya (stealing), Brahmacharya (avoidance of sex) and Aparigraha or Excessive acquisition. Basic Niyamas is in fact an extension of Yama: To refrain from hurting or torturing co-Beings physically or mentally is Ahimsa; to convey whatever is seen, heard, and believed is Satya unless it does not hurt any body is known as Satya; to desist stealing of other's property by deed, thought or otherwise is called Asteya; to negate from relationship with another female or in respect of a female with another male, excepting the wedded woman or man as the case may be and this should be observed by vision, thought or deed is called Brahmacharya or celibacy; and to abstain from excessive acquisition of materials far and above one's needs in the short run of time is stated to be Aparigraha. Besides the above General Principles, Niyamas also involve the specific deeds viz. Shoucha or Physical Cleanliness, Yagna-Tapa or meditation, Daana or charity, Swadhyaya or Memorising or Reciting the Scriptures, Indriya Nigraha or Control of Physical Limbs, Vratas like Chandrayana as also or to perform formal worship directed to specific Devatas and purposes,, Upavaasa or Fasting, Snaana or Formal Bathing besides Tirtha Seva and 'Aniccha' or General Disinterestedness and abstinence; these are the Ten Niyamas. The next component of the Ashtanga Yoga denotes as Aasana which not only includes the right posture of formal seating like of Padmasana followed by 'Bahyatantara Shuchi' or external and internal cleanliness, Shiva Puja starting from Brahmanas, Agni, Varuna with other Devas climaxing with Parama Shiva. Included in the Aasana are Japa, Swadhyaya, and Tapas etc; Japa should be of Panchakshari viz. Om Namassivaya Mantra and Swadhyaya is of Omkara and of Vedas and other Scriptures. Japa and Swadhyaya are of three kinds: Vaachaka, Maanasika and Upaamsaka (Oral, mind-borne and Upaamshak or as guided by Guru). The next step is Pranayama or to practise interruptions of Prana or life-air or merely stated as the breathing processes of 'Manda' or mild, 'Madhyama' or medium and 'Uttamaa' or the best of variations; these interruptions comprise twelve units each of 'Uchhvaasa' or inhaling and 'Nishvasa' or exaling in the mild category, while these two holdings of breath would be for twenty four units in either case in respect of medium category and thirty units in either case in the best category. 'Yogaabhyas' or the practice of Yoga besides providing happiness and peace of mind would cure several physical weaknesses to rectify respiratory and digestive imbalances, bring about shine of body and mind, cleanse up blood and its circulation and sharpness of thinking. Yoga unifies and balances of the ten kinds of 'Vaayus' or Airs in the human system viz. Praana-Apaana-Samaana- Udaana-Vyaana-Naaga-Kurma-Kukara-Devadutta and Dhananjaya. The air that enables vital functions of the human body, respiration and general activity is Praana; the air that is generated by the food intake down in the digestive process is Apana; the air that controls the involuntary movements of the body, circulation of blood, and flow of sweat from glands to skin and creating diseases is Vyaana; the air that controls the bubbling in the 'marmaavaya' or the secret part is Udaana; the Equalising air balancing the body parts and stimulating digestive fluid is called Samaana; Udgaar (dakaar) is the wind called Naga; the wind enabling 'Unmeelana' or of the opening of eyes is Kurma; Kakara Vayu creates hunger, Devadatta created yawning and Dhananjaya Vayu creates high-pitch sounds and also remains with the body for a while even after death. Thus four kinds of Siddhis viz. Shanti, Prashanti, Deepti and Prasada are achieved by the Yoga. Pranaayama also achieves the generation of Tatwas viz. Vivaswara, Mahaan, Mana, Brahma, Smriti, Khyati, Ishwar, Mati and Buddhi. Pratyahara demolishes sins; Dharana facilitates the holding up of the crucial state of balance; Dhyana or meditation of Ishwara bestows the devastation of poisons like Vishayas or worldly matters; Samadhi leads to Prajna or Self-Consciousness. Thus Yoga aided by 'Asana' leads to the dynamic circle of Praanayama-Pratyahara-Dharana-Dhyana culminating in Samadhi. The above was the outline of Yogaabhyasa and now to the practice of it: one should not practise Yoga in the surroundings of Fire, water, dried leaves,

animals, burial places, of great sound or disturbances, worm-infested places, uncongenial and inauspicious places, places occupied by evil-minded persons and so on; but in quiet caves, Shiva Kshetras, lonely forests or gardens without distractions. Yogaabhyaas should be initiated by greeting one's Guru and then to Shiva, Devi, Ganesha and others and by resorting to Padma or any other Aasana ; he should fix his eyes at a particular Target, expand his chest, raise his head, not touch his teeth of one line with another, keep looking at the tip of his nose and not look at sides; and by aligning his Three Gunas, concentrate on Parama Shiva in Dhyana on Omkara, dipa sikha or top of an oil-lamp. The Yogi must visualize a white lotus encased in a Trikona or a Triangle and set in the images of Agni, Soma and Surya and then perform meditation of Rudra on the forehead by picturing Shiva in two, or four, or six, or ten or twelve or sixteen leaves; the dhyana should be targetted to the golden and fire-like, twelve Aditya-samaana, lustrous Nilalohita Shiva. Maheswara should be retained in the hridaya or heart, Sadashiva in the naabhi or navel, and Chandrachuda in the 'Lalaata' or forehead and the prayer should be as follows: *Nirmalam Nishkalam Brahmaa Sushantim Jnaana Rupinam, Alakshanamanirdeshya Manoralpataram Shubham/ Niraalambamatarkai cha Vinashotpatti varjitam, Kaivalyam chaiva Nirvaanam Nishreya samanuttamam Amritamchaaksharam Brahmam hyapunarbhavamadbhutam/ Mahaanandam Parama -anandam Yoganandamanaamaam, Heyopaadeyarahitam Shukshaatsukmataram Shivam/ Swayam Vedyamavedyam taacchivam Janamayam Param/ Ateendriyamanaabhaasam Parama tatwa Paratparam, Sarvopaadhi Nirmuktam Jnaanagamyam Vicharatah/Adwayam Tamasaschaiva parastaat samsthitam param* (Nirmala, Nishkala, Brahma, Shanta, Jnaanarupa, Lakshana Rahita, Shubha, Niralamba, Atarkya or Unquestionable, Naashotpatti rahita or who is bereft of birth and termination, Kaivalya, Nirvana, Nishreya or devoid of hold , Amrita, Akshara, Moksha, Adbhuta, Mahananda, Paramaananda, Yogananda, Heyopaaya rahita, Sukshmaati Sukshma, Parama Jnaana Swarupa, Ateendriya, Anaabhaasa, Paratpara, Sarvopaadhi nirmukta, Jnaanayogya, Unique as he has no duality). Thus Ishwara be prayed in the Naabhi Sthaana, in the middle of the Body Shiva of Shuddha Jnaana be concentrated and in the Uttama Marga by the means of Puraka-Rechaka-Kumbhaka or Inhalation-Exhalation and Retention of breathing respectively called Pranayama. A practitioner of Yoga is invariably faced with several kinds of difficulties like Alasya, Vyadhi Peeda, Pramaada, Samshaya chitta or Chanchalata, Ashraddha in the path of Darshana, Bhranti, Duhkha durmanastatha and Arogya Vishaya. Alasya is due to the heavy weight of Body and the resultant lack of preparedness. Vyaadhi peeda is caused by dhatu- vishamata or ill-health and disability. Pramada is due to fear of Abhyasa or Practice; Samshaya or a feeling of apprehension and negativity of approach; Ashraddha or sheer carelessness and laziness; Bhranti is due to a feeling of Yoga's ineffectiveness; Duhkha durmanstha or misplaced fatalism that human beings are any way subject to 'Tapatrayaas' (or of Adhi bhoutika, Adyatmika and Adhi daivika reasons or due to body-mind or God made calamities) and a general mind-set of yoga or no yoga human beings are any way subject to the ups and downs of life! Arogya Vishaya is yet another limitation to Yoga Practice due to a general belief of retaining health from other ways and means of medicines. A successful Yoga Practitioner is endowed with 'Dasha Siddhis' viz. Pratibha, Shravana, Vaarta, Darshana, Aaswaada and Vedana. Jnaana Pratibha is the Siddhi of knowing about a Vastu or Vyavahar or of a thing of past, present or of future; this Siddhi would influence or impress others. Shravana Siddhi enables a Yogi to hear or understand any kind of sound or conversation or a happening irrespective of distance or time. Vaartaa Siddhi facilitates the experience of Pancha Tanmatraas of sabda-sparsha-rupa-rasa and gandhas. Darshana Siddhi is the ability to perceive or vision of any thing irrespective of time and distance limitations. Aaswaada Siddhi enables tasting any substance and Vedana Siddhi is the power of sparsha to experience the shape, form or a feature of a

person or thing. In fact a Maha Yogi is stated to possess sixty four kinds of Paisachika, Parthiva, Raakshasa, Yaaksha, Gaandharva, Aindra, Vyomatmika, Praajaapatya, Brahmaadi Siddhis but he should discard all such powers in the quest of Shivatwa. Such Siddhis range from assuming any type of Swarupa of fatness, slimness, childhood, youth, old age, man, woman, any specie of a bird-animal-reptile, mountain, water body and so on; ability to lift mountains, drink up an ocean, flying on sky, passing through a needle's eye and endless such miracles. [The normal Siddhis are Anima (miniaturising), Mahima ( Maximising), Prakamya (Visioning and Hearing), Isatwa (Rulership), Vasitwa (Self Control), Kama Vasitwa (ability to fulfill desires), Doora Shravana and Doora Darshana or distant vision and hearing, Parakaya Pravesha or ability to enter other's bodies; 'Devaanaam Saha kreedanam' or playing with Devas, Yatha Sankalpa Samsiddhi or instant fulfillment of desires, Triloka Jnaana or knowledge of the happenings of Three Lokas; Control of heat and cold, Paraajaya or invincibility and so on.] Depending on the intensity of the success of the Yoga practice and the powers attained by way of controlling the Jnanendriyas and Tatwas, a Yogi could perform impossibilities but frittering the Siddhis so gained would negate the capacity to accomplish Maha Tatwa.

**90) Ashta Bhiravas:** Eight Manifestations of **Maha Bhirava** are Kaala Bhairava, Asitaanga Bhairava, Rudra Bhairava, Krodha Bhairava, Kapala Bhairava, Bhishana Bhairava, Unmatta Bhairava and Samhara Bhairava.

Vamana Purana explained that Andhakasura fell in love with Devi Parvati and Prahlada chided him for his stupidity and advised that those who observed Dharma Nishtha ought to refrain from para stree vyamoha, lest they pave way for the frightful Rourava Naraka. Andhakasura replied haughtily and ordered Shambharasura to reach Mandhara Mountain and question Shiva as to how he was residing in the cave of the mountain without his permission as he was after all Andhaka was the Supreme Lord of Tri Lokas! If Shiva however would request the Asura that if he could gift Parvati as his wife, then he would give permission to stay in the mountain cave. Both Maha Deva and Devi Parvati sent calm and curt replies to Andhaka stating that the foolish Andhaka should fight with them to deserve Parvati. Incensed by the reply, Andhaka despatched a strong force of several akshouhinis of strong Rakashasas while Nandideva organised Rudra Sena and Vishnu Sena; the combined the Ganas then visioned a Single Faced Vishnu-cum- Shiva Swarupa with thousand 'chinhaas' or symbols indicating same Swarupas, of which half was Rudra and another half Vishnu; one half was Vrishabhadrhwaja Garudhaarudha and another half was Garudhadhwaja Vrishaarudha. Just as one visualised, so did that person visioned the Rupa of Bhagavan. The same Shankara assumed various forms each time changing his colours of white, red, yellow, blue, mixed or colourless; some times as Rudra, of Indra, Surya, Vishnu, or Brahma. As this most surprising and swift changes happened, the Ganas were then convinced that Paramatma was indeed one and only one!

As Maha Ganesha informed Parama Shiva about the arrival of several Akhouhinis of Daithya Sena led by Andhakasura on Mandaragiri, Mahadeva took leave of Gauri Devi asking Aprasas in charge of Gauri's security to be vigilant even as Tundasura came running towards Ganesha and his army. The Gana Sena halted Tundasura and one of the Ganeswaras snipped the Asura's head with ease. Kundodara and Ghatodara attacked from two sides Shailoda a strong Ganeswara ended one and Nandi another. Krujumbha and Duryodhana met with similar fates by Nandi. As several Danava Chiefs appeared simultaneously the Ganas and Ganeswaras made deadly counter attacks and annihilated the overflowing Asura Senas in hundreds and thousands. As Andhaka was highly disturbed and disheartened at the merciless killings of Asura Sena, he approached Danava Guru Shukracharya for guidance and the latter assured that he possessed Sanjivini Vidya and revived all the dead Asuras. Following this, Danavas made massive and multi-sided attacks

by quite a few most cruel Generals of Asuras like Jambha, Bala, Vitra, and Shira mobilising sea-like Daitya Sena of thousands of Akshouhini; Lord Brahma then instructed Indra to join the Deva Sena at once in counter attacks. As Nandi saw Shukracharya among the Danavas, he picked him up and brought him to Maha Deva who in turn threw the Guru onto his own face and the latter entered Maha Deva's stomach and visioned the entire Brahmanda comprising the Charaachara Srishti including Adityas, Rudras, Vishva Devas, Yaksha- Kimpurusha- Gandharva- Apsaras. The Danava Guru spent a Divya Varsha in the 'Udara' of Shiva and got utterly confused and lost moving around all over inside. Finally, Shukra prayed to Mahadeva with great helplessness, humility and reverence and said that he was tired and would like to return. Then Shiva released him through his 'Shukra' and when he went back to the Asuras, they were very happy. Then there was an all out battle: Jambha versus Indra, Shambha against Brahma, Krujambha against Vishnu, Shalava-Surya, Trishira-Varuna, Dwimurtha-Varuna Deva, Rahu-Soma, Ashtaavasus versus Sarabha, Shalabha, Paaka, Pura, Viprutthu, Pruthu, Vataapi, and Ilval, besides Kalanemi against all Vishwadeva ganas like Vishvaksena; Vidyunmaali against Ekadasha Rudraas; Shambara against Dwadasha Adityas; Naraka against Ashvini Kumaras; Maha Deva created Jrumbhaayika who slowly but steadily demolished the fighting spirit of the opponents who ever released the Astras. Mahadeva then performed his Snaana in the River Sarasvati and having prayed to Surya Deva got ready for his attack when Andhaka deputed Sunda the Senapati to engage Shiva; he took the form of Maha Deva and entered the Abode of Gauri. She understood the falsity of Andhaka and disappeared along with her personal aids into a garden and he chased her for a while and returned to the battle field. Meanwhile, Shiva killed Sunda, Vishnu destroyed Kujumbha and Jambha. Andhaka covered the opponents like Indra, Vishnu, Maheswara and the rest of the Devas with his arrows as Vishnu asked the Devas to continue their fights and asked them to kill the Sarathi or the Charioteer of Andhaka, destroy the charoit so that Shankara could turn the entire personal belongings of Andhaka. Then Vishnu destroyed the horses with his mace. Devoid of his chariot, Andhaka shouted at Mahadeva and said that he was alone and without his chariot would still defeat Shiva; Maha Deva then decided Devas and Ganas to withdraw excepting his Nandi Vahana. He assumed a mammoth Bhairava Swarupa with the extraordinary radiance and heat of crores of Suryas, wearing Tiger Skin, Sarpa-haraas, Ten Hands and Three Burning Eyes and pierced his Trishula right into the Asura's heart and hit his head with his mace and tossed his body up high in the air that got dropped on Earth with a thud. From all the sides of his huge body, there were streams of blood as **Ashta Bhairavas** were surfaced: from the Eastern direction emerged a Bhairava akin to Agni called 'Vidya Raaj' with his neck adorned with lotus flowers; from the Southern direction appeared 'Kala Raaj' Bhairava looking like a 'Preta' with dense black colour; from the Western direction was materialised a Bhairava named 'Kamaraj'; from the Northern direction was caused a fourth Bhairava named 'Soma Raaj'; a fifth Bhairava emerged from the wound near the demon's heart where Maha Deva pierced his Trishula and his name was 'Swacchanda Raja' with the resemblance of Indra Dhanush (Rainbow); the Sixth Bhairava was 'Lalit Raaj' who appeared from the gush of the Asura's blood on Earth; the Seventh Bhairava was 'Vighna Raaj' and including Maha Bhairava there were thus Ashta Bhairavas. As there was sweat from Maha Deva's forehead after the extermination of the Asura, especially since his body was covered with armoury, a Kanya got formed from his sweat and spills of the Rakshasa's blood and Maha Deva named her 'Charchika' and gave her the boon of a Symbol of Propitiousness to be worshipped by Devatas, Rishis, Pitaras, Yaksha, Vidyadhas etc as also Sarpas, and Manavaas. There was also a boy who appeared from the sweat drops which were like sparks of fire dropped on Bhumi and

Maha Deva named him 'Kuja' or 'Mangala' and made him a Senior of 'Grahas' (Planets) with the responsibility of providing 'Shubha' or Auspiciousness and 'Ashubha' or Inauspiciousness.

**91) Ashta Bhairavis for Graha Shanti:** Mahakali worshipped for Shani Dosha, Neela Saraswati for Brihaspati Dosha, Chhinna mastaka worshipped for determination, Lalitha Tripura Sundari or Shodashi to correct Budha Dosha, Tripura Bhairavi / Kaala Bhairavi to accomplish Success, Dhumavati or Alakshmi worshipped by way of Black Magic, and Bagalamukhi or Peetaambari prayed to for the success of Legal Cases. In addition, Matangi is worshipped to resolve family problems and Kamala Devi to alleviate Shukra Dosha.

**92) Ashta Lakshmis:** Dhanya Lakshmi, Dhairya Lakshmi, Santana Lakshmi, Vijaya Lakshmi, Vidya Lakshmi, Bhagya Lakshmi, Gaja Lakshmi, Vara Lakshmi

**93) Ashta Loka Paalakas:** Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Ishana. The 'Dikpalakas' include the thousand eyes **Indra in the East** stationed in Amaravati on Airavata with Sachi Devi, 'Vajra Ayudha' or thunderbolt, the Celestial Apsarasas and the rest; **Agni Deva in South East** with his two wives Svaha and Svadha, his Vahana and other belongings; **Yama Dharmaraja in the South** with his 'Yama danda' ( his Symbol the Celestial Rod) along with Chitragupta; **Nirruti in the South West** with his axe and wife representing Rakshasas'; **Varuna Deva in the West** with his wife Varuni and 'Pasa' ( the noose), drinking Varuni honey and with the King of Fishes as his Vahana (Vehicle) and surrounded by aquatic animals; **Vayu Deva in the North West** with his wife, forty nine members of his Vayu family along with groups of Yogis adept in Pranayama and other practices along with his Deer Vahana; the King of Yakshas and Unparalleled Possessor of Gems and Jewels **Kubera in the North** along with his two Shaktis Viriddhi and Riddhi and his Generals Manibhadra, Purnabhadra, Maniman, Manikandhara, Manisvargi, Manibhushana and Manikar Muktheadhari; **Rudra Deva in the North East** with other Rudras who are angry and red eyed, armed and mighty, frightful and revolting, fiery mouthed and detestably distorted, some times ten handed or thousand handed, odd number footed and odd number mouthed; in the company of Bhadrakalis and Matriganas, Rudranis and Pramadhaganas making 'Attahasas' or reverberating screeches and so on. (Source: Devi Bhagavata Purana)

**94) Ashta Vibhaga Mani Dwipa:** Being far superior to Kailasa, Vaikuntha and Goloka, the Sarvaloka oMani Dvipa is the residence of Devi Bhagavati in whom the entire Creation rests! Indeed She resides everywhere and anywhere but notionally at Mani Dvipa and the description is transcribed in detail by Maharshi Veda Vyasa apparently for the consumption of mortals to carry conviction into their consciousness. Surrounded by 'Sudha Sagara' ( The Ocean of Nectar), Manidvipa has a strong iron enclosure of several Yojanas far and wide with four gates well guarded by Devas and Devis. Within the First Enclosure, there is an Enclosure of white metal made of an amalgam of zinc and tin/copper which touches Heavens and is hundred times higher than the walls of the outer Enclosure. This Enclosure is interspersed with gardens and forests with a wide range of trees and plants, flowers with intoxicating fragrances, luscious fruits along with streams of fruit juices and gregarious animals and birds of staggering variety. The third Enclosure is made of copper with a height of seven yojanas comprising several 'Kalpavrikshas', with golden leaves/ flowers and fruits yielding gems, fulfilling desires of any imagination. The King of the Gardens along with the wives Madhu Sri and Madhava Sri maintains an excellent Spring Season, where Gandharvas reside, rendering divinely songs and music. The Fourth Enclosure made of lead with its wall height is again seven yojanas and within the Enclosure are the

Sanatanaka trees with flowers whose fragrance reaches as far as ten yojanas and fresh fruits providing sweet juices of great quality and its King with the two queens Sukra Sri and Sudha Sri always maintains enjoyable mild summer where Siddhas and Devas reside here. The Fifth Enclosure made of brass with a spread of ten yojanas is maintained by its Chief as a perennial Rainy Season accompanied by twelve of his wives, viz. Nabha Sri, Nabhyasya Sri, Sravasya, Rasyasalini, Amba, Dula, Niranti, Varidhara, Abhramanti, Megha Yantika, Varshayanti, and Chivunika. The Trees grown in the Gardens of this Enclosure are Hari Chandana. The Sixth Enclosure is made of walls with five-fold irons and its Gardens grow Mandara Trees and creepers; the wives of its Chief are Isalakshmi and Urjalakshmi maintaining the Season of Autumn. Here again Siddhas reside with their wives. The Seventh Enclosure of seven Yojanas of length is made of Silver, its Chief maintaining Hemanta ( dewy) Season with his two wives Saha Sri and Sahasya Sri with Parijata as its main tree and flowers. The Eighth Enclosure is made of molten gold with Kadamba garden in the center with Tapas Sri and Tapasya Sri as the wives of the King and the fruits of the trees yield honey that is consumed aplenty by Siddhas and wives who are the inhabitants and the season again is dewy. The 'Navavarana' or the Ninth Enclosure is made of Pushparaga gems of Kumkum (saffron) colour which is abundant all over inside the Enclosure like forests, trees, rivers, flowers, lotuses, 'Mandapas' ( Halls), pillars and so on. All the 'Dikpalakas' of High Regency reside in the Eight Directions of the Enclosure, with the thousand eye bodied Indra in the East, Agni Deva in the South East, Yama Dharma Raja in the South, Nirruti in the South West, Varuna Deva in the West, Vayu in the orth West, Kubera in the North, and Rudra Deva in the North East. Tenth Enclosure made of Padmaraga Mani inside which are the Sixty four 'Kalas' like Pingalakshi, Visalakshi, Vriddhi, Samriddhi, Svaha, Svadha and so on each of these having hundreds of akshouhini strong armies and individually each of these 'Kalas' have the unimaginable Power of destroying a lakh of 'Brahmandas' (Universes)! The Eleventh Enclosure is made of Gomeda Mani and within this are the sin-destroying and beneficent Maha Shaktis viz. Vidya, Hri, Pushti, Prajna, Sinivali, Kuhu, Rudra, Virya, Prabha, Nanda, Poshani, Riddhida, Subha, Kalaratri, Maharatri, Bhadra Kali, Kapardini, Vikriti, Dandi, Mundini, Sendhu Kanda, Sikhandini, Nisumbha Sumbha Madini, Mahishasura Mardini, Rudrani, Sankarardha Saririni, Nari, Nirayani, Trisulini, Palini, Ambika and Hladini. The Twelfth Enclosure made of Diamonds and is the dwelling place of Bhuvaneswari, and is surrounded by Eight Shakties viz. Anangarupa, Ananga Madana, Madanantara, Bhuvana Vega, Bhuvana Palika, Sarvasisira, Ananga Vedana and Ananda Madana; each of these Main Atteendants of Bhuvaneswari has a lakh of Attendants. The Thirteenth Enclosure is made of Vaiduryas and the Residences of Eight Matrikas viz. Brahmi, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani, Chamunda and Mahalakshmi. The Fourteenth Enclosure made of Indranilamani, which is the Most Auspicious Place of the Sixteen Petalled Holy Lotus with Sixteen Maha Shaktis resident viz. Karali, Vikarali, Uma, Sarasvati, Sri, Durga, Ushas, Lakshmi, Sruti, Smriti, Dhriti, Sraddha, Medha, Mati, Kanti and Arya. The Fifteenth Enclosure made of 'Mukta' or Pearls inside which reside Eight Shaktis Ananga Kusuma, Ananga Kusuma Tura, Ananga Madana, Ananga Madanatura, Bhuvanapala, Ganganavega, Sasirekha, and Ganganava Vegarekha. The Sixteenth Enclosure which is made of Marakatha (Vaidurya) is hexagonal of Yantra Shape, and on the eastern corner of the Center is the Brahma with Devi Gayatri with Vedas, Sastras and Puranas as well as their Expansions; on the Western corner is Maha Vishnu and Savitri along with their own Expansions; on the North Western corner is Maha Rudra and Sarasvati with Rudra and Parvati Expansions and Sixty four Agamas and all Tantras; on the South Eastern side is the abodes of Kubera and Maha Lakshmi; on the Western corner side are the Couple of Madana and Rati Devi and on the North Eastern side are Ganesha and Pushti Devi. The Seventeenth one is made of Prabala (Red like Saffron) Devi Bhagavati's five Elements viz. Hrillekha, Gagana, Raktha,

Karailika, and Mahochuchusma; and finally, the Eighteenth Enclosure is built with Navaratnas ( Nine Jewels) with Bhagavati in the Center with ‘Pancha Amnyas’ (Eastern Amnaya is Creation by Mantra Yoga, Southern is Maintenance by Bhakti, Western is Pralay by Karma Yoga, Northern is Grace by Jnana Yoga and Urdhva Amnaya is Liberation); ten Maha Vidyas (Kali,Tara, Chhinnamasta, Bhuvaneswari, Bagala, Dhumavati, Matangi, Shodasi and Bhairavi) and Avataras viz. Bhuvanesvaris Pasamkusavari, Bhairavi, Kapala, Amkusa, Paramada, Sri Krodha , Triptavasarudha, Nityaklinna, Annapurnesvari and Tvarita. **Ratnagriha** or the Crown Palace of Mula Prakriti or Maha Devi Bhagavati is beyond the Eighteenth Enclosure, built of Chintamani Gems with thousands of pillars built by Suryamani Gems or Vidyutkantamani Gems. Four huge ‘Mandapas’ or halls each with thousand pillars in the Palace are made of kaleidoscopic and artistic mix of ‘Navaratnas’ ( The Nine Gems) viz. Mukta, Manikya, Vaidurya, Gomeda, Vajra, Vidruma, Padmaraga, Nila and Marakatas with dazzling lights and exhilarating perfumes suited to the Themes of the Halls designated as Shringara, Mukti, Jnana and Ekanta. In the Central place of each of the Halls, there is a Very Special Chintamani Griha or the Sanctum Sanctorum on a raised platform with a plank supported by the four legs of Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Mahesvara and the plank is Sadasiva Himself! The Maha Tatvas [ refer to earlier pages on Trinity’s Prayers to Bhagavati] are the stair cases leading to the Upper Chambers. Mula Prakriti and Maha Purusha constitute two halves of the Physical Formation of Maha Devi cum Maha Deva with Five Faces of Each Half, with corresponding three Eyes and four arms and armoury , one hand reserved exclusively for providing boons. The Attending Sakhies are those surrounding the ‘Ardhanarisara’ are Iccha Sakti, Jnaana Sakti and Kriya Sakti who are always present with the Maha Bhagavati along with Lajja, Tushti, Pushti, Kirti, Kanti, Kshama, Daya, Buddhi, Medha, Smriti and Lakshmi in their physical Forms. The Nine Pitha Shaktis Jaya, Vijaya, Ajita, Aparajita, Nitya, Vilasini, Dogdhri, Aghora and Mangala are at the constant Service. Devi Bhagavati is simultaneously present in all the Mandapas; enjoying Vedas, Hymns of Praise, and Music in Shringara Hall; freeing Jivas from bondages in Mukti Hall; rendering advice and instructions in Jnana Hall and conducting consultations in Ekanta Mandapa with Ministers like Ananga Kusuma etc. on matters of vital significance related to Creation, Preservation and Destruction of Evil. Indeed the inhabitants of Mani Dvipa are all those who have attained Samipya, Salokya, Sarupya and Sarsti. They have no Arishdvargas to overcome, no tatvas to gain, no gunas to regulate, no Yogas to perform, no ambitions or desires to fulfil. They have no concepts of time, death, age, distance, body, mind, light, season or the ‘Tapatriyas’. Human beings normally tend to describe the negativity of life always but the Eternal State of Perfect Equilibrium is some thing utterly unimaginable! Maharshi Veda Vyas assured that reading, listening or imagining about Mani Dvipa and of the Glories of Devi Bhagavati would provide peace of mind, contentment and fresh springs of hope, purpose and direction of life. Especially so, when new projects are launched and new actions are initiated as also when apprehensions, obstacles, diseases, tragedies or even the facing of death are envisaged by anybody. (Source: Devi Bhagavata Purana)

**95) Ashta Pradhana Subrahmanya Kshetras:** *Swami Malai:* One of significant six Subrahmanya Kshetras worthy of visit in Dakshina Bharat viz. Tiruttani, Palani, Tiruchendur, Tiruppuramkunnam and Palamudircholai is Swami Malai-literally meaning God’s Hill- some 30 km near Kumbhakonam at an elevation of 82 ft. totally dedicated to Swami Nathan, called locally as ‘Tagapan Swami’ or Father God! The legendary background was that the Lord taught the true meaning of OM or Pranava to Maha Deva himself! As Brahma Deva failed to interpret the word adequately to Kumara Swami, he chided him; when Maha Deva asked Kumara to explain in a convincing manner, he analysed the depth of the meaning he did so even as the father learnt it intently as though a Teacher to a Vidyarthi! The Swami Malai Temple

performs 'shat kaala dainika puja' or six worships a day round the year, besides celebrates many festivals like Krittikai every month, Rathotsava in April, Vishakha in May, Navaratri in May, Kanda Shashthi in October, Kartikai Utsav in November, Taipuccham in January and so on. The Golden Chariot utilised for all the festivals are made of 7 kg of gold and 85 kg of silver-copper alloy with sparkling illumination. There is a SwetaVinayaka Temple made of white foam of Sea representing Ksheera sagara that created Amrit! *Palani*: Some 38 km from Trichy and 100 km near Coimbatore is another Subrahmanya Kshetra of the reputed Six as mentioned above, the Abode of Dandayudhapani. There are two mythological references to this Temple; one is that since this Palani Hill was of the 'amsha' or of relationship with the highest mountain of the Universe viz. Meru, Sage Narada provoked Vindhya that the latter was, after all, not taller than Meru; this hurt Vindhya and tried to grow even taller as one side of the Universe was bright but the other side remained dark for ever since Sun became unreachable to the side at all. Parama Shiva asked Agastya Muni who was a resident of Kashi to teach a lesson to Vindhya; the Muni reached Vindhya who as a reverent to the Muni bent down and the Muni asked Vindhya never to stand. Agastya then moved to Dakshina Bharat to stay at Palani Hills for long before moving down further down to other Southern parts of Bharat. Another explanation about Palani Hills was that Sage Narada visited Kailasa to pay respects to Shiva and Parvati and gifted a Fruit of Jnana or Knowledge; he requested to conduct a test between Ganesha and Kartikeya viz. pradakshina or circumambulation of the Universe. Kartikeya instantly flew by his Peacock Vehicle while Ganesha performed a pradakshina and was rewarded with the Fruit. Kumara on return got furious and made Palani his abode as an ascetic assuming danda or a staff and 'koupeena' or loin cloth. Subsequently the parents Shiva and Parvati reached Palani to cajole the Dandayudhapani saying: *Gnaana paam nee Appa!* Or 'Indeed you are the personification of the fruit of Knowledge yourself, darling son!' There are daily worships including Kaala and Shanti Pujas- Alankaras-Aariti-Deepa- Swarna Ratha/ Golden Chariot Darshana. Festivals like Thai-Poosam/ Purnima, Tirtha Kavadi Yatras, Diamond Vel or Shula ( javelin) yatras, Pankhuni Uttiram, Vaishakhas, Soora samhara etc. all drawing large crowds, especially due to the rope way facility up the hill, although many climb by steps owing to vows with or without foot wear or by Kavadis slung on shoulders! *Tiruttani*: Yet another among the six Subrahmanya Tirthas is of Murugan Temple at Tiruttani, near by the border of Andhra Pradesh and distant by 84 km from Chennai up a hill of 250 ft elevation connected by good hill motorable road. Besides the Sanctum of Muruga, there are Temples of Mkahashasura Mardini, Veera Anjaneya, Arumuga Swami, Narasimha Swami, Mangaleshwara Shiva and so on. Besides Trikala Pujas and Deepa-aradhanas, festivals as observed at other Subrahmanya Tirthas as at Swami Malai are celebrated, especially Kanda Shashti, Nava Ratras, Krittikas and Vishakhas as also Shiva Ratri penances. From Madurai to about 3 km is *Tiruppuramkkundam* and nearby there is a small mountain and up there is a cave inside which a Sarovar and a fairly big Mandir with a high rise gopura dedicated to Lord Subramanya, besides Murtis of Shiva-Parvati-Ganesha Idols; the belief is that Kumara's wedding was celebrated here and a row of Peacocks with Shiva- Parvati-Ganesha Murtis present as the audience! This is one of the six Subramanya sthalas of Dakshina Bharat. Passing by near the southern side of Vaigai river, one encounters a large Sarovara where the Ratha Yatra of Meenakshi-Sundareshwara Parikrama terminates at the Maryamman Koil. *Palamoodicholai* hardly 2km from Alagar Koyil up the Mountain and this too is one another six Abodes of Lord Kumara as a Tiruppuruk kundam. This too is one of the six Subramanya sthalas of Dakshina Bharata. *Tiruchendur* is among the Five most famous and Sacred Subrahmanya Tirthas in Bharat, viz. *Swami Malai, Tiruttani, Tiru- chendur, Palani and Tirukundram*. Tiruchendur is on the shores of the Sea and normally yatris perform Samudra Snana before entering this Sacred Kshetra, which has a large Mandapa after crossing which only the Main Temple

unfolds the Lord's darshan. The Golden Murti of the Lord Swami Kartikeya is indeed brilliant both in terms readily arresting features and shape as also the artistic attraction readily experiencing inner vibration of feelings. *Vaitheeswara Koil of Angaraka: Dharani garbhasambhutam Vidyurkanti sama prabham, Kumaram Shakti hastam tam Mangalam pranamaamyaham/* Being the son of Bhu Devi Mangala Deva is of the flashy brightness of a Lightning and he too like Lord Subrahmanya the embodiment of Power and Courage ever worthy of worship. The Temple of Lord Vaideeswaran the Supreme Deity of Healing and of Medical Treatment as the key to Arogya or Health is situated some 27 km of Chidambaram and 52km from Kumbhakonam. Built by Kulottnuga Chola of 11<sup>th</sup> century, Vaideeshwaran Temple encompasses large precincts with a 5tier Gopuram with its principal Sanctum dedicated to Vaideeshwara Linga and a metal image of Muttukumara Subramanya, besides those of Nataraja, Soma Skanda, Angaraka as also stone sculptures of Durga, Dakshina murti, Surya, Jatayu, Vedas and Sampatti. Temples of Taila Nayaki standing with medical oils to cure diseases and another of Dhanvantari and Angaraka are in Place, besides a Vriksha Sthala with medicinal properties in the vicinity. Nadi Jyotisha written in Tamil Script is practised in Vaideeswaran extensively and near the Temple. Brahmotsavas during January- February, Kartigai Festival during November and Kanti Shashtis at Muttukumara Temple are big draws besides on Tuesdays. *Subrahmanya Kshetra:* Within the State of Karnataka in South Kanara District is the renowned Koumara Kshetra where Parashu Rama established a Mukti Kshetra like Mookambika, Udipi, Gokarna etc. Mangalore is the nearest Railway Station from where Subrahmanya is some 40 km although the roads are through forests and dusty and rather difficult to reach in rainy season but recommended from November till May. Main Mandir is of Lord Subrahmanya as seated on a Mayuraasana or on a Peacock. On the platform up at the Temple He is a Shadaanana Murti or of Six Heads, with a Pratima of Sarparaja Vasuki in the middle and at the bottom is Sesha Bhagavan and facing the Temple is a Garuda Dhwaja stated to offset the impact of poisonous flames emitted by the Sarpas. There is a Bhairava Mandir to the South, a Mandir for Uma Maheshwara in the northern side, a Veda Vyasa Samputa Nrisimha Mandir in the Southern side of the Main Mandir, besides a Parashurama Mandir again in South. In Kerala, the main places of worship are Kasargod, Payyanur, Haripad etc. In Andhra, Skandagiri in Hyderabad is famed while in East Godavari's Bikka volu is well known for worship of Subrahmanya Swami just as Karnataka has exclusive Temples venerated Him as Kukke Subrahmanya. Apart from the famed Subrahmanya Khetras in Southern India, there has been a considerable following in North too. Pehova in Ambala of Punjab is the famed Swami Kartik Mandir near Prithishwar Maha Dev who is of Four Faces. Pilgrims worship him with oil and sindur as also perform Pitru Karyas on the banks of Sarasvati River. Swami Malai in New Delhi too has acquired great name for daily abhishakea pujas daily twice to the imposing figure of Lord Murugan at Vasanta Vihar. Worship of Kartikeya especially during Devi Navaraatras and all through the Kartika Month in West Bengal and Odisha is extensive. In Sri Lanka, there is a huge following of Murugan, especially at Jafna. Batu Caves in Kaula lumpur and ardent worship of Dandapani on Tank Road of Singapore are widely popular and so are in the Subrahmanya Temples in London, Midlands and Liester. Murugan worship is also widespread in USA, Canada, Australia, not to mention of Mauritius and South Africa.

**96) Ashta Mahishis:** Principal Queens of Lord Krishna viz. Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Nagnajiti, Mitravinda, Lakshmana, Kalindi and Maadri.

**97) Ashta Matrikas:** Matrikas: viz. Brahmani, Vaishnavi, Maheshwari, Aindri, Vaarahi, Chamunda, Naarasimhi and Kaumari while Kaumari stands for Chastity and Purity devoid of envy with Dwadasha Bhujas or Twelve Hands carrying Bow, Arrows, Axe, Spear, Staff, Water Jar, Lotus, Ghanta/Bell,

Pustaka / Sacred Book, Cock, Tanka or Silver Coins and Shakti alternatively called the Amsha of Kumara's mother; Karunaapaangi or Devi Gayatri is the Symbol of Karuna or Kindness. The Version of Varaha Purana is as follows: The entire Universe was upset by the wickedness and glaring transgression of morals by the uninterrupted evils displayed by Demon Andhakasura [Siva Purana states that Devi Parvati was playful with Maha Deva by closing His eyes tightly and from the Lord's perspiration on His forehead a boy of muscular strength was created.] Eventually Andhakasura became the Unconquered King of the Lower Regions like Patala and tormented the entire Universe. After a series of battles were won with Devas who were driven away from the Heaven, Indra approached Brahma and Vishnu who too were ineffective to conquer the Demon as he was fortified with the boons of Brahma. They had finally approached Maha Deva and to His utter surprise He too could not conquer him as each time Maha Deva applied His trident against the Demon, blood streams of the Demon's body created endless number of Andhakasuras with each drop of his blood. Lord Rudra became so infuriated that from His face produced a mighty conflagration or an inferno-like flame viz. the **Yogishwari** Shakti. Vishnu too created a highly powerful Shakti named Devi **Vaishnavi** and other Deities followed suit by creating their Shakti counterparts viz. **Brahmi** from Brahma, **Kaumari** from Kartikeya, **Mahendri** from Indra, **Yami** or **Poushunyam** from Yama, **Varahi** from Varaha Deva and **Maheswari** from Narayana. The Eight Matrikas represented the Eight Mind born Enemies viz. Kama or Desire from Yogeswari, Krodha or fury from Maheswari, lobha or avarice from Vaishnavi, Mada or Ego from Brahmani, Moha or infatuation from Kaumari, Poushunya or wickedness from Yamadharani, Matsarya from Indrani and Jealousy from Varahi. The blood streams from Andhaka's body got dried up by the Matrikas; the Rakshasa Maya or the illusion created by the Demon was terminated and Andhaka too got exterminated. The combined strength of Matrikas is an extraordinary might of Eight Shaktis providing security and propitiousness to devotees and Lord Brahma declared 'Ashtami Thithi' in the Monthly Calendar. Those who observe this particular day with fast by eating 'Bel patra' with devotion are blessed with excellent health, well being and contentment.

**98) Ashta Siddhis:** or Supernatural Powers are Anima or the ability of miniaturising oneself; Mahima is turning one self giant like; Laghima is the capacity to get oneself unusually light; Garima is to make the Self too gross and heavy; Prapti is to achieve any kind of mental desire; Prakamya or providing fulfillment of other's wishes; Vashitwa or capacity to control any other Party; Ishitwa or fully dominating over others as wished. Among many other Siddhis include Para Kaaya Pravesha or totally entering other's body and even Soul; Doora Shravana or distant hearing, Doora Darshana or Distant Vision or ability to see things or actions any where from other places; Manojavam or reaching a place as fast as a thought as also thought reading; Kamarupa or assuming the physical form of another Being-be it a moving species or an immobile like a mountain etc; Swacchanda Maranam or the gift to die at one's own wish; Deva Saha Kreedana Anudarshanam or the gift to view Deva Devis playing among themselves; Yatha Sankalpa Siddhi or accomplishing any thing by a mere thought; and so on.

**99) Ashta Vasus:** Ashtaavasus are viz. Aapa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha and Prabhasa. They once visited Vasishtha's Ashram along with their wives and desired to possess Nandini the Kamadhenu; as the Maharshi refused, Prabhasa he took lead in stealing the cow while other Vasus too abetted the plan. Vasishtha cursed the Vasus to become humans but reduced the impact of the curse to all of them to be born as humans only for a few hours except Prabhasa the ring leader. Thus Devi Ganga who was married to King Shantanu of Maha Bharata on condition that what even she did should not be questioned but she drowned the new borns one by one in the River but he could not contain himself and

asked Ganga why did she do such merciless actions; Ganga left Shantanu as the eighth child was spared but deserted the King for good. The eighth child was Gangeya who was Bhishma and that was Prabhasa the Leader of Ashta Vasus who secured Vasishta's curse that he should have a full life but without a wife since Prabhasa listened to his wife and stole the Kama Dhenu Nandini.

**100) Nava Durgas:** Nine Manifestations of Durga -viz. Shailaputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skanda Mata, Katyayani, Kaala Ratri, Maha Gauri, and Siddhi dhatri was foremost worshipped by Katya Maharshi as his own daughter and the slayer of Chanda Munda and Mahishasuras; She was invoked by Devas, Indra, and Tri- Murtis of Brahma-Vishnu- Maheshwara to destroy the greatest menaces of the times viz. Chanda-Munda-Mahishasuras; She was the combined Shakti of Devas, Devendra, and Tri Murtis for the purpose as she was of the refulgence of thousand Surya Devas, black hair, eighteen hands and a personality which frightened the demons but of extreme coolness to the virtuous and the noble; Shiva gifted his Trishula, Vishnu his Sudarshana Chakra, Brahma his kamandalu and Rosary beads, Varuna Shankha, Agni his arrows, Vayu's bow, Surya's extreme radiance and anger, Indra's Vajrayudha, Kubera's mace, Kaala's sword, Vishwa Karma's axe and so on.

