

ESSENCE  
OF  
PANCHA MAHA BHUTAS



V D N RAO

**ESSENCE OF PANCHA MAHA BHUTAS  
(EARTH-WATER-FIRE-AIR-SKY)**

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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 - Dharma Bindu - Shiva Sahasra Lingarchana-Essence of Paraashara Smriti

Essence of Pradhana Tirtha Mahima

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 ; Also '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- Also Essence of Knowledge of Numbers

Essence of Narada Charitra; Essence Neeti Chandrika-Essence of Hindu Festivals and Austerities

Essence of Manu Smriti- Quintessence of Manu Smriti-

Essence of Paramartha Saara; Essence of Pratyaksha Bhaskra;

Essence of Maha Narayanopashid; Essence of Maitri Upanishad

Essence of Vidya-Vigjnaana-Vaak Devi; Essence of Bhagya -Bhogya-Yogyata Lakshmi

Essence of Soundarya Lahari\*- Essence of Popular Stotras\*-

Essence of Pratyaksha Chandra\*- Essence of Pancha Bhutas\*

**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

The totality of Universal Creation comprises an interplay of Pancha Maha Bhutas. These Five Elements are linked together as the warp and weft of the universal cloth, as they interact and cooperate, but never cross their ends. In the context of Philosophy and Pragmatism of History, Man is the perennial Actor. His impulses are ever kaleidoscopic, essentially anchored to Panchendriyas and Pancha Tanmatras which of course are linked to Pancha Bhutas, as explained vividly in the Introductory Pages of this Script. Puranas, Upanishads and Vedas handed down the ages painstakingly describe about the awareness of Brahman from whom the Universe originates, sustains, terminates and regerminates again and again; it is that Supreme Energy which is admittedly the Cause and effect existence of Life bestowed by Brahman but far beyond the 'Koshamaya' or of Pancha Koshas or body sheaths of Annamaya-Pranamaya-Manomaya-Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya but indeed the Supreme Self - either of Form and features or of the Antaratma the Individual Self of all the Beings in Srishti. It is this Blissful Brahman who is not only the Individual Consciousness but also of the product of Pancha Bhutas, Space, Light, Praana or Vital Force, besides the Illumination within and without. It is that Singular Entity, the Bhokta and the Bhojya or the Cause and the Effect, the 'Daharakasha' or the Sky within the invisible cavity of the Heart as also the Sky above, the Pancha Bhutas, the Unseen Vaishvanara, the Panchendriyas, the Jagrat-Svapna-Sushupti or the Stages of Awakening-Dream Stage-Deep Sleep and Death, rebirth and 'Kaala maana'!!

Puranas describe the collective and individual specialisations of each of the Pancha Maha Bhutas; the quotes in this Script are from the major Ashtaadasha Puranas highlighting each and every one of these individually attempted. The Pouranic Essence is further supplemented by Smritis and compilations of Dharma Sutras such as Parashara and Veda Vyasa Smritis, Dharma Sindhu and other sources. The coverage is possibly attempted as ranging from 'Prithvi Sthalas', 'Jala Samuuhaas', 'Agni Karyas', 'Homa Prakriyas', 'Vayu Prashastata', 'Pancha Praana Praamukhyata' and 'Antariksha Pradhaanyata'. Some prominent Fifteen Upanishads too have been quoted and explained about the broad intent of the unique role of Pancha Bhutas in the saga of the Beings in Srishti. The inevitability of one's existence in the Universe and its Input Contents have been described by the quotes and annotations. Finally a cross section of even extremely limited referencing has been attempted to light lamps in the oceans of Vedas on a sample principle of 'sthaalee pulaaka nyaaya' or to ascertain sample cooking of food!