**101) Navagrahas, features and Pradhanas Kshetras:** *Adithyaya Somaaya Mangalaaya Budhaayacha Guru Shukra Sanirbhyascha Rahavey Ketavey Namah/* Surya, Chandra, Mangala, Budha, Brihaspati, Shukra, Shani, Rahu and Keta are all expected to be basically beneficent 'Grahas' (Planets). Description of their 'Swarupas' (Forms) is as follows: *Padmaasanah Padmakarah Padmagarbha samuddhitah, Saptashvah Saptarujuscha Dwibhujah syaat sadaa Ravih/* (Surya Deva has two hands wearing two lotuses, seated on a lotus flower; his luster is abundant like that of the outside part of a lotus; Surya Deva is comfortably seated on a magnificent chariot driven by Seven Horses). *Swetaashvah Swetaambaradharah Swetaashvah Swetavaahanah, Gadaapaanirdwibaahus cha Kartavyo varadah Shashee* (Chandra Deva is of white colour, wears white clothes, has white horses, white chariot, with 'gada'/ mace and 'Varada Mudra' or sign of Protection). *Raktamaalyaambara dharah Shakti Shula Gadadharah, Chaturbhujah Raktaromaa varadah syad Dharaasutah/* (Dhara nandana or the son of Earth, Mangala is adorned with Shakti, Trishula, Gada and Vara Mudra on his four hands; his body colour is blood red, wears red clothes and red flower garland) *Peetamaalyaambara dharah Karnikaa –rasamadyutih, Khadgacharma gadaa paanah Simhastho varado Budhah/* (Budha Deva wears yellow flower garland and yellow clothes with body colour too yellowish; he sports a sword, shield, mace and 'Vara mudra' by his four hands and is seated on a lion); *Deva daitya Guru Taddhat peetaswaitow chaturbhujaw, Dandinow Varadow Kaaryao Saakshasutra Kamandalu/* (The 'Pratimas' or Idols of Deva Guru Brihaspati and of Danava Guru Shukraachaarya should respectively be of yellow and white colours; their hands are ornamented with Danda, Rudrakshamaala, Kamandalu and Varada Mudra). *Indra neela dutih Shuli varado Grudhra vaahanah Baana baanaasanadharah kartavy -orka suthastathaa/* (Shanaischara's body colour is of 'Indraneelamani' / blue diamond; he rides a 'Grudhra' / Vulture and carries bow and arrows, Trishula and Varada Mudra). *Karaala vadanah Khadgacharma Shuli Varapradah, Neela simhaasanascha Rahuratra Prashasyatey/* ( Rahu Deva is fierce looking, carries sword, skin sheath, Shula and Vara Prada by his four hands and is seated on a blue throne). *Dhumraa Dwibaahavah Sarvey Gadino vikrutanaanah, Grudhraasana gataa nithyam Ketavah Syurvara pradaah/* (Ketu Deva is of grey colour and of fierce Rupa with two hands showing gadaa and varada mudra seated always on a vulture) *Sarvey kireetinah kaaryaa Grahaa Lokahitaavahaah, Hyaanguleynocchritaah Sarvey shatamashtottaram sadaa/* ( Source Matsya Purana)

While Navagraha Kshetras are spread out all over Bharat, Kumbhakonam in Tamil nadu alone has a large concentration; it is some 40 km from Tanjore and 275 km from Chennai and it literally denotes the Kona of Kumbha or the nozzle corner of the giant jar or container named Universe within which the seeds of Charaachara Srishti or Creation of all Living Beings are enveloped and preserved by Brahma the Supreme Creator, at the time of Pralaya the Great Dissolution with a view to resume Creation thereafter! This Mystic City of Dakshina Bharat is aptly called the City of Temples and is bound by two Rivers viz. Cauvery and Arasalar, celebrating Maha Magha once in twelve years in the Maha Magha Sarovara right in the heart of the City. *Kumbheshwara Temple* is stated to be the foremost one in the City with a high rise gopura and large area around with Kumbheshwara Linga as the center piece of the shape of a Kumbha or a Pot and within this Main Temple itself is enclosed another Mandir of Devi Parvati with the name of Mangalambika, while the Murtis of Ganesha, Subrahmanya and other Shiva Parivara are also in the Parikrama or Pradakshina. The concentration of the Nava Graha Temples at Kumbhakonam in Tamilnadu is detailed as below: *Japaa kusuma sankasham Kaashyapeyam mahaa dyutim Tamorim, sarva paapagham pranatosmi Divakaram/* This is how one prays to Surya Narayana at one's first darshan of Sun early morning as Divakara the Day long Deity and the proud son of Kashyapa Muni who shines day long with the brightness of the hues of Japakusuma flowers demolishing darkness and all kinds of sins. **Surya Narayana Koyil** which is near Kumbhakonam by 18 km is famed for the Sun-worshipping Chola Kings in 10<sup>th</sup> century built with stone as Surya depicted in a seven horse drawn flying chariot faced west, along with other shrines of Kasi Vishwanatha, Devi Visalakshi, Brihaspati and Kol Tirtha Vinayaka in the vicinity demanding nine Pradakshinas of the complex. It is stated that before paying respects at the Suryanarayana Kovil, one is required to pay homage at Tirumangalakkudi Shiva sthalam near Mayladutturai at Pranateshwara and Mangala Nayaki as Devi Parvati was rid of a curse to become a parrot and got re-wedded as Mangala on Makara Sankranti day and hence the Place known as Mangala Kshetra celebrating festival there. Makara Saptami / Ratha Saptami in Maagha Month- coinciding with Tamil Thai month- is an important festival at the Suryanarayana Koil. *Tingalur Chandra/ Kailasa natha Temple* some 18 km away from Kumbhakonam, where the main Idol Shiva as Kaisasha natha but is basically dedicated to Chanda Deva. *Dadhi shankha tushaaraabham ksheeraarnava samudbhavam, Namaami Sashinam Somam Shambhor makuta bhushanam/* Materialised from the Ocean of Milk and adorned as Maha Deva's shining headgear ornament, Chandra Deva is hereby venerated; indeed Chandra is the Lord of Heath and Medicines as also of Peace and Tranquility. There is a separate Shrine of the Lord Chandra at the Kalasha natha Temple. The legend of this Chandra Kshetra reveals that a Nayanar was a great devotee of Appaar viz. Parama Shiva and one day he decided to worship at his residence with piety and pomp by calling his friends, associates and neighbours at an appropriate function. Unfortunately, the son of the Nayanar was bitten by a poisonous snake during the puja. The Nayanar family was shattered at the misfortune but instead of blaming Appan for the misfortune, intensified his prayers undaunted even while the son was almost dying. Appar directed Chandra the God of Medicines and Good Health to cure the child and reverse his condition of sinking due to the effect of poison. The ever grateful Nayanar broke into tearful prayers and in the company of the co-devotees sang praises of Chandra Deva and the Adi Deva Appar and celebrated the devotional function. *Vaitheeswara Koil of Angaraka: Dharani garbhasambhutam Vidyurkanti sama prabham, Kumaram Shakti hastam tam Mangalam pranamaamyaham/* Being the son of Bhu Devi Mangala Deva is of the flashy Lightning and he too like Lord Subrahmanya the embodiment of Power and Courage ever worthy of worship. The Temple of Lord Vaideeswaran the Deity of Healing and of Medical Treatment as the key to Arogya or Health is situated some 27 km of Chidambaram and 52km from Kumbhakonam. Built by Kulottnuga

Chola of 11<sup>th</sup> century, Vaideeshwaran Temple encompasses large precincts with a 5tier Gopuram with its principal Sanctum dedicated to Vaideeshwara Linga and a metal image of Muttukumara Subramanya, besides those of Nataraja, Soma Skanda, Angaraka as also stone sculptures of Durga, Dakshina murti, Surya, Jatayu, Vedas and Sampatti. Temples of Taila Nayaki standing with medical oils to cure diseases and another of Dhanvantari and Angaraka are in Place, besides a Vriksha Sthala with medicinal properties in the vicinity. Nadi Jyotisha written in Tamil Script is practised in Vaideeswaran extensively and near the Temple. Brahmotsavas during January- February, Kartigai Festival during November and Kanti Shashtis at Muttukumara Temple are big draws besides on Tuesdays. From 10 km from Sirkali and 60 km from Kumbhskonom is **Bhudha** Temple viz. *Swetaarayaneshwara-Brahma Vidya Devi Temple* at Tiruvengadu as *Priyangu kalikaa Shyamam rupenaa pratimam Budham, Soumyam Soumya gunopetam tam Budham pranamaamyaham*/To you the ever lovable and pleasing faced Budha Deva with placid and cool temperament, as the blessed son of Chandra Deva, our warm Salutations! Agora Murti the placid and tranquil manifestation of the usually angry antithesis of the Tamasika Swarupa of Maha Deva; like Budha among the Nava Grahas, Maha Deva assumes a form of High Learning and Unparalleled Maturity. Yet, even of smooth and suave temperament, He like Budha Graha, deals with the evil with coolness and unmistakable precision. This was how like of Aghora qualities eliminated Padmasura who unnecessarily clashed with Rishis and the virtuous Brahmanas and interfered with their yagnas and acts of virtue as puffed up by egoism and selfishness. The Chariot Festival at this Aghora Shiva Temple, is a natural phenomenon of the determination of Maha Deva to punish the evil but with the composed temperament typical of Budha, notwithstanding the fact that Agora a Swarupa of Veerabhadra still sustains maturity with a purpose! Alangudi **Guru Sthalam**: *Devanaamcha Risheenamcha Gurum kanchana sannibham, Buddhi bhutam Trilokesham tam namaami Brihaspatim*/ ( I salute Brihaspati the Grand Guide and Mentor to Devas and Rishis who is like the molten gold with which to create Celestial Ornaments of Virtue and Existence; he is the One who leads to Knowledge and Mental Sharpness with which to lead to Supreme Realisation). Well within a distance of 18 km. the Apat Sahayeswara Temple of Parama Shiva who was the 'Garala Kantha' or the Singular Devourer of Deadly Poisonous Flames called 'Haalaahala' that engulfed the Universe and saved the very Existence or Creation as Deva Danavas ventured to materialise Amrit! Indeed He is the Saviour of Dangers and Obstacles in human life! Besides the Temple of Apat kaala Sahaaya or the Unique Refuge Point to Devotees, Alangudi Guru Sthala is also the Abode of Dakshina Murti the Unparalleled Advisor of Virtue and Righteousness viz. Brihaspati. Indeed the Illustrious Nayanars or Shaivite Poet Saints were never tired of the glories of Maha Deva. **Shukra** as Agnishwaraar Temple at Kanjanor some 20 km. from Kumbhakonom is popular since Shukra is identified as Parama Shiva himself in the Linga Swarupa which is omnipresent and all-pervading: *Himakunda tushaaraabham daityaanaam paramam gurum, Sarva shastra pravaktaaram Bhargavam pranamaamyaham*/ Built by late Chola Kings and renovated by Krishna deva Raya of Vijayanagar Empire, this famed Shukra Temple is stated as Shukra within Maha Deva. Maha Deva represents both the virtuous and vicious aspects of Srishti and seeks to balance shades of darkness and brightness alike. Universe as created by the Supreme is indeed a mix of Satwa-Rajasika-Tamo Gunas and if there were a Deva Guru, there ought to be a representation of a Shukra too as the Danava-Daithya-Rakshasa Guru and between the two, transgression of limits neither way is permitted; after all in the scheme of events complete perfection is not possible and to err is human but the playful Almighty ensures that the frontiers of Good and Bad are ably guarded with built-in checks and balances! The legendary belief of Agnishwarar Temple at Kanjanor is that Shiva obliged Parashara Muni with a performance of Cosmic Dance at this Temple, bringing out this aspect of Srishti to balance the impulses of life! **Shaneshwara**

Temple at Tirunallar is 55 km away from Kumbhakonam called Darbhaaranyam in the past or the Forest of Darbhas or kusha grass, utilised in all Sacred Acts or Deva- Pitru Karyas. Darbhaaranyeshwara Linga is the Prime Dety worshipped at thus Temple which is essentially of Shaneshwara or Shiva as Shani Deva. *Neelaanjana samaabhaasam Ravi putram Yamaagrajam Chaayaa Martaandasambhutam tam namaami Shanaishacharam/* (My salutations to you Shani Devata! You are of the splendour of blue saffires and as the illustrious son of Surya Deva and elder brother of Lord Yama Dharma Raja; you are also the son of Chhaya Devi, the alter form of Sanjana Devi).[ Sanjana Devi the daughter of Vishwakarma was unable to withstand the oppressive heat and radiance of Surya Deva and could see him excepting wobbly and unsteady eyes. Their union gave birth to Vaivaswata Manu and Yama Dharma Raja. But the annoyed Surya cursed Sanjana that she would give birth to a female as a river whose course was uneven and unsteady. Then Sanjana created a Chhaya Sanjana (her shadow), briefed her and left for his father and since the latter too was upset, assumed the form of a mare to perform Tapasya to reduce the severity of Surya. Then meanwhile Shanaischara was born to Chhaya Devi. Surya on knowing the truth assumed the form of a horse and their mating led to the birth of Revanta. Later on the Sanjana-Chhaya combine gave Surya the blessing of the birth of Ashwini Kumars, the physicians of Devas]. The Shaneeshwara Temple at Tirunallar mainly displays the Darbhaaranyeshwara stated to have been made of Darbhas and is essentially embodied as Shaneshwara. Worship and Abhishekas to Darbheshwara are learnt to represent those of Shaneshwara as Maha Deva represents the aspects of Lord Shaneshwara as well. Both the Temples of this and that of the neighbouring Tiruvallur's Temple- as built in 7<sup>th</sup> century by Chola Kings- highlight two principal aspects of retribution-reward of Shanaischara and of Sangita-Natya of Fine Arts represented by at Nataraja do signify the two features of Maha Deva. **Rahu Sthala** or Tiru Nageswaram is the Sacred and widely acclaimed Abode of Rahu Graha as embodied in the Maha Naga Natha Linga is hardly 6 km away from Kumbhakonam right on the banks of Kaveri River prayed to as follows: *Artha kaayam Maha Veeram Chandraditya vimardanam Simhika garbha sambhutam tam Rahum pranamaamyaham/* (Rahu Deva! You possess half divine and half serpent physical form. You are the son of Simhika Devi the daughter of Hiranya kashipu; a valiant and resourceful champion of Ksheera Sagara Mathana leading to the emergence of Amrita and the punisher of Surya and Chandra even! My sincere salutations to you!) This Rahu Sthala is also called earlier as Sanbagaranya or the wild forest of Senbaga Trees infested by poisonous serpents. This is thus the habitat of Naganatha Linga and Devi Parvati as Giri Gujambal to whose Swarupas that Indra performed deep Tapasya to, to absolve a curse by Maharshi Gautami since he tricked and molested Ahalya the latter's wife. Tiru Nageshwara is also distinguished as the hallowed Place where the illustrious Maha Sarpas like Adi Sessa, Karkotaka and Takshaka lined up for Tapasya to Maha Deva and secured their blessings. The Temple complex is a master piece of typical Cholan Architecture stated to have been built in 10<sup>th</sup> Century with excellent campus of four gates, with the Main Naga natha Linga, and separate shrines for Piramani Parvati, Giri Gujamba Parvati, Rahu Deva with his spouses, Vinayaka with Ganesha Yantra as per inscription, and of course Nandi before Naga natha. The Rituals are regular six times daily and highly crowded daily Rahu Abhishekas as per respective Rahu Kala Prathamas; holiday Rahu Kaala Abhishekas are extraordinary. *A fantastic feature of the Rahu kaala Abhishekas is the clearly visible sight of white milk turning blue and crowds crave to see the same!* The easy and traditional way of learning one-and half duration of daily Rahu Kaala is on the basis of the following viz. *Mother Saw Father Wearing The Two Socks* to count 7.30 to 9 Am, 9-10 .30 Am, 10.30 to noon, 12 to 1.30 pm, 1.30 pm-3 pm, 3 pm- 4. 30 pm and 4.30-6 pm. **Ketu Sthala:** is 57 km from Kumbhakonam and just 2 km from Pompuhar at Keela perumalpaalam as the Temple of Naganatha Swami and Soundarya Nayaki ie. Shiva and Parvati Swarupas. *Palasha pushpa*

*sankasham taarakagraha mastakam, Roudram Roudratmakam ghoram tam Ketum pranamaamyaham/ Iti Vyasa mukod geetam yah pathetsu samaahitam Divaavaa yadivaa ratrou avighna shantir bhavishyati/* (Our salutations to you Ketu Deva! You are of the brightness of Palasa flowers placed on your hood which is at the top of Stars and Grahas. You are indeed frightening, breathtaking and spiteful. Do kindly pardon my shortcomings and be forgiving! If one recites the entire Navagraha Stotra from Surya Deva onward to all the Nava Grahas sincerely as Scripted by Veda Vyasa himself day and night then there would never be obstacles in daily life but would get fulfillment of wishes and contentment). At this Temple, 'vidhi poorvaka snanas' in the Naaga Tirtha would indeed bestow happiness and peace of mind with the blessings of Naga natha and Soundarya Naayaki well settled in this Temple. Quite apart from the established Nava Graha Sthalas near Kumbhakonam and around, Pradakshinas are performed in the Sub Temples at most of the Devi-Deva Temples all over Bharat, most especially in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Andhra and specified pilgrimage points all over in North too. Shani Shinga pur some 70 km away from the Saibaba Temple at Shirdi and Mandapalli near Rajamandry as also Rahu-Ketu worship at Kalahasti in Andhra too are significant. Invariably among the Vishnu-Shiva-Devi Temples all over Bharat, Navagraha parikramas have become an integral part of the worship as subsidiary Nava grahas Temples are distinctly designated albeit in a remote part of the Sanctum Sanctorum.

**102) Nava Ratnas:** Diamonds, pearls, sapphires, corals, rubies, gomedha and vaidurya.

**103) Navaavarana Puja of Sarva Shaktis:** First Enclosure comprising the Siddhis of Anima, Laghima, Mahima, Ishwita, Vashitwa, Prakamya, Bhuti, Iccha, Prapti and Sarva Kamyas; Eight Matrukas of Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Mahendri, Chamunda and Maha Lakshmi; Sarva Devis viz. Sankshobhini, Vidravini, Vashankari, Unmadini, Mahaankusha, Khechari, Beeja, Yoni, Tri- Khanda, Trilokya Mohana, and Prakata Yogini; Second Enclosure: Akarshini Shaktis named Kama, Buddhya, Ahankara, Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa, Gandha, Chitta, Dhairya, Smrutya, Nama, Beeja, Atma, Amruta, Sharira, Sarva Ashaapariapuraka and Gupta Yoginis; Third Enclosure Ananga Shaktis of Kusuma, Mekhala, Madana, Madanatura, Rekha, Vegini, Ankusha, Malini, Samkshobana and Guptatara; Fourth Enclosure: Sarva Devis of Kshobhini, Vidravini, Akarshini, Ahladini, Sammohini, Stambhini, Jrumbhini, Vashankari, Ranjani, Unmadini, Sadhika, Sampatti Purana, Mantramayi, Dwandwa Kshayankari, Soubhagya daayaka, and Sampradaya Yogini; Fifth Enclosure: Sarva Devis of Siddhiprada, Sampatprada, Priyankari, Mangala kaarini, Kamaprada, Duhkha vimochni, Mrityu prashamani, Vighna niwarini, Sarvanga Sundari, Soubhagya daayani, Ardha Sadhaka Chakra Swamini and Kulottirna; Sixth Enclosure of Sarva Devis of Sarvajna, Shakti, Aishwarya pradayani, Jnaanamayi, Vyadhi Vinashani, Aadhara, Papahari, Anandamayi, Raksha Swarupini, Ipsita phala prada, Rakshakara and Nigarbha yogini; Seventh Enclosure: Vagdevis of Vashini, Kameshwari, Modhini, Vimala, Aruna, Jayani, Sarveshwari, Koulini, Sarva Rogahara, Rahasya Yogini, Baanini, Chaapini, Paashani, and Ankushani; Eighth Enclosure: Maha Devis of Kameshwari, Vajreshwari, Bhagamaalini, Siddhiprada and Atirahasya Yogini; and finally the Ninth Enclosure of Maha Devis viz. Shri Bhattarika, Sarvaanandamaya Chakra Swamini and Paraapara Rahasya Yogini.

**104) Dashavataaraas of Vishnu:** To one of the queries of Bhu Devi about the instances when Lord Vishnu assumed various forms as extreme situations were faced by the Universe, especially when injustice and evil forces reached a point of no return, the reply from Lord Varaha was quite positive. In an earlier case, Lord Vishnu assumed the form of '**Matsya**' or a Giant Fish. As the Lord found in His Yoga Nidra at the time of 'Pralay' that The Four Vedas were being destroyed, He took the very first Incarnation

to rescue the Scriptures. Even Deities were frightened to find the colossal form of 'Matsya' and after the retrieval of the Vedas from the Ocean bed, eulogised and entreated the Lord to reduce the size of the Fish. On another occasion, Lord Vishnu assumed various other forms such as '**Kurma**' (Tortoise) at the time of Ocean-churning to balance the Manthara Mountain by using the Great Serpent Vasu as the huge string as both 'Devas' and 'Danavas' toiled to fetch 'Amrit' (Ambrosia). On occasions following the '**Varaha Avatar**', Lord Vishnu incarnated as '**Narasimha Avatar**' (The Man-Lion form) to destroy Demon Hiranyaksha and save the highly dedicated devotee of Vishnu. The Lord assumed '**Vamana Avatar**' (The Dwarf) to control the ambitions of King Bali and threw him down under the Sub-terrestrial world. In a conscious effort to obliterate the clan of 'Kshatriyas' or Rulers who oppressed and tormented the contemporary world and became tyrannical, Lord Vishnu incarnated as '**Parasurama**' and vindicated Virtue against Vice. Bhagavan Vishnu incarnated as '**Shri Rama**' - a 'Maryada Purusha' or a Model Man of Dignity and Valour who established benchmarks to humanity and annihilated the clan of Demons in Lanka headed by Ravana who not only terrorised the world but trampled all limits of decency by abducting Lady Sita and performing endless acts of cruelty. In Dwapara Yuga, the most charismatic was the Avatar of **Sri Krishna**, the Central Figure of the memorable Epic Maha Bharata who declared: *Yada Yadahi Dharmasya glanir bhavati Bharata! Abhyuthana madharmasya tadatmanam srijamyaham/* (As and when Virtue is trampled and Wickedness dominates, I incarnate myself to correct the balance); *Paritranaya Sadhuunam vinasaayacha dushkrutam Dharma Samsthapanaardhaaya Sambhavaami Yuge Yuge/* (I make my presence felt in various Yugas to save the Virtuous and root out the Wicked). In the earlier phase of Kali Yuga, **Lord Buddha** was born to preach the triumph of Dharma (Virtue), Nyaya (Justice) and Ahimsa (Non-Violence) and popularised Buddhism as a powerful tool in the quest of Truth and Self-Realisation. The tenth incarnation of Lord Vishnu at the termination of Kali Yuga is to be that of **Kalki Avatar** brandishing a sword on a horse back to herald a New Age of Dharma. (Source: Varaha Purana)

Far more elaborate is the presentation of Dashavatara in Agni Purana as follows:

**'Dashaavatara' (The Ten Incarnations) Matsya Avatara:** As the Universe time drew near to Final Destruction including the 'Bhulok' (Earth), 'Swarglok' (Heaven) and 'Bhuvanlok' (intermediate Region), it was flooded with water. As 'Vaivaswata Manu' (son of Surya) was in prayers in River 'Kirtimala'; he found a tiny fish in the water on his palms which begged him not to throw it as big fish might swallow it. Manu kept it in a pot, but soon the fish grew big to occupy the ocean and asked him to build a mammoth Ship and transfer 'Sapta Rishis' (Seven Sages) and a sample each of flora and fauna. Vishnu in the form Matsya declared that the Universe would be flooded soon, that the ship would be saved along with Manu and others, that He would destroy demon 'Hayagriva' and re-create the Universe.

**Kurma Avatara:** As 'Asuras' (Demons) and 'Devas' (Devas) were on fierce battle for long time, Lord 'Brahma' (The Creator) and Lord 'Vishnu' (The Preserver) arrived a truce between the two parties who churned 'Kshira Sagar' (the Ocean of Milk) to attain 'Amrita' (Elixir). The mountain 'Mandara' was commissioned as a rod for the churning and 'Vasuki', the Great Serpent as the rope. Demons grabbed the face of 'Vasuki' out of pride and many perished due to the poisonous flames from its several mouths, whereas Devas preferred to opt for the tail of the Serpent out of veneration for Vasuki. Since the Mountain could not be balanced in the Ocean, Lord Vishnu took the form of a Turtle (Kurma) and withstood the weight and speed of the churning. In the course of churning, came out a colossal poisonous fire, named 'Kalakuta', which engulfed the whole Universe. Lord 'Eswara' swallowed the Great Fire and

kept it in His Throat and thus came to be known as 'Neelagriva' (The Blue Throated). Eventually, a number of Objects emerged as a result of the churning but the Demons rejected them all as they were only bent on 'Amritha' and none else. Among the Objects were: 'Sura' (The Divine Drink), 'Parijata' the Tree bringing heavenly fragrance by its flowers since opted by Indra for his Garden; 'Koustubha' the Holy Jewel adorning Lord Vishnu's chest, the Celestial Animals viz. 'Kapila' the Sacred Cow, 'Uttchaiswarya' the Divine Horse and 'Iravata' the Elephant used by Indra; 'Apsaras', the Heavenly Dancers; Lakshmi the Goddess of Wealth, who preferred to be the Consort of Lord Vishnu and finally emerged 'Dhanvantari' - the God of Medicine, along with the most awaited 'Amritha', which was sought to be grabbed by Demons and Gods alike. To sort out the confusion, there appeared a dazzling damsel 'Mohini' (The Unique Enchantress)-who was Lord Vishnu Himself-and both Suras and Asuras accepted her as an arbitrator and 'just' distributor of Amritha. Mohini made both the parties wait for their turn and served Devas first and declared that the stock of Amritha was all consumed and disappointed the Demons. One of the Demons, Rahu- pretended to be the Moon God and consumed Amrita; on conceding the protests of Sun and Moon, Mohini cut his head. But since he managed to take sips of the Life-giving Drink, Rahu survived and in fact managed to secure a boon that he could devour both Sun and Moon and hence the Solar and Lunar Eclipses. As a result of the drama Demons were defeated and Devas retained power in Heaven thus vindicating the Divine Position of Devas.

**Varaha Avatar:** Sage Kashyapa and his wife Diti gave birth to 'Hiranyaksha', who in turn pleased Lord Brahma, and managed a boon that no force on Earth could destroy him in battles. He conquered all the three worlds, viz. the Earth, Heaven and the Under-World. In fact, he dragged Earth into the depths of the Ocean and there was complete chaos in the Universe. Lord Vishnu had to take the form of a boar, which after a prolonged battle destroyed the demon and restored Earth by lifting it by His tusks. The Balance of the Universe would have been completely upset if Earth were not saved along with the virtues of Mankind, the Holy Scriptures and the very concept of Righteousness and Godliness.

**Narasamiha Avatar:** As his elder brother Hiranyaksha was killed by Lord Vishnu, 'Hiranyakashipa' desired to avenge the death. But he realized that unless he pleased Brahma (Lord of Creation) with rigorous meditation and sacrifice, he would not receive the boons that he wanted. Finally, Brahma acceded to all of his wishes that he could not be killed by any human being or beast, by night or day, in the sky or on the Earth or in water. Having secured the boons, the Demon became all powerful and tormented one and all, especially those who prayed to Lord Vishnu. In fact, he insisted that he alone should be prayed to. He attacked Sages, destroyed 'Yagnyas' (Sacrifices) and temples and sought to terminate the Good and the righteous. But his own son, named 'Prahlada', was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu from his childhood. Hiranyakashipa tried all means of cajoling, threatening and finally used various methods of killing him. Yet, each time that he sought to destroy the son, he was saved and Prahlada's devotion became more intense than ever. Finally in a fit of desperation, the father asked the son: 'Many a time, I tried to murder you, you are saved! Where is your Vishnu? You say that he is everywhere! Can you show him to me in this pillar?' The son replied coolly that He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent! Enraged by this reply, the Demon struck the pillar and there emerged Lord Vishnu in the form of Narasimha (Half-Man and Half-Lion), kept the Demon on His lap and tore him into pieces. As per the prescription of the boon received by the demon from Lord Brahma, the annihilation happened neither by a human being nor a beast, not at a time when it was night or day (viz. dusk time) and neither on earth, sky or water! In this Incarnation, Lord Vishnu had thus not only saved Prahlada, as also established a firm victory of Goodness over Evil, Virtue over Sin, and Permanent over Ephemeral!

**Vamana Avatar:** 'Bali', the grandson of Prahlada, was a Demon King in the lineage of Hiranyakashipa, who became all powerful and was most dreaded by 'Devas'. He drove Devas away from Heaven, who fled away to Lord Vishnu for refuge. Vishnu assured Devas that Bali, who was in fact a benevolent King although dominant, would be humbled and that they would be restored to Heaven soon.. Eventually, the Lord was born to Kashyapa and Diti and grew as a midget ('Vamana'). As King Bali was performing a Ritualistic Yagna (Sacrifice), he declared that on the occasion nobody would be turned out without fulfilling their wishes. Vamana arrived and asked for a 'small boon', viz. a three feet of land to be given as a 'dakshina' (a fee) to his Guru (Teacher). The Guru of Demons, Sage 'Shukracharya' suspected that the dwarf was a fake and might perhaps be Lord Vishnu Himself. King Bali said that if the dwarf were the Lord Himself, then the posterity would remember the King as a donor to the Lord. Thus saying the King asked Sage Sukracharya to sprinkle the holy water from a vessel to commence the ritualistic proceedings. Guru Sukracharya still tried to prevent the act of donation and entered the vessel in a miniature form so that the holy water could not be sprinkled. Vamana was clever enough to pierce a piece of grass into the curved mouth of the vessel and thus pricked into one of the eyes of Sukracharya by doing permanent damage to the eye. As the action of donating the three feet of land was complete, Vamana assumed a huge body and occupied one foot with Bhuloka, (Earth), another with Bhuhvarloka and still demanded a third step for Swarloka. Thus King Bali had no other recourse to shift himself to 'Patala' (Under World). Lord Vishnu was immensely pleased with Bali's altruism and gave him the boon to bear the title and powers of Lord Indra, the King of Heaven.

**Parasurama Avatar:** As per the 'Varna Dharma' of Hinduism there are four categories of castes of which the first category is of 'Brahmins' practising ritualistic prayers, Sacrifices, religious preaching, temple-running etc. Next category comprises 'Kshatriyas' or the Warriors and Kings, whose duty is to protect all other classes of people, especially the Brahmins. In this background, Kshatriyas had over a few generations neglected the interests of the three 'Varnas' and became despotic and cruel. It was at this time, that Lord Vishnu came to mortal life as the son of Sage 'Jamadagni' and 'Renuka' and assumed the name of 'Parasu Rama' or the one with an axe to punish the evil. 'Kartaveerya' was the contemporary King who was an ill-famed and cruel tyrant, with thousand hands. He not only subjected his own people with oppression and brutality but became a terror among his neighbouring Kingdoms too. He had a few boons from Lord Dattatreya which were misused and tormented one and all. On one occasion, the King visited the Ashram (the Hermitage) of Jamadagni and was impressed with the Holy Cow, 'Kamadhenu', as the cow could fulfill all desires of human beings. The King had forcibly taken away the Cow, despite Jamadagni's protests. Parasurama waged a war with the King and cut off his thousand hands. His sons retaliated by killing Jamadagni and destroyed the Hermitage, when Parasurama was away. As a sequel, Parasurama had not only killed the progeny of Kartaveerya, but also hunted and shattered the totality of the Kshatriya clan by waging some twenty one wars to avenge the killings of his father and followers. Eventually, Parasurama retired and lived at Mount Mahendra. He returned again to Earth only in the subsequent 'Yuga' (the second in the Time-series of human existence, viz. Threta Yuga').

**Rama Avatar:** Lord Vishnu's next incarnation was that of Rama. He was born into 'Surya Vamsa' (the ancestry of Sun God) to 'Dasaratha' and 'Kousalya', while his brothers were born to his step mothers as 'Laxmana' to 'Sumithra', 'Bharata' and 'Shatrughna' to 'Kaikeyi'. As the boys grew up, Sage 'Viswamitra' asked for the help of Rama to protect the Yagna (Sacred Ritual) from Demons, as they tended to spoil the Ritual by pouring blood into the 'Agni Kunda' (the Fire Pit). Dasaratha was most reluctant to depute Rama for the purpose as he was still in teens and said that he was prepared to defend

the Yagna himself. Viswamitra insisted only on Rama and Dasaratha had to agree; Rama was accompanied by Laxmana too, as he was not only the closest among his brothers, but also devoted to Rama. The Yagna was performed successfully and Rama killed a dreadful 'Rakshasi' (demoness) named 'Tataka' and demon by name 'Subahu'; Rama also threw away thousands of miles off the high Sea another demon named 'Maricha' by the power of his arrows. As a symbol of his appreciation to Rama, Viswamitra taught how to use valuable 'astras' (Divine Arrows) to destroy enemies, in addition to those which were already taught to him by his own Guru 'Vasishtha', another Great Sage in the court of King Dasaratha. On way back to Ayodhya, the Capital of his Kingdom, Viswamithra took Rama to the Capital City ('Mithila') of another King namely 'Janaka'. The latter announced a 'Swayam Vara' (Self-choice of a husband by a daughter; in this case Lady Sita), the criterion of eligibility for a suitable suitor being that 'Shiva Dhanush'-a Divine Set of Bow and Arrow, belonging originally by Lord Shiva Himself- to be fixed and broken. Rama succeeded in breaking the 'Shiva Dhanush' and married Sita, who was basically Goddess Lakshmi, the spouse of Lord Vishnu Himself. Alongside, Janaka performed the weddings of his other daughters to Rama's other brothers, viz .Lakshmana to 'Urmila', Bharata to 'Mandavi', and Shatrughna to 'Shrutakirti'. On way back to Ayodhya after the joyous weddings, Rama had an encounter with Parasurama, another incarnation of Lord Vishnu Himself, as Prasurama was annoyed that Rama broke the Shiva Dhanush. But Rama sought to convince Parasurama and more significantly the entire world that he was indeed the Avatar of Lord Vishnu. As there was a seeming threat posed by Parasurama, Rama broke another powerful Set of Bow and Arrows, viz. 'Narayana Dhanush' as given by Parasurama. On return to Ayodhya, Dasaratha declared Rama to be the 'Yuvraj' (heir apparent).The entire Kingdom and all the citizens felt highly overjoyed and ecstatic at the great news, as even by then, Rama was considered as a role model for humanity and a 'Maryada Purush'( an exceptionally noble and lovable person). But, the youngest wife of Dasaratha, Kaikeyi, opposed the proposal and as instigated by her maid servant 'Manthara', reminded the King of two of his boons to her that were due to her when she nursed him after a battle with a demon in the past. She asked for fulfilling her boons that Bharata, her elder son, be made the heir apparent and that Rama be consigned to forests for 14 years. Dasaratha had no choice but to concede her requests. Rama obeyed the paternal wishes, as conveyed to him by Kaikeyi, since Dasaratha had already swooned after hearing the undue demands. Rama was accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana.Subsequently, Dasaratha died of heart attack. Bharata was away from Ayodhya to Mithila, as pre-planned by Kaikeyi, and on return, felt hurt by the terrible turnover of events, reprimanded his mother, refused to become the King, kept the throne unoccupied as he was only a caretaker, that too when asked by Rama whom he met in the forests, and carried back Rama's 'Padukas' (wooden footwear) to Ayodhya to be cherished on the Royal Throne.Meanwhile, Rama and Sita, accompanied by Lakshmana moved on to 'Dandakaranya' (Thick interior of Forests) and lived in a hermitage, named 'Panchavati' on the quiet banks of River 'Godavari'. In course of time, a Rakshasa woman, by name 'Surpanakha' approached Rama and desired to marry her. Rama said that his wife was already with him but perhaps another male viz. Lakshmana might agree to do so. Lakshmana got Ram's coded message and slit Surpanakha's ears and nose. The latter desired to avenge the insult and prevailed on her brother 'Khara' to attack Rama and Lakshmana with his full army. The demon and his men were all killed in the battle and Surpanakha approached the mighty King of Lanka, viz.the ten headed and most dreaded 'Ravana' to retaliate. Enraged by the series of the deadly events, Ravana ordered Maricha to take the form of a Golden Deer to entice Lady Sita, so that Rama would chase it and thus abduct Sita. Rama killed the deer but shouted Rama's name aloud as a ploy and Lakshmana left Sita alone and went in search of Rama. Meanwhile 'Ravana' succeeded in abducting Sita and took her away to Lanka. The Great Kite 'Jatayu'

intercepted Ravana to rescue Sita but Ravana killed Jatayu. While dying, Jatayu informed Rama and Lakshmana, who were searching for Sita, that Ravana abducted Sita. Wandering in the forests, Rama made friends with 'Sugriva', the illustrious Monkey Chieftain, along his supporters, especially the Illustrious 'Hanuman', who had become Rama's instant devotee and unfailing follower. Sugriva was being harassed by his elder brother 'Vali', who was a powerful and tyrannical King of 'Kishkintha'. Rama helped Sugriva to kill Vali and made him the King of Kishkintha. Sugriva sent his Monkey soldiers far and wide to locate Sita. Finally, Hanuman crossed the Sea and met Sita in a garden of Ravana under an Ashoka Tree. He identified himself as a devotee of Rama with the help of his golden ring that was given by Rama himself as an identity. Hanuman created havoc in the Ashoka garden and killed many Rakshasa soldiers. Ravana's son, 'Meghanadh' had to utilize his prize 'Brahmastra' (the Divine Weapon of Brahma) to control Hanuman and present him in the royal court of Ravana. King Ravana ordered that Hanuman should be taught a lesson by scorching Hanuman's tail. In turn, Hanuman destroyed palaces, public places and a large part of Lanka's Capital and finally returned to Kishkintha to report the presence of Sita, who was being pressurized to marry Ravana as also the happenings of his visit to Lanka. Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman, the giant Bear Jambavanta, and the massive Monkey- Brigade reached the shores of the Sea and built a gigantic 'Ram Sethu' (Bridge) across the Sea, inscribing the name of Rama on each rock and let it float! Having crossed the Sea, the 'Rama Sena' (Rama's Army) was composed and formulated to surround the entire Island of Lanka. One of Ravana's brothers, 'Vibhishana', who was a man of principles and morals tried to reason out with Ravana not to combat with Rama on the flimsy grounds of obsession with Sita, but he left the party of Ravana to join Rama, where there was 'Dharma' (Justice and Truth). In the fierce and long drawn battle that ensued, Rama killed Ravana's monstrous brother 'Kumbhakarna' and his outrageous son Meghanadha, alias Indrajit. The all powerful Ravana himself had to be wrecked by Rama by utilizing the massive Brahmastra while the entire Rakshasa community was destroyed by Rama's followers. After a long lapse of fourteen years, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana returned to Ayodhya, accompanied by the memorable Hanuman, Sugriva, Vibhushana and innumerable fellow warriors of the Rama Vijay (Rama's Victory) to witness Lord Rama's Coronation. The popular 'Rama Rajya' (Rama's Administration) was a bench-mark as per Hindu Mythology, witnessing the practice of Dharma in full force. The ideals that were followed were as per Scriptures of the Yore and reached peaks of human existence of Justice and Nobility. **Krishna Avatar:** The eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu was of Krishna, belonging to the 'Yadava' Community which was traced back to the ancestry of Lord Brahma. The lineage of Brahma commenced from his son 'Atri' onward to- Soma-Pururuva-Ayu-Nahusha-Yayati-and Yadu. Thus Krishna was born into 'Yadava Vamsa' to 'Vasudeva' and 'Devaki' in Mathura. Devaki's wicked brother 'Kamsa' was the tyrant King, who heard a Divine Voice from the Skies that Devaki's eighth son would kill him. Thus he imprisoned his sister and husband and killed each of the babies born to them. Kamsa took extra precautions to ensure that the eighth child ought not to vanish from the prison. Somehow Vasudeva managed to sneak out the child to safety on a stormy midnight into the cradle of a child just born to 'Nanda' and 'Yashoda' at 'Gokul' across the river 'Yamuna' and the couple brought up the child as their own. The baby since exchanged and brought back to the prison flew away from Kamsa's hands trying to kill that baby too, who flew away from Kamsa's hands and thundered from the sky that the real child, Krishna was safe in Gokul. Having spotted the house where Krishna was safe, Kamsa deputed several demons to somehow kill the child; the demons that turned up thus included 'Pothana', 'Arishta', 'Vrushabha', 'Keshi', 'Dhenuka', 'Gardabha' and so on and Krishna killed them all. Krishna also overpowered a poisonous snake, 'Kaliya', in a poisonous pond as he entered the pond chasing a play ball with his friends. Krishna

humbled Lord Indra, who rained incessantly at Gokula since the inhabitants of that place did not offer prayers to the Rain God, 'Varuna', by lifting a huge mountain, 'Govardhana' by his little finger. As Krishna and his elder brother 'Balarama' grew up, Kamsa invited them to Mathura on a so-called friendly visit, with the malicious intention of killing them. On their entry into the city, Kamsa let loose a mad elephant, which was killed. Kamsa also arranged a duel with two renowned wrestlers, but Krishna and Balarama killed them too. Finally Krishna destroyed Kamsa and got rid of a terrible King bringing great relief to all concerned. Close to the end of Kamsa, another mighty devil named 'Jarasandha' challenged Krishna and sought revenge for Kamsa's (his brother in law) death. Jarasandha too was killed by Krishna. Yet another enemy of Krishna, named 'Sisupala' met his extermination later. There was another momentous occasion, when Krishna and his spouse, 'Satyabhama' fought a deadly demon, 'Narakasura'. It was destined that Satyabhama would terminate the Rakshasa, since Krishna pretended unconsciousness on the battle field to enable her to take the lead-role of killing the 'Asura'. The Victory Day was celebrated as 'Deepavali', the Memorable Festival of Lights. This occasion also led to Krishna's presenting a boon to Satyabhama and her request to Krishna to fetch the celestial flower, Parijata, from the Garden of Lord Indra in Swarga). The Story goes on that unfortunately the Parijata Tree brought from Swarga was planted in the Garden of Rukmini, the senior consort of Krishna and led to jealousies and quarrels in Krishna's intimate family affairs! Moreover, Narakasura imprisoned sixteen thousand daughters of various Devas, Gandharvas, and Yakshas-all from celestial families and Krishna married them, besides his own eight Royal Queens! Besides, Radha the beloved of Krishna led to the concept of 'Ras-Leela' or Group Dances and singing by Gopikas (the girls infatuated with Krishna.)

The Chapter on Harivamsa makes references to Krishna's many sons. But, the Stories of 'Pradyumna' and 'Aniruddha' became popular. Through Rukmini, the Principal Consort of Krishna, Pradyumna was born, but as soon as he was born, a Rakshasa named 'Shambhara' abducted the child and threw him in a Sea. A fish swallowed the child but a fisherman caught the fish and out of its stomach emerged Pradyumna. Eventually, Pradyumna killed Shambhara and married 'Mayavati'. Aniruddha was born to the couple and Krishna felt happy. Aniruddha and 'Usha' were in love, but 'Baana'; an evil-minded King did not approve the wedding and fought with Aniruddha. Finally, Krishna vanquished Baana and made Aniruddha and Usha happy. Closely linked with the Avatar of Krishna is the Story of '**Maha Bharata**', the Great Indian Epic of Ancient India. In fact, the Mahabharata Epic is but an excuse to enact the drama of 'Pandavas' and 'Kauravas', of which the Central Role is of Krishna himself. Pandavas represented nobility, justice, valour and idealism, whereas Kauravas stood for evil, jealousy, meanness and injustice. Krishna sought to depict the good and bad qualities distinctly and reveal that Truth triumphed finally and decidedly. In the lineage that originated from Brahma to Atri down to Yayati, the latter had two wives viz. Devayani, who had two sons named Yadu and Turvusu, while Sharmishtha had three sons named Druhya, Anu and Puru. Krishna was born into Yadu Vamsa, whereas Kuru into Puru Vamsa. King Shantanu was in Kuru Vamsa and he had two wives, Ganga and Satyawati. Bhishma was born to Ganga, whereas Chitrangada and Vichitraveerya to Satyawati. Chitrangada died early and Vichitraveerya was sickly. Meanwhile, Bhishma conquered the King of Kasi and brought three of his daughters, Amba, Ambika and Ambalika with the intention of having them wedded to Vichitraveerya, his younger brother. The three daughters demanded that Bhishma should marry them since they were conquered by Bhishma, but Bhishma took a vow that he would be a bachelor always as he promised his father to facilitate Kingship to the progeny of Satyawati. The eldest daughter, Amba became furious and killed herself in 'Yoga Agni' as she was not married to Bhishma ( In her subsequent birth, Amba was reborn as Sikhandi, a transgender who killed Bhishma subsequently). Since there was a crisis of family lineage to

be perpetuated, Bhishma requested Vedavyasa to bless Ambica and Ambalika into bed. The girls did not initially agree and sent their 'Dasi', a servant maid and thus was born 'Vidura'. On the persuasion of Bhishma the sisters followed into the bed later; Ambica closed her eyes in the union and thus begot a blind son named 'Dhritarashtra', while Ambalika paled away in the union with the fright of Vyasa and thus had 'Pandu' as her son with congenital skin disease. Dhritarashtra was married to 'Gandhari', who also preferred to close her eyes with cloth as a respect to her husband. They got hundred sons, most important of them being 'Duryodhana' and 'Dussasana'. Pandu married Kunti and Madri. Even before her wedding, Kunti was blessed with a son, Karna, by the grace of Sun God, and after marriage she begot Yudhishtara through God Dharma (God of Justice), Bhima by 'Vayu' (God of Wind) and Arjun by God Indra. By the grace of Aswini Gods were born to Madri and they were named Nakula and Sahadeva. As a result of a curse by a Sage, Pandu died untimely and ever since then, Pandavas became fatherless and grew under the care of their paternal uncle Dhritarashtra the blind King. (Vidura, the son of a servant maid born to Vedavyasa was disqualified to become the King and thus became the Chief Adviser to the King.) The hundred strong progeny of Dhritarashtra headed by Duryodhana grew up as the spoilt and much pampered children and developed hatred towards their Pandava cousins, day by day. Karna was disowned by Kunti since she was an unwed mother but tried out an experiment to test a boon given by a Sage and invoked Sun God resulting in her pregnancy and birth of a boy; she packed off the child in a box floating in a river and a chariot driver, 'Suta' and his wife Radha brought up the child as their son. Karna had joined Duryodhana. The Kauravas and Pandavas had a common Guru (Teacher), Drona Acharya, to train them in the art of archery and military skills. Invariably, Pandavas excelled Kauravas in the training sessions and that was an added angle of jealousy to Kauravas, which eventually turned out as hatred. As Bhima was an expert in physical duels and the art of using mace in duel-fight, Duryodhana got envious. Similarly, Arjun was an expert in archery and used to draw praise from Drona. Duryodhana sought to pit Karna in the art of archery, but Guru Drona did not allow Karna in the classes, as Karna was not a Prince, as all others were. At once, Duryodhana being the heir apparent to the Throne declared Karna as the Prince of a subordinate State of the Hastinapura Kingdom and made Karna eligible to join the elite of Princes. In course of time, Kauravas tried several means of terminating Pandavas. The evil minded uncle of Kaurava sons, 'Shakuni' had been an active party in all such wicked actions. In fact, there was a group of four villains- 'Dushta Chatushtaya', comprising Duryodhana, Dussasana, Shakuni and Karna- who were responsible to somehow destroy Pandavas. They arranged a mansion made of shellac to inhabit Pandavas and tried to put it on fire overnight. Lord Krishna, who had all along been on the side of Dharma (Justice) and of Pandavas, had forewarned them of the evil plans of Kauravas to burn the mansion and got them transferred safe through a tunnel leading to a village nearby. Pandavas were disguised as a Brahmin family and rented a small house. Kauravas, including the King and the citizens, believed that Pandavas were ablaze in the mansion. Even in disguise as Brahmins, the five Pandava sons and mother Kunti lived on and rescued the entire village by Bhima from the menace of a Rakshasa, named 'Bakasura', who demanded a villager a day as his food. In course of time, they attended a 'Swayamvara' (Bride seeking to secure a suitable bridegroom) of Draupadi, the daughter of King Drupada and among all the aspirant-suitors only Arjuna was able to smash up a fish revolving fast in a circle placed above the head level and seeing down of its reflection in a water flowing down under. Kaurava sons and Bhishma also attended the function and recognized Pandavas. Kaurava sons were dismayed, but gave great relief to Bhishma and all the well-wishers of Pandava. But, Arjun's victory of winning Draupadi's hand posed a problem since Arjun could not marry ahead of his elder brothers. The puzzle was sorted by Bhishma in consultation with the Sages, Draupadi and elders concerned that she

should marry all the Pandava brothers in a lot. Following the Wedding, Bhishma advised King Dhritarashtra to give half of the Kingdom to Pandavas. Thus Yudhishtara became the King and gradually annexed many Kingdoms and became powerful and wealthy. Pandavas celebrated 'Rajasuya Yagna' (Royal Sacrifice) and elected Krishna as the Chief Guest of the Grand Function. Sisupala, another King and cousin of Krishna objected that the honour to Krishna, whom he defeated in successive wars. But the reality was that his mother requested Krishna to spare Sisupala for one hundred mistakes, before he was destined to die in Krishna's hands finally and thus Krishna hid himself from the wars with Sisupala and suffered him thus far. On reaching the hundred mistakes, Krishna terminated Sisupala. As Pandavas were at their climatic position, Kauravas felt highly jealous and as advised by the wily Shakuni, invited Dharmaraja for a Game of Chess, in which Shakuni played foul. Dharmaraja lost not only the Kingdom, but also Draupadi, who was forcibly brought into the Royal Court by Dussasana in the presence of Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Drona and all the gentry; she was insulted and sought to be disrobed. Further, Dharmaraja was made to agree that Pandavas would spend in the forests for twelve years and an additional year in 'Ajnatavas' (in disguise and not to be noticed or identified by Kauravas or anyone else), failing which, another twelve years of forest life would be re-imposed! After completing the Forest life for twelve years, Pandavas (with the exception of Kunti who stayed with Vidura) took refuge in the Kingdom of 'Virata' in disguised forms viz. Dharmaraja as King Virat's Brahmana- Adviser and companion to play chess, Bhima as the Royal cook, Arjuna as the trans-gender dance teacher of the King's daughter, Uttara; Nakula and Sahadeva as trainers in the Royal stable of the King's horses and Draupadi as the Queen's Principal Maid. During the disguised stay of Pandavas, Bhima weeded out Keechaka one night without trace, even as the King himself was not unhappy about his brother-in-law's villainy and over-control. In the meantime, Kauravas attacked Virat's Kingdom and forcibly took away thousands of cows of King Virat's. Arjun had then decided to take away the disguise of Pandavas, as the period of one year of 'Ajnatavas' was just concluded. In fact, all the Pandavas revealed their own identities. Arjun had defended Virat's Kingdom single handed and frightened away Kauravas by his powerful arrows and finally utilizing just one 'Sammohan Astra', the Divine Arrow putting the entire Kaurava Army unconscious. Not realizing the real identity of Pandavas, King Virat and family as also the subjects of the Kingdom extended apologies to Pandavas. The Princess Uttara was married to Abhimanyu, the son of Arjun. Back to normalcy after suffering the Forest life for twelve years and the disguised existence for one year, Pandavas demanded their share of Kingdom again. In fact, Bhima, Arjun and Draupadi refused to pardon the innumerable misdeeds of Kauravas and wished to take revenge on the battle field, but for the restraint imposed on them by Dharmaraja. Lord Krishna was deputed for peace talks. Kauravas on the other hand refused to part with even a pin worth of land, let alone five villages for Pandavas. Thus the epoch-making Great Battle of Maha Bharata became inevitable. Kurukshetra was the historic war- field, where the battle lines were drawn and the composition of both the fighting parties were identified. As per options offered by Krishna, Duryadhana secured large number of soldiers and Arjuna agreed to be Krishna's charioteer, without fighting himself. Elders like Bhishma and Drona had to fight on the side of Kauravas, though reluctantly, since they had been loyal to King Dhritarashtra. As several grandfathers and uncle figures, close relatives and cousins were faced on the opposite side for a bloody war, Arjuna got bewildered and made a scene of his inability to fight and jumped out of his chariot. Krishna had then delivered his immortal 'Gita Pravachan' (The Discourse of Gita) which constituted the Quintessence of Holy Hindu Scriptures. He explained in detail that the death of stalwarts like Bhishma and Drona or close relatives of Pandavas or of anybody else, would merely mean the destruction of their physical existence but their Atma (Inner Soul) is indestructible as 'It' would don

another body in the never-ending cycle of life, according to the Register of their previous lives viz. 'Sanchita' or the Stored Results of their actions in earlier births and of 'Prarabdha' or their own destinies which would shape their future. Arjuna was just an instrument in the drama of Life. The real quest of life is to attain the Union of individual Atma or the Inner Soul with 'Paramatma', the Super Soul. This is what 'Gyana' (Knowledge or Awareness) is all about and what Yogis (Sages) have all along endeavored to achieve through the ages. Arjuna was thus pacified and was asked to do his Dharma (Duty). In the fierce battle that followed for eighteen days, there was destruction all around from both the sides of warriors. Bhishma, the war-veteran and Commander-in-Chief withdrew from the battle as he was faced with a trans-gender, named Sikhandi, whom Bhishma refused to fight with and thus fell a victim but did not die; he had the boon to live as per his choice-day and preferred to live through the entire duration of the battle and waited for 'Uttarayan', i.e. the first day of Solar journey upwards the northern direction. Drona, the next Commander stopped fighting at the false news confirmed by Dharmaraja, (ever known for his utterances of Truth only) in hushed tone that his son Aswatthama (meant actually named after an elephant) died. Drona was thus killed by Dhrishtadyumna without resistance. Karna who was the next Commander of Kauravas was arrowed to death by Arjuna, as the former could not remember the secret 'Mantras' (stanzas) while releasing arrows favoring specific Gods to invoke special powers; Karna's amnesia was the resultant curse by a Sage which let him down to Arjun's arrows. The Final chapter of the Great Battle of Mahabharata, the Legendary Epic was scripted by a powerful and climactic duel of maces between Duryodhana and Bhima. As Duryodhana defended his position for long, Krishna gave a gesture to Bhima to hit the opponent on his thighs as the former's body was made sturdy all over excepting the thighs; Gandhari, mother of Duryodhana had the power of fortifying any part of a body by opening her ever closed sight just once but Duryodhana hid the loins and thighs and hence were vulnerable. Thus ended the sordid tale of Duryodhana, who was the Prime Villain of the Epic. Dharmaraja was made the King again to Hastinapur Kingdom and after him, the Dynasty carried on the Kingship by Parikshit, the son of Uttara. Lord Krishna who had firmly re-established Dharma on Earth, not only by his own fascinating deeds to vindicate 'Nyaya' (justice) and Nobility, but also by using Pandavas as instruments to bring success to His efforts. Once again He proved through His Avatar (Incarnation) of Lord Vishnu that each time human existence gets disturbed by evil forces, He would appear as an earthly figure and rectify imbalances of the Universe. **Buddha Avatar:** As there was an ongoing battle of Devas and Asuras for long time, Devas approached Lord Vishnu to revive 'Dharma' and 'Nyaya' and beseeched Him to take human form once again. The Lord said that 'Mayamoha' would soon take birth as Buddha to one Sudhodana. But the illusions that would be created in the name of Buddha would be such that many evil persons would call themselves as Buddhists and undo all the Golden Traditions established in Vedas and other Scriptures. The misleading ways would advocate materialism in detestable manner and finally end up in the last phase of 'Kali Yuga'.. [Note: While Agni Purana had thus prophesied the sinful and irrecoverable era ahead, Buddha himself was stated to have provided a silver-line in the quest of Truth and Dharma. He preached the concept of Self -Realisation and recommended the right path to this Goal. He found that the basis of evil was unhappiness and desire, while the means of overcoming the evil is the attitude to secure freedom from material happiness. He preached the eight fold path, viz. the right view, the right intention, the right speech, the right thought, the right livelihood, the right action, the right mindfulness and the right concentration. Another significant preaching of Buddha was to follow the principles of 'Ahimsa' (non-violence) and 'Samyam' (Restraint). But in the post-Buddha period, varied interpretations of Buddhism were adopted to suit some of the following generations, including the practice of low and misleading Tantras. **Kalki Avatar:** Agni Purana also prophesied the Final Avatar of

Lord Vishnu as Kalki, to be born to 'Vishnuyasha'. He would be fully armed to destroy the disbelievers of God and perpetrate sins and criminal acts and re-establish Dharma (Virtue) and Nyaya (Justice) and revive the concepts of four 'varnas' (castes,) viz. Brahmana (the nobility), Vaisya (the business class), Kshatriya (the Warriors and Defenders) and Sudra (the Others). The revival of the four 'Ashrams' (Stages of Life) too would happen viz. Balya (Childhood), Grihastha (the family person), Vanaprastha (the senior and religious class) and Sanyasa (Seekers of Truth and death-awaiting). [Note: The popular belief is that by the close of the fourth phase of Kalki Yuga (era) as against the first phase now, Lord Vishnu would take the 'Avatar' (Incarnation) riding a flying white divine horse, brandishing a sword, destroying the Evil and reviving the Virtue, thus heralding a completely New World Order following the Great Destruction and evolving a Fresh Cycle of Creation.]