My desire to attempt the Essence of Pancha Maha Bhutas is even insignificantly worthy of my best efforts. Yet, the role of HH. Vijayendra Sarasvati who inspired me to condense and translate Maha Puranass, fifteen Upanishads and a host of Dharmic Scripts is simply unbelievable over the last decade plus. My post retired life is amazingly transformed by his guidance and unending zeal. This enthusiasm of mine is backed up by three significant sources- one from my Parents viz. Shri Vemuri Narayana Murti and Smt. Sitaramamma- besides my father-in-law and mother -in-law viz. Shri Chavali Subrahmanya Shastri and Smt. Adi Lakshmi-who gave me contentment of living who were all taken into the fold of Pancha Bhutas already. The third and powerful source is our Family God viz. 'Paramaa -chaarya' of Kanchi- who opened up vistas for fulfilment of Life, and defied the Pancha Bhutas into Immortality! May I place ever fragrant flowers at the respective feet at ever fresh memory screens!

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Chennai

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on earth and in a year resulting in the Seasons on Earth. In every year, one gets two Equinoxes in the Spring and Autumn seasons when both the day and night timings are exactly the same duration; the Summer and Winter solstices have the duration of day time as the longest and shortest respectively. Such are the astronomical features as visualised by the ancient Sages and subsequently rediscovered by the modern findings in a scientific manner. Thus the Sun, the Moon and the Planets too all revolve around Bhumi as the latter remains stationary.

## VEDAS

**RIG VEDA:** (P.179) PRITHVI: In the Vaidika Grandhas, Prithvi is established as the MOTHER Figure and Aakaasha the FATHER Figure.- Mother Earth is vast-heavy with mountains and waters- the singular provider of rains, food and life; and finally takes all the Beings on Her lap en route the next rebirth!- (P.180) APO DEVATA: The features of Jala Devata and magnificence in overcoming physical and mental coolness and cleanliness of the Beings in Srishti! (P 182) AGNI: Agni is the unique Deity whom once invoked formally assumes ever larger volume and radiance and endows with prosperity, progeny and prolonged existence!(P.187) VAYU: The fastest supplier of Havishaana and Roma Rasa from Yaajakas to the Celestials- 'Praana vayu' is literally hinged to life.- The sweep and speed of Vaayu is remarkable and unique.- Vayu Deva moving fast all across the 'antariksha' is never stationary nor restful. You are the father figure who had given us birth and upbringing, the 'bandhu rupa' or the dear relative, and friend who is an adviser and well wisher; do kindly strengthen the supply line of medicines. You possess Praana Rupa Jeevana Tatva and the 'nidhi' or the never diminishing stock of life providing energies! (P.189) ANTARIKSHA: Dyau- Prithivi, Bhumi and Antariksha- are together the hinges of the Universe and also the Yajna swarupas. Even as the number of participants of the Sacrifices has dwindled, the faith and fame of earth and sky is maintained as our eternal parents; may they pardon our increasing lapses as the true father and mother entities, despite our evil doings and ingratitude for them . (P.191) **YAJURVEDA ( KRISHNA) / TAITTIREEYA SAMHITA:** AGNI: 1.1.9: The Fire-altar or Vedi; Purification of Agni; VAAYU: Praana the Life Energy- Praana's internal journey called 'Antaryaama'- To whom Praana of a Jeeva is yoked to like a cross wooden piece!- (P. 194) **SHUKLA YAJURVEDA:**BHU DEVATA: Dyuloka; Prajapati made the initial sacrifice to the Unknown to facilitate the process of creation and foremost of all, manifested Swarga-Antariksha-and Prithivi in the form of a serpentine coil; AGNI: May the cycle of Yajnas on earth and the resultant rains and fertility on earth be secured! AAPAS: Jala samuhaas! You are the singular form of essence among food, ghee, milk and the juices of innumerable fruits and flowers; strength that all the human beings are able to tick and kick with energy and knowledge; VAAYU: Vaayu Deva! you are the singular form of purity and its expansion besides the unique means of sanitization. (P.190) **SAAMA VEDA:** DHYAAVA- PRITHVI: Virat Purusha-Srishti; AGNI: It is that glorious Fire which ensures debility due to inadequacy and non availability of proper food intake; it is that Fire which ensures liveliness and activity of a body; it is that Fire which is readily worshipworthy as the proven medium of inviting Celestials for the attraction of food and juice. You are ever present and active in forests, maatru garbhas, and all over the earth as invisible but readily manifested. VAAYU: Paarthiva-Vaayaveeya-Aakaasheeya or earthy-airborne-skyward. (P.198) **ADHARVANA VEDA:** Prithivi-Agni-Vaayu- Antariksha [ Interdependence of Pancha Bhutas is vindicated thus]; Prithivi; Prithivi- Antariksha; Agni Deva- Shatru Naashaka Sutras]

**CONCLUSION:** (P. 200)

## ESSENCE OF MAHA PANCHA BHUTAS

### (EARTH-WATER-FIRE-AIR- SKY)

**Introduction:** The Unknown and Eternal Paramatma or The Supreme Energy materialised the Alternate Power called Prakriti / Maya which further appeared as Maha Tatwa or the Great Awareness. The latter made possible the occurrence of ‘ Ahamkara’ or Ego in Abstract Form or the Inherent Consciousness which got transformed as Bhutas or Tangible Entities the very First Entity being Narayana who created ‘Apo Naara’ or the Radiant Water who floated on that Water and was hence called Narayana. He deposited his virility with the resolve of creating and there got manifested a Brahmanda, the Huge Golden Egg inside which there was seated Hiranya garbha Brahma. The Egg had two parts viz. Diva/ Urthwa Loka or the Upper Part and ‘Bhuva’ or Earth and the Space between these Parts was ‘Akaasha’ the Sky. There were manifestations eventually of Sapta Lokas (Bhuloka, Bhuvarka, Swaroka, Maharoka, Janaroka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka), Sapta Patalaas ( Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala); Dasha Dishas or Ten Directions viz. Uttara or North-East or Purva-Dakshina or South-Paschim or West-Ishanya or North East -Agneya or South East-Nirruiti or South West-Vayavya or North West-Urthwa or Upper Region and Atho Lokas or the Nether Worlds; Sapta Dwipas (Jambu, Plaksha, Salmaali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkala); 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); Sapta Parvatas (Sumeru , Kailas, Malaya, Himalaya, Udyachala, Agastyac hala, Suvela and GandhamAadana); Ashta Loka Palakas (Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruiti, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Ishana); Kaal maana or Time Calculation (Triti-hundred tritis oneVedha- three Vedhas one Lava-Three Lavas on Nimesha- Three Nimeshas one Kshana- five nimeshas one kashta or eight seconds-fifteen kashtas one laghu or two minutes- fifteen laghus one danda- six to seven dandas one fourth of a day or night-four praharas or yamas one day or night- two pakshas a month-two months a Ritu or Season-Six months one Ayana-365 combinations of a day / night one year- one year a Deva year-1200 Yugas comprising Satya of 4800 Deva Years, Treta Yuga of 3600, Dwapara of 2400 and Kaki yuga of 1200 Deva Years make one a Maha Yuga-100 Maha Yugas one Kalpa and Two Maha Kalpas are one life time of Brahma; Brahma is now passing through his fifty first year and his life span is 100 such years; we are now in the 28<sup>th</sup> Kali yuga of the first day of the first year of the third Sweta Varaha kalpa, second paraartha in the reign of the Seventh Manu named Vivaswanta. Kali Yuga is calculated to have commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> February 3102 BC of Julion Calendar). Besides the Kaala maana (Time), other notable creations were Manasa (Thought), Vaak (Speech), Shad Vargas or the Six Aberrations of Kama-Krodha-Lobha-Moha-Mada- Matsara viz. Desire, Anger, Greed, Infatuation, Arrogance and Jealousy; as also: **Pancha Bhutas viz. Earth, Water, Agni,Wind and Sky**; Nava Grahas of Surya, Chandra, Mangala, Budha, Guru, Shukra, Shani, Rahu-Ketu; Chatur Vedas of Rik-Yajur-Saama and Atharva besides Shat-Vedangas viz. Siksha including Sangeeta and Nayaaya, Vyakarana, Kalpa Grandha, Nirukta, Chandas Shastra and Jyitisha. Ekadasha Rudras or Eleven Rudras viz. Mahaan, Mahatma, Matimaan, Bhishana, Bhayankara, Ritudwaja, Urthwakesha, Pingalaksha, Rucha, Shuchi, and Kalaagni; Sapra Rishis viz. Marichi, Atri , Angirasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, and Vasishtha;Four Kumaras viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat and Sanatana; besides Narada-all Brahma’s mind-born as,Yagnas and Agni Homas like Shodasi, Ukta, Purushi, Agnishtoma, Aptoryama, Atiratra, Vajapeya, Goshava etc. Other facts worth noting in the context of Puranas are Fourteen Manvantaras (Swayambhu, Swarochisha,Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Chakshusa, the present Vaivaswata, Savarni, Bhoutya, Rouchya and four more Savarnyas) and Prajapatis and Vamshas, especially of Surya and Chandra and their lineages.