**105) Dasha Bhujas / Ten Hands:** Adya Shakti, Shiva Shakti, Traana /Tri Bhuvana, Maha Lakshmi, Pancha Tatwa Shakti, Narayani, Savitri, Ananda, Nava Durga and Vijaya Shakti

**106) Dasha Maha Vidyas:** Kali, Tara, Shodashi, Bhuvaneshwari, Chinnamasta, Bhairavi, Dhumavati Bala, Matanga, Kamala and Bagala; Bagala is stated to possess the powers of subduing enemies like sthambhana, jrumbhana, mohana, achalata, aakarshana. Bhairavi or of Dasha Maha Vidya Manifestations [Kaali or of the Eternal Darkness; Tara or the Goddess of Kindness; Maha Tripura Sundari or the Shodashi Devi Vidya; Bhuvaneshwari the Creator of the Universe; Chhinna Mastaka or The Self-Destroyer; Bhairavi or the Goddess of Degeneration, Goddess of Speech, Meditation, Bright like thousand Suryas, carrying milk, books, dispersing fear, providing boons and with constant smile; Dhumavati displaying smoke, dissatisfaction, widowhood seeking even to harm Shiva; Bagalamukhi the crane headed, elongate-tongued, evil natured and of frightening appearance; Matangi full of pollution, dusky and of negative disposition eating Uchchishtha Bhojana; and finally Kamala Devi / Lakshmi the Goddess of Creation and Preservation, Fulfillment and Auspiciousness];

**107) Dasha Vaayu:** comprising five types of Vayu viz. Praana or breathing vital Air; Apaana or Elimination of waste; Udaana or Sound producing; Samana or digestive and Vyana which enables muscular movement of expansion and contraction; and five more Upa Vayus viz. Naaga for blurping; Kurma for blinking; Devadutta for yawning; Krikala for sneezing and Dhananjaya for opening and closing heart valves. Besides, Aavaha, Paravaha, Samvaha, Shamyu, Udhvaha, Vivaha, Shamku, Kala, Shwaasa, Nala, Anila, Pratibha, Kumuda, Kaamta, Shuchi, Ajita, Guru, Jhumjhu, Samvartaka, Kila, Jita, Soumya, Kapi, Jada, Manduka, Samhruta, Siddha, Rakta, Krishna, Pika, Shuka, Yathi, Bheema, Hanu, Pinga and Kapana.

**108) Dasha Vishva Devas and their Puja:** Vishwedevas are stated to be ten in number: *Kraturdaksho Vasuh Satyah Kaalah Kaamasthaivacha, Dhunischa Rochanaiva tathaa chaiva Pururavaah/ Ardraascha darshete tu Vishwadavaah prakourtitaa/* (Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Satya, Kaala, Kaama, Dhuri, Vilochana, Pururava and Ardra are the Vaishwadevas). Daksha and Kratu are engaged in Ishti Shraddhas, Satya and Vasu are into Naandi Shraddhas, Dhuri and Vilochana into Kamyas Shraddhas, Pururava and Ardra in Parvana Shraddhas, Naimittika Shraddhas are to be invoked in Kaala and Kaama. Daksha and Kratu devas are invoked in Ishti Shraddhas, Satya and Vasu in Naandi Shraddha, Dhuri and Vilochana in Kamyas Shraddhas, Pururava and Ardras are invoked in Parana Shraddhas, Kaama and Kaala in Naimittika Shraddhas. Ishti Shraddhas are a part of Samskaras like Seemanta, Pumsavana, Soma and so on. Naandi Shraddha is relevant to Putra Janma Vivahas, Anna Praashana, Chooda Karma and so on.

**109) Dasha Yaksha Prashnottaras:** Yudhishtar recalled as to how his father Prajapati Dharma gave the boon to him; he recalled the incident when he asked Pandavas to fetch water out of thirst but one by one could not do so and were lying almost dead; then Yudhishtara wondered that none of the brothers returned he himself left and on seeing the scene tried to save himself from thirst and approached the water body. Dharma Deva in the form of one Yaksha prevented and asked questions and demanded proper replies to questions.[ Yaksha Prashna Samvaada] 1) Who makes Sun rise and ascend to the skies, circles around, sets on the horizons, the true nature of Sun and where ie Sun established; reply is : Brahma makes Sun to rise and ascend to horizons, Devas perform the encircling, Dharm Deva sets the Sun the True nature is Sun is Himself and finally Sun is established in Truth itself; 2) What instills divinity and virtuosity of a Brahmana, what sustains and upkeeps that virtuosity, what is the human like quality of a Brahmana, what is the conduct akin to a vicious Brahmana; the replies are ‘ Swadhyaaa’ or Self Study, Penance is the sustainer; death is the natural quality of a Brahmana and criticising others is the vicious conduct of a Brahmana! 3) What is the divinity or virtuosity of a Kshatriya, the sustaining power to him, natural quality of a his class and the most vicious act of a kshatriyas! The respective replies are constant practice of archery, conducting Yajna karyas and performing oblations, fear is the natural quality and the heinous misconduct is not to save and run from the battles! 4) What is like the Mantra in the context of Yagnas and oblations, who is the performer of these oblations, who is the acceptor of the oblations in yagnas, and what is that which yagnas surpass! The replies respectively are breath, mind, Veda shlokas called ‘richas’ or stanzas and what surpasses yagnas are Richas indeed! 5) What is heavier than Earth, higher than heavens, faster than wind, far more numerous than straws; the replies respectively are mother, father, mind, and human worries. 6) who is the friend of a traveller, who is the friend of the sick, who is the friend of the dying man. The replies respectively are a companion, a physician and charity. 7)What is that which when renounced makes one lovable and endearing, what is that once when renounced after becoming rich, and what is on attaining very rich one needs to renounce! The replies respectively should be to renounce pride to make one lovable, to renounce desire on becoming rich and to renounce avarice for attaining happiness.8) Which enemy is invincible; what constitutes an incurable disease; and what kind of human being is of nobility or otherwise. The answers should be one’s own anger, greed is an incurable disease and noble are they who pardon others mistakes and ignoble are those who are retaliatory and unkind. 9) Who is truly happy, what is the great wonder, what should be the ideal path and what is the great news? The replies should be: a person without debts is truly happy; the greatest wonder is that death is certain sooner or later but one wishes to live further; the ideal path is elusive as even Shritis and Rishis are of varied views and therefore one’s own Inner Conscience is what ideal path determines about since Truth about Dharma and Duty are thus hidden in the cave of the individual hearts. Finally, the greatest news is that the world is full of ignorance like a pan while Sun is the Fire, days and nights are like fuel, ‘kaala pravaah’ or the cycle of Time comprising months, seasons and years are like the ladle, and indeed the Greatest Master is the cook *par excellence!* That is the Greatest News from all directions of North-East-West-and South!] Source: Essence of Virat Parva of Maha Bharata

**110) Ekaadasha Rudras:** Mahan, Mahatma, Matimaan, Bhishana, Bhayankara, Ritudhwaja, Urthvakesha, Pingalaksha, Rucha, Shuchi and Kaalagni;

**111) Ekaadashi Vrata- background:** As Ekadashi Vrata is stated to be the special day of Vishnu, observance of Upavasa (fasting), Puja and Vrata on this day is stated to be one of the pre-requisites to qualify the abolition of sins and attainment of Vaikuntha. In fact, the advantage of

performing the Vrata in full faith and devotion as prescribed would ensure the fruits of executing several Ashvmedha and Rajasuya Yagnas, besides avoiding Yama Darshana. It is not the bathings in Sacred Ganga, Gaya, Kashi, Pushkar, Kurukshetra, Narmada, Devika, Yamuna and Chandrabhaga that are of importance but performing the Vrata. To signify the import of the Vrata, King Rukmanga of Surya Vamsha was in the regular habit of publicising the Vrata by announcements on elephant tops to alert all the citizens that one and all in the age groups of eight to eighty five years must observe fasting, Puja and penances on Ekadashi with exceptions of expectant mothers, Kumari Kanyas, persons suffering from diseases or with disturbed minds. As the law was enforced with strictness, there were bee-lines by the citizens to Vishnu dhaams and Lord Yama Dharma was had free time and Chitragupta was jobless, as the paths leading to Yama loka which were normally over crowded had very few sinners in thin streams. Maharshi made a trip to Yamaloka and enquired of Dharmaraja as to why the hells which were always busy, noisy and bristling with tremendous activity became suddenly quiet and motionless! Dharma raja informed Narada that King Rukmanga enforced Upavasa and Puja compulsory on Ekadashas extended to Dwadashis too. Dharmaraja took Narada to Chitragupta to see the accounts of arrivals which revealed telling figures as per the Records. Then both Dharma Raja and Chitragupta approached Lord Brahma to sensitise him of the developments as the Order Books were getting thinner by the day. Brahma having examined the accounts and the Reports and decided some instant action since the subordinate officials were helpless and were having to face action as per the Rule Book. Lord Brahma then created a highly charming woman named Mohini and fully briefed her about the purpose of her creation. On the arrival of Mohini on the scene Brahma Maya overcame the King Rukmanga and decided to marry her any cost. She agreed but said although she might not ask for any thing including his entire Kingdom but whatever was desired by her should be agreed by him without objection. That was how Brahma averted the crisis as Mohini demanded the annulment of the Ekasha Vrata Rule! (Narada Purana)

**112) Dwadasha Adityas:** Surya / Aditya Deva assumes twelve other Murti / Forms viz. Indra, Dhata, Parjanya, Pusha, Twashta, Aryama, Bhaga, Vivishwan, Amshu, Vishnu, Varuna and Mitra. Among these twelve Murthis, Indra was Chief of Devas ruling Amaravati and destroying Daityas and Danavas from time to time. Dhata being in the Status of Prajapati took up the task of Creation; Parjanya in the Form of Sun rays rained all over the Universe; Pusha is in the form of Mantras engaged for Prajaaposhana; Twashta is present in the form of 'Vanaspati' and 'Aushadhi' (Vegetable Oils and Herbal Medicines); Aryama who provides protection and relief to humanity; Bhaga is in the form of Earth and Mountains; Viviswan in the form of Agni / Fire and is the cooking facilitator of food as also of the destroying power; the ninth name of Surya Deva is Amshu or of the form of Chandra Deva who provides coolness and pleasure of existence; Vishnu is the tenth name of Surya who constanly checks the evil forces in the World and slays Danavaas and establishes virtue from time to time by assuming Incarnations; Varuna is the eleventh appearance present in water as the source of life and fertility staying in Oceans, Rivers and various water profiles; and finally, Mitra or form of propitiousness and help to humanity. In whatever form he might be, Surya Deva is indeed the 'Karanam, Kaaranam and Karta' or the Act, Action and the Supreme Actor in the drama of Life! Bhakti (Devotion), Shraddha (fortitude) and Puja (Worship) sum up the meanings of human life! The corresponding Twelve Names of Aditya are stated to identify with the

*Twelve Months of a Year* viz. Chaitra with Vishnu, Vaishakha with Aryama, Jyeshtha with Viviswan, Ashadha with Amshuman, Shravana with Parjanya, Badrapada with Varuna, Ashwin with Indra, Kartika with Dhata, Margasirsha with Mitra, Pausha with Pusha, Magha with Bhaga and Twashta in Phalgun. Surya Deva has thousands of *Kiranas (Rays)* of which four hundred rays, known as Chandana generate Vrishti or rains; three hundred kiranas of yellow colour provide coolness entitled Chandra; three hundred more rays coloured white bestowing Aushadhis, Swadha, and Amrit by which human beings, Pitras and Devas are all happy. The names of the twenty most important rays are stated to be Heti, Kiran, Gow, Rashmi, Gabhasti, Abheeshu, Ghan, Usnu, Marichi, Naadi, Deedhiti, Saandhya, Mayukha, Amshu, Saptarchi, Suparna, Kara and Paada. ( Source :Bhavishya Purana) Dhata, Parjanya, Mitra, Aryama, Pusha, Shakra, Varuna, Bhaga, Twashta, Anshumaan and Vishnu as per Brahma Purana.

**113) Dwadasha Jyotir Lingas:** *Kedaro Himavatprushthe Daakinyaam Bhimasankarah /Vaaranaasyam cha Viswestriumbako Gautami thatey/ Saurashtreya Sommanathasva Srisaile Mallikarjunah / Ujjainyam Maha Kala Omkare cha Amaresvarah / Vaidyanathaaschitha bhumo Nagesho Daarukaananey / Sethu bandhe cha Ramesho Ghrusneswara Siva lingo/Avatara Dvadasakamethchhambhoh Paramatmana/* Nandeshwara described the most Celebrated Twelve Shiva Lingas viz. Kedarnath in Himalayas [Uttaranchal], Bhima Shankar in Dakinya [Pune, Maharashtra], Vishweshwara in Varanasi, Triambaka on Godavari Banks, Somanath in Sourashtra [Gujarat], Mallikarjuna in Shri Shaila [Andhra Pradesh], Mahakaala in Ujjain [Madhya Pradesh], Omkareshwara [also in Madhya Pradesh], Vaidyanath at Deogarh [Bihar], Nageshwara near Dwaraka [Gujarat], Rameshwara [Tamil nadu] and Ghishneshwara [near Ellora Caves, Aurangabad, Maharashtra]. [ Kedarnath in Uttaranchal, Bhima Shankar near Pune in Maharashtra, Visveswara in Varanasi, Somnath in Gujarat, Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh, Maha Kala in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, Omkara also in Madhya Pradesh, Vaidhyanath at Deogarh (Bihar), Nageshawara near Dwaraka in Gujarat, Rameswara in Tamilnadu, and Ghrishneswar near Ellora Caves in Aurangabad in Maharashtra] There are some claims and counter claims of the geographical situation of some of the Jyotirlingas and one might possibly visit these Places too possibly! Kedareshwara: Flanked by breath taking views of snow-clad peaks of Himalayas at a height of 3585 m from Sea level on the banks of River Mandakini, Kedareswar is the highest point where Maha Deva's presence is indeed felt in the manifestation of a famed Kedareswara Jyotir Linga as spread out as a fairly large expanse of black stone with an inclined elevation in the middle portion. Being inaccessible excepting by a difficult 14km trek by foot, or horse back or 'dolis' ( palanquins) carried by two or four humans from Gaurikund, the Temple is open only during end April through November since residents, let alone pilgrims, have little access to the Mountain Top Temple during heavy snowfall in the intervening period. [A helicopter service is available now from Agastya Muni to Phata to reach Kedarnath]. The incarnations of Lord Vishnu in the form of two Sages Nara and Narayana meditated to Bhagavan Siva for several years and as the latter appeared and said that the incarnations of Vishnu Himself executed the penance without any basic reason excepting the welfare of humanity and thus agreed to manifest Himself as a Jyotir Linga at that hallowed place. Nara and Narayana are believed to have assumed their forms as hallowed mountains nearby. According to Puranas, Pandavas performed penance at the Temple and even in the opening Hall of the Temple at the entrance of the Sanctum, there are idols of Pandavas, Lord Krishna, Nandi and Veerabhadra. The belief is that Pandavas were chasing a Bull- Lord Siva Himself- and Bhima continued the chase to subdue the animal by holdindg its tail and the Pandavas attained Salvation finally from the Temple surroundings. It is also believed that Adi Shankara attained His Salvation from this Place and there is a 'Samadhi' of His behind the Temple. A distinct feature at the entrance gate of the Temple is the head of a man carved in a

triangular stone as *facia* and a similar triangular *facia* is displayed in another Temple where Siva-Parvati wedding was fabled to have taken place. ‘Udakmand’ is mentioned in Siva Purana as a union of Seven Seas and its water is everfresh. In fact the Homa Kund of the Wedding is also visioned alive. On way to Kedar a number of Pigrimage Centers dot the route including Agastyamuni, Ukhimath, Phali-Pasalat Devi, Kalimath, and Triguni Narayan not far from Sonprayag. Vamana Purana explained the Origin of Kedar Kshetra vividly: Maha Deva performed deep and extensive tapasya on the top of Himalayas to refresh himself as also for Loka Kalyan or to ensure propitiousness to the entire Universe. During the Tapasya, there were fiery sparks from his ‘jatajutas’ or the thick layers of his hair and fell as huge and heavy boulders on Earth. From the boulders that fell, Kedar Tirtha got materialised and Rishis commenced to reside there and by the grace of Mahadeva a Shiva Linga got materialised. Yatis visited the Kshetra atleast for six months a year since it was difficult and unworthy of stay due to heavy snow and cold. Mahadeva blessed and granted fulfillment of devotees who observed fastings, snana, daana, homa, japa and pitru shraddhas and worship and their acts resulted in multiplier returns. In fact Devas came to worship the Shiva Linga after taking holy dips in Kalindi River (Yamuna) the daughter of Surya Deva. There after Maha Deva disappeared deep inside the depths of the River for a very long time and various Lokas and Samudras got disturbed and even Nakshatras dropped down from the Sky. Devas approached Maha Vishnu in Yoga Nidra on Ksheera Sagara. Meanwhile a Danava named Mura, who was the son of Kashyapa Muni and Danu the daughter of Daksha Prajapati, performed such unusual Tapasya to Brahma and secured a peculiar boon that whosoever would touch would die. Deva and all other Celestial Beings like Gandharva, Yakshaadis got rattled and Mura challenged Yama Dharma Raja who in turn directed him to challenge Jagannadha Chatur Murti resting on the Ocean of Milk. Danava Mura reached Jagannadha who asked Mura to enter into a duel. Mura never expected this defiant reply and got confused with Vishnu Maya and muttered: ‘how, where and who’. Swiftly enough, Sudarshana Chakra sliced off the neck of Mura thus earning the encomium of Murari. It was at that juncture that Devas arrived at Ksheera Sagara stating that Maha Deva’s whereabouts were unknown. Vishnu along Devas enquired of Devi Parvati, Ganesha, Kumara, Nandi and so on. Then he instructed Devas to observe Tapta Kruccha Vrata for three days each by consuming hot water, hot milk, hot ghee and on the last three days only Vahu bhakshana followed each day by Abhishakas to Maha Linga at Kedar Tirtha with sixty five pitchers of curd, thirtytwo pitchers of ghee, sixteen full of pitchers of Pancha gavya, eight ghadas of honey, two hundred pitchers of Kalindi’s sacred water, one hundred eight pitchers of Gorochana, Kumkuma, chandana, butter as also puja of Mandara, Harashringara, Agar, dhupa, naivedyas with the recitation of Rigvedantargata pada krama of Shata Rudreeya. At the end of such severe penances, Indra and Devas visioned a Unified Shiva-Vishnu Swarupa!! Having realised their folly that Shiva and Vishnu were one and the same, Devas and even Brahma moved back to Kurukshetra and discovered Parama Shiva inside the water and hailed the Sthaanu Maha Deva and prostrated before him to withdraw from the Tapasya and bless them all and the Lokas! Kedar Linga is known from times immemorial: In Krita or Satya Yuga, Maharshi Upamanyu is stated to have worshipped Kedar Linga and attained salvation; in Dwapara Yuga Pandavas are stated to have performed Tapasya. Bhagavan MahaDeva assumed the form of Mahisha or a Buffalo and confused Pancha Pandavas at the same time as they were engrossed in Tapasya at different locations of Kedar now reputed as Pancha Kedar by displaying different body parts of the Mahisha viz. at Tunganath displaying hands, Rudranath the face of Mahisha, Mada Maheshwara displaying naabhi or middle portion, and Kalpeshwar his ‘jataajuta’ or the coarse head hair; the Prishtha bhaga or the hind body part is stated to have displayed at Kedar nadha proper. One legendary account states that Bhima of Pandavas in the course of his Tapasya got disturbed by the appearance of the hind

part of the Buffalo, chased it and tried to forcibly hold its tail but the ever potent Maha Deva eluded him and succumbed with severe injuries. Pashupati Nath Temple in Khatmandu in Nepal is stated to have displayed the Maha Mahisha's head portion. In Kedar there is no built up Murti swarupa as such but a raised and reclining dome basically a trikona mountain black stone is worshipped with 'Abhishekas' or oblations with Milk, flowers, fruits, honey, agarbattis or perfumed sticks and so on. Kedar Mandir appears very oriental and typically mountainous with imposing locale surrounded by places like Bhrigupantha (Maghna ganga), Ksheera ganga called Chora thadi thaal, Vasuki thaal, Gugukund, Bhairava Shila. The Mandir displays Pancha Pandava Murtis, Bhima cave and Bhimashila. The half broken exit gate is fabled as the Sacred Gate from which Adi Shankara baled out and flew up to Kailasa. Beautiful white stone life size idols of Shankaraacharya addressing his disciples in the rear portion hall of the Kedar Mandir is in place. Apart from the Murtis of Pandavas, those of Usha and Aniruddha, Lord Krishna, Shiva Parvati and so on too. Around the Mandir in a Parikrama are noticed Amrita Kund, Ishana Kund, Hamsa kund, Retasa Kund, and such other Tirthas. Most unfortunate havoc of torrential rains, floods, mountain quakes caused thousands of Pilgrims to perish from all over Bharata Desha recently. Indian Air Force deserves kudos for their endless helicopter sorties and saved countless Yatris and so did yeoman service by various Defence Forces and their Wings to have extended the trekkers. Happily the entire Bharat stood up as one to help the survivors as per one's own resources and sincere assistance. May Bhagavan Shankara who assumed a spurt of momentary fury for whatever was his own reason but essentially of the nature of interminable mercifulness, take the victims in his own fold and bless them as Kailasa vaasis. Bhima Shankar: Located some 110 km from Pune in Maharashtra State in the Ghat region of Sahyadri Hills near the head of Bhima River which merges with Krishna River too, the fifth Jyotirlinga Bhima Shankar is the appearance Maha Siva who exterminated Demon Bhima, son of Kumbhakarna (Ravan's brother). Demon Bhima on knowing from his mother Kartaki wanted to avenge the death of his father by Lord Rama, who was Maha Vishnu's incarnation and performed penance to Lord Brahma to receive boons to conquer even mighty opponents. He defeated Indra and Devas and what provoked Lord Siva most was the tormenting of a great Siva Bhakta King Kamarupeshwara insisting that the latter should pray to himself rather than Siva Linga. As the Demon was about to destroy the Sivalinga by his sword, Lord Siva appeared and destroyed the Demon and His mighty anger caused sweat which flowed as River Bhima. The Jyotirlinga thus manifested is a powerful representation of 'Ardhanariswara' in the Temple provides proof of instant fulfillment of all desires thus attracting thousands of devotees, especially on all Mondays and definitely on Sivaratri festivals. As in certain other cases like at Ujjain, the Swayambhu Jyotirlinga is set at a level lower than the normal Ground; also there is a speciality here that there is a constant flow of water from the Linga! The Bhima Shankar Temple is also associated with the killing of Demon brothers Tripurasuras along with Devi Parvati in Her manifestation as Kamalaja whose temple is also nearby the main Temple. Devi Kamalaja was worshipped by Brahma and hence She was called so. Sakini and Dakini were among those whose contribution was significant in the battle against Tripurasuras and their worship too is performed at the Temple. 'Mokshakund Tirtha', the Holy Waterbody adjacent the Bhimashankar Temple is associated with Sage Kausika. [Maratha Rulers especially Nana Phadnavis who built the Temple 'Sikhara' and Sivaji who made donations to its maintenance were intensely associated with the progress of this illustrious Temple]. While the above version of the location of Bhimashankar is convincing, Siva Purana which is relevant in the context of the current source states in Rudra Samhita: 'Dakininam Bhimashankara' while outlining the broad references of the Dwadasa Jyotirlingas; more clearly the Koti Rudra Samhita states: *Bhimashankara sanjnaastu Shashtha Shambho Maha Prabho/ Avataro Maha leeloBhimasuravinashanah/*

*Sudakshinabhida Bhaktam Kamarupeshwaram vrisham / yogaraaksha sadbhutam hatvasaram tha bhakta duhkhadam/Bhimashankara naamaa sa daakinyam samsthitaha swayam/ Jyotirlinga Siva rupena prarthesena Sankarah/* The sixth incarnation of Shambu and His 'Leela'( miracle) was the killing of Bhimasura and saving of King Sudakshina of Kamarup whose grateful prayers resulted in the manifestation of Siva at Dakini. The belief is the Bhimashankar Temple at Bhimapur Hill near **Guwahati** in Assam is the one where the King Sudakshina was saved and the Jyotirlinga was consecrated. Sivaratris are celebrated with pomp and Show in this Temple. Yet another version relates that the Temple of Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga at Kashipur near **Nainital** which was noted as a Dakini Country in the past is the one where the Jyotirlinga appeared. The legend in the Region was that Bhima of Pandava brothers married a Dakini woman named Hidimba and that Lord Siva appeared in that Place as a Swayambhu Jyotirlinga in that Temple area. In this Temple too, there are Idols of Bhairavanath and Devi Bhagavati as also a Temple Tank, called Sivaganga. Siva Ratri Jagarans and Worship are observed with religious fervour and devotion in this Temple too. Varanasi: Famed as the Place of Devas that was founded by Bhagavan Siva Himself, some five thousand years ago, Kasi has a hoary legend with age-old reputation worldwide. Varun and Ganga and also Ganga and Assi, flowing in different directions, confluence in 'Varana-Assi' or Varanasi. Euologised in several Scriptures like Rig Veda, Puranas and Epics, Varanasi was the Capital of Kasi King three thousand years ago and was reputed even by then as the capital of Religion, Education and Arts. The City covers some five kilometers of the Holy and Everflowing Ganges on its banks attracting lakhs of Pilgrims every year as the Ultimate Destination of Salvation for Hindus of all faiths and several other religions especially Buddhists and Jains. This is the Sacred Spot that Bhagavan Visveswara manifested as Avimukta Jyotir Linga in the renowned Golden Visveswara Temple. It is stated that Lord Brahma executed such severe Tapasya ( meditation) here so much that Maha Vishnu moved His head across fast in disbelief and the latter's ear ring fell at a place on the bank of the River and was since then named 'Manikarnika'. When Brahma was once chanting Vedas in praise of Siva in the form of the Jyoti Linga with the former's 'Panchamukhas' or Five Heads, some pronunciation slips rolled by and becoming furious of the chanting mistakes which changed the sense of the words, Lord Siva opened the third eye and burnt one of Brahma's heads which fell and found a permanent place in the Temple. Viswanath Temple is also considered as a 'Shakti Peetha' and it is believed that Devi Sati's ear-rings fell at the spot where Devi Visalakshi's shrine stands. Durga Temple, nick-named as Monkey Temple owing to large presence of monkeys, is considered as a shrine built originally by Durga Herself and during 'Navarathras' of Dussera festival comes fully alive and heavily crowded by devotees. Sankata Vimochana Hanuman Temple is frequently visited, especially on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The Shrine of Annapoorni is stated as the place where Devi Annapurna Herself distributed 'Anna' (Rice and so on) to devotees when there was a famine and Lord Siva Himself asked for 'Anna' in the disguise of a Beggar! There is a Neelakantha Temple with Deities of Vishnu, Avikuntha Vinayaka, Virupakshi Gauri, Saniswara and clusters of Five-some Lingas. A separate shrine dedicated to Kala Bhairava is present too in the courtyard. On the five km long banks of Ganga are situated hundreds of 'Ghats' or areas specified for many purposes like Sacrifices or Yagnas and Homams, some for bathing, or some even owned privately. For eg. 'Dasasvamedha' Ghat where Brahma performed Yagnas and even now Brahmanas perform Agni Sthomas, Homas to please Devas and so on; 'Manikarnika Ghat' where Brahma executing penance and Vishnu's earrings were lost at the disbelief of the former's strength to do it so seriously and shook His earrings fast and lost these while Devi Parvati pretended that Her earrings were lost so that Siva would stay back to search the lost earrings forever and thus tie Him up to Kasi and such other beliefs. Besides the Manikarnika Ghat, where dead bodies are brought for the favour of cremation to attain mukti

(salvation), there is the Harischandra Ghat where the Illustrious King Harischandra was posted as a slave and cremated dead bodies with the same belief of attaining salvation. It is common knowledge that the King stood for truthfulness and endured the most severe tests of life of selling off his family and Son, became a life-long slave and finally attained Salvation. There are many other Ghats like 'Man Mandir Ghat' near Someswara Linga Temple, Lalitha Ghat near by Pasupatinath Temple, Tulasi Ghat where Tulsidas scripted Ramayana and so on. Ranging from Kings and Queens, Foreign Plunderers, Great Saints like Adi Shankara, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Dayananda, Tulasidas and GuruNanak; Educationists, Artistes, Disbelievers, Non Hindu Followers, and even modern Pandas- anybody be named and be found- are all attracted to this Memorable City for their reasons of Salvation, Religion, worldly fulfilments, mischief or mere curiosity: but Maha Deva Blesses them all whatever may be the motive! Tryambakeshwara: Located thirty kilometers away from Nasik in Maharashtra, the renowned Jyotirlinga of Lord Siva's materialization called Tryambakeswar attracts thousands of Pilgrims round the year providing boons of material and spiritual nature. The 'Punyakshetra' or the Hallowed Land is the source point of the Holy River Godavari basically owing to the Bhagiradh-like efforts of Sage Gautama and his highly pious wife Ahalya. By virtue of the Sage's penance and prayers, Lord Varuna was pleased to supply water and food grains in abundance but this boon turned out as a basis of jealousy of co-Sages and their spouses who created a cow to plunder the grains. Sage Gautama destroyed the cow, but as a result of a sin in killing the cow, the Sage-couple was banished to a hermitage on the mountain of Brahmagiri. Gautama Muni made relentless 'Tapasya' to Bhagavan Siva who endowed Gautama with the double desires of bringing River Ganga near his hermitage and also stay on its banks along with Bhagavati in the form of a Jyotirlinga. Lord Siva granted both the wishes that Ganga was brought near Gautama's hermitage as River Godavari and His manifestation as Tryambakeswara Jyotirlinga in the vicinity of the River Godavari / Gautami. In parallel to this, another legend related to the formation of a Jyotirlinga at Brahmagiri was the interface of Lords Brahma and Vishnu vis-à-vis an appearance of a Fire Column whose height and depth could not be ascertained by both of them; Brahma's cover-up story was that he found out the height of the Column and cited a Ketaki flower as a witness. Bhagavan Siva gave a curse to Brahma that there would not be worship of the former and Brahma gave a return curse that Lord Siva would be pushed underground. Hence the manifestation of Tryambakeswara under the Brahmagiri. The Jyotirlinga is of a small size in a depression on the floor with water oozing out constantly from the top. The force of waves of the River appears to be as per the intensity of the prayers of Sage Gautama according to the conviction of devotees in the Temple! Major Tirthas (Tanks) in the Temple are named Gangadwara representing the source of Ganga (Godavari), Varaha Tirtha where Lord Vishnu had a bath in the River in Varaha Rupa (appearance as Boar) and Kushvartha Tirtha considered as the most significant as Sage Gauthama spread across Kusha or Darbha Grass while securing the waters of Ganga. There are also other Tirthas like Gangasagara, Bilva Tirtha, Indra Tirtha, Vishwanath Tirtha, Mukund Tirtha, Prayag Tirtha, Rama Kund, Lakshmana Kund and so on. Among the Shrines are Kedarnath, Rameshwar, Gauthameshwar, Kasi Viswanatha, Jareswar, Kanchaneswar, Tribhuneswar, Venkateshwar, and Hanuman. There are daily worships at the Main Temple thrice and the nightly 'arthies' are special. On Mondays there are special 'abhishekas' and 'arthies' as also 'Parikramas'. Kartika month worships are important, especially Kartika Purnima. Gangavatarana is celebrated in the month of Magha. Simhastha Parvati is held once in twelve years. Somnath: Prajapati Daksha married away twenty seven of his daughters to Chandra Deva (Moon) but Chandra had great infatuation for Rohini to the neglect of other wives. Daksha warned Chandra about this but to avail. Finally Daksha cursed Chandra who appealed to Lord Brahma, and in turn asked to perform Tapasya to Bhagavan Siva. Chandra observed penance at

Prabhasa on the banks of River Sarasvati. On His appearance Lord Siva sorted out the problem with a compromise that the first bright fortnight of a month (Sukla Paksha) Moon would wax and the 'Krishna Paksha' Moon would wane. He also blessed Moon to be near Him and Parvati always. Being a 'Sparsha'(Touch) Jyotirlinga-Somachandra- stated to be the first in the series, it would remove away all physical ailments particularly tuberculosis and leprosy and bathing in the Water body 'Chandra kund' washes off all the sins committed by human beings. Known as Prabhat Kshetra [near Veraval in Kathiawad District of Saurashtra in Gujarat], Lord Krishna is believed to have performed his Leelas (Miracle Acts). [An ever burning light in a cave of the Temple is witnessed till date]. Srishailam: Stated to be the Second in the Series of Jyotirlingas on the Sri Parvat ( in Andhra Pradesh, some 230 Km. from Hyderabad) on the banks of River Krishna, Lord Siva's manifestation as Mallikarjuna along His Spouse Devi Bhramaramba is famed mythologically as the place of penance when Kartikeya was unhappy and felt cheated as Ganesha was wedded earlier despite the Agreement that whoever arrived first after full 'Bhu Pradakshina' (circumambulation of the World) would win, but Ganesha took advantage of a Provision of the Scriptures and performed a 'Pradakshina' of his parents and attained the advantage of the Pradakshina. Siva and Parvati visited the Krouncha Mountain to pacify Kartikeya but to no avail and thus moved over to the Mountain from Kailasa. As Vrishabha Deva –Siva Parvati's Carrier-did Tapasya to the Maha Devas, they appeared as Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba at this Holy Spot. Lord Rama is said to have installed a Sahasralinga and Pandavas set up Pancha Pandava Lingas in the Temple surroundings. In a tiny hole inside the temple of Devi Bhramaramba, one could still hear the buzz of bees as the Devi assumed the form of bees all over Her Body and killed Mahishasura. Adi Shankara is reputed to have scripted his well known Work named 'Sivananda Lahari' at this Temple. Ujjain: The only 'Svayambhu' (Self-born) Jyothirlinga of Lord Siva in the form of Mahakal originating 'Mantra Shakti' (Power of Mantras) from within is indeed a unique specimen among all the Jyotir- Lingas on the banks of River Kshipra. This is the only Temple of various Jyotirlingas maintained on Tantrik Principles. While Mahakaleswar faces south as a Dakshina murthi, the Idols of Ganesh, Parvati, Kartikeya and Nandi are installed on West, North, East and South respectively. Shree Yantra is perched upside down at the Ceiling of Garbha Griha where the Main Linga is situated. The Temple has five levels including an underground and on the third level is installed the idol of Nagchandreswar open for public view only on Nag Panchami days. Experience at the time of very early morning 'Bhasmabhishekhas' or the spread of ash along with the loud chanting of Mantras of the Deity and with the thrilling and reverberating sounds of various percussion and bronze gong instruments takes one to devotional ecstasy. [It is stated that the Bhasmabhishekhas are performed by using the ashes of the first dead bodies of the previous day, sanctified by Mantras from the holy waters of River Kshipra. Ladies are not allowed to enter the Sanctum at the time of the Bhasmabhishekhas although they could witness the proceedings on Close Circuit TVs.] The mythological background of the Temple was that there was a pious Brahmana well versed in Vedas and Scriptures had four learned sons named Devapriya, Priyamedha, Survita and Suvrata. A demon named Dushana lived nearby on a hill Ratnamala who could not tolerate the very concept of Vedas and its applications and particularly hated the Brahmana brothers. One day the Demon decided to destroy the brothers who were unfazed and continued their worship of Maha Siva. As the Demon and his cruel followers were about kill the brothers there was such a 'Hunkar' or roaring sound of Mahakal which itself took away the breath of the entire band of Danavas headed by Dushan instantly. The Brahmana brothers prayed to the Lord who appeared on the spot and implored His manifestation of 'Mahakala' to stay put for the greatest benefit of posterity and conducted daily worship from generation to generation. [ Ujjain, the erstwhile Capital of Avanti, had considerable importance of India's ancient history ruled in the past by