Markandeya Purana describes the Origin of Srishti by the Hiranyagarbha : He who is the root-cause of the Universe, is the unborn, enduring, the singular refuge of the moving and non-moving entities alike and the Creator is the Paramapada Swarup; He is the ‘Adi Purush’ or the Foremost Being who causes ‘Srishti, Sthiti, Pralaya’(Creation, Preservation and Destruction), is unparalleled and Ever-existent. Having greeted this ‘Hiranyagarbha’ or the ‘Golden Bellied’ Supreme Energy with great veneration, the

fantastic creation of the World is sought to be described, especially of those five kinds of Physical Features, Creation and characteristic attributes. This 'Bhuta Srishti' (Creation of the World) being originated from 'Maha Purusha' is in a way permanent yet occurs in temporary and repetitive stages. Maharshis describe Bhuta Srishti as an incomprehensible and minutest manifestation of 'Prakriti', which is Endless, indestructible, and devoid of sensory features like Gandha (Smell), Rupa (Form), Rasa(Taste), Shabda (Sound) and Sparsha (Touch); it has no beginning nor end, is the producing point, the source of Three Gunas of Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika nature, is the Vidyamaan (Embodiment of Knowledge) and is 'Avigneya' (Incomprehensible). Before the 'Pralaya' (the Great Destruction), He is the 'Sarvaya Vyapi' or the Omni-Present. Sage Markandeya explained to Jaimini Muni further as follows: In the task of 'Srishti' (Creation), Lord Brahma visualised 'Pradhan Tatva' (Main Nature) which camouflages 'Maha Tatva' (The Great Nature) just as a seed is hidden by the skin of a vegetable. This Maha Tatva, with the assistance of 'Trigunas' produces 'Ahamkar' (sense of the Self). Ahamkar has three kinds viz. Vaikarika, Tejas and Tamas. Just as Maha Tatva camouflages Pradhan Tatva, Vaikarika Tatva hides away Ahamkara. The interaction of Ahamkara and Pradhana Tatva produces 'Shabda (Sound) Tanmatra'. The Sound feature produces 'Akash' (Sky) as Sky possesses the same tendency of sound. Now, the Shabda Tanmatra hiding Akash interacts with Tamas Ahamkar and produces 'Sparsha (Touch) Tanmatra'. Then the Sparsha Tanmatra interacts with Vaikarika Tatva of Ahamkar and creates 'Vayu' (Wind). The interaction of the Sky's Shabda Matra, Skin's Sparsha Matra and that of Vayu Matra creates Rupa Matra whose further interaction with Tejas Tanmatra creates 'Jyoti'. The cyclic effect thus creates Rasa Matra leading to the formation of 'Jala' (water) and 'Gandha Matra' leading to the formation of 'Prithvi' (Earth), following the interface of the respective Tanmatras. Further on, the chain reactions of Tanmatras, Matras and Gunas manifest innumerable creations. Panchendriyas of Ears, Skin, Eyes, Tongue and Nose and Pancha Karmendriyas of respective actions, besides the controlling mind were created. By the union of 'Maha Purusha' and His own alternate form, 'Prakriti', a Golden Egg was produced in the huge sheet of water and grew up gradually. This Egg is massive as it contains the 'Kshetrajna' who made the Fore-most Appearance as the Originator of 'Bhuta ganas' including 'Pancha Bhutas' (Five Elements).