Mauryas and Guptas. Memories of King Vikramaditya still linger in the City till date. His Nine Gems of Poets especially Kalidasa who scripted famed Works like Megha Sandesam, Abhijnana Shakuntalam and so on, the other Gems being Dhanvantari, Kshapanaka, Amarasimha, Sankhu, Vetala Bhatta, Ghatakopara, Varahamihira and Vara Ruchi. Bhartruhari the step brother of King Vikramaditya became an ascetic and the Caves of Bhartruhari are on the tourist map of the City as many believe that a person entering the maze of the Caves seldom returns! Kalbharava Temple too is an interesting feature; as much of liquor poured as Naivedya (offerings) in the Deity's throat (in the form of a Dog), half of it is returned as 'Prasad'! Ujjain is one of the Seven 'Mukti Sthalas' (Salvation Places) of India, besides Ayodhya, Mathura, Haridwar, Benares, Kanchipuram and Dwarka.] Omkareswar: Situated in the banks of River Narmada on the Mandhata (Shivapuri) Island formed in the shape of OM in Sanskrit, Omkareswar is one of the Jyotirlingas besides another Amareswar Linga. The Legend was that Sage Narada visited Vindhya Raja and the latter bragged that Vindya was the highest and most powerful Mountain in the entire World. Narada replied that perhaps Meru was the greatest in terms of height and might. Vindhya Raja felt jealous and executed severe 'Tapasya' and pleased Maha Siva and requested that He should always be present in the Vindhyas and establish a Linga of Bhagavan on the banks of Narmada near to Vindhya. Hence the Omkara Jyotirlinga there. Puffed by Siva's presence there, Vindhya Raja grew taller and taller to compete with Sumeru. This obstructed Sun God's routine circumambulation of the Universe and He had to return half way turning half of the Universe dark. Bhagavati asked Sage Agastya from Kasi to visit Vindhya Raja who out of veneration bent down to touch the feet of Agastya who asked Vindhya to be in that position till he returned and he never came again from the South! Vaidyanath ( At Deogarh / Parli?) The legendary background of Vaidyanath Jyotirlinga is related to Ravana's the Epic Villain of Ramayana. The King of Lanka carried out a relentless meditation to Bhagavan Siva at Kailash Mountain for mighty supremacy and indomitability in the Three Worlds. But as Siva was still not responsive, he moved out from Kailasa to Vrikshakandhaka towards south of Kailasa. He dug up a pit and worshipped a Sivalinga even by sacrificing his ten heads, one by one and at the end Lord Siva became visible and gave away boons of supremacy as also to let a Sivalinga to carry to his Kingdom on the condition that he should reach Lanka directly without even a single halt, lest the Linga if kept down would never be pulled out! Devas became afraid that once Ravana turned unquestionable, there would be chaos in the Three Lokas and Dharma would be wiped out. Thus Devas prayed to Devi Parvati and Ganesha to somehow avert the risk of the Sivalinga to reach Lanka. Parvati appeared on way to Ravana in disguise and in collaboration with Varuna, tempted pure waters of major holy Rivers to quench Ravana's thirst. The King's stomach got bloated and he wished to stop over urgently for a relief and luckily for him, there was a lad whose assistance was sought to hold the Linga for a few moments without placing it on the Ground. By the time Ravana returned, the lad- Lord Ganesha-disappeared and the Linga was stuck to the Ground and no force applied by Ravana was a match to Bhagavan's decision. That was the Jyotirlinga of Vaidyanath who was a 'Vaidya' (Physician) and he helped to piece together the slashed heads of Ravana at the time of his sacrificing them one by one. 'Baidyanathdham' (Baba dham) at Deogarh (Jharkhand) is some seven km from the Jasidhi Junction on Howrah-Delhi main line. It is 220 km away from Patna. The Baidyanath Shrine attracts lakhs of pilgrims from all over a year normally, but they were in millions during the entire 'Shravan' month (July-August). Several of them carry Ganges water from Sultanganj to Deogarh- a distance of about hundred km-to perform 'Abhishekams' to the Jyotirlinga, and many saffron clad Sadhus carry the Ganges water by walk barefooted covering this distance! Pilgrimage to 'Babadham' is considered incomplete without visiting Basukinath Siva Temple some distance away. A well maintained Nandi Temple edging the Nandan Pahad (hill) faces a beautiful lake on one side and the Siva Temple on

the other. Sivaganga is a pond very near the Main Temple, where Ravana desired to wash but since there was no water nearby, he used his fist and hit the Earth and a pond appeared. Other places of interest at Deogarh include Naulakha Mandir, Satsang Ashram of Radha Swami, Tapovan with many caves where Valmiki is said to have stayed for penance, Rikhia Ashram of Yoga, Hamira Jori where Ravana handed over the Holy Linga to Ganesh before his ablutions and Trikut Parvat with a Maha Deva Temple. Inside the huge complex of Babadham itself are situated some 22 Temples viz. Neelkantha and Parvati before Babadham and on either side a cluster of Shrines devoted to Sri Ram, Ananda Bhairavi, Ganga, Gauri Shankar, Tara, Maha Kali, Annapurna, Lakshmi Narayana, Surya Narayan, Bhavani, Sandhya, and so on. There is a controversy about the location of Vaidyanatha Jyotirlinga at Parli in Maharashtra called Kantipur (Madhyarekha Vijayanti or Vijayanti), which is some 26 km from Ambejoga in the Beed District. One legend of this Temple often heard in the vicinity was that Amba Yogeshwari of Ambejoga wedded Maha Deva Vaidyanatha and the marriage party arrived late after the ‘Muhurtha’ (the precise time) for the wedding and Devi was waiting for long; She cursed the members of the Party to turn into stone statues. Another Story was that after the churning of Ocean for Amrit (nectar), fourteen gems emerged among which were Dhanvantari and Amrit which were hidden inside the Shivalinga, but as Demons tried to take them forcibly, huge flames came out and they had to retreat. Till date, devotees have strong faith that Amrit and Dhanvantari or disease killing medicinal flows emerge from the Abhisheka waters. Thus Lord Lingamurthi is called as Amritamurthi and Dhanvantari. In fact, all the devotees-irrespective of caste or creed-are allowed touching the Linga and performing Abhishekas by themselves. Daily Rudra Parayana Mantras are reverberated in the entire Complex. This Sacred Temple is also believed to be the Place where Lord Vishnu as Mohini distributed Amrit to Devas, and hence is called Vijayanti. The other legend associated with the Temple is that of Ravana’s carrying the Linga as described above. Incidentally, the surrounding mountains, forests and rivers are stated to abound medicinal sources. Over the last hundred years or so, considerable construction was made around the Swayambhu Linga by way of strong walls, Enclosures, ‘Mahadwara’ (the Main Gate) and several other Gates, a number of windows (one of which allows morning Sunrays inside one Enclosure by means of which Sun God is worshipped), minarets, lighting and various facilities to lakhs of Visitors. This Temple is a hallowed place particularly to Vira Shaiva Lingayats and devotees of Lord Harihara. There is a Harihara Teertha in the vicinity. Many festivals connected with Siva, Krishna and Bhagavati are celebrated with fervour; Mondays, Fridays, Ekadasis, Chaitra Padava, Dussehras, Tripura Pournami, the entire Kartika month, Sivaratri, Sravana month and so on are observed with reverence. A Pond in the Area is associated with Markandeya’s extraordinary devotion to embrace the Linga firmly defying Yamaraja’s order of death and Bhagavan’s subsequent appearance giving His blessing of immortality to the devotee. A Vateswara Temple reminds the devotees of a ‘Vata’ or Banyan Tree around which was the Story of Satyavan and Savitri over Yama’s sanction of long- life to the couple. Nageshwara (Dwaraka/ Naganath/ Almora) *Nageswaraavataarasthu dasamahaparikerthitah /Aavirbhutah swabhaktartha dushtaanam danda sada / Hatva Daruka namaanam Rakshasah Dharmaghatatum / Swabhkata Vaishwanaam cha prarakshat Supriyabhidam /* Bhagavan’s tenth manifestation (of Jyotirlinga) is popular in save His devotees; a Demon named Daruka who obstructed virtue was destroyed to save His devotee Vaishaya Supriya. While this was the Statement of Siva Purana’s ‘Koti Rudra Samhita’ establishing that Nageswara Jyotirlinga was no doubt evident but there are atleast three claimants of Its Location viz. Nageswara Temple at Dwaraka, Gujarat; Naganath Temple at Aoudhya, Maharashtra; and Jagaswara Temple at Almora, Uttarakhand. Happily, all are winners! The legend was that there a demon couple named Daruka and Daruki and the latter secured a grant from Devi Parvathi that wherever the Demoness went, the entire

forest would accompany her. The Demons were spoiling Yagnas and all Spiritual tasks, there were protests from the harassed Brahmanas to Sage Ourva and the Sage cursed the demons and followers that they would all be destroyed on earth; the Demons had thus no alternative excepting to move into the Sea. Daruki's boon from Parvati became ineffective since the forests were all submerged in the Sea. The Demons thus restricted only in the Sea and resorted to pirating the Ships moving in the Seas and one of extremely devoted Bhakta of Lord Siva named Supriya-a Vaiasya- was thrown into a prison on the ship. Bhakta Supriya who was a staunch devotee of Lord Shiva made sincere prayers and Bhagavan appeared, killed all the Demons and released the prisoners especially Supriya. Commemorating this joyous moment, the Lord blessed that a Swayambhu Nageswara Jyotirlinga be manifested on the Sea Coast as the memorable Nageswara Jyotirlinga. Dwaraka (Gujarat): Some 18 km from Dwaraka, the Temple is situated in a large scrub landscape with a huge Siva idol beckoning outside the Holy Shrine with high Sikhara. The Sacred Linga of raw yellow stone is quite small of size (40cm high and 30cm dia) set underground of 3-4 steps in a spacious Hall of pillars; the Linga which could be touched by all Hindus. The Sivalinga is facing South and a Gomukham ( Face of a Cow) is facing East. Sant Namdeva desired to sing a Bhajan while simultaneously Rudra Parayana (Recital of Rudra Hymns) was being performed and thus the Namdeo party was asked to go to the back of the Temple and when they did so, the Lingam turned towards where the Sant was singing and as this miracle happened the Brahmins begged the Sant for forgiveness. It is said that as the Temple closes, live snakes hover with their hoods open around the Sivalinga as though they were guarding the premises. Naganatha linga is believed to possess supreme Spiritual Powers; a Naga (serpent) is indicative of the nerves of human body. The 'Sushumna Nadi' or 'Naganatha' indicates the energy channel under the spine. The power of Kundalini which normally lies inactive in Mula Dhara Chakra or the Root Chakra at the bottom of the Vertebral Column is also known as 'Naganatha'. The snake-like Kundalini Shakti is akin to the brilliance of Soul (Lord Siva) Himself. Thus the Jyotirlinga is the symbol of Spiritual Radiance. Also the Temple of Dwarakadhish dedicated to Lord Krishna is quite popular in Dwaraka; it is some five hundreds old, remodelled and renovated from time to time. It is granite-built beautiful structure of seven stories of 51 m. height and is a tall land mark in the Township. Krishna and His entire clan shifted to Dwaraka from Mathura although the vestiges were submerged in the Arabian Sea. Naganath (Maharashtra): Situated at Audha in Prabhasa Kshetra [Prabhasa Railway Station on Manmadi-Nanded Line] Naganath Jyotirlinga was referred to as follows by Adi Shankaracharya: *Yame( South)Sadanga ( old name of Audh) Vibhushitangam vividhaischa bhoga bhogai/ Satbhakti muktipradameesa mekam /Sri Naganatham saranam prapadye /* The legend of Aunda Naganatha Temple is that during 'Aranya Vasa' (Forest life of twelve years) by Pandavas pursuant to their defeat in a Game of Dice with Kauravas lived in a hermitage and their cows taking water from a river nearby were automatically giving milk back into the same river and finding this miracle act, Bhima found that the middle part of the River was hot compared to the rest of water. Bhima with his mace broke the middle portion of the River seeking to find out as to how had this happened; there was blood gushing out and when dug up to the great surprise Pandavas discovered a Jyotirlinga full of radiance. The Story of Demons Daruka and Daruki as also of Supriya the great Devotee of Bhagavan was also ascribed to Nageswara Temple at Dwaraka in Gujarat was referred to Naganath Temple at Audh in Maharashtra also. The architectural beauty of the Audha Temple of Prabhasa is distinctive, as was built by Pandavas originally with heavy stones and spacious corridors and halls. The Court Hall is oval shaped supported by strong pillars and the Jyotirlinga of Naganatha Deva is in a Garbhagriha which is in a small internal area. While there is no Idol of Nandi before the Main Deity, there is a separate Shrine for him behind the Main Temple. On all the four sides of the Main Temple are

separate shrines dedicated to Twelve Jyotirlingas, besides Vedavyasa linga, Bhadreswara, Nilakantheswara, Ganapati, Dattatreya, Murali Manohar, and Dasavataras- totalling 108 Shiva Temples and 68 Shrines, interestingly including Mothers in law and Daughters in law! Also interestingly, there is a picturisation of a Scene depicting a sulking Devi Parvati and a pacifying Lord Siva! It is said that Aurangzeb ordered to plunder the Temple and swarms of bees drove away the soldiers. Jagdeswar (Almora): Till date, devotees pray to Bhagavan Siva as Bal Jagdeswar as connected to a legend of the Area. In Daruka Vana, there were ‘Balakhilyas’ a group of Sages of dwarf size performing severe penance for years. Bhagavan Siva sought to test the depth of the Dwarf Sages and appeared as a tall, hefty and handsome personality, a ‘Digambara’ or completely naked, covering His body with snakes. The house wives of the Area were so attracted to the Stranger that they were not only inquisitive but got hypnotised neglecting their house chores. The Sages got frustrated and approached Devas to save the confusion. When Devas meditated Lord Siva in desperation, He manifested as a Bal Jagdeswar, who has no Physique, Gunas (Characteristics), Tatvas, Sex, Age, Time, Distance, yet, He has all of these too! Thus materialized as a ‘Swayambhu’ (Self-born) Linga ever since! The Main Temple in the Complex is dedicated to Tarun Jagdeswar and the Dwarpalakas are Nandi and Skandi. The Sanctum is of two parts, the larger area being of Jagdeswara Jyotirlinga and the smaller area being of Devi Parvati. There is an ‘Akhandya Jyoti’ or Everlasting Lamp. The biggest Shrine in the Main Temple is dedicated to Mritunjaya or the Saviour of Death. The distinction of this Linga is that it has an opening of an Eye. Recitation of Mritunjaya Mantra would yield immediate reliefs of troubles, health problems, mental disturbance and Spiritual solace. The Mantra is from Sukla Yajur Veda: Aum Trayambakam Yajamahe / Sugandhim Pushti Vardhanam / Urvarukamiva Bandhanaan / Mrityor Mokshiyee Maamritaam -We pray to Lord Siva whose eyes are the Sun, Moon and Fire. May He protect us from disease, poverty, and fear and bless us with prosperity, longevity and good health. Another important Shrine in the Complex is of Pushti Bhagavati. Outside the Complex are Vinayak Kshetra, Jhanker Saim Mahadev (who was meditated and instructed His Ganas to destroy the Demons who were disturbing His Tapasya), and Briddha Jagadeswar (in the Form of Old Jagadeswar). Rameshwaram: The Temple town of Bhagavan Siva’s emergence of the penultimate Jyotirlinga of Ramalingesa happens to be celebration point of Lord Rama’s glorious victory over Ravana paying Rama’s dutiful homage to Bhagavan. Having crossed ‘Setu Bandhan’ across the Sea on the triumphant return journey from Lanka en route Ayodhya, Lord Rama despatched Hanuman to visit Varanasi to pray Viswesvara and bring a replica of the Linga from Kasi for consecrating it on the Sea coast but since Hanuman could not return by the appointed auspicious time, Sita Devi improvised a Sand Linga and installed it formally amid Vedic Mantras. Hanuman was upset and wished that the Linga blessed at Kasi Viswanadha be substituted instead and tried hard to pull it out but the so called temporary Sand Linga was ever lasting, blessing millions of devotees ever since. The Kasilinga or Hanumanlinga too was installed nearby which too is worshipped by devotees. It would be appropriate therefore that worship to Rameswara or Rathnaswami be performed after the homage to the Kasilinga or Hanumanlinga. Spread over some 15 acres of land, the Temple could boast of rich architectural heritage of high Raja- Gopurams on the East (126 feet high) and the West side, massive walls, a huge Nandi (18 feet tall and 22 feet long) and a 4000 feet long Corridor with 4000 carved granite pillars on raised platforms on either side- perhaps the longest in the World. [It is gathered that in the initial stages, the Rameswara Jyotirlinga was kept in a thatched abode till the 12<sup>th</sup> Century but royal patronage of passing centuries of the Kings of Travancore, Ramanadha -puram, Nagercoil and Pudukkottai helped improve the Temple Complex.] There are some thirty six Teerthas ( Water Springs) with considerable medicinal and mineral properties - twenty of them being in the Temple Complex itself- most of the devotees bathing bucketfulls in all the twenty two Wells

dotted all over the surroundings and walking along into the Sanctum drenched and then only perform the worship to the Jyotirlinga in queues! Festivals at the Rameswara Temple are celebrated in 'Ani' Masa (June 15- July 15) signifying Lord Rama's victory worship to Bhagavan Siva and two 'Brahmotsavas' or Annual Principal Celebrations are observed in 'Adi' and 'Masi' months as per local customs. Six worships commence from 5 am each day and Special worships are on Fridays. [Among the experiences include a memorable journey approaching or leaving Rameswaram across the Ocean preferably by train or by a road journey over a high bridge and a commanding view of Area atop the Gandhamadan Hill where a Shrine and Rama's revered foot-prints are witnessed as also a Place in the vicinity of the Temple a heavy mineral-laden stone floating on water, apparently due to its high phosphatic content; the stone was a sample with which Setu bridge was constructed by Vanara Sena or Monkey Brigade! ]

Ghrishneshwar: On a mountain called Devagiri, there were a pious Brahmana named Sudharma and his wife Sudeha but she was barren and had no child. Sudeha proposed that her younger sister, Ghushma or Kusuma who was a staunch devotee of Parameswara be wedded to Sudharma. Sudharma agreed and in course of time, they had a male child due to Lord Siva's blessings. Ghushma was in the habit of daily worship by creating Sivalingas of clay and immerse them after Puja and Abhisheka in a pond nearby. Sudeha got jealous of her younger sister as she was blessed with a son. One night Sudeha killed the child out of jealousy and threw away the child in the same pond where the Sivalingas were immersed by her. The latter no doubt wept over the tragedy but continued her daily worship of Siva none-the-less. The dead body of the child floated in the pond where Ghushma used to immerse the lingas and there was commotion in the family and indeed in the village. Ghushma still continued her prayers to Lord Shankara who finally stood before her and desired to kill Sudharma, but she requested not to do so out of her extreme kindness. Lord Siva brought back the child from death and also asked Ghushma for any boon and she requested Him to stay in pond and the Lord agreed to do so and hence the formation of Ghrishneshwara as a Jyotirlinga. Alternative names of the Place are Ghushmeswar or Kusumeswar. This Temple is situated in the Village of Verul or Yelur where River Yala flows and is some 30 km from Aurangabad. [From Aurangabad, Ellora is 30 km, Ajanta is 106 km and Shirdi is 130 km.] The Temple Complex is quite spacious (240 X 185 feet) enclosed by strong outer walls and the Garbha griha (Sanctum) admeasuring 17 feet X 17 feet are the Jyotirlinga of Lord Ghrishnaswara and Idol of Goddess Ghrishneswari; a Nandikeswara is facing the Deities in the Court Hall of the Sanctum. It is believed that long ago, the Patel of the Village discovered a treasure in a snake pit and the amount was spent on the basic construction of the original Temple and the Holkar Royal family renovated with Dasavataras and various other carvings in red stone were added besides a lake named Sikharashingarapur. [Ellora and Ajanta caves which are World Heritage Sites are firmed up on the Tourist map of India].

**114) Dwadasha Raasis coordinated with Saptavimshad (27) Nakshatras:** Stars and Constellations in terms of Maha Deva's physique- Vamana Purana: Maharshi Pulastya explained to Narada, Maheswara was of 'Mangalmaya Swarupa' and was spread all over the Sky to bless the Universe and all the Beings providing ready protection to one all. Nakshatras and 'Raashis' constituted the entire Physique of Maha Deva: the Stars Ashwini, Bharani and Krittika's first 'charana' or the first part of the four parts of Bhouma Kshetra (Planet) of Mesha Raashi (Constellation) constituted Maha Deva's head; Krittika Star's remaining three parts, Rohini, and Mrigaseersha's two Parts of Shukra Planet of Vrisha Raashi constituted Shiva's face; Mrigaseersha's remaining Parts, Ardra and Punarvasu's three Parts of Budha's Mithuna Raashi constituted Shiva's two 'bhujas' shoulders; Punarvasu's last Charana, Pushya and Aslesha of Chandra's Kshetra in the Karka Raashi constituted Shiva's 'parshvaas' or body sides; Magha, Purvaphalguni and Uttara

Phalguni's first Charana of Surya's Simha Raashi constituted Shiva's heart; Uttaraphalguni's remaining three Charanaas, Hasta, and the first of two Paadaas of Chitra of Budha's Kanya Raashi comprised Shankara's 'Jathara' or stomach; Chitra's remaining two Parts, Swati and Vishakha's three Parts of Shukra of Tula Raashi was Shiva's navel; Vishakha's one Part, and Sampurna Anuraadha and Jeshtha Stars of Mangala and of Vrischika raashi constituted the Kaala Rupa of Maha Deva; the full Stars of Moola, Purvaashaadha and Uttaraashaadha's first Charana of Dhanu Raashi being of Brihaspati Kshetra would be Maheswara's 'Vurus' or thighs; Uttaraashaadha's remaining three Charanaas, Shravana and two parts of Dhanishta of Makara Raashi of Shani Kshetra constituted Shiva's Ghutanas or knee-caps; Star Dhanishta's earlier two Charanas, Shatabhisha and Poorvaa -bhaadra's three Charanaas of Kumbha Raashi of Shani constituted 'janghaas' or buttocks; Poorvabhadra's fourth Charana, Uttaraabhadra and Revati of Brihaspati's second Kshetra of Meena Raashi constituted Maha Deva's both the feet. Mesha Raasi has its movement in the circle of Nava Durgas, Dhana-Dhanya and Pushpa-Vanaspati Sarovaras; Vrishabha Rasi is in the Territory of Gokula Deva residing in the Karshaka Bhumi or the Provider of Farming Benefits, cool, convincing, and have an eye for details; Mithuna Raasi is a coexistent Place of Purushas and Strees /men and women alike engaged in music, dance and other fine arts as also sports and tourism; Karka Raashi or of the symbol of a crab of attractive features of detachment, loneliness and of maturity; Simha Raashi persons are fond of enterprise, public relations, mental agility and royal in gait and nature; Kanya raashi persons are courageous, highly sociable, intelligent, quick to learn, adapting and charming; Tula raashi persons are non- controversial, tolerant and adjustable; Vrischik Raashi persons are friendly, resourceful, adaptable and calculative; Dhanu raashi entreprising, skilled in military and daring activities, royal in behaviour and outlook. Thus Parameshwara is a multi-featured, multi- creative and multi-formed entity and at the same time an Omni-Present, Omni- Scient and Omni-Potent Symbol of Unity in Diversity! ( Source: Vamana Purana)

**115) Dwadasha Shraaddhas and Mahalaya Pakshas:** Sage Vishwamitra lists twelve types of Shraddhas: *Nityam naimittikam Kaamyam Vriddhi Shraadda mapindanam, Parvanam cheti vigjneyam goshthyaam Shuddhirthamashtakam/ Karmangam navamam proktam Daivikam dashamamsmrutam, Yatrataashvede -kasham proktam Pushtyartham dwadasham matam/* (Nitya Shraddha is the one performed regularly on Amavasyaadi days or coinciding with Solar and Lunar eclipses; Naimittika or the Shraddhas on sacred days coinciding with select days of one's choice of Tithi-Vaara- Nakshatras; Kamyas Shraddhas are at Upanayana- Vivaha-Janmaadi Samskaraas; Vriddhi Shraddha or for longevity, Sapindikarana Shraddha or involving fistful cooked cereals, Parvana or as explained above the Pindas offered to the departed generations, goshthi shraddha at Vidwamsa sabhas or collective shraaddha in Pitru paksha or the second fortnight of Bhadrapada month ending Amavasya; Shuddhi shraddha or the one to signify the termination of Ashuchi for various reasons like disallowed personal contacts; Karmanga or as parts of certain Karmas or actions involving inappropriate acts or when there are obsessions of extreme affection to the dear ones; Daivika Shraddha or occasions relevant to natural events like quakes, storms, fire related happenings etc.as also on dwadasi tithis; Yatra shraddhas cones like Gaya, Brahma kapala, etc. and Pushti Shraddha aiming at recoveries of health or warding of epidemics etc.; Nitya Shraddha is with cooked food or atleast with water; Namittika is the offer of cooked food to one or three numbers of Brahmana bhoktas and so on. *Yatra Shraddhas:* are specifically related to visits of Punya Tirtha Kshetras like Gaya sheersha, Akshaya Vata, Brahma Kapaala, Gangaasaagara Sangama Kushaavarta, Bilva, Neela Parvata, Prayaga, Kubjaagra, Bhrugutunga, Kedara, Mahaalaya, Amarakataka Narmada, Yamuna, Ganga,

Ganga dwara, Lalika, Sugandha, Shakambari, Phalguni Tirtha, Maha Ganga, Tantu vikaashrama, Kumara dharva prabhava, Saraswati, Kuru Kshetra, Naimishaaranya, Varanaasi, Agastya Ahrama, Kanvaashrama, Pushkarini, Gokarna, Narmada, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Gomati, Vetravati, Vipasha, Vitasti, Shatadu, Chandrabhaaga, Iravati, Kaanchi, Pancha nadi teera, Kaushaki, Saryu, Shona, Jyoti ratha, Uttara Manasa, Badaba, Saoptarcha, Vishnu Paada, Swarga maga pradesha, Sindhu and so on besides Samudra Snanas. Shraddha along with Snana-Homa- Daana- Tarpana are expected to be not only of repaying Pitru Runa but for the fulfillment of personal desires too. Gaya Pinda Phala is considered as of the prize Shraddha. Darshaada Shraaddha timings: According to Parashara Madhaveeyam, Maharshi Yangjnyavalkya opined that when there is not much of a constraint for money and material, Shraddhas be comfortably planned on Amavasyas of Margashira and three subsequent months of Pousha-Maagha-Phalguni; on Bahula Ashta tithis; Putra janma tithis; Utaarayana ad Dakshinaayana tithis, Tula Mesha Sankranti Vishuvat kalas; Surya samkramana days, Vyatipaata, Gajacchaaya, and Surya-Chandra grahana days. *Vyatipata Lakshana*: Amavasya coinciding with Sundays and further coinciding with the Stars of Shravana, Ashwin, Dhanishtha, Ardra, Asresha, and Mrigashira is called Vyatipata and in case that day further coincides with a 'Punya Dina' then that day is reckoned as a Maha Vyatipaata. Shraddha must be performed on that particular day, lest prayaschitta is to be executed. *Gaja chhaaya*: When Chandra coincides with Star Makha, or Surya coincides with Hasta Nakshatra on any Trayodashi Tithi that Tithi is called Gaja Chhaya and that is the appropriate and auspicious day for performing Shraddha. *Surya-Chandra Grahana Shraddha*: *Tridashaah*: *Sparsha samaye trupyanti pitaraatathaa, Manushyaa Madhya kale tu moksha kale tu Rakshasaah*/ (Just when the eclipse commences, Pitru Devatas are happy with the Shraaddhas, Manushyas are blessed when the Grahana is midway but it would be Rakshasas who rejoice the act of shraddha if over at the termination of the eclipse! Lord Yama is quoted to have stated that on the Pournamis of Ashadha-Kartika-Maagha months, shraddhas if performed by satisfying three or five Pandita Brahmanas with bhojana-danas would be most rewarding. Also, coincidences of Vaishakha Shukla Tritiya with Rohini Nakshatra, or Bhadrapada Krishna Trayodashi with Makha Star, Vaishakha Shukla Triteeya with Star Rohini and Kartika Shukla Navami with Shatabhisha are stated to be ideal for Gaja chaaya or Vaidhruti Shradhas. Additionally, Vishnu Purana suggests shraddhas or atleast Jala Tarpana mixes with Tilas would please Pitru Devatas on Vaishakha ShuklaTriteeya, Kartika Shukla Navami, Magha Krishna Amavasya, and Bhadrapada Krishna Trayodashi being the Yugadis. Matsya Purana also suggests Shraddhas for pleasing Pitru Devatas on Manvadis on Ashwiyuja Shukla Navami, Kartika Shukla Dwadashi, Chaitra Shukla Triteeya, Bhadrapada Shukla Triteeya, Phalguni Krishna Amavasya, Pushya Shukla Ekadashi, Ashadha Purnima, Kartika Purnima, Phalguni Purnima, Chitra Purnima, and Jyeshtha Purnima. Kaamyas Shraddhas are fruitful as per Vaara-Tithi- Nakshatras. As regards Vaaras, Kurma Purana states: *Aditya vaaret vaarogyam Chandre sowbhagyamevacha, Kuje sarvatra Vijayam sarvaan kaamaan Budhasyatu/ Vidyaam vishishtaancha Gurou dhanam vai Bhargave punah, Shanaischare bhavedaayuraarogyancha sudurlabham*/ (Shraaddha Phala on Sundays provides health, Mondays Sowbhagyam or Auspiciousness, Tuesdays all round victory, Wednesdays fulfillment of desires, Thursdays Vidya Laabha or success in Studies, Fridays profits and wealth, and Saturdays longevity). As per Manu, the Tithi phalas of performing Kamyas Shraddhas are as follows: *Kurvan Pratipadi Shraaddham rupaan vindite sutaan Kanyakaantu dwiteeyaayaam trititeyaantu sampadah/ Pashun kshudraan chaturthantu Panchamaam shobhanaan sutaan, Shashthaam dyute krishischaiva saptamyaam labhate narah/ Ashtamyaamapi vanijyam labhate shraaddham sadaa, Swaannavamyaam ekakhuram dashamyaam dwikhuram Pashum/ Ekadashyaam tathaa rupyam brahma varchaswinah sutaam, Dwadashyaam jaatarupantu rajatam rupamevacha/ Jnaati shreshtham trayodashyaam*

*Chaturtha -shyaantu suprajaaah, Shraaddhadaamaavaasyam sarvaan kaamaan samashruye/* ( Shraaddhas on Pratipadi Tithi would bestow handsome sons, on Dwiteeya pretty daughters, prosperity on Triteeya, cattle on Chaturthi, illustrious sons on Panchami, success in gambling on Shasthi, Agricultural profits on Saptami, Business profits on Ashtami, Horse based profits on Navami, Vrishabha Laabha on Dashami, Gain of Silver on Ekadashi, Golden jewellery on Dwadashi, Superiority and Pride to Swajana or close relatives on Chaturdashi; Yogya Santana or well deserved progeny doing the parents proud, and all round fulfillment on any Amavasya). Similarly, Shraddhas performed during the various Nakshatras from Krittika to Bharani provide following results: Kritthika Shraddha would result in Swarga, Rohini good progeny, Mrigashia Brahma Varchas, Ardra Karma Siddhi, Punarvasu Bhu laabha, Pushtya Deha Pushti, Asresha Sampada, Makha fulfillment of desires, Purva phalguni Sowbhagya, Uttara Phalguni Dhana Prapti, Hasta Swajaati Shreshthatwa, Chitta Soundara Tanaya or handsome sons, Swati Vanijya laabha or commercial profits, Vishakha Suvarna Laabha, Anuradha Mitra laabha, Jyeshtha Rajya prapti, Moola Krishi laabha, Purvashadha Desire fulfillment, Abhijit Shreshthatwa or Superiority, Shravana samasta Vaanchaa siddhi or realization of all kinds of desires, Dhanishtha bala, Shatabhisha Arogya, Purvabhadra Samudra yaana, Uttaraabhadra Bharyagriha laabha, Uttaraashadha Pashu laabha, Revati Go laabha, Ashwini Ashwa laabha, and Bharani provides longevity. Such would be the results of Shradhas oriented to Kamyarthas. Ekoddishtha Prakaara Shraaddhas: Apastamaba Sutraas prescribe that in case of brothers or sisters without children pass away then Ekoddishtha vidhana on Mahalayaadi Tithis without paarana vidhana be followed. Anyway after Sapindeekarana, the demised body would become rid of 'pretatwa' and join Pitru varga ranks. In other words, only after Sapindikarana, the departed Soul would join Pitru Varga and then only the validity of Ekoddhishta mehod. Otherwise whoever takes upon the responsibility to perform the 'Antya kriyas' of the departed brother or sister, should be cautioned of the need to execute the Parvana vidhana. In case this is not so executed, the Karta is stated to have committed Brahma hatya! In case, there is any difficulty in taking up the responsibility, *Sutakaantara* or after the Ashuchi days in the next month on the Mrita Tithi of either Shuka paksha or even Krishna Paksha would be in order. *Sutakantara* Maasika is required to be executed with all the components including Agnoukarana, Pindapradaana, Brahmana bhojanaadi Pitru puja. *Amashraaddha*: In case there is any limitation of performing Shraddhas on Amavasyaadi Tithis afore mentioned due to the non presence of wife for reasons, then Anna Shraddha might not be essential and Amashraddha would suffice. Mahalaya Paksha Shraddha Phalas: The fortnights following Ashadha Shuddha Purnima or that of Bhadrapada Krishna are stated to be of Punya Tithis which are of significance to Pitru Devas and those fifteen days are called Pitru Pakshas. The fruits of performing Shraddhas on each of the Tithis are as follows: Prathama Tithi-Dhana Laabha; Dwiteeya: Santaana Prapti; Triteeteeya: Vishesha Laabha; Chaturthi: Shatru naashana; Panchama Tithis: Sampada; Shashthi: Pujyata; Saptami: Senadhipatya; Ashtami: Budhi; Navami: Putrika pradaana; Dashami: Ichhaa Purnata or fulfillment of desires; Ekaadasha: Vedabhyaasa; Dwadashi: Suvarna Laabha, Pushti, Pashu laabha, Vriddhi sheshtata; Trayodashi: Deerghaayu and Ishwarya; Chaturdashi : Mukti of those who died young or during accidents; Amavasya: Swarga phala. Mahalaya Pakshas: are also stated to refer to the fortnight when Surya enters Kanya Raashi during Bhadrapada Krishna Praapitada to Amavasya and this fortnight is called Gajacchhaaya. During these days, it is stated that parvana shraddhas would be effective. Also, on Aswiyuja Prathama Tithi and the following fortnight too is good for Shraddhas. There is also a view that from Bharapada Krishna Paksha to Ashadha Purnima even if Surya has not entered Kanya Raashi, shraddha prakriya would be beneficial to sons for their good health, longevity and prosperity, as stated by Jaabaali. On the entry of Surya and during Bhadrapada Krishna Paksha, Pitru Devas would be awaiting atleast Jala tarpana as pointed by

Brihanmanu. In fact Adi Purana emphasizes that during this period when Surya enters Kanya rashi, Shraddhas would yield definite and positive results. In fact Gautama Maharshi stressed that on this specific day, Shraddhas have far reaching phala tantamount to Yagjna karya. Even as Bhadrapada Krishna p aksha is terminated and as Surya enters Vriscika Raashi, Pitrus in the state of pretatwa are stated to be badly affected by thirst and hunger and shraddhas with payasaadi padarthas would gratify them fully. Now, till Surya leaves Kanya raashi and Tula Raashi and enters Vriscika Raashi, Pitri devatas would be waiting for the Shraddas and once disappointed without relief, then they would have to transport to Yama Loka while cursing the progeny. Once satisfied with 'bhakshya bhojyas' during the shraddhas, they attain mukti and bless the progeny responsible for the Shraddhas for Dhana Dhanya Arogyaadi fulfillments. In case Shraddhas are not performed daily but on certain days only, then the avoidable days are Janma Tithi- Vaara- Nakshatras, Fridays, Tayodashi, and Rohini-Makha-Revati nakshatras. Also, in this context, Shraddhas are required to be performed to Pitru varga and Matamaha varga too. Another precaution would be that Mahalaya Shraddhas in favour sister/ brother, son, maternal uncle, Guru or one's own Master are required being as per Ekoddishtha Vidhana. Now, some do's and don'ts before performing shraddhas: The Brahmanas to be appointed as 'bhoktas' are to be well versed in Veda Vedangas, well behaved, healthy with no physical disabilities, coming of good family background, infallible, and trained well in performing Parvana shraddha and /or ekoddishtha as well. Such ideal bhoktas be invited in advance by the Karta or his brother or son or disciple. The 'nimantrana' or invitation should be done with 'Apasavya' of 'yagnopaveeta' in respect of 'Pitru sthaana bhokta' and 'savya' position to Vaishwanara bhokta. The prescribed number of Pitru Sthana and Vaishwadeva Sthaana is three and four but as per Desha-Kaala-Parishithis or convenience and availability a minimum of one each would be a must. Vaishwa Deva Brahmanas are to be seated Purva Mukha or east facing and Pitru Deva brahmanas are Uttara mukha or facing north. The respective Brahmanas of Pitru and Vaishwadevas are not mingled nor even touch each others.

**116) Chaturdasha Manvantaras:** The fourteen Manus of each Manvantara have been Swayambhu, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Chakshusha, **Vaivaswata**, Savarni, Daksha Savarni, Brahma Savarni, Dharma Savarni, Rudra Savarni, Rouchya Savarni, Bhoyta Savarni and Indra Savarni. The Time Cycle is as follows: One Kalpa- the present Kalpa being Sweta Varaha Kalpa -or just a day time excluding Brahmas night time- comprises 14 Manvantaras; each Manvantara or the life span of a Manu comprises 72 Chatur Yugas; each Chatur Yuga has 12000 Deva Vatsara defined as 4800 Deva Vatsaras of Krita Yuga, 3600 Deva Vatsaras of Treta yuga, 2400 Deva Vatsaras of Dwapara yuga and 1200 Deva Vatsaras of Kali yuga or  $1200 \times 360 = 432000$  human years. Incidentally, there would be 5040 Manus in a year of Brahma's life span of Brahma's his own one year while he has his own 100 years.

**117) Shodasha Chandra Kalaas:** Amrita, Manada, Tushti, Pushti, Rati, Dhruti, Shashini, Chandrika, Kanta, Jyotsna, Shri, Priti, Angada, Poorna and Poornaamrita; The Corresponding \*Shodasha Nitya Devis are: Maha Tripura Sundari, Kameshwari, Bhaga maalini, Nityaklinna, Bherunda, Vahni vaasini, Maha Vajreshwari, Shiva dooti /Roudri, Twarita, Kala Sundari, Nitya, Vijaya, Sarva Mangala, Jwala Malini and Chidrupa.

**118) Shodasha Kumaris:** depending on their age: Sandhya, Saraswati, Tridha Murti, Kalika, Shubhaga, Uma, Malini, Kubjika, Kaala Sandarbha, Aparajita, Rudrani, Bhairavi, Maha Lakshmi, Peetha Nayaki, Kshetrajna, and Ambika ( Source: Devi Bhagavata Purana)

**119) Shodasha Matrikas:** viz. *Gouri Padma Shachi Medha Savitri Vijayaa Jayaa, Devasena Swadhaa Swaahaa Maaturey Loka Maturey, Shanti Pushti Dhruti Tushti Kula Devata Atma Devatah/*

**120) Shodasha Tatwas:** 1) 'Jnanendriyas': Five of sense organs, viz, Eyes, Nose, Tongue, Mouth, and Skin; 2) 'Karmendriyas': or Five Organs for Action viz: mouth, feet, hands, genital and anus; 3) Five 'Tanmatras' or inner basics of elements or light, sound, taste, smell and consciousness; 4) Five 'Antahkaranas': Mind or thought, Buddhi or Understanding, Siddha or Power of mind leading to Jayam or success and Angaram or Excitement; 5) Six 'Adharas' or Foundations: Muladhara, Svadhista, Manipura, Anantha, Visuddhi and Angana; 6) 'Dhatus' or Seven Body Constituents: Serum, Blood, Semen, Brain marrow, Flesh, Bone and Skin. 7) Ten 'Vayus' or Vital Airs: Prana ( Near Heart), Apana ( Top to bottom), Samana ( Near Throat), Vyana ( Total Body), Utthana ( near navel), Nahana ( movements and speech), Koormana ( causing disgust or dismay), Kiriharana ( facial), Devadatta ( exhaled by yawning) and Dhanajaya ( remaining in the body after death) 8) Five 'Kosas' or body parts: Annamaya ( food body), Manomaya(Composed of mind), Pranamaya (the force holding body and mind), Vijnanamaya ( body of intellect) and Anantamaya (the body of Bliss); 9) 'Nava Dvaras' or Nine Doors : two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, genital and excretionary channel. 10) Eight 'Vikaras' or Vices: Lust, meanness, anger, carelessness, showiness, ferocity, haughtiness, and jealousy. 11) Three 'Mandalas' or Body Regions : Agni Mandala or the fire place in lower abdomen, Aditya Mandala or the Place of Sun in stomach, and Chandra Mandala or the Region of Moon in head and shoulders. 12) Three Temperaments viz. flatulency or excessive self importance, melancholy or pensive sadness, bilious temperament or irritability, Phlegmatic temperament or indifference. 13) Three 'Gunas' or attributes: Satva ( Goodness), Rajas ( Passion) and Tamas ( Ignorance). 14) Five 'Avasthas' or Inner Soul abodes in body parts viz. 'Sakiram' or Fully Alive and Vigilant connected to forehead, 'Svapnam' or dormant soul in a state of dream connected to neck, 'Sujjuti' or insensibility of soul connected to breast, 'Turiyam' or abstraction of mind while soul is connected to navel and 'Turiyathitam' or a state of death when the soul is sunk into mooladharam. 16) Ten 'Nadis' or nerve connections viz. Idakala or the nerve beginning from big toe of right foot to left nostril, 'Pinkala' nerve connecting the big toe of left foot to right nostril, 'Kantari' or nerves beginning from navel to neck assuming seven folds of seven tones of human voice, 'Suguva' or the optical nerves interconnecting ten branches, 'Purudan' or the auditory nerves linking one hundred twenty lines, Guru beginning from navel to flat stomach, 'Sangini' on flat belly, 'Suzi Muna' the nervous link connecting Adharas like Mooladhara, Svadhishtana etc. and Atti and Alambuda connecting miscellaneous body parts.

**121) Shodasha Upacharas:** Sixteen proverbial services at formal Pujas: Aavahana-Aasana- Padya- Arghya- Achamaniya-Shudhodaka Snaana Naivedyadaka-Vastra-Pushpa- Gandha-Dhupa-Deepa- Naivedya- Taambula-Neerajana-Prarthanaas.

A) Lakshmi Puja: *Dhyana:* 'Parama Pujya Bhagavati Maha Lakshmi seated on a thousand petalled Lotus illuminated with the lustre of countless Chandras! We are mesmerised to vision your stunning and gorgeous Rupa like that of molten gold wearing silks of extraordinary grace and charismatic smile as the Embodiment of Affluence and Propitiousness. May we deserve the extraordinary fortune of worshipping you in person?' *Asanam:* *Amulya Ratna saaram cha nirmitam Vishwakarmanaa, Pashyaani prakrush - taani varaani durlabhaani cha, Aasaanamcha vichitram cha Maha Lakshmi pragrahnataam/* (Bhagavati Maha Lakshmi! May I offer in your service an invaluable and distinguished seat made of Choicest Jewels specially designed and crafted by Vishwakarma, the Celestial Designer!) *Paadyam:* *Shuddham Gangodakamidam Sarva Vanditameepsitam, Paapedhma vahni rupam cha gruhyataam Kamalaalay/*

(Kamalaalaye! This pure and hallowed Ganga water is borne by the heads of one and all as the same is endeared and revered by them; this is considered as Agni Swarupa which burns off all kinds of sins; do kindly accept it to wash your sacred feet); *Arghyam: Pushpa chandana durvaadi samyuktam Jaahnaveejalam, Shankha garbhastitam shuddham gruhnataam Padma vaasini/* (Padmavaasini! This Ganga water in a Shankha along with flowers, Chandana, Durva and such other consecrated material is offered to you as a welcome drink) *Sugandhi Pushpa thailam: Sugandhi pushpa thailam cha Sugandhaamalaki phalam, Deha Soundrya beejam cha gruhnataam Shri Harey Priye!* (Shri Hari Priye! This fragrant oil extracted from Amala fruit is a pleasing application to enrich physical beauty and skin smoothening; do please allow it to be used as a bathing device); *Dhoop :Vriksha niryaa swarupam cha Gandhadravyaadi samyutam, Shri Krishna kaantey dhupam cha pavitram prati-guhyataam/*(Shri Krishna Kantey! I proffer ‘dhoop’ or the aromatic smoke of incense material mixed with a vegetable gum; do kindly accept this smoke offered with sanctity); *Chandan: Malayaachala sambhutam vriksha saaram manoharam, Sugandha yuktam sukhadam Chandanam Devi gruhnataam/* (Devi! this chandana ‘gandha’ which originated from the chandana tree on Malaya mountain is not only sweet-smelling but also provider of coolness; I request you to apply on your body to give soothing effect); *Deepam: Jagacchasthuh swarupam cha dhwaanta pradhwanasa kaaranam, Pradeepam shuddha rupam cha gruhyataam Parameswari/* (Parameswari! Kindly allow this Sacred Light which is the vision of eyes, remover of darkness and a symbol of Purity to please you and light the surroundings); *Naivedya: Naanopahaara rupam cha nanaa rasa samanvitam, Naanaa swaadukaram chaiva Naivedyam Pratigruhnataam/* (Devi! I am tendering this ‘Naivedya’ or the offering of various eats and juices which have been prepared with taste and flavor; I should be obliged of these snacks are consumed to please me). *Anna: Annam Brahma swarupam cha Pranarakshana kaaranam, Tushtidam Pushtidam chaiva Devyaannam pratigruhyataam/* (Devi! Annam/ food is considered to be of Brahma Swarupa; food is also a life saving material which ensures eating-satisfaction and enhances strength in the natural way; I request you to taste this food); *Kheer: Shaalyakshata supakvam cha sharkaraagavya samyutam suswaadu samanoharam, Swaadu yuktam Maha -Lakshmi Paramaannam Pratigruhyataam/* (Maha Lakshmi! This Kheer or cooked rice with sugar and ghee is specially prepared for your taste; please taste this preparation); *Swaastika Mishtaanna: Shakaraa gavya pakvam cha suswaadu sumanoharam, Mayaa niveditam LakshmiSwaastikam pratigruhnataam/* (Lakshmi! This is ‘Mrishta- anna’/Sweet rice called Swastika which is a mix of sugar and ghee in cooked rice which is being offered as a Naivedya to you for your kind acceptance). *Phala: Naanaa vidhani ramyaani pakkvaani cha phalaanicha, Swaaduyuktaani Kamaley gruhyataam phaladaani cha/* (Devi Kamaley! These are various fruits ripe for eating, which are not only sweet luscious but also desire-fulfilling; may I present these juicy fruits for approval). *Dughdha: Surabhistana sambhutam swaadu sumanoharam, Martra -amrutam sugavyam cha gruhnnataamachyuta priye/* (Achyuta Priye! This pure milk which is fresh from Surabhi cow’s udder is meant for Martyaloka residents and is tasty like ambrosia; I beseech you to taste it and gratify me!) *Gud / Jaggery: Suswaada rasa samyuktamikshu vriksha samudbhavam, Agnipakkamati swaadu gudam cha prati- guhyataam/* (Devi! this jaggery has been made of sugarcane juice heated up and solidified; indeed this is very sweet and fresh; please savour this). *Mrishtaanna: Yava godhuma sashyaanaam churna renu samudbhavam, Supakvam guda gavyaaktam Mrishtaannam Devi gruhyataam/* (Devi! This is a sweet preparation made of wheat and ‘Yava’ grains-mix, nicely cooked with jaggery and ghee which too is very appetizing for favour of your taste); *Pishtak: Shasyachurnodbhavam pakkvam Swastikaadi samanvitam, Mayaa niveditam DeviPishtakam pratigruhyataam/* (Devi! This pisthak made of rice powder with Swastika and other signs is a fried and crisp savoury for your taste); *Eik/ Sugar cane: Paarthivo vriksha bhedascha vividha dravya*

*kaaranam, Suswaadurasa samyutam Eikshuscha pratigruhyatam/* (Devi! This sugar cane is an extraordinary tree on Earth and is a source of several by products like jaggery, sugar and simple juice from raw cane; this juice is indeed very sweet and succulent; it is my prayer that you may drink up this juice!); *Vyanjan: Sheeta vaayu pradama chaiva daahey cha sukhadam param, Kamaley! Gruhyataam chedam vyajanam shweta chaamaram/* (Kamaley! In this stuffy climate, a white ‘chamara’/ hand fan would certainly bring relief and happiness; may I serve you with ‘Vyanjana’ for your comfort); *Taamboola: Taambulamcha varam ramyam karpuraadi suvaasitam, Jihwaa jaadyacchedakaram Taamboolam Devi gruhyataam/* (Devi! This ‘Taamboola’ made of tender betel leaves and fragrant materials like ‘karpura’/ camphor and other scented edible digestibles would provide freshness and good feeling to your tongue and mouth; may I tender this to you); *Jala: Suvaasitam sheetalamcha pipaasaa naashakaanam, Jagajjevaa rupamcha jeevanam Devi gruhyataam/* (Devi! To quench thirst, there is nothing like very cold, nicely scented and life-reviving water; do please accept this as well); *Maalya: Deha soundarya bijam cha sadaa Shobha vivardhanam, Kaarpaasaja cha krumijam vasanam Devi gruhyataam/* (Devi! The bouquets and garlands made of a wide variety of fresh and perfumed seasonal flowers provide invaluable joy to the wearers of these as also enhance beauty and grace to them; it is my privilege and unique opportunity to proffer these flowers to you); *Achamaneeya: Punya tirthakam chaiva Vishuddham Suddhidam sadaa, Grhnateem Krishna Kaantey twam ramyamaachaneeyakam/* ( Krishna Kaantey! This ‘Tirtha jala’ which is sanctified on its own as also purify others is highly worthy of ‘Achamaneeya’; do accept the same); *Shayya: Ratnasaaraadi nirmaanam pushpachandana samyuttm, Ratnabhusha bhushaadhyam sutalpam Devi gruhnnataam/* (This invaluable and highly comfortable bed with soft cotton and silk clothing, which is bejewelled and treated with fresh and intoxicating flowers and fragrances, is tendered to you Devi! please do accept this for your relaxation); *Apurva Dravya: Yadyad dravyamapurvam cha Prithivyaapi durlabham, Deva bhushaarbhogyam cha taddrayam Devi gruhnnataam/* (Devi! Not only these but whatever invaluable and even impossible materials are available on Earth or elsewhere that are worthy of adorning your body would be available at your nod of head. (Source: Brahma Vaivarta Purana)

2) Vishnu Puja: *Shodasopacharas:* Bhagavan Narayana is in Yoga nidra during the Chaturmasa period as He lies on water that is omnipresent; water is the root of ‘Anna (food) and the entire Universe is sustained by food which causes ‘Tripti’ (contentment). Thus ‘Anna Brahma’ is the origin of Paramatma or the Supreme Energy. When a devotee appeals to that Great Force, the invocation or Avahana instantly responds to a true and hearty dedication with the recital of the Sixteen Stanza ‘Maha Purusha Suktam’ of Yajurveda stating: *Om Sahasra Seersha Purushah Sahasraakshassahasra paath/ Sa Bhumim Viswato Vrutwa Athathishtha Dassangulam/* In response to the Avahana one visions the appearance of Vishnu as : Jyotissantham Sarva Lokantharastham, Omkaarakhyam Yogi Hridhdhyana gamyam, Sangam Shaktim Sayudham Bhaktasevyam, Sarvakaaram Vishnumaavaahayami. With the Second ‘Rucha’ (Stanza) stating: *Purusha Evedagum Sarvam, Yadbhutam yaccha bhavyam/Utaamrutatva syeshanah, yadanney naa thirohati/*