Vishnu Purana details: Maha Tatwa (The Supreme Manifestation): That Parabrahma-Paramatma-Vishwa Rupa-Sarvavyaapi-Sarvabhuteshwara-Sarvatma-Parameshwara on its own volition who has no 'Vikaaraas' or traits manifested the Self into the Alternative Self with 'Vikaaraas': *Pradhaana Purushouchaapi pravishyaatmeychhayaa Harih, Kshobhayaamaasa Sampraaptey Sargakaaley vyayaavyaou/ Tathaa Sannidhi maatrena Gandhah Kshobhaaya jaayatey, Manaso nopakratrut twaattayasou Parameshwarah/Sa yeva Kshobhako Brahman kshobascha Purushottamah, Sa shankho cha vikasaabhyaam Pradhaanatvepi cha sthitah/ Vikaasaanuswarupaischa Brahma Rupaadi bhistathaa, Vyakta Swarupascha tathaa Vishnuh Sarveswareswarah/ Guna saamyatta tasmaat tasmaat Khetrajnaadhishthanaan Muney, Guna vyanjana sambhutih Sarga kaaley Dwijottamaa/* (That Pradhaana Purusha transformed from the State of 'Nirvikaara' to that of 'Vikaara Pradhaana' or full of characteristics just as fragrance influences the fragrance-free Vastu or material! Thus Purushottama the Nirvikaara basically assumes traits and Paramatma assumed the Samashthi-Vyashthi Rupas or endless manifestations commencing from Brahma and so on and indeed this process of transformation is known as Maha Tatwa! ) This Maha Tatwa is of three major Attributes viz. Saatvika, Tejasa or Raajasa and Taamasa and accordingly of three kinds of Ahamkaaraas or Self-oriented egoistic feelings. The Tamasa Ahamkaara led to the emergence Pancha Bhutas as follows: first by the Tamasa-based Ahamkara created **Tanmatras** (Subtle forms of Matter); first the *Shabda Tanmatra* or Guna Rupa/ feature of Sound leading to the Creation of Shabda Guna and its allied Aakaasha or the Sky; the Shabda Tanmatra represented by Sky created the *Sparsha Tanmatra* leading to the manifestation to Vaayu; the Taamasa Guna's Ahamkara which created Aakasha and Vayu from the Shabda and Sparsha Tanmatraas respectively led to the emergence of *Rupa Tanmatra* which in turn led to the Tejo Bhuta; further on the Tamasika Guna having created the Sky- Air- Illumination and Heat or Fire further went on to the emergence of *Rasa Tanmatra* and its allied Aapo Bhuta or Jala /Water; finally the Tamasika Guna having interacted with Shabda-Sparsha-Rupa-Rasa Tanmatras and created Sky-Air-Fire-Water, had further

reacted with *Gandha Tanmatra* and materialised Prithvi or Earth. Thus the Maha Tatwa created : ‘Prithivyaaas Tejo Vaayuraakaashaas’ or Earth-Water-Radiance-Wind, and Sky. Maha Tatwa’s Raajasa-ahankara Guna was responsible for the creation of Panchendriyas viz. Pancha Jnanendriyas and Pancha Karmendriyas all driven by Manasa (Mind). The Karmendritas are Paayu (anus), Upastha ( marmen - driya), hasta, paada, and Vaak; the Jnaanindriyas are Twak (Skin),Chakshu (Eyes), Naasika (Nose), Jihva (Tongue) and Shrotra (Ears). Together with the Pancha Bhutas as above, the Beings of Srishti are thus readied with their Indriyas or Physical Features to face their lives

**Please Note: A systematic description is sought to be attempted in the following pages. However description of Pancha Bhutas is restricted only for the Puranas Section, while that of Upanishads and Vedas is common.**

## SOURCES FROM PURANAS AND SMRITIS

D)