Asanam: Kalpadrumulemanivedimadhya, Simhaasanam Swarnamayam Su Ratnam/ Vichitra Vastraavrutthamachyu Prabha, Grihana Lakshmidharanisamanvita! Navarathnakhachitahea Simhaasanam Samarpayami. Padya m: *Etavanasya Mahima Ato jayagumscha Puurushah, Paadosya Viswabhuutaatripaadasya amrutam divi/ Sri Krishna Sarva Devaanamadhi kassarva Kaamadah, Mayaniveditam thubhyam Sam graahana Supaadyakam Paady am Samarpayami; Arghyam: Tripaada uurdhva Uda Purushaha Paadosya abhavathpunah Tato Vishvajvyakraa mat, saasanaanasane Abhi/* Gangajalam Samaaneetham Suvarna Kalase Sthitham, Arghyam Grihaana

Bhagavan Kaala Rupa Namostuthey; Arghyam Samarpayami. Achamaneeyam: *Tasmadviraadajayatha Virajo Adhi Puurushah /Sajaatho Athyarichyatha Paschadbhumi matho purah/* Namo Janaardanaaya Devaaya Samstha Jagadaatmaney, Nirmala Jnaana Rupaya dattamaachaneeyakam; Mukhe Achamaneeyam Samarpayami. Madhuparkam: *Yatpurushena havisha Devaa Yagnamathanvatha, Vasantho Asya see dajyam Greeshma Idhma ssaradhhavihi/* Madhyajya Dadhi Samyuktam Swarna Patrey Prathishthitam, Madhuparkam Grihaanathvam Lakshmikantha Namesthuthey; Madhuparkam Samarpayami. Snaanam: *Saptasyasanparidhaya Trissaptha Samidhahkritah/Devaadyagnam tanvaanaa Abhadhna purusham Pasum.* Panchamrita Snaanam Samarpayami [Cow milk, Curd, ghee, honey, coconut water] Vastram: *Tam Yagnam barhishi prokshan Purusham jaathamagrathaha, Thena Devaa Ajayantha Saadhya Rishayascha ye/* Swarnaanchalam Swarnavichitra Sobhitham, Kauseya Yugmam Parikalpitham maya, Daamodara Praavaranam grahana, Maayaabala pravrittha Divya rupa; Vastra Yugmam Samarpayami. Yagnovapeetham: *Thasmadyajna Sarvahuthah, Sambhurutam Prushadaajam, Pasuugum stagumschakrey Vayavyan, Aranyan Graamaashaye/* Suvarnanathanuudbhava Yagna Sutram, Mukataphalasyutha manekaratnam, Grihaana tadvakritha mutthareeyam, Swakarma sutram dharathey namosthu. Yagnopaveetham samarpayami Chandanam: *Thasmat yajna sarva huthah rucha ssaamaani jajnirey, Chhandagumsi jajnirey thasmat dajaayatha/* Kasthurika kardama chandanaani, Kashmiri Samyujitha Gandha Saraih/ Vilepanam Sweekuru Deva Deva! Sri Devi Vakshoja vilopanaamkam; Gandham Samarpayami; Pushpam: *Thasmaadaswa Ajaayantha, Ekechobhayadathah/ Gaavo ha jajnire tasmaatjaatha Ajaavah/* Chaamantika vakula champaka Paatalaabja Punnaga Jaaji karaveera rasaala Pushpaih, Bilva Pravaala Tulasi dhala mallikaabhih twaam Pujayaami Jagadeeswara Vasu Deva! Pushpai Pujayami. Dhupam: *Brahmanosya mukhamaaseeth Baahuu Raajanyah Krithah, Vuuru thadasya Yadvasyaih Padbhaagum Suudro Ajaayatha/* Vanaspathudbhavair Divyair naanaa gandhaissu samyuthah, Aagheyassrava Devaanaam Dhuupoyam Prathi gruhyataam. Dhupamaaghraapayami. Deepam: *Chandramamaso Jaataah, Chakshoh Suryo Ajaayatha, Mukhaadrindra schagnischa Praanadwayurajayatha; Saajyam Trivarti Samyuktam Vahnina Yojitham Priyam, Grihaana Mangalam Deepam Thrailokya Thimiraapahaaram, Bhaktya Deepam Prayacchaami Devaaya Paramaatmaney, Thraahi maam Narakaadghorat Divya Jyothir namosthuthey; Deepam Darsayaami.* Naivedyam /Anna daanam: *Nabhyaa Aseedantariksham, Seershno dyaouh Samavarthatha, Padbhyam Bhumirdisah Srotraat Tatha Lokaagum Akalpayan/* Naivedyam is performed by sprinkling water on the Anna Prasada and recites the Mantra: Om Bhurbhuvassuvah, Tat Savithur Varenyam, Bhargo Devasya Dheemahih, Dhiyo yonah Prachodayaat. Thereafter recite ‘Satyamtharthena Parishinchaami’ if the Naivedya is during the day; in the night, recite the Mantra: Ruthamthwa Sathyena Parishinchaami; then round up the Material for Naivedya with water and recite Amritamasthu and leave water in a Plate and again recite: ‘Amritopastharamamasi’ and show the Prasad to Deva reciting Om Praanaya Swaha, Om Apaanaaya Swaha, Om Udaanaaya Swaha, Om Samaanaaya Swaha, and after Naivedya one must address Deva saying Madhyey Madhyey Paaneeyam Samarpayami, Hasthou Prakshaalayami, Paadou Prakshaalayami, Suddhaachamaneeyam Samarpayami. After Naivedyam, the devotee performs the Thirteenth Service by way of Punarachamana; the corresponding Rucha states: *Vedaahametham Purusham Mahaantham, Aadityavarnam thamasasthupaare, Sarvaani Ruupaani Vichitya Dheerah, Naamaani Krutwabhidhan yadaasthey/* The fourteenth Service is executed by Sashtanga Namaskar and the Rucha of Purusha Suktam states: *Dhata purasthadyamudaa jahaara, Sakrah Pravidvaan pradisachathasrah Thamevam Vidvanamritha Iha Bhavati, Naanyah Pandhaa Ayanaaya Vidyathey.* The fifteenth Service is by way of Parikrama (Circumambulation) as the corresponding Rucha is: *Yagnena*

*Yagna mayajamtha Devaah, Thani Dharmani Prathamaanyaasan, the ha naakam Mahimaanah Sachamthey yathra Puurvey Saadhyaah Santhi Devaah.* Finally the Sixteenth Service is Self realisation that is to identify the self with Bhagavan Vishnu Himself! The relevant Stanza of Purusha Suktam states *Vedahametham Purusham Mahaantam Aditya Varnam Tamasah Parasthat, Thamevam Vidwanamritha Iha Bhavati, Naanyah Panthah Vidyatheyaaya* (I know Purusha or Bhagavan who is Mahantham or Supreme; who is resplendent like Sun and is very far off from darkness. Whoever could realise Him attains Salvation in this world itself; there is no other way indeed.) Source : Skanda Purana

**122) Ashtadasha Bhuja:** Devi is endowed with Eighteen Hands carrying Aksha Maala or stringed beads, battle axe, mace, arrow, thunderbolt, Lotus, Pot, Cudgel, lance, sword, shield, conchshell, Ball, drinking cup, trident, noose, discuss or the wheel; She is also of ‘Mahashtaadasha Peethika’ or of the Eighteen Famed Temples like at Kolhapuri and at various Ashta Lakshmi Temples dotted all over in Bharat and elsewhere.

### **123) Ashtaadasha Adhyaayas of Bhagavad Gita Mahatmya and Implied Messages**

**A) Mahatmya:** As Bhagavan Vishnu was in ‘Yoga Nidra’(Yogic Slumber) on Sesha Nag in the midst of Ksheera Sagara (Ocean of Milk) stating that he was meditating Bhagavan Maheswara, Devi Maha Lakshmi wondered as to why did Vishnu assert that he was Paramatma himself and none else! Did he not ask Arjuna in no uncertain terms that he should fight without hesitation and dedicate all actions and results to Him, since He was the Cause, the Causation and the Causer! Fully endorsing what Devi Lakshmi said, Bhagavan defined that out of the Eighteen ‘Adhyayas’ (Chapters) of Bhagavad Gita, five Adhyayas constituted five of his Faces, ten Adhyayas were his ten hands, one Adhyaya was his belly and two were his two feet. He further gave the illustration of Susharma and said that intelligent people like him who read an Adhyaya of Gita a day or half of it or a quarter, or atleast a stanza, would certainly secure Mukti. Susharma was no doubt a Brahmana by birth but was a chronic sinner; he did neither dhyana nor japa, neither homa nor ‘Atithi Satkar’ or Puja of Guests; on the contrary he was a drunkard, meat eater and a regular womanizer. One day he died of a snake bite. After experiencing retribution in various ‘Narakas’, he was born as a bull and served under an oil-extractor for seven to eight years and died out of hard work and exhaustion. A few persons contributed prayers for the animal’s salvation and among them was a ‘veshya’ (prostitute) who donated some ‘Punya’ on her account. In the rebirth the bull became a pious Brahmana in the same village as a ‘Jyatismara’ with the gift of memory of the past birth. He met the Veshya and enquired as to which Punya that she donated at the death of the bull. She said that she bought a parrot which used to mutter some lines of a stanza always although she did not guess what was it but surely that muttering had highly soothing effect. The Brahmana asked the Parrot and the latter said that she was earlier in an Ashram in a cage where a Rishi was teaching something to his disciples and it learnt it but a hunter stole the bird and sold to the Veshya. The Rishi conveyed that he taught the *First Chapter of Gita!* That was the Punya which the Veshya acquired from the parrot’s muttering that was learnt at the Ashram. Such was the Mahtmya of the First Chapter. Bhagavan Vishnu then explained to Devi Lakshmi the significance of the *Second Chapter of Gita.* A Veda Pandit Deva Sharma of Purandarapura in Dakshina Bharat was anxious to learn and attain ‘Tatwa Gyan’ and came across a visiting Mahatma about his desire. The Mahatma directed Deva Sharma to a Goat Keeper called Mitravan at Sowpur in a forest seated on a rock on the banks of a river bed nearby. Mitravan narrated one of his experiences about a tiger approaching a helpless goat; all other goats fled away but this one waited as though it welcomed the tiger to eat him up. The tiger hesitated and asked the goat as to why he had the

courage to stand firmly but did not run. The goat questioned as to why the tiger did not pounce on her! The tiger replied that her hunger subsided suddenly. Both the tiger and the goat met a Mahatma in the forest and he asked them to approach a Vanara Raja (Monkey). The Vanara Raja replied that there was a highly religious Brahmana named Sukarma who meditated in a Shiva Temple not far off for long time. When Sukarma was asked, he said that one Maha Purush appeared in the Temple and Sukarma requested him to teach him Tatwa Gyan. The Maha Purush asked Sukarma to read an inscription on a rock nearby the Temple from the Second Chapter of Gita emphasizing the importance of ‘Abhyasa’ or Practice. Having said this, the Maha Purush disappeared. The Second Chapter states: *Karmaneyyaadhi kaarastey maa phaleshu kadaachana, maa karmaphala heturbhuh maa tey sangostva karmani/* (Partha! You have freedom only to perform your duty. The rest is not relevant to you. But You should perform the ‘Karma’ without expecting the fruits). Bhagavan defined a Tatva Gyani as follows: *Duhksheshvanu dvignamanaah Sukheshu vigataspruhah, Veeta raga bhayakrodhah Sthidheermuniruchyatey* (A Stitha-Pragna or a Tatva Gyani is he who is least disturbed when there is unhappiness and difficulty and gets elated when there are reasons to be delighted; if one could practise equanimity without desire, fear or anger, that only is the feature of Tatva Gyan (Sthita Pragnyatwa). Thus the chain of Deva Sharma-the Mahatma-Mitravan the Goat Keeper-the Tiger and the Goat-the Vanara Raja-Sukarma and the Maha Purush revealed the Message of Tatwa Gyan which simply stated that one should practice one’s own duty and Tatwa Gyan would unfold itself! Describing the Mahatmya of the *Third Chapter of Gita* titled Karma Yoga, Bhagavan cited the example of a Brahmana named Jada who practiced the profession of a ‘Vaishya’ or of business. He amassed wealth from this line but became a victim of vices. He desired to earn more and travelled to a far off city. On way he halted for the night and slept off under a tree in a village. A gang of robbers looted and killed him and he turned to be a ‘Pretaatma’ (goblin) and resided on the same tree. Jada’s son was a dutiful Brahmana and followed the duties of a Brahmana. As he was concerned of his father’s whereabouts, the son asked a friend of his father and he conveyed that the latter was looted and killed on way in a village under a tree. Being highly saddened by the news, he proceeded to Varanasi to perform the obsequies of his father and coincidentally halted under the tree of the same village where his father also halted for an overnight stay and got killed by the gang of robbers. Before he desired to sleep, the son recited the Third Chapter of Gita; his father who was also on the same tree as a Preta appeared before the son, and while boarding an air-plane to Vaikuntha since he was redeemed as a result of the recital of the Third Chapter of Gita, he asked his brothers also to revert to the Brahmana Varna at once and observe the duties concerned and more importantly recite the Third Chapter. Since Jada’s son was also visiting Varanasi anyway as planned by him, the son should invoke the forefathers of the Vamsa by reciting the Karma Yoga or the Third Chapter of Gita so that they too would realize Salvation. The principal message of the Third Chapter stressed: *Shreyan swadharmo vigunah pardharmatswanushthaat, Swadharmey nidhanam shreyah Para Dharmo bhayaapah/* (Even if one feels that the ‘Dharma’ or duty of somebody else’s is attractive, one must observe one’s own Dharma since ‘Para Dharma’ or Dharma of others is worse than death). Another significant instruction given by Krishna to Arjuna in this Chapter stated: *Mayi sarvaani karmaani sanyasyadhyatma chetasa, niraaseermamo bhutwa yudhyasya vigata jwarah/* (Partha! I create all actions and hence perform your duty targeting me and leaving results to me and fight). As the son followed his father’s instruction in letter and spirit and all the forefathers flew to Vaikuntha by air-planes, Yama Dharma Raja was concerned that several ancestors were leaving away to Vaikuntha from Narakas as per the directive of Vishnu dootas and thus double-checked from Lord Vishnu and the latter endorsed the instructions. As Yama Raja enquired of Vishnu whether there were further instructions to him, the latter replied that he should better perform Yama

Raja's own Swadhrma! Bhagavan Vishnu narrated to Devi Lakshmi the illustration of Mahatma Bharat worshipping at Vishwanatha Temple of Varanasi on the banks of Ganga, while signifying the Mahatmya of the *Fourth Chapter* of Gita. One day, he desired to rest under the shade of two bilva trees which were located side by side with a gap of five-six feet. Bharat kept his head at the bottom of one bilva and placed his feet at the bottom of another tree and recited the Fourth Chapter and after a while left for his home. Even as he was leaving, he found that the trees were fast drying up and when he reached home he found two 'Kanyas' (young girls) at his house. The Kanyas thanked Bharat profusely and said that they were relieved of a curse by a Tapasvi named Satyatapa that they received at a curse at a Kshetra called 'Chhinna Paapa' (Relieved of Sins) on the banks of River Godavari. The two Kanyas were two 'Apsaras' bathing half nude seeking to entice the Tapasvi at the behest of Lord Indra since the latter felt a threat to his Throne at Swarga, whereas the Tapasvi's desire was to attain 'Jeevan Mukti' or Mukti while he was alive; hence the curse that the Apsaras should turn as trees at Varanasi on the banks of Ganga. When the Apsaras pleaded for mercy, the Tapasvi agreed to get their original forms when a Mahatma called Bharat would one day rest under the trees reciting the contents of Gyana Yoga in the Fourth Chapter of Gita titled Jnaana Yoga. The redeemed Apsaras took up to the regular recitation of the Fourth Chapter of Gita. Incidentally, it was in this this Adhyaya titled 'Jnaana Yoga' that Lord Krishna declared: *Yadaa yadaahi Dharmasya glaani bhavati Bharata! Abhyuddhhaana madharmasya sadaatmaanam srijaamyaham/ Paritraanaaya Saadhunaam vinashaya cha dushkirtmanDharma Samsthaapanarthaya Samshavami Yuge Yuge* (Arjuna! As and when Dharma is affected adversely and Adharma prevails, I shall take the 'Avataras' (incarnation) to vindicate the cause of the Virtuous and destroy the Forces of the Evil!) Underlining the magnitude of the *Fifth Chapter* of Bhagavad Gita, Lord Vishnu told Lakshmi example of a Brahmana named Pingala of Madra Desha, ignoring his responsibilities as a Brahmana but built up expertise in music and dance and eventually achieved reputation in the profession as also proximity to the King as his favourite. He married a woman of low caste called Pingali alias Aruna. One night, being jealous of Pingala, Aruna killed him in his sleep. He suffered in Narakas and was born eventually as a vulture and after her death due to pox, Aruna was reborn as a parrot. Being aware of the memory of previous life, the vulture saw the parrot and tore it apart as the latter was dropped in a pond. A hunter spread a net and the vulture was entangled and died as he threw the vulture's body too fell in the same water body as the parrot fell. Surprisingly, both the birds achieved salvation! They asked Yama Dharma Raja as to what was the reason for both the sinners of equal guilt to head for Swarga since Pingala left the duties of a Brahmana and had loose morals while Aruna killed Pingala! Dharma Raja explained that their dead bodies fell in the same water body leading to a River on the banks of which was a pious Brahmana always reciting the Fifth Chapter of Karma Sanyasa Yoga in Gita! Bhagavan Vishnu narrated to Devi Lakshmi the value of *Sixth Chapter* of Gita entitled Jnana Yoga and described the virtue, fame and high charitable disposition of the King Janashruti. Even Devas made flying trips as 'Hamsas' (Swans) to his Kingdom on the banks of River Godavari with Pratishtanapuri as its Capital to appreciate the noble deeds being executed by the King. Once the King while strolling on the top of the Palace overheard the remarks of flying Hamsas that the King's greatness and virtue were nearing even those of Mahatma Reik's who was residing at Manikeswar on the top of Himalaya Mountains beyond the Kashmira Region. The King immediately decided to visit Manikeswara at the Temple of Bhagavan Chandrasekhara where Mahatma Reiki stayed. On way from the Pratishtanapuri, the King along with his big entourage passed through several important Tirthas and worshipped Kasi Vishwanath, Gadadhar at Gaya, Shri Krishna at Mathura near Kalindi (Yamuna) and on to Kashmirapuri where he stopped over at the Manikeshwara Temple of Bhagavan Shiva. At the main Dwara of the Temple, the King spotted a beggar-like Sadhu stationed on an

empty cart under a big tree. The King's Sarathi (charioteer) introduced the King to the Mahatma who made kind enquiries about the various charities, construction of temples, water bodies and public gardens as also Yagnas and Vratas that the King was responsible for. Then the King sought to donate several chariot-full of gifts of Dhana (money)-Dhanya (foodgrains), Cattle, Jewellery and clothes. The Mahatma became suddenly furious and shouted on the King in white anger: 'Arre Shudra! You think you can buy me with these gifts? Has not somebody told you about me? Take these away and get lost!' The King was dazed at this sudden spurt of the Mahatma's rage and was afraid that he might not give a 'shaap' (curse) to him. The King profusely apologized and fell on his feet shivering with fear and shame. After the Mahatma cooled down, he conveyed to the King that he always recited the Sixth Chapter of Gita on 'Jnaana Yoga': *Yadaa hi nendriyaartheshu na karmaswanu- shajjetey/ Sarva sankalpa sanyaasee yogaarudhastha dochatey* (A Saadhaka or Yogi would become ripe only 'Indiras'-body parts of external and internal nature- and their desires are left out, Karmas or duties are too avoided subduing the feelings of the giver or the taker and the totality of the 'You' or 'I' is avoided then only one becomes a Yogi). Somewhat on the lines of the Brahmana Jada in the Third Chapter earlier, Shankhakarna too followed the Vaishya profession, became extremely rich and desired to marry for the fourth time and proceeded to a neighbouring village. But on way, he was bitten by a serpent and died and was born again as a serpent. He came in the dreams of his sons as a serpent and conveyed that he did crores of cash and jewellery at such and such a shrub in the backyard of their home. Next morning, the brothers dug up at the location as per the dream, but a serpent appeared, desired to ascertain their identity and said that they should recite the *Seventh Chapter of Gita* titled Vigyan Yoga at once. To their utter surprise, the serpent took the form of their father, handed over huge reserve of gold and jewellery to the sons and boarded a Viman destined to Vishnu Loka. The sons were all virtuous, performed Yagnas, charities and such other noble tasks as digging up wells, water bodies and construction of choultries, rest houses etc. for public benefit. Most importantly however was the recitation of the Seventh Chapter of Gita and attained Vishnu Loka! The essence of this Chapter was stated by Bhagavan to Arjuna as follows: *Beejam mam Sarva bhutaanaam viddhih Parthah Sanatanam, buddhirbuddhimatamasmi Tejastejasvinamaham/ Balam balavataam chaham kamaraga vivarjitam, Dharmaa virudho bhuteshu kaamosmi Bharatarshabha/* (Partha! Do realize that the timeless seed responsible for germinating the entire Creation is me; I am the Intelligence to the intelligent; Radiance to the radiant, Physical Power to the powerful etc. I am also the desire and hatred; virtue to the virtuous, vice to the vicious and so on!). About the 'Mahatyma' of the 'Ashtama Adhyaya', Lord Vishnu gave the example to Devi Lakshmi of Bhava Sharma who lived in Amardakapura in Dakshina Bharat. Being a Brahmana by birth, he married a 'Veshya' and was a meat-eater, wine drinker and a debauche. Once he and his wife were drunk dead and became huge 'Tada Vrikshas' (Palm Trees). Another Brahmana couple called Kushibal and Kumati were wrong examples of deceit, greed, and anger. Kushibal used to accept 'daanaas' of horses and 'Kaala Purusha Pratimas' and were also involved in base tantras. This couple died and turned out to be 'Brahma Rakshasas' and made the 'Tada Vrikshas' as their abode. Once a Vedavedya Brahmana came to rest under the trees, when the Rakshasa couple appeared and asked as to how they could get rid of their Rakshasatva and obtain 'Mukti'. The Brahmana said: 'Brahma Vidya's Upadesha' or teaching, 'Adhyatmika TatvaVichara' or the Awareness of Inner Consciousness and Karma Vidhi Gyana or the Knowledge of performing Karmas / deeds are the three factors which could redeem them! Then the Brahma Rakshasi got confused and said: *Kim tat Brahma! Kimadhyantakam! Kim Karma!* (Who is this Brahma? What is this Adhyatma? And which is this Karma?) As soon as the Brahma Rakshasi muttered these words, a miracle happened and the Brahma Rakshasa couple attained 'Mukti' and so did the Palm Trees/ Bhava sharma couple! These were the

opening lines of the *Eighth Chapter* of Bhagavad Gita entitled Akshara Brahma Yoga and hence the miracle! The further lines of the stanza stated: *Adhi Bhutam cha kim proktam Adhi Daivam ki muchyatey/* (What is Adhi Bhutam? What is Adhi Daivam?) To this question of Arjuna, Bhagavan Krishna's reply was: *Aksharam Brahma Param Swabhaavodhyaatma muchyatey, Bhuta bhaavodbhava karo virangah karma sanjnitah* (Arjuna! The Supreme and Indestructible Soul is Brahma; His nature is Adhyatmika, Adhi Bhautika and Adhi Daivika)! The significance of the *Ninth Chapter of Gita* was explained by the instance of a goat being given as a sacrifice at a Yagnya by a Brahmana named Madhava who resided at Mahismati Nagar on the banks of River Narmada. The goat talked suddenly in raised human voice to the surprise of the 'Ritviks' performing the Yagna as also the audience and said that the Yagna was of no avail since it was certain that human beings would have to be born again, their old age and death were inevitable; the goat also said: 'Look at my fate; you are going to kill me now!' Then the onlookers enquired of the goat as to who was it in its earlier birth? The goat replied that he was a Brahmana who desired to perform a sacrifice of a goat kid to appease Devi Chandika, as his son was extremely ill; but Devi Chandika was furious to kill a goat kid to save a child and cursed the Brahmana to become a goat; thus said the goat to the Ritviks and others at the Yagna. It further narrated that in Kurukshetra, a King named Chandra Sharma gave a Kala Purusha Pratima as a 'daan' in connection with a Solar Eclipse and from the Pratima a Chandala couple surfaced about to devour both the King and the Brahmana but the Brahmana was quick in reciting the Ninth Chapter of Gita titled 'Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga' of Gita and the Chandala couple named 'Paapa' (Sin) and 'Ninda' (Blame) disappeared. Bhagavan in this Chapter says: *Ananyaschintanaamto maam ye janaah paryupaasatey, Tessaam nithyaabhi yuktaanaam yogakshemam vahaamyaham* (Those who always think and meditate of me always, I look after them and assure them of their welfare)! Eversince then, the King always recited and reflected of the contents of the Adhyaya and eventually The goat which narrated the incident of Chandra Sharma was released to freedom. Bhagavan Shankara gave the example to Devi Parvati of Brahmana Dhirabuddhi residing in Kashipura who was an unparalleled 'Vedarupi' (the form of Vedas) who could readily vision 'Atma Tatwa'; it was widely believed that Bhagavan Shankara always held on to Dhirabuddhi's hand, run along with him and care for him wherever the Brahmana moved with affection and consideration. What indeed was the kind of Tapa- Homa-Dhyana that Dhirabuddhi performed to deserve this unique treatment that Bhagavan took such concern about him! Once when Bhagavan sat on the mount of Kailash, one Hamsa (Swan) fell at His feet and narrated that it fell with a thud down while flying above in a Sarovar in Saurashtra; the usually white swan got blackened. The Swan told Bhagavan that a lotus shub with five beautiful flowers was responsible for this incident; it said that as soon as it flew across the shrub it released sixty five bees when it actually fell and thus its form got black. The Lotus Shrub was in its third previous birth a Brahmana house wife called Sarojavadana, who no doubt was a Pativrata but was attracted too much to a Myna Bird in a cage in their home and was unmindful of her husband's callings as she was immersed in play with the bird; the husband got furious and cursed her to become a Myna bird. The cursed Myna was brought up by a Muni Kanya where the Muni regularly recited the 'Vibhuti Yoga Adhyaya' which was the *Tenth Chapter of Gita* and she learnt the contents fully; in her next birth, the Myna bird was born as an Apsara. Sage Durvasa was performing Tapasya on the banks of a Sarowara when the Apsara was bathing and out of fury, Sage Durvasa cursed the Apsara to become a Lotus shrub which was crossed by the Swan and became black in its form. Such was the power of Vibhuti Yoga (the Tenth Chapter) in which Lord Krishna told Arjuna that all kinds of 'Vibhutis'/ manifestations were his own like radiance, Shaktis, Virtue, Meditation, prosperity and victory. The Vibhutis would include the Swan crossing the lotus shrub was out of ignorance; Brahmani Sarojanavadana's attraction to the Mynah

Bird; her husband's anger causing the creation of another Mynah; the cursed Mynah's learning of the 'Dashama Adhyaya' from the Muni; her becoming an Apsara, Sage Durva's curse out of anger crating a lotus shrub, Dhirabuddhi's Vision of Atma Tatva and Parameswara's great affection for Dhirabuddhi! There would be thousands of instances that would signify the *Eleventh Chapter of Gita* regarding 'Vishva Sandarshana Yoga' and Bhagavan Shiva described only one to Devi Parvati. In Meghankara Nagar on the banks of River Pranita, there was a Parama Bhakta of Vasudeva called Sunandana Muni who undertook a Kshetra Yatra and on way had to halt over a night in a village. The Village head noboubt welcomed the Muni but said that there was a Rakshasa in the village with whom there was an understanding not to kill any villager but might eat up any stranger who did not specify by the Village head; but the Rakshasa ate up the Village head's son himself by mistake. Sunandana Muni asked the Village head as to how this Rakshasa came to this Village. The background was that there was a Brahmana in the village engaged in farming and used to look after his own farm inthe nights. A huge vulture chased a traveller staying overnight in the village near the Brahmana farmer's farm; as the traveller shouted for help since he fell in a ditch and could not pull up by himself, the Brahmana Farmer though could give a helping hand to save the traveller but did not bother. An infuriated Tapasvi cursed the Brahmana Farmer to become a Rakshasa in the village. When the latter begged for mercy, he diluted the cusre saying that if any Buddhiman recited the Eleventh Chapter of Gita and also explain its meaning to the Rakshasa then the latter could be liberated from the Rakshasatva. On knowing the background, Sunandana Muni recited and explained the contents of the Adhyaya to the Rakshasa and latter was liberated. Not only that, all the men and women who were killed by the Rakshasa including Village head boy son were lifted up by a Viman to Vishnu loka. The Chapter stated: *Anaadi madhyantamananta veeryam, Ananta baahum Sashi Surya netram/ Pasyaami twaam deepta hutaasa vaktram, Swatejasa vishwamidam tapantam/* (I am enabling you the Vision of the Supreme Form who has no beginning or end; whose might is unlimited; who has innumerable hands; who possesses Surya and Chandra as his eyes; who has a fiery and radiant face like Agni and who has apowerful and red-hot scorching Form.) One of the major highlights of Bhagavad Gita was the Bhakti Yoga (*Twelfth Chapter*) explained by Shri Krishna to Arjuna as was narrated by Bhagavan Shiva to Devi Parvati. In Kolhapuri of south-west of Bharata Varsha, the most reputed Maha Lakshmi Temple had been fulfilling the desires of Bhaktas for centuries. A young Prince came into the Temple and prayed to her very earnestly as follows: 'Mother! You are the Icchaa Shakti, Jnaana Shakti, and Kriya Shakti all rolled into One Swarupa; You are the Nishkala, Nirmoha, Nitya, Niraakaara, Niranjana, Antarahita, Antahkarana, and Niramaya; You are the Shatchakra Bhedini, Anahata Dhvani, Bindu, Naada and Kalaa; You are Para, Pashyanti, Madhya and Vaikhari; Brahmi, Vaishnavi, and Maaheswari, Vaaraahi, Naarasimhi, Iaindri, Kaumari, Chandika, Savitri and so on. Maha Lakshmi was pleased with the euologies and asked the Prince of his desire. He told her that his father King Brihadhratha had half-done an Ashwamedha Yagna and died, that although the horse returned successfully after Vijaya Yatra (Victory Travel) it had suddenly disappeared and that his prayer was to secure the missing horse and bless him to complete the Yagna. Bhagavati Lakshmi directed the Prince to approach Siddha Samadhi Muni at the entrance of the Temple and the needful would be done. Siddha Samadhi was approached and the Prince was astonished to vision a few Devatas responsible for the theft of the Yagnashwa at the behest of Indra! He pulled them up and commanded that the horse should be in its original position at once. The Prince was so impressed that he was emboldened to request the Siddha Samadhi to revive his dead father since his body was still in oil at the Yagnashaala. The Muni smiled and and asked the Prince to take him to the Yagnashaala. Having reached there, the Muni sprinkled 'Mantrajal' and the King emerged afresh from the oil and completed the Yagna successfully. When asked as to how the Muni could miracles to

reprimand Devatas to secure the missing horse and also revive the King to life, the Muni's cool reply was that the powers attained was due to the constant recitation and dedication to the Bhakti Yoga (Twelfth Chapter) of Bhagavad Gita alone and nothing else! The Sacred Book states: *Yo na hrushyati na dveshti na shochati na kaamkshati, Shubhaashubha parityagee bhakti maanyassa me priyah/* (A devotee who is free from likings and dislikings as also from happiness and unhappiness, and who dedicates all my deeds to me totally is my favourite); *Etu Dharmyamritamidam yathoktam paryupaasatey, Shraddhadhaana matparaah bhaktaastheva mey priyah/* (Those devotees who keep unreserved faith in me and observe Dharma as I prescribe are my most beloved ones). Describing the Mahatmya of the *Thirteenth Chapter* of Gita titled 'Kshetra Kshetragna Yoga', Maha Deva told Devi Parvati that on the banks of River Tungabhadra in the Southern part of Bharata Varsha, there was a popular Kshetra called Harihara Nagar where Vedic Brahmana Hari Dikshith lived. His wife named Kuvaacha was however a characterless slut. Looking for a male companion one night, she treaded into a forest and faced a tiger. The tiger felt that if the woman was of morality then she would not kill her but otherwise she certainly would. As the tiger killed the woman, she landed in several Narakas like Rourava and was reborn as a Chandalini. As she grew, she became a victim of diseases and reached a Temple of Jambhaka Devi where a Brahmana always recited the thirteenth chapter of Gita; the purport of the Adhyaya was to distinguish the Kshetra and Kshetrajna. Steeped into the world of vice, the soul of Kuvaacha had in the past gone through Narakas as an iron rod went through white heat. Also as a Chandalini with diseases in the current life, she underwent difficult times due to diseases and continued ill-health; thus she realized Kshetra Gyana from Devi Jambhaka Temple when the Brahmana explained the meaning of the Chapter verse by verse and she finally reached Vishnu dhama! *Idam Shareeram Kounteyah Kshetramityabhi dheeyatey, Etadyo vethhi tam praahuhu Kshetrajna iti tadvidah/* (Kounteya! This body is known as the Kshetra; by inference, those who realize this truth that if one does honest effort, the Kshetra could lead to 'Ishvara Praapti'). *Kshetraajnam chaapi mam viddhi Sarva kshetreshu Bharata! Kshetra Kshetrajna yorjnaanam yatthad jnaanamatam mama/* (Arjuna! Do realize that I am the Kshetrajna; the real Jnaana is the awareness of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna)! The *Fourteenth Chapter of Gita-Gunatraya Yoga*-highlighted the 'Bhava bandhana Vimochana' (Relief from the shackles of Samsara) and gave the illustration of the King of Simhala Dwipa viz. Vikrama Betala, who went on a hunting spree on horses showing the way in a forest chasing a few hares. The hares crossed a breach which the dogs could not cross easily and there was a peaceful Ashram of Muni Vatsa who along with his disciples always recited the 'Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga' of Gita. One of the disciples of the Muni cleaned up his feet with water before entering the Prayer Hall of the Ashram where the recitation was practiced. The sand and water mix became muddy and the hares fell in the slush; as soon as the hares fell in the slush, they were lifted by a Vimana bound for Vishnuloka thanks to the Mahatmya of the recitation of the Adhyaya. Meanwhile the chasing dogs arrived and having fallen in the slush they too were airlifted in the form of Gandharvas. The King Vikrama reached the Ashram and the Prayer Hall and asked the Muni for the reason that the hares and horses went to higher lokas. The Muni explained that there was a Brahmana called Keshava and his wife Vilobhana were both vily; the Brahmana killed the wife and was turned as dogs and the wife was born as hares. Both of these thus were beneficiaries of the Recitation of the Fourteenth Chapter of Gita. The message of the Adhyaya was given by Krishna as follows: *Gunaanetaanateetya treen dehi deha samudbhavaan, Janmamrityu jaraa dukkhaihi vimuktomrita masnutey/* (Once the three gunas of Satva, Rajasa and Tamasa which are responsible for the ration of old age and death, then the Beings break away from the chains of Samsara and attain Salvation.). *Maam cha yopyabhichaarena Bhakti yogena sevatey, sa gunaanSmateethyitaan Brahma bhuyaya kalpathey/* (He who worships me with unreserved devotion

would cross the barriers of the three Gunaas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas and would become eligible to step into the 'Parama Brahma Sthiti' or Highest Salvation!) Maha Deva cited the example to Devi Parvati of an arrogant and uncontrollable elephant named Arimardan belonging to King Khangabahu of Saurashtra in Gujarat, while signifying the *Sixteenth Chapter of Gita* titled 'Daivasura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga'. A number of elephant tamers from the neighbouring Kingdoms landed to control Arimardana, not only to secure hefty Prizes of high value but also name and fame but to no avail. Heavy iron rods, piercing tridents and such other weapons were used but despite streams of blood flowing from the body, the animal was getting further wilder. One Brahmana arrived at the scene and touched the elephant with affection and everybody was taken aback since it was not even allowing touching it earlier. Queried as to how the miracle happened, the Brahmana that he attained Siddhis due to the relentless recital of the Sixteenth Chapter of Gita. The King then ordered that the elephant be freed and move about freely on the streets of the Nagar and even children used to play with it for fun! *Dambho darpo hi maanascha krodhat paraarushya meyvacha, Agnaanam chabhi jaatasya Partha! Sampadaaasurim/* (Partha! Ignorance, arrogance, pretentiousness, egotism, anger and self-image are all natural phenomena of Asuras). *Trividham narakasyedam dwaaram naasana maatmanah, Kaamah krodhastatha lobhah tasmadetatrayam tyajet/* (The three enemies of human beings viz. Kama (desire), Krodha (fury) and Lobha (avarice) are the destroyers of one's own Soul and are the Entry Points of Naraka; that is why the intelligent persons avoid these). The ignorance of the elephant misdirected him and taming was accomplished by affection, peacefulness, humility and character. The *Seventeenth Chapter* of Bhagavad Gita viz. Shradhatraya Vaibhava Yoga was illustrated by the Story of King Khangabahu of Simhala Dwipa, his servant Dussahana and their elephant. Once Dussahana drove the elephant in a race, made it run too fast by poking it by an 'Ankusha' and out of annoyance the animal dropped Dussahana dead. The servant in his next birth was born as an elephant and was born in the same Royal Court. The new elephant (Dusshahana) was gifted by the King to a Poet who in turn sold it to the King of Malwa for a good price. But on reaching Malwa, the elephant took suddenly ill and lied down without food and water. Many experts treated the elephant but to no avail. Medicines, charities and prayers did not help but finally a Brahmana recited the Seventeenth Chapter of Gita and the elephant got recovered and slowly stood up only to collapse and die. The Brahmana who recited the Chapter explained that the dead elephant in his earlier birth he was servant Dusshana and as a result of the holy recitation he attained Moksha. King of Malwa continued the reading of the Seventeenth Chapter and attained Sayujya there after. *Satvaanu rupa sarvaswa shraddhaa bhavati Bharata, Shraddha mayoyam purusho yoyacchadrassa evam sah/* (Arjuna! The features and ways of life are normally shaped in every human being by his own 'swabhava' or personal traits). The *Eighteenth and last Chapter of Gita* named Moksha Sanyasa Yoga contained the quintessence of Vedas and Shastras signifying the termination of Samsara Bandha or the shackles of Life. It is the destroyer of 'Arishadvargas' of Kama, Krodha, Moha, Mada, Lobha and Matsarya; the final goal of Siddha Purushas; the Rest-Home of Indra and Devas; and the High Point of Entertainment of Sanaka, Sandanda, Sanatana and Sanat Kumaras. Sincere recitation of this Grand and Concluding Chapter of Gita constitutes sure steps forward to Moksha or complete break-away from the endless cycle of life! When Lord Indra was enjoying a dance and music programme of Rambha and other Deva Kanyas, a group of 'Vishnu dootas' arrived in Swarga and announced the arrival of a new Indra soon! Indra wondered whether the incumbent Indra performed Hundred Yagnas successfully; constructed lakhs of water bodies; planted crores of trees for the joy of the travelers; organized countless 'Anna daanas' and charities etc. like he did. He reached Bhagavan Vishnu lying in 'Yoga Nidra' on 'Ksheera Sagara' (the Ocean of Milk) and asked him in an agitated tone as to why his 'Indratva' was at stake! Smilingly, Lord

Vishnureplied that the Indra-Elect was a consistent reciter of the Eighteenth Chapter of Gita and that he too could retain his position by performing the same. Indra visited the Kalikagram on the banks of River Godavari by taking the form of a Brahmana and having been so impressed by what he observed there, felt that the position of Indra was none too significant to that of Indra-elect but surely deserved Vishnu Sayujya!

Who ever heard or recited even the Mahatmya of Bhagavad Gita would be entitled to ‘Yagna Phala’ or the Fruits of Performing Yagna. The Supreme Message of the Final Chapter-and indeed of entire Gita-is summed up as: *Sarva Karmanyapi sadaa kurvaano madvyapaashrayah, Matprasaadaadavaapnoti Shasvatam Padamavyayam/* (Do accomplish the everlasting and indestructible ‘Parama pada’ by performing the needful ‘Karmas’ and keeping complete faith in me).

### **B) Gita’s implied messages:**

Shri Krishna asked Arjuna to fight the Battle of Kurukshetra as that was the Kshatriya Dharma (Duty of a Kshatriya) and dedicate all actions and results to Bhagavan, as the latter was the Cause of every action, the Causation or the basis of action and the Causer or the Creator of the Cause. Bhagavan defined that out of the Eighteen ‘Adhyayas’ or Chapters of Bhagavad Gita, five Adhyayas constituted five of His faces, five Adhyayas his ten hands, one Adhyaya was his belly, and two were his feet. Padma Purana assured that intelligent persons who read one Adhyaya of Gita a day, or half of it, or a quarter of it or even a Stanza at least would pave way to Mukti and cited the example of **Susharma** who was no doubt a Brahmana but a chronic sinner; he did neither ‘dhyana’ nor ‘Japa’ nor even Atithi Seva or Service to Guests; on the other hand, he was a drunkard, meat-eater and a womaniser. One day, he died of a snake-bite and after suffering several Narakas and births as the retribution of his sins was born as a bull and served under an oil extractor for many years died of hard work and exhaustion. A few kind persons contributed prayed for its salvation and among them was a Veshya (Prostitute) who donated some ‘punya’ on her account. In the rebirth the bull was born as a Brahmana in the same village as a ‘Jatismara’ or with the memory of the previous birth. He located the Veshya and asked her as to which Punya she donated to the dead bull. She said that she bought a parrot which used to mutter a stanza and that gave a soothing effect. The Brahmana learnt from his powers that the parrot learnt the stanza from the cage in which a Rishi stayed in his Ashram but a hunter stole the parrot and sold it to the Veshya. On reaching the Rishi, the Brahmana was told that the Stanza that the parrot learnt was from the *First Chapter* of Gita! A Vedic Pandit Deva Sharma of Purandarapura of Dakshina Bharata was anxious to learn ‘Tatwa Gyana’ and approached a ‘Mahatma’ (Great Learned Person) in this connection. The Mahatma directed the pandit to a Goat Keeper called Mitrvan in a forest who was seated on a rock on the banks of a river bed nearby. Mitrvan narrated to Deva Sharma about his experience of a tiger attacking a group of goats; while all the goats fled away, one remained as though it invited the tiger to eat it up. The tiger asked the goat as to why it also did not run away as other goats did. The goat asked as to why the tiger did not pounce on it and the tiger replied that its hunger vanished suddenly. Both the tiger and the goat asked a Mahatma who in turn referred both the animals to a Vanara Raja (Monkey). The latter replied that there was a highly religious Brahmana named Sukarna who meditated at a Shiva temple nearby for several years and that he should be asked as to why the tiger did not suddenly lose appetite and did not pounce on the goat which was readily willing to eat it up. Sukarna replied that there was a ‘Maha Purusha’ or a Great Saint inside the temple and when he (Sukarna) requested him to teach ‘Tatwa Gyan’ or Self-Realisation, the Maha Purusha asked him to read an inscription on a rock outside the temple which stated :

*Karmanyevaadhi kaarastey maa phaleshu kadaachana, maa karmaphalaa heturbhuh maa tey sangostwa karmani/* (Partha! You have freedom only to perform your duty; the rest is not relevant to you; but you should perform the duty without expecting returns and rewards! Bhagavan further clarified that a ‘Tatwa Gyani’ or He seeks Self-Realisation and a ‘Sthita Pragna’ or he with stable conscience has to be one who treats happiness or sorrow with equanimity, without desire, fear, or anguish: *Duhkeshwanu dwignamanaah Sukheshu vigataspruhah, Veeta raaga bhayakrodhah sthidheermuniruchyatey/* Thus the chain of Deva Sharma-the Mahatma- Mitra van the goat-keeper-the Tiger and the Goat-the Vanara Raja-Sukarna-and the Maha Purusha revealed the Message of Tatwa Gyan which simply stated that one should practise one’s own duty and Tatwa Gyan would unfold itself! This indeed is the message in the *Second Chapter* of Bhagavad Gita. The *Third Chapter* titled Karma Yoga gives the Message that ‘Swadharma’ or one’s own duty needs to be followed at any cost, even if the Dharma of others is attractive: *Shreyan swadarmo vigunah paradharmatswanushthaat, Swadarmey nidhanam shreyayah paradharmo bhayaapah/* A Brahmana named Jada practised ‘Vaishya Dharma’ or the profession of a businessman, amassed considerable wealth, became a victim of vices, desired to amass more money, travelled a lot, was killed by a gang of robbers, finally became a Pretatma (Goblin) and stayed on tree. Jada’s son who was a dutiful Brahmana went out in search of his father and having learnt that his father was killed by robbers proceeded to Varanasi and stayed under the same tree coincidentally overnight and before sleeping recited the above Stanza of Gita. Instantly, the father in the form of Pretatma appeared after liberation and was taken away by an air-plane to Vaikuntha and asked the son to proceed to Varanasi and in the course of Shraddha recite the Third Chapter of Gita so that the forefathers too would attain Salvation. Recitation of the *Fourth Chapter* describing Jnana Yoga redeemed two Apsaras who were cursed by a Tapaswi named Satyatapa as they were bathing nude to attract the attention of the Tapaswi whom Indra suspected to dethrone him and instructed the Apsaras to disturb the Tapaswi. The Apsaras were cursed to become two bilwa trees next to each other on the banks of Ganga in Varanasi and when they begged of pardon the kind Tapaswi agreed for redemption from the curse when a Mahatma called Bharata would lie down between the trees and recite the Fourth Chapter of Gita. As soon as the recitation was over, the trees dried up and when Bharata reached his Ashram, there were two ‘Kanyas’ (maidens) awaiting the return of the Mahatma to thank him. Eversince then the Apsaras (Kanyas) regularly recited the Jnana Yoga chapter; it was in this Chapter Lord Krishna declared: *Yadaa yadaahi Dharmasya glanir bhavati Bharata! Abhyuddhaanamadharnasya sadaatmaan srijaamyaham/ Paritraanaaya Sadhunaam vinashaya cha dushkrutaam Dharma samsthaapa –naarthyaya sambhavaami yugey yugey/* (Arjuna! As and when Virtue is affected adversely and Vice dominates, I shall take an incarnation to vindicate virtue and destroy the Evil). In the Karma Sanyasa Yoga dealt with in the *Fifth Chapter* of Gita, the story of a Brahmana named Pingala of Madra Desha was illustrated as he ignored the duties of a Brahmana and took to music and dance and his expertise secured the favour of the King. Pingala married a low class woman named Pingali who eventually disliked the Brahmana and killed him in sleep. Owing to their sins, Pingala and Pingali went through hells and in their next births became a vulture and parrot respectively. Being aware of the memory of past lives, the Vulture met the parrot and tore the latter apart and the parrot got thrown in a pond and died but a hunter trapped the vulture in a net and that too got killed. Surprisingly, both the birds attained salvation! The explanation given by Yama Dharma Raja was that though both the birds were sinners, their dead bodies fell in the same stream on the banks of which a Muni sat reciting the fifth chapter of Gita underlining the Karma Sanyasa Yoga. The episode of King Janashruti of Pratishtanapuri on the banks of River Godavari was described in the *Sixth Chapter* as he was a rare example of virtue, fame and noble deeds. When the King was strolling on the terrace of his palace he overheard the remarks

of a group of ‘Hamsas’ (Swans) since he understood the swan language that the greatness and virtue were nearly reaching the level of Mahatma Riek who resided in the Temple of Chandra sekhar at Manikswar on top of Himalayas in the Kashmira Region. The King decided to visit that Mahatma and proceeded with huge entourage and several chariots- full of gifts including gold, jewellery, clothes, foodgrains and cattle. On way from Pratihthanapuri to Maniksawara the King visited many Tirthas including Kasi, Gaya, and Mathura. King Janashruti reached the Shiva Temple at Manikswara and spotted a beggar-like Sadhu stationed on an empty cart who was identified as the Mahatma Riek. The King offered the chariots-full of gifts, the Mahatma became furious and shouted on the King saying that he could not be purchased with huge gifts! The King profusely apologised and fell on the feet of the Mahatma shivering with fear and shame. As the latter cooled down a bit, the Mahatma confessed that he attained celestial vision by constantly reciting the Jnaana Yoga from the Sixth Chapter of Gita: *Yadaahi nendriyarteshu na Karmaswanushajjyatey, Sarva Sankalpa Sanyaasee yogaarudhastha dochatey/* ( A Sadhaka or Yogi would become ripe only ‘Indiraas’ or body parts of external and internal nature and their demands are overcome, Karmas or Actions are subdued and the concepts of ‘You’ and ‘I’ are eliminated and then only, a person would truly become a real Yogi! The *Seventh Chapter* titled Vigyana Yoga gave the example of Shankhakarna who followed the profession of a Vaishya ; having become extremely rich and prosperous he married for the fourth time and being avaricious desired to travel to Places to obtain further riches! He was bitten by a serpent and eventually became a serpent. He appeared as a snake in the dreams of his children and asked them to dig up a specified shrub in the backyard of his residence to discover crores of cash and jewellery. The sons who recited the Seventh Chapter of Gita discovered the riches which they decided to utilise for charitable purposes; the father too was liberated as the sons who were extremely pious and reversed the selfish pattern of their father. The underlying message of the Chapter is that Dharma begets Dharma and vice-versa and Vigyana is the doorstep to Dharma. The father lacked the capacity to differentiate duty and virtue as against irresponsibility and evil. Akshara Brahma Yoga is the title of the *Eighth Chapter* of Gita which underlines the Basic Truth that Parbrahma is the Supreme and Indestructible. The episodes of Bhava Sharma a Brahmana who married a Veshya (Prostitute) with unforgivable habits of meat-eating, wine-drinking and debauchery and a Brahmana couple called Kushibala and Kumati who were involved in base tantras and were examples of deceit, greed and anger. The couples died and were converted as ‘Brahma Rakshasas’ or Huge Demons. They stayed on two Tada Vrikshas or Palm Trees and often regretted their misdeeds. They exchanged their views as to how to obtain ‘Mukti’ or liberation from their current lives. Once, a Veda Vedy Brahmana who came under the shade of the Palm Trees advised the Rakshasa Couple that they could be liberated if they could receive Brahma Vidya’s Teaching, Adhyatmika Tatwa Vichara or the Awareness of Inner Consciousness and Karma Vidhi Gyan or knowledge of performing Karmas or deeds then they could be liberated from their present condition. The Brahma Rakshasis got utterly confused and said: *Kim tat Brahma!! Kimadhyatmakam! Kim Karma!* ( Who is that Brahma! What is that Adhyatma! And which is this Karma!) As soon as the Brahma Rakshasis muttered these words, a miracle happened as the Brahma Rakshasa couples got Mukti and so did the Palm Trees too. These were the opening lines of the Eighth Chapter of Gita! The further lines of the Stanza are: *Adhi bhutam cha kim proktam Adhi Daivam kimuchyatey?* To this query of Arjuna means: What is Adhi Bhutam! What is Adhi Daivam!. To this query Krishna replied: *Aksharam Brahmaparam Swabhaavo-dhyatmamuchyatey, Bhuta bhaavodbhaava karovirangaha karma sanjnitah/* (Arjuna! The Supreme Soul is Brahma and His nature is Adhyatmika or the Internal Features, Adhi Bhoutika or the External Features and Adhi Daivika or the happenings created by Paramatma Himself!) The significance of the *Ninth Chapter* of Gita was explained by the instance of a