### P R I T H V I

#### BHUDEVATA

*Bhuh paadouyasya naabhirviyasuranilash Chandra Suryau cha netre karnaavashaah shiro dyarmukhamapi dahano yasya vaasteyaamabhih antastam yasya vishvam sura nara khagagobhogi gandharva daityahchitramramramyate tam tribhuvana vapusham Vishnumeesham namaami/* May I salute Vishnudeva whose physique occupies Trilokas as Bhumi is His feet, Aakasha as His navel, Vayu as His breath, Surya Chandras as His eyes, Ashta Diks as His ears, Swarga as His Head, Agni as His face and oceans as His abdomen. Thus the Universe in entirety comprises countless Beings ranging from Deva- Devis, humans, birds and beasts, Gandharvas and Asuras.

*Ashvakraante ratha kraante Vishnukraante vasundharaa, shirasaam dharayahaami rakshaswa maam pade pade/* May this Sacrificial Earth be such that Lord Vishnu Himself by horses and chariot traverses severally, while my head is bent in prostration thrice for His blissful protection at every step of His chariot.

*Bhumirdhenurdharani loka dhaarini, udyataasi Varahena Krishnena shata baahunaa/* In Varaha avataara, Lord Vishnu lifted up Bhu Devi as in the form of a milch cow while she was sinking into deep seas as dragged to ‘atho loka waters’ by the demon Hiranyaaksha.

## PURANAS

### Origin of Bhumi, worship and consequences of disrespect to her

At Paramatma’s twinkle of an eye, Lord Brahma’s age of hundred Brahma years are over and there would be a ‘Prakritik Pralaya’ when Prithvi (Earth) sinks in water and merges into Parabrahma Paramatma. Maharshi Narayana narrated to Narada that there had been a belief when Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha were killed on the expanded dry place of Narayana’s thighs (since the Daityas agreed to be mutually killed only on a dry place without wetness) and the ‘Meda’ or fat of the demons’ dead bodies got dried up by Sun’s heat and that was how Medini was formed. Another version about the origin of

Prithvi which Narayana Rishi narrated was what Mahatma Dharma told the Rishi: The ‘roma kupas’ or the hair-roots of Maha Purusha’s body emitted dirt which created ‘Bhumi’ and as many hair roots mixed with the sweat (water) emitted dirt so many times the formation of Bhumi takes place! Each time Bhumi is created, it emerges from the Seven Seas, along with Seven Dwipas, with Himalaya, Meru and other Mountains; with Surya, Chandra and other Planets; with Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara abiding the Maha Purusha’s instructions; along with Devas and other Pranis would get materialised too; Punya Tirthas are also created; Seven Heavens and Seven Under Worlds are created too; Brahma loka, Dhruva loka and so on would also get materialised. Such is the repetitive activity which takes place in each Kalpa.[Brahma’s age is hundred Brahma years of which he has completed fifty years and the first day of his fifty first year is in progress and a day/night of Brahma is two kalpas; thus each Kalpa has a thousand Mahayugas equivalent to 4.32 billion human years] Matsya/