Sacrificial Goat at one Yagna by Madhava a Brahmana who resided on the banks of River Narmada.. The goat talked suddenly in human voice to the surprise of the ‘Ritviks’ and onlookers. It said that Yagnas were meaningless as all the human beings would have to go through the process of birth-childhood-youth-old age and death. The same fate was awaiting the goat too, the animal said. The onlookers asked the goat as to who was it in the previous birth and it narrated the story that it was a Brahmana who performed a sacrifice to Devi Chandika as his son was ill; but Devi cursed him as it was improper to sacrifice a goat to cure his son’s illness and cursed the Brahmana to become a goat. The goat further narrated that there was a King named Chandra Sharma in Kurukshetra who gave in charity a ‘Kaala Purusha Pratima’ at the time of Solar Eclipse but a chandala couple emerged from the Pratima and were about to devour the King and the Brahmana and the latter was quick in reciting the Ninth Chapter of Gita entitled ‘Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga’ and the chandala couple called ‘Paapa’ (Sin) and ‘Ninda’ (Blame) disappeared at once. The substance of the Chapter is : *Ananyaschintanaamtoma maam ye janaah paryupaasatey, tessaam nithyaabhi yuktaanaam yoga kshemam vahaamyaham/* (Those who always think and meditate of me, surely I look after them and assure them of their welfare). Ever since then the King always recited and reflected the purport of the Chapter. Eventually, the goat was released to freedom. Vibhuti Yoga was the title of the *Tenth Chapter* of Gita. A Brahmana called Dhirabuddhi visioned of Atma Tatwa and Bhagavan Shankara had immense affection for the Brahmana. Once when Bhagavan sat on the mount of Kailasha, a Hamsa (Swan) fell at his feet with a thud and bemoaned that while flying above a Pond in Saurashtra it crossed a lotus shrub and its natural color of crystal white got fully black since the lotus shrub released sixty five bees which blackened the swan. The lotus shrub was in its third previous birth was a Brahmana house-wife called Sarojavadana who was no doubt a Pativrata but was immersed in play with a Mynah bird in a cage when her husband called her and the Brahmana cursed her to become a Mynah. The Mynah was brought up by a Muni Kanya and the Muni was in the constant recital of the the Vibhuti Yoga or the Tenth Chapter of Gita and the bird learnt the ‘Adhyaya’ fully and in its next birth became an Apsara. The Apsara was bathing in a Sarovara when Sage Durvasa out of fury cursed her to become a lotus shrub and the Swan crossed that very shrub that released the sixty black bees which changed the colour of the Swan! Such was the power of the Vibhuti Yoga in which Lord Krishna told Arjuna that all kinds of ‘Vibhutis’ or manifestations were his own like radiance, powers, virtues, meditation, prosperity and victory. The Vibhutis in this context included the swan crossing the lotus shrub was out of ignorance; Sarojavana’s attachment to the Mynah was out of attraction; her husband’s curse was due to anger; the accursed Mynah’s learning of the Tenth Chapter was due to concentration and memory power; her becoming an Apsara was an upgradation of life; Muni Durvasa’s curse was an expression of anger to create a lotus shrub; Dhirabuddhi’s vision of Atma Tatwa and Bhagavan Shiva’s affection was due to the devotee’s extreme devotion! The *Eleventh Chapter* of Gita is entitled Vishva Darshana Yoga and one illustration of the effectiveness of the yoga related to the Episode of a Prama Bhakta named Sunandana Muni residing in Meghankara Nagar on the banks of River Pranita. The Muni undertook a travel to visit ‘Tirthas’ and on way stopped over in a village where the village head warned the Muni that a Rakshasa moved about in the village and might catch hold of a stranger as per an Agreement with the Rakshasa that none of the villagers be killed for his food but might eat up a stranger if required. Next morning it was learnt that by mistake the son of the Village Head was killed! The Muni asked the Head as to how the Rakshasa arrived in the first instance! The background was that there was a Brahmana Farmer in the village who did not heed the loud crying of a stranger when he was chased by a huge vulture and fell in a ditch; the Brahmana Farmer could have easily saved the stranger by lending a helping hand by lifting the stranger but the Brahmana did not bother; a Tapasvi detested the casualness of

the Brahmana and let the stranger to be killed and thus cursed the Brahmana to become a Rakshasa. On hearing the background of the Rakshasa, Sunandana Muni recited in full the Eleventh Chapter of Gita and liberated not only the Rakshasa but also lifted to Vishnu Loka by a Vimana the Village Head's son killed by the Rakshasa too. The Chapter quoted Shri Krishna's instruction to Arjuna saying: ' I am enabling you Arjuna! To view the vision of my Supreme Form who has no beginning nor end; whose might is unlimited; who has countless hands; who possesses Surya and Chandra as his eyes; who has a fiery and radiant face like Agni and who has a powerful and red-hot scorching Form!'The *Twelfth Chapter* is considered as a highlight of Bhagavad Gita since it deals with Bhakti Yoga. A young Prince of Kolhapuri of the south-west of Bharata Varsha visited the most reputed Maha Lakshmi Temple and prayed to Lakshmi Devi most sincerely as the latter was pleased to respond to the eulogies and asked the Prince of his desire. He narrated that his father King Brihadratha had half-completed an Ashwamedha Yagna and died while the Sacrificial Horse no doubt returned from its 'Vijaya Yatra' or the Victory March but was missing and the Yagna remained half-accomplished. He requested Devi Lakshmi to restore the horse and let the soul of his dead father who was still embalmed in oil be given the satisfaction of completing the Yagna. Bhagavati Lakshmi directed the Prince to approach a Siddha Samadhi Muni at the very entrance of the Temple and that he would do the needful. As directed, the Prince made the request to the Muni and was astonished to invoke certain Devas who confessed that the horse was hidden by them under the instruction of Indra Deva. He pulled up the Devas concerned and commanded that the horse be brought there at once. Indeed the horse was brought there in tact. The Prince was so impressed that he emboldened himself to request the Siddha Muni hesitantly whether his father whose body was still in oil could be brought back to life so that he could complete the Yagna himself! Siddha Muni smiled and asked the Prince to take him to Yagna-shala and having reached there sprinkled 'Mantra jala' or the Sanctified Water and the King came back to life again. The Prince was totally taken aback and asked the Muni as to how the miracles happened including the admonition to Devas to bring back the horse and what was more thrilling the revival of his dead father back to life! The Muni gave a cool reply that the powers that he attained were due to his constant recitation of Bhakti Yoga Chapter of Bhagavad Gita! The Holy Book's Bhakti Yoga Chapter states: 'A devotee who is free from likings and dislikings as also from happiness or unhappiness and who dedicates all his deeds to me totally with unreserved faith is my favourite!' 'Kshetra Kshetragna Yoga' was elucidated in the *Thirteenth Chapter* of Bhagavad Gita: On the banks of the twin River Tunga-Bhadra in the Southern Part of Bharata Varsha, there was a popular Kshetra called Haraihara where a Vedic Brahmana named Hari Dikshit lived. His wife Kuvaacha was however a characterless slut. Looking for a companion in bed, one night she treaded into a forest and faced a Tiger. The tiger felt that if the woman faced was of morality, she should not be killed but the animal pounced on Kuvaacha and killed her straightaway. The woman experienced several hells like Rourava and was born as a Chandalini. As she grew up she became a victim of diseases and reached a Temple of Jambhaka Devi where a Brahmana always recited the thirteenth chapter of Gita the essence of which was to distinguish the 'Kshetra' or the human body and the 'Khetrajna' or the Supreme Being. The woman was fed up through harrowing experiences in Narakas and the incurable diseases in her current life and the meaning of verse by verse of the thirteenth chapter that the Brahmana explained to her was like ambrosia to her inner self and a totally transformed Kuvaacha attained Salvation. The exhortation to Arjuna by Bhagavan Krishna explained the body of every human being was like Kshetra and by inference those who realise this basic Truth would tend to perform honest efforts and aim at Ishwara Prapti. Lord Krishna further asserted: ' Arjuna! Do realise that I am the Kshetrajna; the real Jnaana is the awareness of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna'! The *Fourteenth Chapter* of Gita dealing with 'Gunatraya Yoga' highlighted 'Bhava

Bandhana Vimochana' or Relief from the shackles of 'Samsaara' or worldly desires and provided the illustration of the King of Simhala , Vikrama Betala who went on a hunting spree on horses chasing a few hares with a few dogs showing the way. The hares crossed a breach but the dogs could not; there was a peaceful Ashram of Vatsa Muni who along with his disciples always recited the Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga of Gita. One of the disciples of the Muni cleaned up his feet with water before entering the Prayer Hall of the Ashram. The sand and water mix turned muddy and the hares fell in the slush. As soon as the hares fell in the slush they were air-lifted by a Vimana bound for Vishnu Loka thanks to the recitation of the Fourteenth Chapter. Meanwhile the dogs chasing the hares fell in the slush and they too were air-lifted to Gandharva Loka. Then followed King Vikrama at the Ashram and the Prayer Hall and asked the Muni as to why the hares and dogs went to higher lokas. The Muni explained that there was a Brahmana named Keshava and his wife Vilobhana who were both quite vily; the Brahmana killed his wife and in the subsequent birth became as dogs while the wife turned into hares. Both these were the beneficiaries of the recitation of the Fourteenth Chapter. Lord Krishna gave the message of the 'Adhyaaya': 'Once the three Gunas of Satva-Rajasa-Tamasa, which are responsible of old age and death, then human beings break away from the chains of Samsara and attain Salvation. The person concerned who worships Krishna with unreserved devotion would cross the barriers of the Tri-Gunas and would be able to step into the 'Parama Brahma Sthiti' or the Highest Salvation!' The 'Daivasura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga' of Gita was illustrated by an uncontrollable Rogue Elephant called Arimardan on the Court of King Khangabahu of Saurashtra in Gujarat. Several Elephant Tamers from the Kingdom and many others failed to tame even by using heavy iron rods, piercing tridents and such other weapons even while streams of blood flowed but each time the tamers tried, Arimardan turned more and more violent. One day a Brahmana arrived and touched and cajoled the wild animal with affection as the onlookers wondered as to how such a miracle occurred! The Brahmana confirmed that he was a regular reciter of the Chapter of Gita. The King then ordered that the elephant be set free and as a result even boys and girls played with it on the Sreets. Bhagavan Krishna then addressed Arjuna saying: 'Ignorance, arrogance, pretentiousness, egotism, anger and Self-Image are all features of Asuras while the Three enemies of human beings viz. Kama (desire), Krodha (fury) and lobha (avarice) were destroyers of one's own Soul and entry points of Naraka which are avoided by intelligent persons . The ignorance of the elephant misdirected him and taming was accomplished by affection, humility and peacefulness. The Chapter titled 'Shraddha Traya Vaibhava Yoga' which is the penultimate Adhyaya of Gita illustrates the Story of King Khangabahu of Simhala Dwipa, his servant and their elephant. One Dussahana drove the elephant in a race, made it run too fast by poking it by an 'Ankusha' and out of annoyance the animal dropped Dussahana dead. The servant in his subsequent birth was born as an elephant in the same Royal Court. The new elephant (Dussahana) was gifted by the King to a Poet who in turn sold it to the King of Malwa for a good price. But on reaching Malwa, the elephant took suddenly ill and lied down without food and water. Many experts treated it but to no avail. Medicines, charities and Prayers did not help. Finally, a Brahmana recited the Seventeenth Chapter and the elephant started recovering and tried to stand up but fell down dead. The Brahmana who recited the Chapter explained that the dead elephant in its earlier birth was Dussahana and as a result of the recitation attained Moksha. King of Malwa continued the reading of the Chapter and attained Sayujya later. Lord Krishna told Arjuna: The features and ways of life are normally shaped by every human being by his own 'Swabhava' or personal traits. The Final Chapter of Bhagavad Gita named 'Moksha Sanyasa Yoga' contained the quintessence of Vedas and Shastras signifying the termination of Samsara Bandha or the shackles of Life. It is the destroyer of 'Arishadvargas' or the Six Enemies of humanity viz. Kama-Krodha-Moha-Mada-Lobha- and Matsarya; the final goal of Siddha Purushas and the High-Point of

Entertainment of Maharshis. Sincere recitation of this Grand Finale of Gita constitutes sure steps forward to Moksha or the total break-away from the endless cycles of Life! The Episode behind the Final Chapter was that when Indra was enjoying a dance-music ensemble of Apsarasas, a few Vishnu-Dootas rushed in to convey that a new Indra would be soon installed in Swarga Loka. Indra wondered whether the Indra-Elect performed hundred yagnas successfully or constructed lakhs of water-bodies or planted crores of trees for the joy of the travellers or organised countless ‘Anna Danas’ and charities as he did. He reached Bhagavan Vishnu and expressed agitation about the news of the new incumbent and whether his own position was at stake! Vishnu smiled and asked Indra to meet the new-elect at Kalikagram on the banks of Godavari who was a constant reciter of the Final Chapter of Bhagavad Gita; Vishnu further assured Indra that he too could retain his position if he performed likewise too. Indra visited the Indra-Elect in the form of a Brahmana and realised that each such recital of the Final chapter would be equated to the fruit of performing one Yagna plus all the Punya Karyas or the benevolent and splendid tasks that Indra did in the past qualifying him to achieve ‘Indratwa’! The Supreme Message of the Moksha Sanyasa Yoga is thus summed up as: *Sarva Karmanyapi sadaa kurvaano madvyapa-ashrayah, Madprasaadaadavapnoti Shasvatam padamavyayam/* (Do accomplish the everlasting and indestructible ‘Parama pada’ by performing the needful ‘Karmas’ and keeping complete faith in me!

**124) Ashtaadasha Puranas:** Eighteen Maha Puranas are Brahma- BrahmaVaivarta-Brahmanda-Bhagavata-Vishnu-Matsya-Kurma-Varaha-Vamana-Shiva-Linga-Skanda-Markandeya-Agni-Narada-Padma-Bhavishya-Garuda Puranas ; besides there are Eighteen Upa Puranas viz. Devi Bhagavata-Sanat Kumara-Narasimha-Brihannaaradiya-Shiv a Rahasya-Durvaasa-Kalki-Vamana-Bhargava-Varuna-Saamba-Nandi-Surya- Paraashara-Vasishtha-Ganesha-Hamsa; besides there are any number of Minor Puranas like Sthala-Tula / Kaveri, Ganga, Maagha- Vaishakha- Nilamata and so on; also, Nyaya Meemaamsa constitutes a part of Shad -darshanas or Six Darshanas based on Vedas, Upanishads and other Scriptures and the Darshanas are Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Purva Meemaamsa, Uttara Meemaamsa or Vedanta and Yoga. As regards an outline of Ashtadasha Puranas, following is relevant: *Brahma Purana* has twenty five ‘Shlokas’/ Stanzas and might be given as ‘Daan’(charity) to a Brahmana on Vaishakha Purnima along with a Jala Dhenu or Water-Cow. *Padma Purana*’s Padma Samhita or Bhumi Khand has twelve thousand Shlokas which might be given away in charity with a cow on Jyeshtha Purnima for the benefit of reading/ hearing it. *Vishnu Purana* with twenty three thousand Shokas is best given in charity along with a Jala Dhenu on Ashadha Purnima for ‘Vishnu Pada Prapti’. *Vayu Purana* with fourteen thousand stanzas is Bhagavan Shankara’s loved one and its ‘daana’ by the donor should preferably be hand written along with Gud (Jaggery)-Dhenu on Shravana Purnima for excellent results. *Maha Bhabaata Purana* is an Eighteen thousand Shloka volume with Vishnu orientation for Daana on Bhadrapada Purnima along with a golden Simhasana. *Narada Purana* with twenty thousand Shlokas described Brihatkalpa’s principles of Dharma and is given as daana on Ashvin Purnima along a cow. *Markandeya Purana* with nine thousand Shlokas contained preachings of ‘Pakshis’ on ‘Dharaaadharma’ topics and is best awarded to a Bramhana on a Kartika Purnima. Being a comprehensive exposition of several Principles of Dharma, Mantras and Vedangas, *Agni Purana* contained twelve thousand Shlokas which may be given away in charity to a deserving Veda Pundit on Marga Sirsha month preferably on hand written form by the donor; this Purana is a bestower of ‘Maha Phalas’ as it contains age old Mantras to socially oriented teachings. *Bhavishya Purana* is with orientation of Surya Deva, emphasizing his Supremacy over fourteen thousand Shlokas and ‘daan’ of jaggery and fruits on Pousha Purnima day assures excellent health and quality life by the grace of Surya Deva. *Brahma Vaivarta*

*Purana* containing eighteen thousand Shlokas was scripted at the instance of Saavaran Manu and is best offered as charity to a Brahmana on Magha Purnima. On the same Magha Purnima, charity along with *Varaha Purana* would accomplish Brahma loka. *Linga Purana* with eleven thousand Shlokas is all about Agnimaya Linga of Parameswara and its charity on Phalguni Purnima with Tila Dhenu assures Shiva Prapti. *Garuda Purana* with twenty four thousand Shlokas depicting the picture of post-life experiences has to be given as daana to a Brahmana on Chaitra Purnima along with Suvarna Hamsa (Golden Swan) for favour of securing 'Vishnu Pada'/ Vaikuntha. *Skanda Purana* is the longest of Puranaas scripted with eighty four thousand Stanzas and charity of this Purana on Chaitra Purnima would bestow Shivaloka Prapti. *Matsya, Kurma and Vamana Puranas* have thirteen thousand, eight thousand and ten thousand Shlokas respectively and charites of golden fish; golden Kurma and golden Vishnu Murti are best performed on Sharad Purna Vishu Samkraanti. *Brahmanda Purana* with twelve thousand Shlokas is to be offered to a Vedic Brahmana along with 'Daanaas'.

Narada Purana provides a more elaborate account of the Ashtadasha Puranas as follows: Brahma 'Maanasa Putra' Maharshi Marichi approached Lord Brahma to describe the 'beeja' (seed), 'lakshana' (characteristic), 'pramaana' (means of knowledge / contents), 'vakta' (Acharya) and 'shrota' (the Listener) of the main line Puranas which provide the knowledge of the 'Charaachara Jagat' or the moveable and immoveable Universe. Among all the 'Kalpas', there actually was stated to be one Single Purana comprising one hundred crore 'Shlokas' (stanzas) with the 'Four Purusharthas' of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mokshas as the 'bijas'; but Bhagavan Vishnu created Vyasa Muni in each Yugas and the latter in turn condensed the Single Purana with only four lakh Shlokas and distributed it among Eighteen Puranas with varied number of Shlokas among these. In fact, it is stated that the Single Mother Purana continues to be in position in the Deva Lokas. The four-lakh shlokas are sub-divided among the Eighteen Puranas viz. Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Bhagavat Purana, Narada Purana, Markandya Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Linga Purana, Varaha Purana, Skanda Purana, Vamana Purana, Kurma Purana, Matsya Purana, Garuda Purana and Brahmaanda Purana.

Mahatma Vyas first produced **Brahma Purana** with the underlying message of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and ten thousand 'Shlokas'. This Purana described about the creation of Devas, Asuras and Prajapatis like Daksha; about the 'Vamsa' (clan) of Bhagavan Surya; the incarnation of Lord Vishnu viz. Shri Rama and of the Epic of Ramayana; about Chandra Vamsa and of another incarnation of Vishnu viz. Shri Krishna; description of 'Sapta Dwipas' as also of 'Bhugola', the higher lokas and of the Lower Lokas of 'Pataala'; about the activities in 'Narakas'; Daksha Yagna and Parvati's wedding with Maha Deva. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga' of the Purana, 'Tirtha Yatras' were detailed with special reference to Purushottama Kshetra; 'Ashrama Dharmas' were highlighted and Principles of 'Vaishnava Dharma', Yoga / Shankhya Siddhanta, and 'Brahmavaada Digdarshana' were explained. The Purana's 'Vakta' was Suta Maha Muni and the 'Shrota' was Shaunaka Muni. Its 'pramana' and 'lakshanas' are of 'Bhoga' (Worldly Pulls and Pressures) while the principal objective is 'Moksha'. Even reading or listening to the 'Anukramanika' or the Contents of the Purana would result in the control of 'Indriyas' or physical and internal organs, while its reading or hearing of it on a Vaishakha Purnima by honouring a Brahmana with Bhojan, and charities especially of a cow and gold ornament would assure attainment of Brahma loka.

**Padma Purana** has five 'khandas' symbolising 'Panchendriyas' wherein Maharshi Pulastya delineated to Bhishma the details in 'Srishti Khanda' of Creation of Brahma as well as by Brahma of Eight Vasus, Eleven Rudras, Twelve Adityas, Forty Nine Maruganas, Fourteen Manus, Sapta Rishis and Pitras and so on besides of Pushkara and other Tirthas, Brahma Yagna, Veda paath lakshanas, Pitraas and Shraaddha Vidhana. In 'Bhumi Khanda', Pitru Bhakti and the illustration of Shiva Sharma were cited; Vritraasura vadha; Prudhu / Vena and Sunita's tales, the interesting examples of Nahuha, Yayati, Chyavana Muni and Parrot Kunjal, Significance of Tirthas etc. too were covered. 'Swarga Khanda', was about Tirtha Yatras especially to the neighbouring places of Narmada, Kurukshetra, Kalindi, and Kashi, In 'Patalala Khand', the highlights were of Ramayana and Krishnaayana, while Bhagavad Gita Mahatmya and of the rest of Avataaraas of Vishnu were vividly depicted in 'Uttara Khanda'. Veneration of a Brahmana on a Jyeshtha Purnima with Bhojan and daanaas bestows the fruits of reading, hearing and meditating of Padma Purana.

**Vishnu Purana** comprising twenty three thousand 'Shlokas' is considered as a demolisher of past and present sins. The narrator of the Purana was Shakti Nandan Muni Parashara and the 'Shrota' was Maharshi Maitraya. In the 'Poorva Bhaaga', six major 'Amshas' or aspects were covered of which the First Amsha concerned with 'Adi karana Sarga (Primary Creation)', 'Devotpatthi', 'Samudra Madhana', narratives of Dhruva, Pruthu, Praachatesa, and Prahlada. The Second 'Amsha' described the account of Priyavrata who demarcated the Earth into Sapta Dwipas; depiction of the under-sea worlds of Pataala etc. as also of Seven Swargas; the movements of 'Grahas' Planets), 'Bharata charitra', 'Mukti Marga Nidarshana' etc. The third Amsha referred to Manvantaryas, importance of Karma kanda, Shraddhas etc. Portrayal of Surya vamsha and Chandra Vamsha Kings was attempted in the fourth Amsha. In the Fifth Amsha, vivid accounts were given on Shri Krishna's childhood 'leelaas', youthful acts of 'Dushta Sikshana' and 'Sishta Rakshana', his weddings, overnight transfer of the residents of Mathura to Dwarakaa etc. A picture of Kali Yuga, four kinds of Pralayas and Gyanopadesha of Brahma Tatwa were the underscores of the Sixth Amsha. In the 'Uttara Bhaga' of Vishnu Purana, Suta Maha Muni gave narrations to Shounaka Muni concerning various chronicles on Dharma titled 'Vishnu Dharmottaraas' such as Punya Vratas, Yama-Niyamas, Dharma Shastra, Artha Shastra, Vedanta, Jyotisha, Vamsha Varna Prakarana, Stotras, Mantras and all other 'Sadhanas' (means). This Vishnu Purana tries to cover all significant 'Siddhantas' of Shastras which Veda Vyasa considered fit for attaining Moksha. Those who read or hear the Vishnu Purana with reverence and earnestness would both secure the 'Ihika' or Worldly and 'Amushmika' or Other Worldly desires most certainly. If a devotee would write down or get it transcribed by others and donate a cow to a Vishnu Bhakta Brahmana on a Purnima of Ashadha Month would be readily qualified for Vishnu Loka after the end of his/her life! Even a mere perusal of the Contents of Vishnu Purana would help with encouraging results.

With twenty four thousand Shlokas scripted into it by Vayu Deva himself, the **Vayu Purana** yields the fruits of propitiousness by its reading, or having it read. Comprising two parts of 'Poorva' and 'Uttara', the Purana gives an effective delineation of the means of obtaining Salvation. In the Poorva Bhagaa, the features of Sarga (Creation) are vividly expressed, besides the descriptions of the different 'Manvantaras' and Kingships especially of Gayasura and of his extermination. The significance of 'Masaas' has been discussed, declaring that the month of 'Maagha' as the best. 'Daana Dharmas' and 'Raja Dharmas' have been dilated at length. Also, narrations about Prithvi, Pataal, Dishas and Aakaash have been made in some detail in the Poorva Bhaaga. The Uttara

Bhaaga of the Vayu Purana contains 'Shiva Samhita' and is fully depictive of the Sacred River of Narmada and surroundings. It is stated that this River was materialised from Bhagavan Shiva's Body and was the confluence of Brahma and Vishnu too. It is further stated that the northern bank of Narmada comprised the devotees of Rudra and the southern bank of the River by Vishnu Bhakas. From the famed Omkareshwara Kshetra towards the west leading to the Sea, there are as many as thirty five 'Sangamas' of which eleven are positioned on the northern bank and twenty three on the southern bank; the thirtyfifth sangam is said to be at the Maha Sangam of Narmada and the Sea. In fact, there are as many as four hundred Tirthas on either side of the banks including those at the Sangamas, although there really were stated to have existed sixty crore and odd dotting along the River lines! Those who write the Vayu Purana in full and donate a cow alongwith jaggery on Sravana Purnima to a Vedic Brahmana and his family would reside in Rudra Loka during the ensuing fourteen Indratvas.

Brahma Deva informed Maricha Maha Muni about the excellence of **Shrimad Bhagavata Purana** which had eighteen thousand Shlokas and assured that it was like a 'Kalpa Vriksha' with twelve branches represented by each 'Skanda' or Chapter. Veda Vyasa was the author of the Purana and 'shrotas' or listeners were several. The Opening Skanda, as reported by Suta Maha Muni to a congregation headed by Shounaka Muni, dealt with King Parithkshit's request to Suka Muni, the illustrious son of Veda Vyasa, to preach as much knowledge of Dharma and awareness of the Supreme Power as possible within a week's time since the King was cursed by Samika Rishi's son that Parikshit would die within a week due to snake bite; the King did the indiscretion of hanging a dead serpent around the neck of the Muni who was in Tapasya. The second Skanda explained the concept of the Gross and Minute manifestations of Paramatma, the analysis of 'Maha Tatwas' - the Causes of 'Srishti' (Creation). The third Skanda described the dialogues between Vidura of Maha Bharata fame and Maharshi Maitreya about the procedure of Creation by Brahma as well as of Kapila Maharshi's narrative of Sankhya Yoga. The fourth Skanda depicted the process of 'Visarga' (Secondary Creation) and referred to the Stories of Devi Sati and Daksha Yagna, of Dhruva, King Prutha all in the context of Manus and Prajapatis and happenings during these time-frames. The fifth Skanda covered the history of Prajapati Priyavrata and progeny, demarcation of Sapta Dwipas, description of Planets and Narakas etc. The sixth Skanda covered the Story of the illustrious Brahmana called Ajamila, Daksha Prajapati's creation, the termination of Vritrasura and creation of Marudganas. Prahlada charitra and varnashrama dharma as also the 'dos' and don't's by way of 'Karma' were discussed in the seventh Skanda. Gajendra Moksha, Samudra mathana, King Bali and his control through Vishnu's Avatara as Vamana and Matsyavatara were described in the Ashtama Skanda. The Ninth Skanda dealt with Surya vamsha and Chandra vamsha Kings. The Tenth and Eleventh Skandas depicted the totality of Krishna's Avatar covering the Bala Leelas, escapades of Youth, extermination of Adharma and revival of Dharma, Happenings at Dwaraka, his extraordinary role on Bharata Battle, Prabhasa Kshetra, Udbhava Geeta and the end of Yadu Vamsha. The final and the Twelfth Skanda described the accounts of subsequent Kings, the end of Parikshit, Markandeya Tapasya, the magnificence of Surya Deva and winding up by Suta Maha Muni by the aspects of Moksha prapti. Those desirous of higher achievements of Bhakti would do well by organising Maha Bhagavata 'Pathana' / 'Pravachana' and 'Shravana' by a virtuous Brahmana on Bhadrapada Purnima and perform 'Puja' to the Vakta along with Suvarna Daana/ Vastra daana.

**Narada Purana** comprised twenty five thousand Shlokas based on Brihad Kalpa Katha. Narrated by Suta Maha Muni to Shounaka Muni, the Purana was basically conceived by Brahmarshi Narada himself but preached by Sanaka Brothers to Narada. The earlier part of the Purana dealt with 'Pravritti Dharma' and the second part was devoted to 'Moksha Dharma'. Sanandana described at length the Six Vedangaas as Moksha Sadhanas and about the illustration of Suka Deva in this context. The Third Part gave 'Upadeshas' to Narada by Sanat Kumara about 'Pashu paasha vimoksha' and Mantras concerning major Deities, Diksha, Puja procedures, Stotras etc. The fourth Part provided details of tithi-wise and Maasa-wise Vratas as also an Index of 'Ashtadasha Puranas'. The 'Uttara Bhaga' of the Purana gave details of Ekadasha Vratas, Vasishtha-Mandhata Samvada, King Rukmanga and Mohini, curse to Mohini, her revival and her exposure to Tirtha Yatras. Sincere study and 'shravana' of the Purana on Ashwin Purnima followed by Puja to a Brahmana with daanas of seven cows, clothing and so on would surely pave the way to Salvation.

**Markandeya Purana** has nine thousand Shlokas and the various 'Dharma Sandehas' or doubts related to the practice of Virtue-oriented Principles raised by the Sage Jaimini to Mahatma Markandeya were referred by the latter to Holy Birds, who were the sons of Sage Vipulaswan viz. Sukrish and Thumbaru in their past life; the Muni cursed the sons to turn as birds as they refused his instruction to be eaten by Indra who appeared as a bird and demanded human flesh at the Muni's Yagna. Sage Jaimini's doubts were cleared by the Holy Birds as to why Devi Draupadi consented to marry all the Pandava brothers, why Bala Rama had to atone for the sin of 'Brahmahatya' and why were the defenceless sons of Draupadi killed by Ashvatthama, the learned son of Dronaacharya. Having been satisfied by the replies of the Birds, Sage Jaimini sought to be enlightened by several other topics related to the exemplary Harischandra who stood firm to follow Dharma and Satya; the rivalry of Sages Vasishtha and Vishwamitra resulting in mutual curses to become birds; the story of the better enlightened 'Jatismara' Sumati with the knowledge of previous birth than his father Mahamati and the son's 'pravachana' or teachings about the aftermath of life, its recyclings, classification of hells and their experiences; retributions and rewards of human deeds; the great examples of Kaushiki and Anasuya as Pativratas; the Story of Dattatreya and Kartaveeryarjuna; King Alarka and Queen Mother Madalasa, Yoga Siddhis, the Accounts of Fourteen Manus; Devi Mahatmya and Surya Deva Mahatmya/ Surya Vamsha headlights. Those who read, hear and annotate the Purana and pay reverences to a virtuous Brahmana on a Kartika Purnami day by gifting a golden 'Pratima' with an embossed elephant would qualify Shiva Loka.

**Agni Purana** was addressed by Agni Deva himself to Sage Vasishta through fifteen thousand Shlokas describing Ishaana-Kalpa. It provided an account of 'Dashavataras' at length followed by Agni Karyas, Mantras, Diksha Vidhanas and Abhishekas. Then the details of Mandala Lakshanas, Devalaya vidhi, Shalagrama puja, Deva Pratishtha, Bhugola and Khagola Varnana, Shatkarmas, Yantra, Mantra, Shat prakara Nyasa, Koti homa vidhi, shraaddha vidhi, Griha Yagnas, Shrouta Smaarta Karmas; Maasa-Tithi- Vaara-Nakhatra Vratas; Sandhya / Gayatri Vandana; Rajyabhisheka vidhi; Swapna/ Shakuna phalas; various Shant Mantras and Procedures; Dhanur vidya, Ayurveda, Yoga and Vedangas like Vyakarana, Chhandas, Sahitya, Jyotisha etc. Agni Purana Vachana, Pathana, Manana and Lekhana-hearing, reading, cogitating, and writing- on Margasirsha Purnima and daana of 'pratimaas' / idols of golden lotus and cow with tilas would yield the 'Punya' to secure fulfillment of desires in 'Iham' or the on-going life and 'Param' / Swarga Prapti thereafter.

**Bhavishya Purana** which contained fourteen thousand Shlokas was originally recited by Brahma to Narada to Veda Vyasa to his disciple Sage Sumantu. The Purana is divided into five Parts viz. 'Brahma Parva', 'Vaishnava Parva', 'Shaiva Parva', 'Soura Parva' and 'Prati Sarga Parva'. The highlights of the Purana are Sacred Rites, Varnashrama Dharmas, Vratas including Ganesh Chaturthi, Naga Panchami, Skanda Shashthi, Ratha Saptami, Suryoraadhana, Agni Homa vidhi, over-view of Yugas, Satya Narayana Vrata; the advent of Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad, Revival efforts of Hindu Dharma, Shankara and Ramanuja Acharyas, Mughal Empire, Victoria and British Rule and finally various Vratas in prevalence. Veneration to the Purana is best done by reading, writing and Pravachana on Pousha Purnima and paying respects to learned Brahmanas along with daanas of gold ornaments, clothing and bhojan.

**Brahma Vaivarta Purana** scripted by Veda Vyasa consisted of eighteen thousand Shlokas and divided into four 'Khandaas' viz. Brahma Khanda, Prakriti Khanda, Ganesha Khanda and Shri Krishna Khanda; it underlined the identity of Shiva and Vishnu. In fact Narada prayed to Bhagavan Saavarni and the fact of one-ness of Shiva and Vishnu was over-emphasised. Addressing the congregation of Munis, Suta Maha Muni commenced with 'Srishti Varnana', Origin of Vishnu from the body of Shri Krishna, background of Radha, Gopas and Gopikas, and Creation of animate and inanimate beings. In Prakriti Khanda, the Mahatmyas of Devis Durga, Radha, Lakshmi and Sarasvati were given; besides narrations of and Savitri Satyavan, Surabhi, Swaha and Sudha, Surata, Ganga Mahatmya, Ramayana and worship of Lakshmi. In Ganesha Khanda, the supremacy of Ganesha was extolled at length, besides covering the accounts of Jamadagni, Parashurama, and Kartaveeryarjuna. Shri Krishna Khanda was totally devoted to Krishna's childhood leelaas, his youth and romantic accounts, his adventures in destroying evil forces and saving the virtuous, his key role on the context of Maha Bharata etc. This Sacred Purana is highly worthy of reading, concising, writing and worshipping especially on Magha Puranami. Charity to a Vidwan by way of Pratyaksha Godaan would grant the donor with Brahmaloaka praapti and cotentment as long as one lived on Earth.

Highlighting Bhagavan Shiva's extraordinary magnificence, **Linga Purana** was written by Veda Vyasa but as conceived by Maha Deva Himself with some eleven thousand 'shlokas'. At the commencement of the Purana, Creation of Universe was depicted followed by 'yogaakhyaan' and 'kalpaakyaan'. 'Linga pradurbhaav' (emergence of Linga) and procedure of worship was explained later on. Subsequently, the Story of Muni Dadhichi, exposition of 'Yuga Dharma', description of 'Bhuvana kosha' or the World, as also details of Surya Vamsha and Chandra Vamsha were scripted. This was followed by the depiction of 'Linga Pratishtha' or formal set-up of Linga with Mantras as also the discussion of 'Pashu-paasha vimokshana' or salvation of human bondage. The topics of Shiva Vrata, 'Sadaachara', 'prayaschitta' and 'Shrishailla' Temple visit were also covered. The destruction Andhakasura and Jalandhara were described as also the 'Avataras' of Vishnu as Varaha and Nrisimha. The devastation of 'Daksha Yajna', the blazing of Manmadha and the wedding of Shiva and Parvati were covered. The sacred 'Shiva Sahasrtanaamaas' were rendered, besides description of Ganesha Mahatmya and Shiva Tandava. In the Uttariya Bhaga, the Vishnu and Shiva Mahatmyas were given. Then followed the coverages of Snaana, Yaaga, daana, Shraaddha and Shiva Puja 'Mahimas'. Pratishthaapana mantras, Aghora kirtana, Vajresdwara Maha Vidya, Gayatri Mahima, Triambika Mahatmya and such other topics too got extensive coverage. Those Shiva Bhaktas who would read, reproduce, reflect and render the most auspicious

Linga Purana on any day but most certainly on Phalgun Purnima day would certainly yield considerable returns. If these deeds are accompanied by charity of 'tila dhenu' (cow) either as a Pratima or better still in a live form would definitely accomplish 'Shiva Sayujya'.

**Varaha Purana** scripted by Veda Vyasa with twenty four thousand stanzas divided into two Parts and was dominated by high Vishnu-consciousness. Initiated with a conversation between Bhagavan Varaha and Devi Prithvi, the Purana covered the exemplary devotion displayed by Kings Priyavrata, Ashwasira, and Vasuas well as Sages like Raibhya and Gomukh. After 'Shraddha' Kalpa, accounts of concerned Deities governing specified days were described for instance Agni on Pratipada, Aswini Kumars on Dwitiya, Devi Gauri on Triteeya, Ganesha on Chaturthi, Naga Devatas on Panchami, Kartikeya on Shashthi, Surya Deva on Saptami, Ashta Matrikas on Ashtami, Durga on Navami, 'Dasa Dishas' on Dashami, Dwadasi on Vishnu and ten incarnations, Dharma Purusha on Trayodasi, Chaturdasi on Rudra Deva, Amavasya on Pitaras, and Moon on Purnima. Then various 'Vratas', 'Daanas', and Tirtha Yatras/ Punya Khestras were discussed in the Purana. The portrayal of Bhudevi's rescue from the clutches of demon Hiranyaksha by Varaha Murti, which indeed was the main Subject matter of the Purana, was described very effectively. The Purana was indeed the Kalpa Vriksha of Vratas and Tirtha Yatras aside from 'Daana Mahimas'. Its veneration on Chaitra Purnima with its reading, writing, and memorising contents, along with 'daana' of a golden 'Garuda' should help secure Vaikuntha to Bhaktas.

The largest and one of the most popular of Puranas which was dominated by Bhagavan Shiva viz. the **Skanda Purana** also called as Kartika Purana has eighty one thousand Shlokas, divided by Veda Vyasa into Seven 'Khandas' viz. Maheswara Khanda, Vishnu Khanda, Brahma Khanda, Kasi Khanda, Avantya Khanda, Nagara Khanda and Prabhasa Khanda. A bird's eye-view of the entire Purana includes Kedara Mahatmya, Daksha Yagna, Shiva Linga Puja, Samudra Mathana, Shiva-Parvati's wedding, birth of Skandha, carnage of Tarakasura, Panchalinga Sthapana, Appearance of Maha Kaal, significance of various Tirthas like Arunaachala, Venkataachala, Purushottama Kshetra, Badari Kshetra; of the months of Kartika, Margashira and Vaishakha; and of the Mahatmya of Ayodhya, Rameswara, and Dharmaranya, Kashi, Avanti, Prabhasa and Dwaraka; Shiva Mantra-Shiva Ratri-Shiva Pradosha and Shiva Kavacha etc. Perhaps the best coverage of Tirthas all over Bharat was attempted in Skanda Purana. Those who reproduce the entire Skanda Purana as scripted by Veda Vyasa and gift it to a deserving Vedic Pandita along a golden 'Trishul'(Trident) on a Magha Purnima day should indeed be blessed with 'Shivaloka prapti'.

Containing ten thousand 'Shlokas' **Vamana Purana** was originally conceived by Maharshi Pulasthya and advised Narada about it and the latter passed it on to Veda Vyasa, while Vyasa imparted it to his disciple Romaharshana with the instruction of reciting it at the congregation of Munis at Naimisharanya headed by Maha Muni Shaunaka. This Purana has two Parts; the former Part opened with the coverage of slitting Brahma's fifth head, Kapala mochana and destruction of Daksha Yagna. The subsequent contents included 'Madana Dahana', Prahlada-Narayana battle, the big conflict of Devas and Danavas, the Story of Sukeshi and Surya, Kaamya Vrata, Durga Charitra, Tapati Charitra, Kurukshetra, the birth of Parvati, the wedding of Tapati, the Stories of Gauri, Kaushiki, Kumara, and Jabala; Siva's battle with and killing of Andhakasura and former's request to Shiva to provide him with full-fledged *Ganatwa*; birth of Marudganaas; the tales of King Bali, Lakshmi, Trivikrama etc. In the 'Uttara Bhaaga', there are four 'Samhitas' pertaining to Maaheswari, Bhagavati, Souri, and Jnaneswari. In the Maaheswari Samhita, there was a vivid

description of Shri Krishna and his devotees. In the Bhagavati Samhita, Jagadamba's delineation was provided, while in the Souri Samhita, Bhagavan Surya's Mahatmya was explained from the view point of destruction of sins. In the Ganeswari Samhita, there were the significant explanations about the extraordinary powers of Ganesha and Bhagavan Shankara. Reproduction of the text of Vamana Purana during 'Sharat kaala' and perform 'ghrita dhenu'daana would redeem 'Pitras' from 'narakas'to Swarga and the devotee himself would reach 'Vishnupada'after his end of life.

**Kurma Purana** with seventeen thousand 'Shlokas'divided into four Samhitas was essentially a Vishnu dominated 'Grandha' of great significance. Brahma introduced this Purana to Maharshi Marichi about several Principles of Virtue targetting the attainment of the Four Purusharthas of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. In the 'Poorva Bhaaga'of the Purana there were covrages of Bhagavan Kurma and Maharshi's conversation, Varnaashrama Principles, Creation of Universe, outline of the method of 'Kaala Sankhya, Shankara Charitra, Parvati Sahasra naama, Yoga, Bhrgu Vamsha, Creation of Swayamshu Manu and lineage, Dahsha Yagna and its destruction, Daksha Srishti, Muni Kashyapa and progeny, Atri Vamsha, Shri Krishna-Markandeya Samvad (conversation), Vyasa-Pandava Samvad, Yuga dharmas, Mahatmya of Kasi and Prayaga, and the effectiveness of 'Vaidika Shaakhaa' or the Following of Veda practioners.In the 'Uttara Bhaaga'of the Purana, there were the Ishwariya Gita and Vyasa-Gita, and Instructions on Dharmic Principles. This was followed by 'Brahma Samhita' covering 'Prati Sarga'or Universal Destuction and Renewal. In 'Bhagavati Samhita', there are five Parts, the first four Parts being devoted to the four Varnas of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras and their respective duties; the fifth Varna viz. of 'sankara' or mixed origin was also prescribed of duties by following so that the persons concerned might be shifted to higher levels in future births. The third Samhita called 'Souri Samhita' which teaches 'Shat-karma bodha' and the Fourth one entitled 'Vaishnavi Samhita' is a Guide to accomplishing 'Moksha'. This Purana is an excellent exposition of the established Principles of Dharma and a comprehensive Guide to the pure and devout Hindus seeking 'Uttama Gati' or the most appropriate Route to Salvation. This Sacred Purana is best read, heard and written on a day of Solar Movement from Southern direction to Northern (Uttaraayana day) or vice versa called Dakshinaayana and give away charity of a golden 'Kurma' to a Vedic Brahmana.

**Matsya Purana** again scripted by Veda Vyasa over fourteen thousand 'Shlokas' commenced with the discussion between Matsya Deva and Manu, and continued with description of Brahmanda (Universe), Creation of Brahma, Devas, Asuras; emergence of Marud Ganaas, Manvantaras, King Pruthu, Creation of Surya and Vaivaswata Muni, Pitru Vamsha, Shraadhha kaal, creation of Soma and his vamsha, King Yayati, Kaartaveeryaarjuna, Bhrgu's curse, Vishnu's ten incarnations, Praise of Puru Vamsha, Hutaashana Vamsha, Nakshatra Vrata, Purusha Vrata, Martandashayana Vrata, Kishnaashtami Vrata, Ananata Triteeya Vrata etc. besides Graha Shanti, Shiva Chaturdahi, Sarva Phala tyaaga, Sankrasti Snaan, Shashthi Vrata Mahatmya, Snaana Vidhi, Antariksha gamana, Dhruva Mahima, Shreshtha Pitara Mahima, Shiva-Parvati wedding, Kartika's birth, Tarakaasura's extermination, the Story of Nrisimha, Vaaranasi / Narmada Mahatmya, Vaastu Vidya, Deva Mandira Nirmaana, future Kings etc. This highly virtuous Purana is conducive to excellent health, extension of life, securing fame and name, and fulfillment of wishes. Pathana, Shravana, Lekhana, Manana and Kirtana of this Purana as well as daana of a golden Pratima of Matsya to an erudite Brahmana also with Go-daana at 'Vishuva Yoga' would result in 'Vishnu dhaama praati'.

**Garuda Purana** was Vishnu Deva's sermon to Mahatma Garuda, as conveyed by Brahma to Maharshi Marichi and it contained nineteen thousand 'Shlokas'. At the beginning of the Purana in the 'Purva Bhaaga', there was brief introduction of 'Srishti' and was followed by the Puja of Surya Deva and other Deities, Diksha Vidhi or procedure of assuming Diksha or disciplined way of life; Shraadda Puja, Nava Vyuha Puja, Vaishnava Panjara, Yogaadhyaya, Vishnu Sahasra nama kirtana, Vishnu Dhyana, Surya Puja, Mrityunjaya Puja, Maalaa Mantra, Gopala Puja, Trailokya mohana Shridhara Puja, Vishnu-Archa, Pancha Tatwaarcha, Deva Puja, Sandhyopaasana, Durgaarchana, Maheswara Puja, Sarva Deva Pratishtha, Ashtaanga Yoga, Daanadharma, Praayaschitta vidhi, Naraka varnana, Jyotisha, Saamudrika Shastra, Swara Jnaana, Nutana Ratna pariksha, Tirtha Mahaatmya, Gaya Mahatmya, Pitaropaakhyaana, Varna Dharma, Ashrama, Preta shuddhi, Niti Shastra, Vratha katha (story), Surya/Chandra Vamsha, Shrihari Avataara katha, Ramayana, Hari Vamsa, Bhaaraataakhyana, Ayurveda, Chikitsa, Dravyaguna, Roga naashaka Vishnu Kavacha, Garuda Kavacha, Traipura Mantra, Prashna chudaamani, Vyakarana, Chhanda, Tarpana, Bali Vaishva Deva, Sandhya, Paarvana Karma, Nitya Shaaddha, Sapindana, Dharmasaara, Praayaschitta (atonement of sins), karma phala, Yogashastra, Vishnu Bhakti, Nrisimha Stotra, Vishnvarchana stotra, Vedanta / Saankhya siddhanta, Brahma Gyana, Atmaananda, and Geetaasaara. The Uttara Khanda starts off with Preta Kalpa varnana. Asked about Dharma, Bhagavan Vishnu explained about the route to 'Urthwa lokas' or the higher destinations and the performance well defined acts of Virtue including Shodasa Shraaddhas, 'daanaas' etc. Then were scripted the route to Yamaloka, the wretched experiences on way, 'Preta's' features, 'sapindikarana', 'pretatwa mukti', the erstwhile deeds of help rescuing the Preta from various torments, Yama loka varnana, determination of sins or good deeds, effectiveness of follow-up deeds by progeny performing the rites after the death under reference, Madhya shodasda shraaddha, proactive deeds to enable 'swarga prapti' of the deceased, 'sutaka dina sankhya' or the number of 'Asuchi' depending on the relationship to the deceased, Narayana bali karma, Vrishotsarga Mahatmya, Nishidha karma tyaga, criteria for Swarga Prapti, etc. The Purana also gives accounts of the seven under worlds, five upper worlds as also of Brahmada Charitra, Pralayas, ever-repetitive cycles of birth and deaths etc. Reading, writing, hearing, thinking and imagining of post-life experiences of the contents of Purana during 'Vishuva' Yoga time along with charity of a golden swan to a Brahmana would help reduce the severity of sins.

**Brahmada Purana** with twelve thousand 'Shlokas' has four Parts titled 'Prakriya paada', 'Anushanga paada', 'Upodghata paada, and 'Upa samhaara paada'. The first two Paadaas are considered as 'Purvi Bhaga' and the latter two as 'Uttari Paada'. The Prakriya paada narrates Instructions on Duties, description of 'Naimisha' or the popular Forest Place of the Congregation of Rishis, Creation of Hiranyagarbha, formation of Lokas, etc. The Second Part gives a picture of Kalpas and Manvantaras, Lokagyana, Creation of human beings, Creation by Rudra, Rishi Sarga, Agni Vijaya, Kaala sadbhaava, Priyavrata's vamsha, Prithvi's length and breadth, Bharata Varsha, Sapta Dwipas, the under-world of seven regions like Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasatala, Patala etc; Bhurbhuvah like upper Lokas, details of Grahas (Planets) and their features, Adityavyuha's description, Devagraha anukeertana, the incident of how Shiva became 'Neela Kantha', Amavasya varnana, Yuga tatwa, Yana pravartana, features of human beings as per Yugas, Rishi pravara varnan, Swayambhu Manu's details, the chronicle of the rest of Manus, etc. In the 'Upodghata Paada', there are the details of Sapta Rishis, Prajapatis, Marudganaas, Kashyapa's progeny, Rishi Vamsha, Pitru Kalpa, Shraaddha Kalpa, emergence of Vaiwaswata Muni, the lineage of Manus,

Ikshvaku Vamsha, Atri Vamsha, Amaavasv Vamsha, the tale of Yayati, Yadu Vamsa, Kaartaveerya, Parashu Rama, Vrishni Vamsha, Sagara charitra, Krishnaavataara, Bali Vamsha, and depiction of future Kings on the Earth. In the Uttara Bhaaga of the Brahmaanda Purana, there are descriptions of Upasamhaara Paada including ‘Pralaya’ (The Great Dissolution), Time measurements, account of Fourteen ‘Bhuvanas’/ worlds, sins and the resultant hells, practice of virtue and attainment of ‘Shiva dhaam’.

*Who should read Puranas!* Lord Brahma told Maharshi Marichi that basically Bhagavan Vishnu bestowed a Single Purana to him which was of the volume of crores of Shlokas; Brahma passed on to Vasishtha Maharshi who in turn gave away to Parasara Muni and the latter pronounced it aloud and Vayu Deva carried it to Veda Vyasa. Vyasa selected only four lakh stanzas and distributed these among Eighteen Puranas. These were sketched for ‘Loka Kalyan’ and even these highly abridged versions are apparently tough to digest. It is believed that a person who could read, hear, reproduce, annotate and assimilate all the Eighteen Puranas in full as written by Veda Vyas should have no rebirth into this ‘Samsara’ once again. Besides, this kind of ideal person, should practise the Sacred Principles enunciated among them. In any case, the contents of any or all Puranas should not be preached to a ‘daambhik’ (vainglorious), ‘Paapaachari’ (sinful), unbearable of Devas, Gurus and the Virtuous and to ‘shath’ (stubborn) persons. Only those who are self-controlled, matured, good-featured and God-fearing should be specially invited and inspired to inculcate interest in the Puranas and their contents.

**125) Ekavimshati Naraka Lokas and retributions:** Yagjnyavalkya described ‘eka vimshati’ or twenty one narakas as follows: *Prayaschitta makurvaanaah paaeshu nirantaa naraah, Apaschaantaapinah kashtaan narakaan yaanti daaruram/Taamishram Lohashanku Mahaairaya shalmali, Rouravam Kumbhalam Puti mritthikaam Kaalasutrikam/ Sanghaatam Tohilodakamcha Savisham Sampra taapanam, Mahaa Naraka Kaalolam Sanjeevana Mahaapatham/ Avichour andha -taamishram Kumbhopaakam tathahivacha, Asipatrvanam chaiva Taapanam chaika vimshikam/* (The details of the twenty one hells are Taamishra, Lohashanku, Maha Niraya, Shalmali, Rourava, Kumbhala, Puti mrittika, Kaala Sutra, Sanghata, Tohiloda, Savisha, Samprapaatana, Maha Naraka, Kaakola, Sanjeevana, Maha Patha, Aveechi, Andhataamisra, Kumbheepaaka, Asipatrvana, and Taapana. In case, prayaschittas are not already executed in one’s life time in lieu of Maha Patakas and Upa patakas perpetrated on earth in the previous birth, the accumulated sins of dreadful nature would entail much more severe penalties and retributions). The retributions are on account of non-performance of ‘Vihita Karmas’ or prescribed duties and perpetrating ‘nishiddha karmas’ or prohibited acts. For example, avoiding Garahana Snanas involves attacks of leprosy for seven births. Committing ‘Brahma hatya paataka’ and such grave sins and not resorting to prayaschitta would definitely lead to payback reprisal like being pushed down from mountains of high altitudes or being consigned to engulfing poisonous flames mercilessly. Persons who are normally susceptible to continuous attacks by ‘Arishad Vargas’ viz. Kama-Krodha-Lobha-Moha-Mada-Matsaras viz. Deep desires, terrible anger, passionate possessiveness, excessive attachments, incorrigible arrogance and unpardonable jealousy; one’s misdoings of serious nature are therefore sure to lead them to Ati Pataka, Maha Pataka, Anupataka Upa, Paataka, Upa pataka, Jaati bhramsha types of retributions as also Sankarikarana, Apaatri karana, Malaavaha, and so on. Matru -Putrika-Swashru-Sunsha gamana are considered as Atipatakas and Brahma Hatya-Suraapaaa-Brahmana Dhana harana-steya or stealing-guru bharya gamana are Maha patakas. Rajaswala-Garbhini-Asphuta baala gamana and Sharanaagata Shatru vadha are as dreadful as Brahma hatya; providing wrong or misleading evidences and murder of friends are as heinous as Suraa Paana; Para daaraa gamana especially with closely related

women is stated to be as appalling as Guru Bharya gamana; ‘Sharanaagata stree gamana’ is stated as Anupataka or as deplorable as Maha Pataka. Go Vadha, Para Stree vikraya, Matru/Pitru dushana and bahishkarana, Brahmana Vidhi parityajana, Vrata parityaga, Kanya dushana and nastikyata are of the rank of Upapaata dosha. Para ninda, Madyaadi vikraya, Neecha sahavaasa and such other traits demand Jaati bhramsha. Pashu samhara and Heena vritti demand sankarikarana. Asatya sambhaashana, nishkarana nindaaropana, krika keeta pakshi jalachara vadha are considered as Malaa vaha; heena jaati seva, nindita dhanaarjana and such acts of depravity including Urbandhana maranas or forced deaths and anti-social activities are called prakeerna-avikeerna paapas. Among the Atipatakas are listed Matru-Putrika-Sahodari gamana or with such other blood relations both knowingly or ignorantly, the Prayaschitta is Sishna-chedana and three Kruccha prayaschitta and three chandrayana vratas. Para stree gamana demands a series of Chandrayana Vratas like Rishi Chandrayana-eating three fistful havishaanna a day for a month, Sishu chandraayana or consuming a one year old boy’s four-fistfuls of cooked food a day for a month or Yati chandrayana or eight fistfuls of cooked bhojana on a mid-day for ever! There after, a cow and calf are to be donated to a Veda Brahmana.

**126) Eka Vimshati Ganesha Kshetras:** The most sancrosant and age old Ganesha Temples in Bharat were the following 21 Kshetras: *Moreshwara*: Mayuresha Ganesha is stated to be of Ganapatya ‘Mukhananda’ Kshetra which is some 35 km from Pune in Maharashtra; *Prayaga* in Uttar Pradesh is ‘Omkara Ganapati’ stated to have been installed in the Adi Kalpa of the Yore and worshipped ever thereafter; *Dundiraja Ganapati* at Kashi Mandir; At Kalamba village near Pune is *Chantamani Ganapati* stated to have worshipped by Lord Indra to alleviate the curse of Gautama Maharshi and is famed to reduce the extremely difficult hardships of the devotees with faith. *Adosha Ganapati* on Nagpur-Chhindwaa line at Saamner is famed as Shami Vighnesha Kshetra which was stated to have been worshipped by Vamana Avatara of Lord Vishnu to be able to suppress Bali Chakravarti and demanded three feet viz. Prithvi-Paatala-Antariksha Lokas. *Pali Ganapati* or Ballal Ganapati again in Maharashtra was stated to have worshipped by a Vaishya boy of Pali in Kulaba Dt. for salvation. *Mangala Ganapati* at Pariner on the banks of Narmada was the Kshetra where Mangal Graha was stated to have worshipped. *Phaala Chandra Ganesha* near Parbhani on the Kachiguda-Manmad- where Parbhani Jyotir Linga is also situated where Lord Chandra was stated to have worshipped nearby the Sacred Godavari River flows at a place called Ganga Masale. A place called Rakshasa Bhuvana on Kachiguda Manmad Railway Line again there is *Vigjnana Ganesha Khetra* where Lord Dattaatereya venerated. Very near to Pune Yevur, Lord Brahma himself was stated to have worshipped *Vighnanaashaka Ganesha* to ward off al hurdles and obstacles before launching his creation. The eleventh manifestation of the twenty one series of Pracheena Ganesha is at Siddhitek on Mumbai-Raichur Railway Line named *Siddhi Ganesha* who was worshipped by Lord Vishnu Himself before he launched offensive against the invincible Madhu Kaitabha Demons in the form of Hayagriva. This Siddhi Vinayaka of Siddhitek was also venerated by Maharshi Veda Vyasa before he launched the onerous task of dividing the Single Veda into the present Chatur Vedas. Lord Shiva himself adored the ‘Tripura- dhwamsa’ Ganesha as the twelfth in the current series of Prachina Ganapati Deva at Manipura Kshetra at Rajan gaon near Pune. at the launch of the battle with the Asura. The next significant Ganesha Kshetra is of *Vijaya Mangala Ganeshwara* at Vijayapura / Vijaya Mangala on Chennai- Mangalore Railway line as Ganesh Deva was manifested to destroy Anasura. At Kashypashrama yet unknown about his whereabouts, Kashyapa Maharshi was stated to have meditated at his Ashram and constantly worshipped for Loka Kshema. At Jalesha pura, Tripurasura too performed puja for victory. The whereabouts of these Kshetras were not known. At Lehyadri near Pune in Juwar

Taluk, Devi Parvati worshipped Ganesha to be born as her most popular son as *Putra Ganesha*. At Berol or Ailapur near Ellora near Aourangabad, right within the premises of Ghrishneshwar Jyotir Linga afore mentioned, Ganesha Murti was set up by Skanda Deva as *Lakshya Vinayaka*. At 'pracheena' Pravala Kshetra called *Padmalaya Tirtha*, on Mumbai- Bhusaval Line of Railways, Karta Veeryajuna venerated both Ganesha and Shesha Sarpa on the banks of Ugama Sarovara. At Naamalagao from Jalna to Beed road is the *Amalaakama Kshetra*, Lord Yama Dharma Raja was stated to have worshipped Ganesha to ward off the curse of his mother on the banks of *Sadbuddhiprada Tirtha*. The penultimate 'pracheena' Ganesh is at *Raja sadana Kshetra* where Sindurasura was killed by himself and taught *Ganesha Gita* to Varenya Raja and ever since became popular as 'Ganapati Rajur Kshetra'. Among the most illustrious Pradhana Ganapati Kshetras of the times immemorial, the twenty first and ever popular one is at *Shveta Vighnesh -wara Kshetra* at Kumbhakokam in Tamilnadu on the banks of the Sacred River Kaveri *Sudha Ganesha Murti* who was worshipped by Deva Danavas before the churning of Ksheera Sagara for the manifestation of Amrit!

**127) Chaturchatvaari (44) Tirthas:** Devaprayaga (Alaknanda-Bhagirathi Sangama), Triyugi Narayana (Sarasvati Kund); Mada Maheshwara (Madhyameshwara); Rudranatha; Badari natha at Brahma Kapala; Haridwar at Hari ki Paidi; Kurukshetra; (Pahova), Pindaaraka Tirtha; Mathura at Dhruva ghat; Naimisharanya; Dhouta paapa or Hatya harana Tittha; Bittur (Brahmavarta); Prayag raj; Kashi (Manikarnika); Ayodhya; Gaya; Bodhgaya; Raja griha; Parashurama Kunda; Yaajapur; Bhuvaneshwara; Jagannatha puri; Ujjain; Amarantaka; Nasika Triyamabakeshwara; Pandaripura at Chandrabhaga; Lohaarigal; Pushkar; Tirupati; Shiva Kanchi at Sarva Tirtha Sarovara; Kumbhakonam; Sri Rangam on the banks of Kaveri; Rameshwaram at Lakshmana Tirtha; Dhanushkodi the Sangam of thousand rivers!; Darba shayana; Siddapur; Dwarakapuri; Narayana sara; Prabhasa at Veraval, Gujarat; Shulapani or Surapaneswara; Chanoda; Krishna, Godavari .

**128) Chatvaarimshad (40) Samskaaras:** Vedas and Shastras prescribed 'Samskaras', among the 'Chaturvarnas' or Four Castes ranging from 'Garbha Dhaan'/'Rutusanti' (Impregnation); 'Pumsavana', a Sacred Rite after third month of Conception; 'Seemanatrotrayan', literally meaning the parting of hair of the pregnant mother or the Rite performed in the sixth or eighth month of pregnancy; 'Jaata Karma or cutting of the navel-tube; 'Naamkarana' or giving a name to the child; 'Annaprasasna' giving the first morcel of food; 'Chooda Karma' or cutting the lock of hair of the baby. Jaatakarma, a ritual for boys is performed along with Veda Mantras on the tenth day, or twelfth day, or eighteenth or on the completion of birth; the infant is taken out from the house either on the twelfth day or the fourth month and this act is called 'Nishkraman'. During the sixth month, 'Annaprashana' or first touch of food is performed; either during the first or third year his 'Mundan' or first hair-cut is done. While these and Vivaha related 'acharas' are common to all the varnas, Upanayana or Yagjnopaveeta Samskara is performed in the fifth or eighth year to Brahmanas; the sixth or eleventh year after birth for Kshatriyas, and during the eighth or twelfth year to Vaishyas. But this Sanskar is futile beyond sixteenth year for Brahmanas, twenty two years for Kshatriyas and twenty fourth years for Vaishyas; such persons are known as 'Vraatya' and are not qualified for wearing the 'Yagnopateeta', unless a Ritual called 'Vatsyashtom Yagna' is performed for 'Prayaschittha' or purification. Besides Upanayana (Sacred Rite of wearing Holy Thread and 'Upadesha' or Instruction of Gayatri Mantra), Brahmanas are also prescribed besides vivaha or wedding anyway, the Four-folded Veda Vrata; 'Pancha Maha Yagna' or the Sacrifices addressed to Devas, Pitras, Human Beings, Pancha Bhutas and Brahma to satisfy them; 'Sapta Paaka Yagna Samstha' or Seven-folded Sacrifices of Cooked Materials viz. 'Ashtakaadvaya', 'Paarvana', 'Shraavani', 'Aagrahaayani',

‘Chaitri’/’Shulagava’ and ‘Aashvayuji’; ‘Sapta havijna Samstha’ or Seven-folded ‘Havis’ or oblations in Agni /Fire viz. ‘Agniyadhaan’, ‘Agni-hotra’, ‘Darsha-Pournamasa,’ ‘Chaaturmaasya’, ‘Niruddha Pashu Bandha’, ‘Soutramani’; and ‘Sapta Soma Samstha’ viz. ‘Agnishtoma’, ‘Athaygnishtoma’, ‘Ukthya’, ‘Shodashi’, ‘Vaajapeya’, ‘Atiraatra’ and ‘Aapatoryami’; these are the Samskaras relevant to Brahmanas. The Brahmanas are expected to practise Eight ‘Atma Gunas’ or Self-oriented Features or Characteristics viz. *Anasuya Dayaa Kshaantiranaayasam cha Mangalam, Akaarpanyam tathaa shouchamaspuhaa cha Kuruduha!* (The seven salient features of Brahmanas are non-jealousy, Mercifulness, Forgiveness, unconcern, propitiousness, equanimity, inward and outward cleanliness and detachment). The Sacred Rites like Garbhadhaan, Pumsavan, Seemantotrayan, Jatakarma, Anna -praashana, Chuda karma and Yagnopapeet are meant of removing ‘beeja-sambandhi’ or Seed-related Doshas or Blemishes, whereas Vedaadhyana (Study of Vedas), Vratas or Pujas, Homams (Fire Rituals), Tri Vidya Vratas, Devarshi-Pitru ‘Tarpanas’ (Water oblations), ‘Putrotpaadana’, Pancha Maha Yagna and such other Jyotishtoma Yagnas are targeted to ‘Brahma Praapti’ or attaining Salvation. Jaatakarma, a ritual for boys is performed along with Veda Mantras on the tenth day, or twelfth day, or eighteenth or on the completion of birth; the infant is taken out from the house either on the twelfth day or the fourth month and this act is called ‘Nishkraman’. During the sixth month, ‘Annaprashana’ or first touch of food is performed; either during the first or third year his ‘Mundan’ or first hair-cut is done. In the fifth or eighth year Yagnopapeet Samskar is performed to Brahmanas; the sixth or eleventh year after birth for Kshatriyas, and during the eighth or twelfth year to Vaishyas. But this Sanskar is futile beyond sixteenth year for Brahmanas, twenty two years for Kshatriyas and twenty four years for Vaishyas; such persons are known as ‘Vraatyas’ and are not qualified for wearing the ‘Yagnopateeta’, unless a Ritual called ‘Vatsyashtom Yagna’ is performed for ‘Prayaschittha’ or purification.

**129) Shata Rudreeyam:** 1) Brahma dedicated a golden Linga to Bhagavan Siva named *Jagat Pradhana* and prays it at His feet 2) Sri Krishna set up a black coloured Linga called *Urjit* and prays to Siva’s head 3) Sanaka and other Manasa Putras of Lord Brahma pray to Siva Hridaya (Heart) Linga as *Jagadrati* 4) Sapta Rishis pray to ‘Dharbhaankura maya’ (Dharbha made) Linga called *Viswa Yoni* 5) Devarshi Narada conceived Siva Linga as an all pervasive ‘Aakash’ (Sky) and prayed to *Jagatvija* 6) Devaraj Indra prays to a Diamond Linga called *Vishvatma* 7) Surya Deva prays to a copper Linga called *Vishwasruga* 8) Chandra performs Puja to a Pearl Linga known as *Jagatpathi* 9) Agni Deva prays to an Indra Nila Mani Linga named *Viswesvara* 10) Brihaspathi prays to a Pushparajamani with the name *Visva Yoni* 11) Sukracharya pays penance to a Padmaragamani Linga called *Viswakarma* 12) A golden Linga is worshipped by Kubera called *Iswara* 13) Viswa Deva Ganas perform puja to a Silver Linga called *Jagatgati* 14) Yama Dharma raja pays his obeisance to a peethal (brass) Linga named *Shambhu* 15) ‘Ashtavasus’ execute ‘Aradhana’ to a Glass made Linga called *Shambhu* 16) Maruganas do puja to a Triloha Linga (three kinds of metals) called *Umesh / Bhupesh* 17) Raakshasas pay penance to an iron Linga and named Siva as *Bhuta Bhavya Bhavodbhava* 18) Guhyaka Ganas perform puja to a mirror-made Siva Linga named *Yoga* 19) Muni Jaigeeshva does Upasana to Brahmarandhra maya Linga named *Jaigeeswara Yogeewar* 20) King Nimi considers the Ugal Netra or the Two Eyes as Parameswara Linga called *Sharva* 21) Dhanvanthari worships Gomaya Linga (cow dung) in the name of *Sarva Lokewswareswara* 22) Gandharvas perform Puja to wood based Siva Linga named *Sarva Sreshtha* 23) Lord Rama did intense ‘Japa’ to ‘Vidyunmani’ Linga in the name of *Jyeshtha* 24) Banasura paid homage to Marakathamani Linga named *Varishtha* 25) Varuna Deva offers reverence to a Sphatikamani Linga named *Parameswara* 26) *Lokatrayankara* is the name given to a Linga made of Munga (Black Pearl) by

Nagagana 27) Devi Saraswathi pays reverence to Suddha mukta maya Linga named *Lokatrayashrita* 28) Sani Deva performs 'Japa' on Saturday Amavasya midnight at Maha Sagara Sangama the Bhavari (Honey Bee) Swarupa Linga named *Jagannadha* 29) Ravana implored to a Linga made of Chameli flower and named it *Sudurjaya* 30) Siddhaganas paid respects to Manasa Linga called *Kama Mrityu Jaraatiga* 31) Raja Bali worshipped Yashamaya (Famed) Linga named *Jnanatma* 32) Marichi and other Maharshis pray to Pushpamaya (flowerful) Linga with the name *Jnana gamya* 33) Devathas who performed noble deeds made approbation to Shubhamaya Linga (Propitiousness) named *Jnaanajneya* 34) Maharshi Phenaj (foam) who drank Phena did Upasana to Phena Linga called *Sarvavid* 35) Sage Kapila performed Japa to Balukamaya Ling named *Varada*. 36) Saarasvat, the son of Devi Saraswathi did Upasana to Vanimaya Linga named *Vaageeswara*. 37) Sivaganas made a Linga of Bhagavan Siva and provided penance to *Rudra*. 38) Devathas made a Jambu River golden Linga to pray to *Sitikantha*. 39) Budha prays to Shankhamaya (conchshell) Linga by the name of *Kanishtha*. 40) The Two Ashvini Kumars pray to Muktkimaya Parthiva Linga named *Suvedha*. 41) Ganesha made a Siva Linga made of Wheat Flour worships it by the name of *Kapardi* 42) Mangala Graha (The Planet of Mars) made a Buttermade Linga called *Karaala* to pray. 43) Garuda prays to an Odanamaya Linga named *Haryaksha*. 44) Kamadeva Manmadha prays to a jaggery made Linga called *Rathida*. 45) Sachi Devi, the Consort of King Indra paid reverence to a Salt-made Linga *Buddhakesha*. 46) Visvakarma prayed to a Prasaadamaya (or of the shape of a Mahal / Building) Linga called *Yamya*. 47) Vibhishana made a dustful of Linga called *Suhrutam* to pray. 48) Raja Sagar who brought Ganga from Siva's Head made a 'Vamsamkura' Linga called *Sangat*. 49) Rahu made a Hing (asafoetida) made Linga named *Gamya* to worship. 50) Devi Lakshmi made a Lehya Linga named *Harinetra* and worshipped it. 51) Yogi Purush prays to Sarvabhuthatha Linga called *Sthaanu*. 52) Human beings prepare a wide variety of Lingas and worship them by the name of *Purusha*. 53) Nakshatras (Stars) pray to Tejomaya (full of Radiance) Linga called *Bhaga / Bhaskara*. 54) Kinnaras make a Dhaatumaya Linga by the name of *Sudeepth* for Japas. 55) Brahma Raakshasa Ganas pray to Asthimaya (Bones) Linga named *Deva Deva*. 56) Charanas worship dantamaya (full of Teeth) Linga called *Ramhas*. 57) Sadhya ganas pray to Saptaloka maya Linga titled *Bahurupa*. 58) Ritus worship Doorvaankura maya Linga named *Sarva*. 59) Celestial Damsel Urvasi prays to Sindhura Linga named *Priya Vasan*. 60) Apsaras perform Archana to Kumkuma Linga called *Abhushana*. 61) Guru Deva performs puja to Brahmachari Linga named *Ushnivi*. 62) Yoginis offer their obsequiousness to Alakthak Linga by name *Suvabhruk*. 63) Siddha Yoginis worship Srikhanda Linga named *Sahasraaksha*. 64) Dakinis perform puja to Lingas made of Mamsa or Meat and call Siva by the name of *Sumidhsha*. 65) Manna Ganaas worship Annamaya Linga called *Girisha*. 66) Agasthya Muni worships Vreehimaya Linga to Siva named *Sushanth*. 67) Muni Devala made Yavamaya Linga and called Siva with the name of *Pathi*. 68) Valmiki Muni made a Linga of Valmikas and prayed to *Chira Vasa*. 69) Pratardan prays to Baana Linga named *Hiranyabhuj*. 70) Daityagana made Rayi made Siva Linga and prayed to *Ugra*. 71) Daanavas worship a Nishpaavaj Linga known as *Dikpathi*. 72) Baadal (Clouds) pray to Neeramaya (waterful) Lingas called *Parjanya*. 73) Yaksharaj made Maashamaya Linga and performed puja to *Bhutapathi*. 74) Pitruganas made Tilamaya (Sesame seeds) Linga and worshipped Siva as *Vrishapathi*. 75) Gouthama Muni worships Godhulimaya Linga named *Gopathi*. 76) Vanaprastha ganas display veneration to a phalamaya (full of fruits) Linga named *Vrikshavrita* 77) Karthikeya is highly devoted to Siva in the form of a stone Linga called *Senanya* 78) Ashtavatar Nag worshipped Dhanya linga called *Madhyama*. 79) Yagna Kartha prayed to Purusha Linga named *Sthruva hasta*. 80) Yama worships 'Kalaaya samaya' Linga called *Dhanvi*. 81) Parasurama prays to Yavaankura Linga named *Bhargava*. 82) Pururava prays to Ghritamaya (Gheeful) Linga by name *Bahurupa*. 83) Mandhata paid admiration to a

Sugary Linga by name *Bahuyug*. 84) The clan of Cows utilises a Dugdhamaya Linga (full of Milk) for paying their respects and sincere devotion to *Nethra sahasrak*. 85) Pathivrata Sthrees (Women devoted to their husbands) worship to Bhatrumaya Linga called *Viswapati*. 86) Nara and Narayana worship Siva in the form of Mounji Linga named *Sahasra Sirsha*. 87) Pruthu worships Thaaksharya Linga known as *Sahasra Charan*. 88) Birds pay their homage to Vyoma Linga in the name of *Sarvatmaka*. 89) Prithivi prays to Gandhamaya Linga named as *Dvithanu*. 90) The entire Animal Kingdom prays to Bhasmamaya Linga known by the name of *Maheswara*. 91) Rishiganas perform Upasana to Jnanamaya Linga called *Chirasthan*. 92) Brahmanas do penance to Brahma Linga in the name of Siva as *Jyeshtha*. 93) Sesa Nag worships to ‘GoroChanamaya’ Linga named *Pashupathi*. 94) Vasuki Nag prays to Visha (poison) Linga with the name of *Shankara*. 95) Takshaka Nag prays to Kaalakutamaya Linga called *Bahurup*. 96) Karkotaka Nag pays esteem to Halahalamaya Linga named *Pingaksha*. 97) Shringi prays to Vishamaya Linga by the name of *Dhurjati*. 98) Puthras (Sons) perform in the name of Pitrumaya Linga (Fathers) called *Vishwarupa*. 99) Siva Devi worships Parama maya Linga named *Vyambak*. 100) Matsya and such other Jeevas pray to Shastramaya Linga named *Vrishakapi*.

*Phalasaruti* : Whoever recites Siva Sata Rudreeyam in the morning, the sins committed by the mind, tongue and action get vanished; diseases and fatigue get dissolved; fear and apprehension evaporate; and worries and anxiety disappear. Those who utter the hundred names of Parama Siva and make Salutations to Him as many times would instantly secure mental peace and contentment.

**130) Shat Samvatsara naama: (60)** Prabhava, Vibhava, Shukla, Pramodoota, Prajopatti, Aangirasa, Shrimukha, Bhava, Yuva, Dhaata, Ishwara, Bahudhanya, Pramaati, Vikrama, Vrisha, Chitrabhanu, Swayambhanu, Taarana, Parthiva, Vyaya, Vrisha, Sarvajit, Sarvadhari, Virodhi, Vikruti, Khara, Nandana, Vijaya, Jaya, Manmatha, Durmukhi, Helambi, Vilambi, Vikaari, Sharvaani, Plava, Shubhkrut, Krodhi, Vishwaavasau, Paraabhava, Plavanga, Keelaka, Soumya, Saadhaarana, Virodhikrut, Pareedhaavi, Pramaadeecha, Ananda, Raakshasa, Nala, Pingala, Kaala Yukti, Siddharthi, Roudri, Durmati, Dundhubhi, Rudhi-rodgaari, Raktakshi, Krodhana and Akshaya; all these are of repetitive/ cyclical nature.

**131) Chatushshashti(64) Yoginis** – Chhaya, Maya, Narayani, Brahmayai, Bhairavi, Maheshwari, Rudrayani, Baseli, Tripura, Ugratara, Charchika, Taarini, Ambika Kumari, Bhagabati, Nila, Kamala, Shaanti, Kaanti, Ghatabari, Chamunda, Chandrakanti, Madhavi, Kachikeshwari, Anala, Rupa, Baaraahi, Nagari, Khechari, Bhuchari, Betali, Bali, Dohini, Dwarini, Sohini, Sankata Taarini, Kotalai, Anucchaya, Khechamukhi Samuha, Ullaka, Samsil, Mudha, Dhakinai, Gopali, Mohini, Kamasena, Kapaali, Uttaraayani, Trailokya Vyapini, Trilochana, Nimaayi, Dakeswari, Kamala, Ramayani, Anadi Shakti, Balakshatraayani, Braahmani, Dharani, and Matangi.

**132) Shashthitama Kalaas (60):** Sixty Kalas include Vidyas like Geeta (Singing), Vadya or Instrumental Music; Nritya or dance; Natya or Theatrical performances; Alekhya or Painting; Visheshha kacchedya or face and body painting; Tandul kusumaavali vikar or the art of preparing divine offerings from flowers and rice; Pushpapastrana or making a bed of flowers; dashanvasanang raag or the art of preparing materials for cleansing teeth, cloths and body paintings; mani bhumika karana or making the base for jewellery; shayana rachana or the art of making beds; Udaka vadya- Jala tarangini or the art of playing instrumental music; Udaka ghata or percussion on water surface and splashing; maalya grandha vikalpa or the art of degining and making wreaths of flowers and grasses; kesha shikhara pidyojana or setting coronets on head hairs / hair dressings; nepathya yog or the art of dressing chambers; karnapatrabhang:

the art of ear piercing; Gandhayukti / Sugandhayukti or the art of the application of aromatics; Chitra yog: Art of colouring mixes; Indrajala or the Art of Magic; kouchumaaryog or the art of make belief; hasta laaghava or the sleight of hand; chitra bhakshya vikara kriya or the mastery of preparing salads, bread, cakes and varieties of tasty culinaries; Paanaka-rasa-raagasava-yojana or the art of making tasty drinks and eats; Suchikarma or the art of needle works and weaving; Sutrakarma or the art of thread play; Vina-damaruka-vadya or the art of playing on lute and small drums for fistful hands and fingers; prahelika or the art of making and solving riddles; pratimala or art of reciting verses by the skill of memory by way of Ashtavadhana or when eight literary luminaries posing questions in poetry in a row to be able to create replies in the order of the eight questioners; or Shatavadhaana or hundred persons posing questions and be able to provide replies to the hundred questioners in an order; durvaachaka yoga or the practice of answering difficult questions to be answered; pusteka vaacham or the art of reciting from memory or by reading; natakaakhaika darshan or the art of enacting anecdotes or plays; Kaavya samasya purti or the art of solving enigmatic verses [ an example is signified by a Telugu Poet Tenali Ramakrishna who when asked by a door keeper of the King of Vijaya Nagar as prompted by jealous co-poets was : ‘Sir! Please fill in the ‘Samaasa’ meaning a strong line of elephants walked through the throat of a mosquito, the poet replied ‘bastard! How could a line of five elephants do so! Are you drunk? ‘But when the King overheard the same question and repeated the same question then asked Ramakrishna in the open Royal Court, the reply was: Sir! The strong line of famed elephants when lost the game of chess, it looked that Pandavas of such might and fame had by the twist of fate since they lost the game of dice had necessarily entered the thought of a mosquito!]; pattika vetraban vikalpa: the art of preparing arrows, a shield and an arrow case; Turka karma or the art of spinning by spindle; takshan: the art of carpentry; Vaastu vidya: the art of civil engineering and house construction; Roupya ratna pariksha or the art of testing silver and jewellery; Dhaatu vad: the art of metallurgy; maniraagdnya or the art of examining the purity of jewels; aakaardnyan or the art of minerology; Vrikshaayurvedyog: the art of examining and treating herbs and trees; mesha-kukkuta-lavaakuydhha vidhi or the art of ascertaining the method of fighting goats-cocks-and birds; Shukasarika paripalana or the art of maintaining and understanding the conversation of parrots; utsadan or the art of healing or cleaning a person with perfumes; kesha majana koushala: the art of maintaining and combing hair; akshara mushtika kathana or the ability of talking with letters, finger gestures; Mlecchitkalaa vikalpa or the art of adopting and fabricating barbarous sophistry; desa bhaashadyan or the art form of knowing dialects of distant places; pushpa shataatika nimittadnyan: or the art of prediction by heavenly voices or the art of making toy carts by flowers; Yantra matrika or the art of mechanics; dharanmatruka or the use of amulet or talisman or charm; Samvachya or the art of conversation; Maanasi Kavya or mental compositions; Dyuta Vishesha or gambling and game of dice; baala keeda karma or the art of making toys for children; Vainaayaki vaidyadnyan or the art of enforcing discipline; Vaijayaki vidyagnan or the art of gaining victory; and vyaayamuiki vidyadyan or the art of awakening master by music at dawn. ( Source with courtesy:Discover India Sanskriti)

**133) Aneka Daksha Shrishti** from Shashtthitama (60) Putrikas: Creation of Eight Vasus, Eleven Rudras, Twelve Adityas, Forty nine Marudganas and Fourteen Manus (Source : Padma Purana) : The initial lot of ‘Prajavarga’ was created by ‘Sankalpa’ (Thought), ‘Darshana’ (Vision) and ‘Sparsha’ (Touch). But, the process of creation adopted by the aforesaid methodology was not quick enough as Daksha Pajapati initiated man-woman body contact by which means the process of Srishti became faster and more definitive; by adopting this technique, his wife ‘Veerini’ gave birth to ten Dharmas, thirteen Kashyapas, twenty seven Chadramas, four Agnishtomikaas, two ‘Bhrigu Putras’, two Kushashvas and two Maharshi

‘Angeeras’. The broadening the family base took place henceforth. Dharma’s wives were Arundhati, Vasu, Jaami, Lamba, Bhanu, Marutvati, Sankalpa, Muhurta, Sandhya, and Vishwa. Devas were born as follows: Vishwa begot Vishwadeva; Sandhya-naamak Devatas were born of Sandhya; Marutvati gave birth to Marut Devas; Vasu begot ‘Ashta Vasus’; Bhanu gave birth to Bhanu; Muhurtamani Devas were born to Muhurta Devi; from Lamba was born Ghosh; Jaami gave birth to Nagavidhi Kanya; from Arundhati were born all the ‘Praanis’ on Earth and Sankalpas were born Sankalpa. These Devas were spread over and illuminated. The Ashta Vasus were Aapa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Prathyusha, and Prabhasa. Aapa had four sons viz. Shanta, Vaitanda, Saamba and Muni Babhru and these are ‘Yajna Rakshaka Adhikaaris’ or the Security Officials of Yajnas. Dhruva’s son was called Kaal and Soma’s son was Varcha; Dhara’s sons were Dravina and Havyavaaha; Anil’s putras were Praana, Ramana and Sharira. Anal had several sons and were like Agni; they were born of ‘Sarkhandhis’ (sea shore grass); significant ones of these were Shaakha, Upashaakha and Naigameya. As ‘Krittikas’ as well as Agni were responsible in the birth of Skanda Deva, he is also known as Kartikeya. Prathysha’s son was Devala Muni and Vishwakarma Prajapati was the son of Prabhasa and the Architect and Builder of Devas. Ekadasha Rudras viz. Ajaikapaada, Ahirbhudhnya, Virupaaksdha, Raivata, Hara, Bahurupa, Thraimbaka, Saavitra, Jayanta, Pinaki, and Aparajita are the Chiefs of Rudra ganas numbering eighty four crore Ganas, each wearing Trishuls. Kashyapa’s progeny from his wives Aditi, Diti, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Taamna, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kadru, Khasa and Muni was in multitudes. During the present Vaivaswata Manvantara, there are Twelve Adityas viz. Indra, Dhata, Bhaga, Twashta, Mitra, Varuna, Aryama, Viviswan, Savita, Pusha, Amshuman and Vishnu. These Aditya’s were born to Kashyap and Aditi. As regards the origin of Danavas born of Kashyapa and Diti viz. Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha. Hiranyakashipu had four sons-Ayushmaan, Shibi, Vaashkali and Virochan. The last mentioned had an illustrious son called Bali who had in turn hundred sons of whom Banasura was a mighty warrior with expertise in ‘Astras’ or the Science of Archery. Maha Shiva was so satisfied with Banasura’s Tapasya the he agreed to reside in the Asura’s Nagari. Shiva bestowed the title of Mahakaal to Banasura who was Shiva’s companion. Hiranyaksha had four sons, viz. Uluk, Shakuni, Bhutasantaapan and Maha Bheem, who among them produced twenty seven crore Danavas in their generations. Danu had from Kashyap hundred sons who were virtuous and mighty, important among them being Viprachit, Swarbhanu, Maya, Vrishaparva, and Vaishwanara; Mandodari was born to Maya; Vaiswanara’s daughter named Puloma gave birth to Paoloma and Kalakeya who created havoc among in the world on securing Brahma’s boons of invincibility and was finally killed by Arjuna of Maha Bharatha. Viprachit married Simhika and their son Rahu is the famous Planet who was stated to have tasted ‘Amrit’ and became deathless like Devas. Tamra was among the wives of Sage Kashyap who had six daughters who all gave birth to various birds viz. Shuki who created Shuka or parrots and Ullu or owls; Shaini created the birds of the same name; Bhasi created ‘Krr’ named bird; Grudhri created Grudhra or Kite; Sumrughni created Kabutar or Doves; Shuchi created Hamsa, Saras, Karanda and Plava birds. Devi Vinati who was the religiously inclined wife of Kashyap created two celebrated sons viz. Garuda the ‘Pakshi Raja’ who was the Carrier of Maha Vishnu and Aruna the Carrier of Surya Deva. Vinati also gave birth to Saudamini who appears on the Sky occasionally as a fleeting lightning. Aruna had two sons viz. Sampaati and Jataayu. Surasa, another daughter of Kashyap and Diti, gave birth to thousands of serpents; but Kadru observed a noble Vrata and begot thousand-hooded Nagas of whom twenty six famous ones were Sessa, Vasuki, Karkotaka, Shankha, Itavata, Kambal, Dhananjaya, Mahanila, Padma, Ashwatara, Takshak, Ilapatra, Maha Padma, Dhritarashtra, Balahaka, Shankhapala, Nahusha, Ramana, Panini, Kapila, Durmukha and Patanjalmukha. Not many of the Nagas survived since Janamejaya the last reputed Pandava avenged Parikshit-his

father's- untimely death in the Sarpa Yagna and thousands of poisonous snakes perished in the fire-pit. Surabhi with the Amsa of Kashyap created Aprasas, the beautiful celestial damsels. Arishta gave birth to Kinnaras and Gandharvas. Ira Devi created trees, creepers, grass and the like, while Khasa gave birth to crores of Rakshasas and Yakshas. As innumerable Daityas were killed in the series of Deva-Danava battles, especially at the time of 'Samudra-Manthan' (Churning of the Ocean) and 'Amrita Prapti' (Emergence of Amrita), Devi Diti was mentally shattered and performed severe Tapasya on the banks of River Sarasvati to Surya Deva with the singular objective of killing Indra and Devas. Kashyap assured that her objective should be fulfilled and that she should observe regulations such as reside in a Tapovana, take ample care of her 'Garbha', observe single meal a day, never go near a tree, never enter water nor a house/ shadow, keep calm, never hear bad news nor quarrel, never be overjoyed, keep engaged in propitious acts, and so on. As her confinement stage was nearing, Indra entered Diti's garbha when she was asleep and cut the embryo of the boy about to be born into seven pieces, with each piece being cut into seven further pieces thus making a lot of forty nine pieces. As these pieces started crying, Indra tried to console the, saying : 'ma rudah' ( do not cry); Indra realised that Devi Diti was blessed due to the power of a Vrata that she was asked by Kashyap to perform; he apologised for his heinous act of entering her womb and cutting forty-nine pieces of the baby, named the forty nine boys as Marudganas, elevated their status of Devas and made them eligible for sharing the 'Havis' or the 'Yagna Phal' and with veneration gave all the facilities due to Devas; and flew them across to Swargaloka along with Diti Devi, the Daitya Mata. Having described the Adi Sarga (Creation) and Pratisarga (Reabsorption), Sage Pulastya provided an overview of Manvantaras to King Bhishma. Swayambhu, Swarochisha, Uouttama, Tamasa, Raivata and Chakshusa were the earlier six Manus and the on-going Seventh Manvantara is of Vaivaswata. During this period the Sapta Rishis are Atri, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, Gautama, Bharadwaja, Vishwamitra and Jamadagni. The future Manus are scheduled to be Sanavarnya, Rouchya, Bhoutya, Meru Savarnya, Ribhu, Veetadhama and Vishvaksena, thus totalling fourteen Manus.

In brief, Daksha's while Daksha Prajapati was gifted with sixty daughters he married off ten of them to Dharma and as per the 'Amshas' of Planets the progeny were as follows: Bhanu Devi gave birth to Dwadasha Adityas; Sadhya Devi to twelve Sadhyas or Concepts of Achievement with Chandraamshaviz. Bhava, Prabhava, Kurushaashwa, Suvaha, Aruna, Varuna, Vishvmitra, Chala, Dhruva, Havisman, Tanuja and Vidhana; Ashta Vasus from Vasu Devi with Mangalaamsha; Devi Arundhati gave birth to Prithvi Tatwa with Budhaamsha-this Arundhati is stated to be different from Vasishtha's wife the famed Pativrata; Devi Muhurta begot thirty Muhurta Ganas with the Amsha of Deva Guru; Vishwa Devi gave birth to ten Vishwa Ganas with Shukraamsha viz. Kratu, Daksha, Vasu, Satya, Kaala, Kaama, Dhriti, Kuru, Shankumatra and Vamana.; Thirty Marud Ganas were born to Marud Devi with the Amsha of Shanaischara; Lamba Devi begot Rahu and Yami gave birth to Ketu; Muhurta Deva begot thirty Muhurta Manis and Sankalpa Devi to Sankalpa Ganas.

#### **134) Ashtottara Shata Shakti Peethas:**

[Background: Brahma blessed Daksha Prajapati to beget a daughter with the 'Amsha' or part-manifestation of Devi Bhagavati as **Devi Sati**. Already Daksha got sixty daughters, ten married to Dharma, thirteen to Kashyapa Muni, twenty seven to Chandra, two to Bhuta Ganas, two to Kushashwa, six to Garuda and so on. As Sati Devi came of age, she fixed her mind on Rudra Deva and resorted to severe Tapasya. Rudra agreed to marry her, Brahma proposed formally and the marriage took place with pomp and show. Sati and Rudra shifted from Kailasa to Himalayas where Bhagavan enlightened Sati

Devi on many matters of Spiritual Significance including the nuances of Mantra-Tantra-Yantra and Yoga. But meanwhile, Daksha Prajapati got increasingly jealous of Rudra Deva. At the ill-famed **Daksha Yagna**, Daksha denied 'Pradhana Havis' or the prime part of the Yagna to Rudra as per the usual practice and even as Sage Dadhichi pointed out the lacuna, the caution was ignored. Sati Devi felt that there was a mistake made by her father and insisted on attending the yagna despite Shiva's warning and his subsequent approval with great reluctance as Nandi and Rudra Ganas accompanied her. Daksha ignored her entry at the Yagna and in fact talked disparagingly against Rudra Deva. She could not contain Daksha's criticism of Maha Deva and having produced Yogic Fire ended herself to unite with Bhagavan. As Nandi informed Shiva of the tragedy, the latter pulled out a few hairs from his Jatujuta or the coarse knotted head-hair against a mountain and the energy so created broke the mountain into two parts, one of which having materialised Veerabhadra and another Devi Bhadra Kaali. The enraged Rudra asked them to destroy Daksha Yagna. Veerabhadra beheaded Daksha and together with Bhadra Kaali turned the Yagna into smithereens. Devi Bhagavata Purana stated that Shiva picked up the body remains of Sati Devi and performed furious Shiva Tandava to release his pent up emotions of intense love of Sati and heightened anger for Daksha; Vishnu apprehended Pralaya and used his Sudarshana Chakra to spread out the body remains of Sati and hundred and eight Shakti Peethas came into being. Veda Vyasa affirmed that worship at these Siddha Peethas or even hearing about these would destroy sins and bestow powers to the devotees concerned. Eventually, the instant fury of Shiva was cooled down by the prayers of Brahma and Devas and the ever merciful Shiva agreed to the resuscitation of Daksha by fixing the Goat-head of the Sacrificial animal. The ever grateful Daksha begged of Shiva's clemency and re-organised Daksha Yagna once again with Maha Deva occupying the High-Seat at any Yagna ever since.]

Two versions of Shakti Peethas are given below, one sourced from Devi Purana by Veda Vyasa and another sourced from Maha Peetha Purana:

1) Veda Vyasa described the Siddha Peethas as mere hearing about these would destroy sins and worshipping the Deities would bestow powers. The face of Gauri is at Kasi with the name of Visalakshi; that in Naimisharanya as Linga Dharini; Lalitha Devi at Prayaga or Allahabad; in Gandha Madan by the name of Kamuki; in Southern Manasa as Kumuda; in Northern Manasa as Viswakama or the Provider of Desires; in Gomanta by the name of Gomati; in the Mountain of Mandara as Kamacharini; in Chaitraratha by name Mandotkata; in Hastinapura as Jayanti; in Kanyakubja as Gauri; in Malaya Mountain as Rambha; in Ekambara Peetha as Kirtimati; in Visve as Viswesvari; in Pushkara as Puruhuta; in Kedara Peetha as Sanmarga dayani; as Manda at the top of Himalayas; as Bhadrakarnika at Gokarna; as Bhavani at Sthanesvara; as Bilvapatrika at Bilvake; at Madhavi at Srisaila; Bhadra in Bhadresvara; Jara on Varaha Saila; as Kamala at Kamalaya; as Rudrani at Rudrakoti; Kali in Kalanjira; Maha Devi in Salagrama; Jayapriya at Sivalingam; Kapila at Mahalingam; as Muktesvari at Makota; as Kumari in Mayapuri; as Lalitambika at Sanatana; at Mangala at Gaya Kshetra; as Vimala at Puroshottama; as Utpalakshi at Sahasraksha; Mahotpala at Hiranksha; Amoghakshi at Vipasa River; Patala at Pundravardhana; Narayani as Suparsva; Rudra Sundari at Trikuta; Vipula Devi in Vipula; as Kalyani in Malayachala; Ekavira in Shyadri; Chandrika in Harischandra; Ramana in Ramatheertha; as Mrigavati at Yamuna; as Kotini at Kota Theertha; Sugandha at Mandhavadana; Trisandhya at Godavari; Rati Priya at Gandharva; Subhananda in Sivakundam; Nandini at Devika thata; Rukmini in Dvaravati, Radha at Brindavana; Devaki in Mathura; Paramesvari in Patala; Sita in Chitrakuta; Vindhyaivasini in Vindhya Range; Maha Lakshmi at Karavira; Uma Devi in Vinayaka; Arogya in Vaidyanatha; Mahesvari in Mahakala; as Abhaya in all the Usna Thirthas; Nitamba in Vidhua mountain; Mandavi in Mandavya; Svaha in Mahesvari pura; Prachanda in

Chagalanda; Chandika at Amarakantaka; Vararoha in Somesvara; Pushkaravati in Prabhasa; Devamata in Sarasvati; Paravara in Samudra thata; Mahabhaga in Mahalaya; Pingalesvari in Payosni; Simhika in Kritasoucha; Atisankari in Karthika; Lola in Utpalavartaka; Subhadra in Sona Sangam; Lakshmi at Siddhavana; Ananga in Bharatashrama; Visvamukhi in Jalandhara; Tara in Kishkindhya; Pushti in Devadaru Vana; Medha in Kashmira Mandala; Bhima in Himadri; Tusti in Visvesvara Kshetra; Suddhi in Kapalamochana; Mata in Karavarohana; Dhara in Sankhodhara; Dhriti in Pindaraka; Kala in Chandrabhaga River; Sivadharani in Acchoda; Amrita in Vena and as Urvasi in Vadari; also as Medicines in Uttarakuru; as Kuskodaka in Kusadwipa; as Manmatha at Hemakuta; as Satyavadini in Kumuda; as Vandaniya in Asvaththa; as Nidhi Vaisravanalaya; as Gayatri in the mouth of Vedas; as Parvathi near to Siva; Indrani in Devaloka; Sarasvati in the face of Brahma; Prabha in Solar disc; as Vaishnavi in Matrikas; Arundhati among Satis or the chaste women; Tilottama among Ramas; Maha Devi in the form of Great Intelligence or 'Samvid'; Bhramakala in the hearts of the embodied beings. Veda Vyasa told King Janamejaya that even if one recited the names of the hundred and eight Devis, the person concerned would secure immense peace of mind and of course if one visited and worshipped the Deities-at least as many as possible- he or she would attain bliss. The aftermath of Devi Sati's yogic immolation, Sadasiva's unleashed anger on Daksha and the stormy events that ensued witnessed an awful era of sorrow and aimless existence. Sadasiva went into severe Tapasya and Devas lost their usual splendour. That was the time when Danavas gained an upper hand and their Chief Tarakasura who performed rigorous penance to Lord Brahma secured a tricky boon from him of invincibility except from Sadasiva's son, knowing well that Lord Siva was upset by His consort Sati Devi's yogic end and little possibility of Sadasiva's re-marriage and begetting a child even in the distant future! Out of sheer desperation, Devas approached Maha Vishnu for help.

II) The facts about the Shakti Peethas as given in Maha Peetha Purana in fuller detail with Place-Organ/Ornament-Embodiment name of Devi and name of Maha Bhairava are: 1) Chandanwadi to Amarnath in J& K- Throat-Maha Maya-Trisandheswara 2) Attahas village of Dakshindihi, Bardhaman near Katwa in West Bengal- Left Arm- Lips-Phullara Devi-Vishweshwari 3) Bahula on the banks of Ajay River at Ketugram near Katwa, Burdwan in West Bengal-Left arm-Bahula Devi-Bhiruk Bhairava 4) Bakreshwar on the banks of Paap hara River, District Bhirbhum near Dubrajpur Railway Station, West Bengal-Bhrikuti or the middle part of Eye Brows-Mahishasura Mardini-Vakranath 5) Bhairava Parvat, near Kshipra River in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh-Upper Lip- Devi Avanti-Lambakana Bhairava 6) Bhavanipur Union at Karatoya tata, 28km from Sherpur, Bogra Dist, Bangladesha-Left anklet ornament-Arpana Devi-Vamana Bhairava 7) Gandaki, Pokra, Muktinatha Mandir, Nepal- Body Part temple on fore head-Gandaki Chandi Devi-Chakrapani Bhairava 8) Saptashringi Mandir at Vani in Nasik, Maharashtra-both chins-Bhramari Devi-Vikritaksha Bhairava 9) Hingula in Southern Baluchistan, some 125 km towards North West from Karachi, Pakistan-Brahma randhra of Sati Devi's head- Devi Kattari-Bhimalochana Bhairava 10) Jayanti at Nartiang village in Jaintiya Hills Dt., locally popular as Nartiang Durga Temple in Meghalaya-Left thigh-Devi Jayanti-Kramadishwar Bhairava 11) Jessoreshwari at Ishwaripur, Shyamnagar in Bangladesh-Palms of hands and soles of the feet-Devi Jessoreshwari-Chanda Bhairava 12) Jwalaji, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh-Tongue-Devi Siddhida (Ambika)-Unmatta Bhairava-13) Kalighat, Kolkata, West Bengal-Right toes-Devi Kalika-Nakuleshwar Bhairava 14) Kalmadhava on the banks of Shon River in a cave over hills near Amarakantak, Madhya Pradesh-Left buttock-Kali Devi-Asitanga Bhairava 15) Kamgiri, Kamakhya in Neelachala hills near Guwahati in Assam-genitals-Devi Kamakhya-Unmaada Bhairava 16) Kankali tala on Kopai River banks north east of Bolpur Station in Birbhum Dt; and locally known as Kankaleshwari Mandir, in West Bengal-Bone is the part of body

fallen-Devi Devagarbha-Ruru Bhairava 17) Kanyashram Balambika Bhagavati Temple in Kanyakumari of Tamilnadu / also presumed to be in Chittagong, Bangladesh- back the body part-Devi Sharvani-Nimisha Bhairava 18) Karnat, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh- both ears- Devi Jaya Durga-Abhiru Bhairava 19) Kiteetkona village, Lalbagh Court Rd Station, Murshidabad Dt. West Bengal-Ornament of Kireeta or Crown-Devi Vimla-Sanvart Bhairava 20) Anandamani Temple at Ratnavali on the banks of Ratnakar River at Khanakul-Krishna nagar, Hoogly Dt. West Bengal-Right shoulder-Devi Kumari- Shiva Bhairava 21) Bhramari Devi Temple in Jalpaiguri near Boda Village on the banks of Teesta or Tri-Shrota or the Sangam of three water flows, West Bengal-Left leg- Devi Bhramari-Ambara Bhairava 22) Manas under Tibet at the foot of Mount Kailash in the Lake Manasarovara-Tibet-Right hand-Devi Dakshayani- Amara Bhairava 23) Manibandh at Gayatri hills near Pushkar, Rajasthan-Sati Devi's bracelet ornaments fell off there and the Devi's specific name is Devi Gayatri and Sarvanad Bhairava is Maha Deva's specific name 24) Mithila near Janakpur railway station on the Indian border of Nepal-Left shoulder- Devi Uma-Mahodara Bhairava 25) Nainativu/Manipallavaram, Northern Province of Sri Lanka-Devi's anklets- Indrakshi/ Nagapooshani/ Bhuvaneshwari worshipped by Indra, Rama and Ravana too, besides Garuda and Naga devas too-Rakshasheswar/Nayanair Bhairava 26) Nalhati/ Nalateshwari Temple, Birhum Dt. West Bengal-body part fallen being the Devi Sati's vocal chord-Devi's name is Kalika Devi- Yogesh Bhairava 27) Guhyeshwari Temple, near Pashupatinath Temple, Kathmandu, Nepal- both the knees-Devi Maha shira- Kapali Bhairava 28) On Chandranatha hill in the famed Chandranatha Temple in Chittagong Dt. Bangladesh- Right arm-Devi Bhavani-Chandrashekhara Bhairava 29) Panchasagara near Hardwar, Uttarakhand-Lower teeth-Devi Varahi-Maharudra Bhairava 30) Prabhasa Kshetra near Veraval and Somnatha Mandir, Gujarat-Stomach- Devi Chandrabhaga- Vakratunda Bhairava 31) Prayag near Sangam at Alhabad, Uttar Pradesh- Finger is the body part fallen-Devi Lalita-Bhava Bhairava 32) Kurukshetra toen or Thaneshwar /Staneshwar, Haryana-Ankle bone, Savitri / Bhadrakali Devi-Sthanu Bhairava 33) Ramgiri at Chitrakuta on Jhansi-Manikpur Railway Line, Uttar Pradesh- right breast-Devi Shivani-Chanda Bhairava 34) Saintiya's Nandikeshwari Temple under a banyan tree, Birbhumi Dt. West Bengal- necklace-Devi Nandini-Nandikeshwara Bhairava 35) Kotilingeshwar Temple on the banks of Godavari River, near Rajamundry, Andhra Pradesh- cheeks- Rakini Devi / Vishweswari- Vatsnabh / Dandapani Bhairava 36) Shivaharakaraya near Sukkur station from Karachi, Pakistan-Eyes-Mahishasura mardini-Krodhish Bhairava 37) Shondesh at source point of Narmada River in Amarantak, Madhya Pradesh- Right buttock-Narmada Devi- Bhadrasena Bhairava- 38) Shri Parvat, near Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir or alternatively believed as Srishailam on Shiva Parvat hills, Karnool Dt. Andhra Pradesh-Right anklet ornament- Devi Sundari- Sunderanada Bhairava 39) Shri Shail, Dakshina surma near Gotatkar, Sylhet Town, Bangladesh- neck got dropped- Devi's name Maha Lakshmi- Sambaranand Bhairava 40) Shuchi, Shuchindram Temple near Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu- Upper teeth- Devi Narayani-Sanhara Bhairava 41) Sugandha, Shikarpur, Barisal town on the banks of Sonda river, Bangladesh- nose- Sugandha Devi- Trayambika Bhairava 42) Tripura Sundari Temple at Udaipur, Tripura- Right leg- Tripura Sundari- Tripuresha Bhairava 43) Ujaani near Guskara, Burdwan Dt. West Bengal- Right wrist- Devi Mangala Chandika- Kapilambara Bhairava 44) Varanasi at Manikarnika Ghat on the banks of Ganga- Ear ring-Devi Vishalaakshi / Manikarni- Kalabhairava 45) Vibhash, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal-Left ankle-Devi Kapalini (Bhima rupa)- Sarvananda Bhairava 46) Virat near Bhratpur, Rajasthan- left toe- Devi Ambika- Amrisheswar Bhairava 47) Bhuteshwar Mahadev Temple, Katyayani Peeth, Brindavan, Uttar Pradesh- Hair ringlets- Devi Uma- Bhutesha Bhairava 48) Jalandhar's Devi Talaab, Punjab- Left breast-Tripuramalini- Bhutesha Bhairava 49) Baidyanath dhaam, Jarkhand- Heart- Jaya Durga- Baidyanatha

bhairava 50) Puri, Biraja in Jagannatha Temple, Odisha- navel- Bimala Devi-Jagannaath Bhairava 51) Burdwan, West Bengal-Great toe- Jogaadya- Kshera Kandaka Bhairava.]

**135) Ashtottara Shata Shakti Tirtha Kshetras:** *Ashtottaram cha Tirthaanaam shatametaduhaahritam, yah pattechrunyaad vaapi sarva paapaih pramuchyate/ Yeshu Tirtheshuyah kritwaa snaanam pashyati maam narah sarva paapa vinurmuktah kalpam Shiva pure vaset/* ( Following are 108 Shakti Kshetras which are read or heard about by itself would reduce the accounts of blemishes committed. Those who take a clean bath with mind of purity and of conscience as followed by ‘darshan’ of the Devi with varied names should indeed dismantle the heaps of sins.)

Bhagavati Shakti with different names and varied Kshetras be worshipped as under: 1) Devi Vishalaakshi at Kasi; 2) Devi Lingadharini at Naimisharanya 3) Devi Lalitha at Prayaga; 4) Devi Kamakshi at Gandhamaadana Parvata; 5) Devi Kumuda at Manasarovara; 6) Devi Vishwakaaya at Ambar or Aamer; 7) Gomati at Gomanta Parvata; 8) Devi Kamacharini at Mandarachala; 9) Devi Madotkata at Chitrarathavana; 10) Devi Jayanti at Hastinapura; 11) Devi Gauri at Kanyakubja; 12) Devi Rambha at Malayachala; 13) Devi Kirtimati at Ekambara Kshetra; 14) Devi Vishveshwari at Vishra; 15) Devi Puruhuta at Pushkara; 16) Devi Margadayani at Kedara; 17) Devi Nanda at Himachala; 18) Devi Bhadrakarnika at Gokarna; 19) Devi Bhavani at Thaneshwar; 20) Devi Bilwapatrika at Bilwaka; 21) Devi Madhavi at Srishaila; 22) Devi Bhadra at Bhadrashwara; 23) Devi Jaya at Varaahashaila; 24) Devi Kamala at Kamalalaya or Tituvayur; 25) Devi Rudrani at Rudrakoti; 26) Devi Kaali at Kaalanjar; 27) Devi Kapila at Mahalinga; 28) Devi Mukuteshwari at Markota; 29) Devi Mahadevi at Shalagrama; 30) Devi Jajapriya at Shiva Linga; 31) Devi Kumari at Mayapuri or Haridwar; 32) Devi Lalitha Santana Kshetra; 33) Devi Utpalaakshi at Sahasraaksa; 34) Devi Mahotpala at Kamalaksha; 35) Devi Mangala at Gangaatata; 36) Devi Vimala at Purushottama Kshetra; 37) Devi Amoghaakshi at Vipasha on the banks of Vyasa River; 38) Devi Paatala at Pundravardhana; 39) Devi Narayani at Supaarshwa; 40) Devi Bhadrasundari at Vikuta; 41) Devi Vipuleshwari at Vipula; 42) Devi Kalyani at Malayachala; 43) Devi Kotavi at Koti Tirtha; 44) Devi Sugandha at Madhava Vana; 45) Devi Trisandhya at Kubjaamraka or Rrshiksha; 46) Devi Rati Priya at Ganga dwaara or Haridwaara; 47) Devi Sunanda at Shivakunda; 48) Devi Nandini at Devikaa Tata; 49) Devi Rukmini at Dwaraka; 50) Devi Radha at Brindavana; 51) Devi Devika at Mathura; 52) Devi Parameswari at Paatala; 53) Devi Sita at Chitrakuta; 54) Devi Vindhyaavaasini at Vindhyaachala; 55) Devi Ekavira at Sahyanchala; 56) Devi Chandrika at Harischandrapura; 57) Devi Ramana at Rama Tirtha; 58) Devi Mrigaavati at banks of Yamunaa ; 59) Devi Maha Lakshmi at Karaveera or Kolhapuri; 60) Devi Uma Devi at Vinayaka Kshetra 61) Devi Aroga at Vaidyanath; 62) Devi Maheshwari at Maha Kaala; 63) Devi Abhaya at Ushna Tirtha; 64) Devi Amrita at Vindhya kandaara; 65) Devi Mandavi at Mandukya; 66) Devi Swaha at Maheshwarapur or Maahishmati; 67) Devi Prachanda at Chhagalanda; 68) Devi Chandika at Makaranda; 69) Devi Vararoha at Someshwara; 70) Devi Pushkaraavati at Prabhasa Kshetra; 71) Devi Deva Maata at Saraswati Samudra Sangama; 72) Devi Maha Bhaga at Mahalaya; 73) Devi Pingaleshwari at the banks of Payoshni River; 74) Devi Simhika at Krita shoucha; 75) Devi Yashaskari in Kartikeya Kshetra; 76) Devi Lola at Utpalavarta; 77) Devi Subhadra at Shona-Ganga Sagama; 78) Devi Mataa Lakshmi at Siddapur; 79) Devi Anjana at Bhrataashrama; 80) Devi Vishwamukhi at Jalandhar; 81) Devi Tara at Kishkindha Parvat; 82) Devi Pushti at Devadaru vana; 83) Devi Medha in Kashmira; 84) Devi Bhimadevi at Himadri; 85) Devi Pushti at Vishweshwara; 86) Devi Shuddhi at Kapala mochani; 87) Devi Maata at Kayavarohana; 88) Devi Dhvani at Shankodwaar; 89) Devi Dhriti at Pindaraka; 90) Devi Kaala at the banks of River Chandrabhaga; 91) Devi Shivakaarni at Acchoda; 92) Devi Amrita at Venna river bank; 93) Devi Urvashi at Badari vana; 94)

Devi Oshadhi at Uttarakuru; 95) Devi Krushodaka at Kusha dvipa; 96) Devi Manyatha at Hemakuta Parvata; 97) Devi Satyavadini at Makuta; 98) Devi Vandaniya at Ashvattha; 99) Devi Nidhi at Alkapuri of Kubera; 100) Devi Gayatri in Vedas; 101) Devi Parvati in Shiva Saannidhya; 102) Devi Indrani in Indra Loka; 103) Devi Sarasvati in Brahma Mukha; 104) Devi Prabha in Surya Loka; 105) Devi Vaishnavi among Matrukas; 106) Devi Arundhati among Pativratas; 107) Devi Tilottama among Apsaras; and 108) Devi Brahma kalaa Deha dharini Shakti Swarupas.

**136) Ashtottara Shata Shiva Kshetras:** Following are hundred and eight Shaiva Kshetras and names of the respective names of Shiva Murtis: 1) Kaivalya Shaila: Shri Kantha; 2) Himalaya Parvata; Kedareshwara 3) Kashipura : Vishwanadha 4) Shrishaila: Mallikarjuna; 5) Prayaga: Nilakanthesha; 6) Gaya: Rudra; 7) Kaalanjar: Nilakantheswara; 8) Draaksharama: Bhimeshwara; 9) Maayura/Mayavaram : Ambikeshwara; 10) Brahmavarta: Deva Linga; 11) Prabhasa: Shashi Bhushan; 12) Shwetahastipura: Vrishadhva; 13) Gokarna: Gokarneshwara; 14) Soma- nadha: Someshwara; 15) Shrirupa: Thyagaraja; 16) Veda: Vedapurishwara; 17) Bhimarama: Bhimeshwara 18) Manthana: Kaalikeswara; 19) Madhura; Chokkanatha; 20) Manasa: Madhaveswara; 21) Shri Vaanchaka: Champakeswara 22) Panchavati: Vateshwara; 23) Gajaaranya: Vaidhya natha; 24) Tirthaa chala: Tirthakeswara 25) Kumbhakona: Kumbheshwara; 26) Lepakshi: Paapanaashana; 27) Kanvapuri : Kanweshwara; 28) Madhya: Madhyaarjuna; 29) Hariharapura: Shankara Narayaneshwara; 30) Virinchipura: Margesha; 31) Panchanada: Girishwara; 32) Pampapuri: Virupaksha; 33) Somagiri: Mallikarjuna; 34) Tri- makuta: Agasteshwara; 35) Subrahmanya: Ahipeshwara; 36) Mahabala Parvata: Mahabaleshwara; 37) Dakshinaavarta: Ankeshwara as worshipped by Surya Deva directly 38) Vedaranya : Vedaranyeshwara; 39) Somapuri: Someshwara; 40) Ujjain: Rama Lingeshwara; 41) Kashmir: Vijayeshwara; 42) Maha Nandipura: Maha Nandeshwara; 43) Koti Tirtha: Koteswara; 44) Vriddha Kshetra: Vriddhaachaleshwara; 45) Kukkud Parvata: Gangaadhareshwara; 46) Chamaraja nagara: Chamarajeshwara; 47) Nandi Parvata: Nandeshwara; 48) Badhirachala: Chandeshwara; 49) Gurapura: Nanjundeshwara; 50) Shata -shringa Parvata: Adhipeshwara; 51) Ghanaanada Parvata: Someshwara; 52) Nallur; Nimaleshwara' 53) Needa naatha pura: Needa natheshwara; 54) Ekanta: Rama Lingeshwara; 55) Shri Naaga: Kunadale -shwara; 56) Sri Kanya : Tri Bhungeshwara; 57) Utsanga: Raghaveswara; 58) Matsya Tirtha: Tirthesh -wara 59) Trikuta Parvat: Tandaveswara; 60) Prasanna puri : Marga Sahaayeshwar; 61) Gandaki: Shiva naabha; 62) Shripati : Shripateswara; 63) Dhamapuri: Dharma Linga; 64) Kanya kubja: Kalaadhara; 65) Vaanigrama: Virinjeshwar; 66) Nepala: Nakuleswar' 67) Jagannaadha puri: Markandeshwar; 68) Narmada Tat: Swayambhu; 69) Dhamasthala : Manjunatha; 70) Tri Rupa: Vyaseshwara; 71) Swanavati: Kalingeshwar; 72) Nirmal: Pannageshwar; 73) Pundarika: Jaiminishwar; 74) Ayodhya: Madhureshwar; 75) Siddhavati: Siddheshwar; 76) Shri Kurmaachala: Tripurantaka; 77) Manikundala: Manimuktaa –nadeshwara; 78) Vataatavi: Kritthivaashewara; 79) Triveni Tata: Sangameshwara; 80) Stanita Tirtha: Malleswara; 81) Indrakeela Parvata: Arjuneshwara; 82) Sheshachala Parvata: Kapileschwara; 83) Pushpagiri: Pushpagirishwara; 84) Chitrakuta: Bhuvneshwara; 85) Ujjain : Maha Kaaleshwara; 86) Jwala- mukhi: Shula tanka; 87) Mangali: Sangameshwara; 88) Tanjapuri: Brihadishwara; 89) Pushkar : Rameshwar; 90) Sri Lanka: Matseshwar; 91) Gandhamaadana: Kurmeshwar; 92) Vindhya Parvat: Varaaheshwar; 93) Ahobila: Nrisimha swarupa; 94) Kurukshetra : Vaamaneshwara; 95) Kapila Tirtha: Parashu Rama Tirtha; 96) Kurukshetra: Vaamaneshwar; 97) KapilaTirtha : Parashurameshwara; 98) Setu bandhana: Rameshwar; 99) Saketa: Balarameshwar; 100) 101) Vaaranaavata: Bouddheshwara 102) Tatwa Kshetra: Kalkeshwara; 103) Mahendrachala:

Krishneshwar; 104) Mandapalli : Shaneshwara; 105) Nepal : Pashupati natha; 106) Tenkashi: Kashinatha; 107) Hampi- Virupaksha and 108) Vemulavaada: Nilalohita

**137) Ashtottara Shata Vishnu Kshetras:** *Ashtottara shatastaaneshwaavirbhutam Jagatpatim, Naami Jagataameesham Naraayanamananya dheeh/* Narayana is as Vaasudeva in Vaikuntha, Sankarshana at Aamoda; Pradyumna at Pramoda, Aniruddha at Sammoda; Vishnu in Satyaloka; Padmaksha at Surya Mandala; Shesha shayi in Ksheera Saagara; Taaraka in Shweta Dwipa; Narayana at Badarikashrama; Avinashi Hari at Naimisharanya; Shalagrama at Harikshetra; Rahavendra Shri Ramabhadrta at Ayodhya; Bala Krishna at Mathura; Madhusudana at Mayapuri; Bhogashayana at Kashi; Avanipat at Avantika; Yadavendra at Dwaraka; Gopijana Vallabha at Vraja Bhumi; Nandanandana at Brindavana; Govinda at Kaliya hrada; Bhava nashaka at Govardhana; Shouri at Gomanta Parvata; Jagatpati at Haridwaara; Veni Madhava at Prayaga; Gadadhara at Gaya; Vishnu at Ganga Sagara Sangama; Raghava at Chitrakuta; Rakshasa hanta at Nuanda grama; Vishwa rupa at Prabhasa; Achala Kurma at Shri Kurma; Purushottama at Neelachala Jagannaatha; Paana Nri-Simha at Simhachala; Gadapani at Tulasivana; Paapahara at Ghrita shaila; Simhaswarupa at Shwetachala; Yogananda at Dharmapuri; Andhra Nayaka at Shri Kaakula; Hiranyantaka at Ahobila; Panduranga Vithala at Pandaripura; Srinivasa Balaji at Tirumala Venkatachala; Narayana at Melkote; Nrisimha at Ghatikachala; Varadaraja Kamala lochana at Kanchipura; Yathotkari at Shiva Kaanchi; in Kanchi itself there are as many as eighteen Vishnu Swarupas; Vijaya Raghava at Grudhra Sarovara thata; Veeraraghava at Vikshaaranya; Tangashayi at Totadri; Gajarti nashaka at Gajasthala; Maha Bali at Balipura; Jagatpati at Bhakti saara; Maha Varaha at Shri Mushna; Padmalochana at Mahindra; Ranga natha at Sriranga; Janaki vallabha at Shridhama; Saranatha at Sara Kshetra; Harachapa bhanjaka at Khandana; Purna at Shrinivasa Sthala; Suvarna at Swarna Mandira; Maha Vishnu at Vyaghrapuri; Bhakti daata at Bhakti sthaana; Shanta Murti at Shweta hrada; Bharga at Bhargava Sthala; Madhava at Vaikuntha; Bhakta sakha at Purushottama; Sudarshana at Chakra Tirtha; Chakrapani at Kumbhakona; Sharanghadhara at Bhutapuri; Gajartihara at Kapisthala; Govinda at Chitrakuta; Anuttama at Uttama; Padmalochana at Shwetachala; Parabrahma at Parthasthala; Madhusudana at Krishna koti; Mahananda at Nandapuri, Vrishaashraya at Vriddhapuri; Asanga at Sangamagrama; Shri Sharana at Sharanya; Jagatpati Gopala at Dakshina Dwaraka; Maha Simha at Simha Kshetra; Mallari at Manimandapa; Nibidakara at Nibida; Jagadishwara at Dhanushkoti; Kalamegha at Mouhura; Sundara at Madurai; Parama Swami at Vrishabhachala; Shri Natha at Varagna; Ramapriya at Kuruka; Goshthipati at Goshthipura; Darbha shayi at Darbha shayana; Shouri at Dhanvi Mangala; Baladhya at Bhramara sthala; Purna at Kurangapura; Srikrishna at Vata sthala; Achyuta at Kshudra Nati pranta and Padmanabha at Anantapura. It is firmly believed that among the above Kshetras, Bhagavan's Vighras were self generated at Eight Places viz. Sriranga, Srimusha, Venkatashala, Shalagrama of Hari Kshetra, Naimisha, Thotadri, Pushkara and Badarikashrama.

**138) Ashtottara Shata Vishnu Kshetras as reckoned by Alwars: Supplementary:**

It is likely that quite a few of the following Kshetras are repeats of the above list and hence clarification is given the new and older names as mentioned within brackets: Kshira Sagara (Tiruppalkadal); Shriranga is near Tiruchirapalli; Koliyur or Oraiyur almost a part of Trichinapalli; Shwetagiri is Tiruvallur near Shrirangam; Dhanvinahpura near Lalgudi/ Trichinapalli with Nambi Sundararaja and Sundaravalli Deities; Tiruppera/Shri Ramanagar near Tanjavor where Pupapriya Ranganathag and Ranga nayaki Lakshmi are the Deities; Karambanor or Kadabapur near Sriranga / Tiruvallarai with Purushottama and Purva Devi are the Deities; Tanjaimamani koil (Sharanya Nagar) near Tanjavur with three Temples of

Neela megha Bhagavan and Arunakamala Nayaki; Nrisimha and Tadjai nayaki Lakshmi; and Manikundala Perumal and Ambujavali; Tirukkandiyur ( Khanda Nagar) near Shartanuya Nagar with Harashapa vimochana Narayana and Devi Lakshmi; Cuddalore (Sangama Pura) and Tituvayyar where Vishnu and Kamkala Valli Lakshmi are present; Kapisthala near Cuddalore and River Kaveri from where Gajendra Varada and Lakshmi hastened to rescue Gajendra to Gandaki River near Bihar and thus there is a Gajendra Pushkarini in place here; this is also place where Hanuman had Sakshat kar of Shri Rama as Bhagavan Vishnu himself!; Pullabhudamokudi (Grudhra Tirtha) where Jatayu realised Rama as ‘Sesha shaayi’ Narayana himself; Adanor or Gopuri where Kamadhenu and Alwar Shriparakaal realised Rama as Maha Vishnu; Tirukkandnadai (Kumbakonam); Tiruvinnagaram (Akashnagar); Tirunaaraiyur (Sugandhagiri); Tiruccherai (Saara Kshetra); Nandan Koel; Tiruvelliyankudi (Bhargavapuri); Tirullundur (Rathapaata Shtala); Tiruvandilurn (Indrapura); Shirupuliyur (Vyaghrapura); Tiruvannampuram ( Kanvapura); Tirunnamangai (Krishna Mangalapura); Tirukkannankudi ( Krishna Kuti); Tiruvannagai (Nagapattanam); Kalahasti; Tiruvali Tirunagari (Parirambhapura); Manimadakkoyil (Tirunagur-Nagapuri) ; Vaikunthavinnagaram ( Vaikunthapura); Arimeyavinnagaram (Nabhapura); Vanpurushottamam (Purushottama); Semponseya Koil (Swarna Mandira); Tiruttontriyambalam (Lakshmi Ranganatha); Tirumanikkutam (Manikuta); Tirukkalam padi (Talavana); Tiruddevanaar Tokai ( Keelai – cchalai Devanagara); Tiruvellakkullam ( Shwetahrada or AppanKoil); Parthanpalli( Parthasthala); Talaicchankaamadim-Tallaicchenkadu ( Shankhapura); Tallai Tiruchitra Kutam (Chidambaram); Tirukkundal (Madurai);Tiru mohur (Maahur); Vrishabhadri or Alagar Koil; Tirummeyyam (Satyagiri); Tirukkostiyur ( Goshithi pura);Tiruppullani (Darbha shayana);Tiruttankaalore (Sheetodyana pura); Shri Villuputtur; Totadri; Tirukkurunkudi; Tirukkurukur; Tiruvallimangalam; Shri Vaikuntham; Varagunimangai (Varaguna); Tiruppulingkudi (Chimchakuti); Tirukkalandai ( Perunguklam-Brihattadaag); Tirupperai (Shrinampura); Tirukkollur (Mahanidhipura); Tiruvananta puram ( Ananta shayanam/Trivendram); Tiruvattaru (Partashutrama Kshetra); Tiruvanparisaaram ( Ramya shtala); Tirucchankanur (Trichur); Kuttunadu or Tiruppuliyur/ Shardulanagar; Tiruvannavandur; Tiruvallavaal (Keralpura); Tirukkadittanam (Gandha nagar); Tiruvaranbalai Aranmulai (Samruddhisthala); Maruttata; Shri Mulidhama; Vidytpura; Navapura; Ateendrapura; Dehalipura; Vrindaranya Kshetra; Tinnanur; Veeeksharanya;Ghatikachala; Toyadri; Vaaraaha Kshetra; Tirunkkagmalai; Hastigiri; Tiruvekka (Yatthottakari); Ashtabhujam; Tiruttanka (Deepa prakasha); Velukkai (Kaamasiki); Uragam (Trivikrama); Neeraakaara; Kaarakam; Kaarvanam; Tirukkalvanore; Patakam(Pandava doota); Chandra chooda, Pravala varna; Pacchaivarnayurt; Parameshwara vinnagaram; Gruddhra Kshetra; Tiruvenkatam or Tirupati/ Tiruvenkatadri; Singavellukutram; Dwaraka; Ayodhya; Naimisharanya; Mathura; Tiruvayippadi; Deva Prayaga; Jyotishpeetha; Badarikashrama; and Mukti Narayana.

### **139) Thousand handed Kaartaveeryarjuna and Parashu Rama**

On reaching Mahishmati pura the Capital of Kartaveeryarjuna, Parashu Rama sent Maharshi Atreya to the King recalling the latter’s atrocities in bringing chaos in the peaceful Ashram, shamelessly demanding Kamadhenu, forcibly trying to seize it and the worst of all killing the Maharshi. The overconfident King replied that he was the Star of HaihayaVamsha, that his thousand hands were endowed with such enormous might that none could dare to look straight in his eyes and that he had the blessings of Dattatreya and so on. He sent away the emissary to Rama to come prepared for the battle. He jumped into action at once, grouped his enormous army with gusto and led it against Parashu Rama, imagining that the Muni Kumara with little backing except his revenge to be pitted against the sea-like and fully trained army with courage,

commitment and colossal Mantra Siddhi. There were twelve Akshouhinis of warriors trying to face a single Bhargava Rama! Even while the King and the army were advancing, there were unwelcome omens like the scenes of some with mutilated body parts, some with dishevelled hair hysterically crying loud, some carrying baskets full of bones with oozing blood, some with loud and continuous sneezes, some carrying bags full oil and salt and also the continuous wails of dogs and jackals but the mighty and haughty King ignored them. As soon as the first contingent of army arrived with racing chariots, horses, elephants and experts in archery under the command of Matsya Raja, the first offensive came from the latter in the form of ‘Parvata astra’ and Bhargava used Vayavyaashtra and the former bounced back killing thousands of the Raja’s own men in a death trap. By resorting to the offensive, Bharga invoked Narayanaastra as the first contingent of the army with elephants, horses and chariots was wiped out while the Matsya Raja was singled out with four arrows to systematically destroy the Dhwaja (Flag), the Charioteer, the horses and the Matsya King who was hurt in the stomach and got killed by omitting blood. King Kartaveeryaarjuna then called upon Brihadbala, Somdutta, Vidarbha Raja, Mithileswara, Nishadaaati, Magada Chief and others; as they all called up the same destinations of death. Then the tactics of war were changed and instead of the various Allies of Kartaveeryarjuna one by one, the Allied Kings surrounded Bhargava some from the rear, some sideways and some others in the front! It was a combined / group attack; the enraged Rama like ‘Pralayakalaagni’ slaughtered the Kings and their supporters in ‘Dasa Dishas’ and fought with them all for three days and nights with his axe and slaughtered the stronghold of the Kings that appeared invincible for a while but they caved in finally. King Suchandra who was an outstanding expert in ‘Mayavi Yuddha’ and an exceptional practitioner of Mantraas entered the battle . Bhargava released ‘Narayanaastra’ and to his great astonishment and disbelief the Astra proved ineffective. Rama threw up Shiva Shula and that had adorned Suchandra as flower garland. Then Rama invoked Bhadra Kaali as he knew that She was the most reputed devotee of King Chandra and as she appeared with Trinetras and Trishula: He said: (Shankara Patni!, my salutations to you; you are the Creator of Samsara; You have the reputation of saving those in difficulties; You are the daughter of Daksha, the Arthaangi of Maheswara as also the daughter of Himavanta!). As Bhadra Kali was commended, she gave her appearance and asked Bhargava to despatch Suchandra to her as she was her distinguished devotee ; she suggested that Bhargava should use Agneyaashtra to send him to her and that he (Suchitra) would become her servant. Then Bhargava Rama did ‘Praanayama’ and taking the name of Bhadra Kali, shot his arrow with Agneyastra and Suchandra reached Kailasha. Then came Pushkaraaksha who was by no means an insignificant warrior; even as he entered he attacked Rama by raining arrows all around and an angry Rama transmitted Vaaruna- Astra but it was sharply retaliated by Vayavyastra. Rama directed Brahmastra but that too was surprisingly retaliated too. A furious Rama took up his axe and ran up to Pushkaraasha who saved himself by sending ‘Panchavishikaastra’ a Five pronged fiery arrow with venomous and hissing cobras and these arrows hit Bhargava on his head, shoulders, and tuft; for a second Rama was taken aback and following his reflexes flew literally upto the opponent and axed his head even as all the Devas watching the battle proceedings bit by bit clapped from the skies at the unbelievable and spontaneous alacrity displayed by Rama.

Finally, Kartaveeryarjuna himself arrived by his four hundred feet long golden and bejewelled chariot drawn by hundred chosen horses, with surprisingly huge stock of arms and armaments; he has thousand hands of unique Shakti . It was stated that when Ravana desired to display his prowess to Kartaveeryarjuna, the latter was busy taking morning baths in many Tirthas and

dragged Ravana by clutching his ten heads with one of his thousand hands till the Pradakshinas of Tirtha Yatras were over in Sapta Samudras! The chariot accommodated his hundred- strong warrior sons too, each one of them being a warrior in his own right. The classic battle of the heroes was like that of the clash of two Planets! Both were unique in their own right; both were gifted with unparalleled expertise in Astra-Shastra Vidyas and both were blessed by incarnations of the same Bhagavan; one by Dattatreya and another by Maha Deva and Krishna! As soon as Kaartaveerya commenced the fight releasing Brahmastra, Rama had no choice of releasing another Brahmastra too. Keeping in view the universal havoc that created by the Brahmastras, Bhargava Rama-the Incarnation of Vishnu himself- was aware of the impact and absorbed it by his eyes thus secretly exercising his latent capability even as pretending himself as a mere human being! Indeed his main objective was Loka Kalyana! Having eased the Universe of the devastation thus averted, Bhargava picked up two arrows and directed them at both the ears of Kartaveerya whose face got defaced due to the loss of both the ears! The King immediately remembered Bhagavan Dattaatreya who in the past, on such extreme situations, appeared before him at once and provided a shield with the help of which he was defying even Loka Paalakas! But now, there was no trace of Bhagavan Dattatreya as the reason was clear: he was no longer a specimen of Virtue and devotion and he ceased to uphold Justice when he became arrogant, selfish, avaricious and cruel to the extent of stealing the Celestial Cow and killing Maharshi Jamadagni without scruples! On the other hand Bhargava Rama had shone by comparison; having taken the vow to avenge his father's death and mother's untold grief, he equipped himself with Tapasya, Japa-Homa-Tirtha Yatras as directed by Maha Deva and Krishna Paramatma, both being the same as well as himself since he assumed a Human Form! As there was no response from Datta Deva, Kartaveerya was thus left to his own fate but since his arrogance was still on display, he put up the show and never gave up. He continued releasing Astraas; he released Agneyastra which was subdued by Rama's Varunastra; he released Gandharvastra which was controlled by Rama's Vayavyastra; the King released Nagastra and Garudastra resisted it. Finally, Kartaveerya threw the 'Shula' that Datta Deva gifted to him for an acute emergency and Bhargava Rama became a victim of it and fell down unconscious; as Devas and other Celestial Beings who were closely witnessing the proceedings of this historic battle of Dharma versus Adharma got panicky and Shankara himself administered 'Sanjivini' to Bhargava Rama. The latter purified himself with Sacred water and recited Krishna Kavacha and released Pashupata while Datta Bhakta released Sudarshana. As an ample proof of Dharma Vs Adharma Sudarshana got absorbed in Pashupastra and the greatest hero turned a despicable villain finally got burnt as ash, once again vindicating Truth and Justice in the Srishti of that Omni Potent and All- Pervading Supreme! ( Source: Brahmanda Purana)

#### **140) Ekam Anantam or Unity in Diversity the Axim of Sankhya Parigjnaana:**

Chhandogya Upanishad vide ChapterVII describes Narada approaching Sanatkumara, the Brahma Manasa Putra to teach him Reality. The latter asked Narada to first describe as to what all was learnt heretofore so that he could then deduce as to how other things of inferiority to Existence were known and what kind of vision was required in the context. The Kumara further desired to ascertain as to what level of understanding Narada had to define the Supreme Reality called Infinity, for instance like showing the Moon on the branch of a tree to a child through the leaves of a near by tree! Indeed knowledge of the Self would be in the realms of the possibility only when seeking to locate the best goal of life! Then Narada narrated that he read Rik-Yajur-Saama-Atharvana Vedas, Itihasa Puranas as the Fifth Veda, Vyakarana, Rites for the Pitru ganas, Ganita, Astrology and Astronomy, Natural Sciences, Menerology, Logic,

Sciences of Archery, Military Tactics, Science of Poison Cure, Fine Arts of Music, Poetry, Dance and of Sounds! But Narada confessed that he had only textual knowledge except a few of practical applications. Even what all he learnt was by way of subjects and names and that his objective was specific viz. know of Self beyond sorrow and that his request too was specific viz. To take him beyond sorrow to Eternal Bliss! Sanat Kumara replied that indeed what all he acquired was by way of titles of texts and of learning, but the real learning was far more specific namely meditation on an Image, indeed that of Vishnu who was Unknown, being ‘Avyaktam Shasvatam Vishnum Anantam Ajam Avyayam’! Any one who meditates on the name of that Reality called, say, Brahman, would acquire freedom of barriers of space, time, distance and knowledge! Now, a systematic analysis of natural features and their magnificence vis a vis the supreme self is attempted step by step like the power of Vaak or Speech, Manas or the might of Mind, Sankalpa or Determination, Chittam or Will Power, Dhanam or the Meditation and Contemplation, Vijnaanam or Enlightenment and Critical Analysis, Balam or Strength, Annam or Food, Apas or Water, Smarana or Will Power, Asha or Hope, Praana or the Vital Force and the Concious Self or Pragjnaatma, Thought and Faith, Nishtha or Commitment and Karyaacharana. Then Sanat Kumara replied to Narada: Once any person believes and gets convinced that he - or any Individual Self for that matter - happens to be the spring boat of the Praana, hope, memory, space, water, form and look, strength, food, reasoning and intelligence, mental power, speech, knowledge, rites and all such abilities, then indeed that Self himself or each and every Self like himself, is certainly, nay undoubtedly, the Supreme Self himself with all the accomplishments listed and such as those which are even dormant in him but capable of! In this connection a Stanza with considerable hidden meaning has been described; it states: *Tad esha shloka: na pasho mrityum pashyati, na rogam notadukhataam, Sarvam ha pashyah pashyati, Sarvam aapnoti sarvashah iti// Sa ekadhaa bhavati, tridhaa bhavati, panaachadhaa saptadhaa navadhaa chiva punaschaikaadasha smritah, shatam cha dashachaikascha sahasraani cha vimshatih aahaara-shuddausattva-shuddhih, sattva-shuddhau dhruva smritih, smritilambhe sarva grabndhinaam vipramokshah; tasmairidita kahaayaaya taasah param darshayati bhagavaan sanakkumaaraah: tam skanda ii aachakshate, tam skanda iti aachakshate/* (‘The definition of one who accomplished Realisation of Truth is free from grief, illness and death; he can foresee each and everything and attain what he desires. He originally becomes one, then three fold-say Tri Gunas and five fold-say pancha bhutas, seven fold say Sapta Dvipas or Samudras, and nine fold, say Nava Grahas; he is called eleven say Ekaadasha Rudras, or one hundred and ten and one thousand and twenty and so on! He is a symbol of Purity, purity of food, nature, memory, heart, thought, and action. Sanatkumara advised Narada about spiritual freedom to escape from darkness, impurities of ignorance, attachment to desire and to speed up the bandwagon of knowledge, mind, thought, resolve, meditation and introspection to discover Truth finally as Himself! Once that stage is reached, then he becomes ‘Bhagavan’ or God like and He knows the source and cause of Existence, its termination, the entries and exits, as also the knowledge and ignorance of Reality. Brahmarshi Narada had that conviction of Sanatkumara being a Bhagavan and hence approached him for guidance and thus the latter titled himself as Skanda, like Lord Kartika Himself!)

*Ya eko varno bahudhaa shakti yogaad varnaan anekam nihitaartha dadhaati, vichaiti chaante vishvam aadou sa devah sa no buddhyaa shubhaayaa samyunaktu/* (May Almighty endow us with clarity of thoughts about His many splendoured distinction of Unity, with neither colours nor forms but of enormous powers, at once transparent and hidden, all forged into Oneness from multiplicity!) Source: Svetaashvatara Upanishad.

**OM TAT SAT**