### **Maha Maya enables Vishnu to kill the Demon Brothers Madhu and Kaitabha**

In the Manvantara of Saavarni would be the Sapta Rishis viz. Ram, Vyas, Gaalava, Deeptimaan, Kripa, Rishyashringa, and Droni. Sutapa, Amitabh, and Mukhya would be the three Devaganas and each of these there would be twenty Ganas, of whom Tapastapah, Shakra, Dyuti, Jyoti, Prabhakar, Prabhas, Dayita, Dharma, Teja, Rashmi and Vakrut would be included. Dama, Danta, Ritha, Soma and Vintha would be included in the third Devaganas. Saarvani’s progeny include Viraja, Ariveera, Nirmoha, Satyavaak, Kuruti, and Vishnu and would all be Kings in the Manvantara. During the second Manu’s regime of Swarochisha, there was a King named **Suratha**, who was an extremely virtuous person looking after his Subjects with affection and attachment, but his vicious Ministers usurped the Kingdom and Suratha took refuge in the hermitage of Megha Muni. The King felt extremely distressed that the Kingship which was with his many generations was lost due to the injustice and treachery of the persons around, despite the fact that he was ruling with considerable merit and charity. Meanwhile, a prosperous Vysya (business person), named Samadhi, who was also disowned by his vicious wife and children and drove him away from his palatial building, came to the King and the Hermit Megha. Samadhi said that despite their cruel treatment, he still had great affection for his wife, children and relatives and that he did not at all have any aversion for them. The King asked as to how Samadhi bore no ill will to his close persons, inspite of their insensitive feelings for him. The Muni replied that just as a bird which might be hungry would still prefer to feed the baby birds, human beings never bother for their selfish considerations but are infatuated with their children, although the children might not always have reciprocal feelings. It is in the same way that Maha Maya tends to obscure human feelings and insensitize any illwill towards their own children for their wrong doings affecting the parents.

*Tanmaatras vismayah Kaayom Yoganidra Jagatpathey, Maha Maya Harischaisha tatha sammohyatey Jagat/ Jnaaninaamapi chetaamsi Devi Bhagavati hi saa, Baladaa krishya mohaaya Maha Maya prayacchati/ Tayaa visrujyatey Viswam Jagadethacharaacharam, saa vidya Paramaa Muktiheturbhuta Sanaatani/ samsaarabandhu hethuscha saiva Sarveswarewari/* (It is not surprising to say: Maha Maya is the Nidraswarup (Sleepy Illusion) of Jagatpati Hari who spreads over the net of ignorance all over the Universe. It is that Bhagavati Maha Maya who pulls down intelligent human beings forcefully into ignorance; is that Devi who creates the totality of the Universe, turns benvolent to humanity and bestows Salvation; is that highest ‘Hetuswarup Sanatani Brahmagyana Swapura Vidya’ or the Everlasting Reason of Reasons-the Embodiment of Brahma Gyan Vidya; She is the Eswari of Eshwaris who is the cause and effect of Birth and Death and the final Provider of ‘Mukti’. The King Surata asked Muni Megha as to who

was that All-Pervading Maha Maya, and how did it come into being? The Muni replied that it was highly incorrect to say that Maha Maya came into being at a time since it was Everlasting; however one could surmise the Great Illusion was recognised at the end of a ‘Kalpa’ as the whole Universe got submerged into fathomless waters at the time of Grand Annihilation and Bhagavan Vishnu was resting in ‘Yoganidra’ or the Yogic Sleep. It was at that very time, there were two ‘Asuras’, named **Madhu and Kaitabha**, who were materialised from the ear-rejects of Vishnu; they chased Brahma who prayed to Nidra Bhagavati (Goddess Of Slumber) so that Vishnu could be woken up. He said: Devi!

*Twam Swaha Twam Swadha Twamhi Vashatkaarah Swaraatmika, Sudha twamakshare nithye Tridhaamaa -tratmikaasthitha/ Ardhamaatraa sthitha nithya Yaanucchhaarya viseshatahah, Twameva Sandhya Saavitri twam Devi Janani Para/* (You are the ‘Swaha’ Mantra of the ‘Havis’ or oblations to Agni meant for Devatas; the Swadha Swarup of the ‘Shraddha’ to Pitras; You are the ‘Vashatkar’ Mantra Swarup of ‘Havis’ meant for Indra; You are the Sudha Swarup of the Three ‘Matras’ (Letters) of Deerga, Hraswa and Pluth Rupas; You are the famous Gayatri Swarup; and You are the Sublime Mother of the Universe). Brahma continued the Prayer to say: Devi! You are the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of ‘Srishti’ (Creation); You are the Maha Vidya (The Highest Form of Learning), Maha Medha (Highest Brain Power), Maha Maya, Maha Smriti (Highest Consciousness), Maha Moha (The Highest Obsession); You are the Trigunatmika Prakriti of Satva, Rajas and Tamo Gunas; You are the ‘Kalaratri Bhayankara Yama Swarup’; You are the ‘Lakshmi beeja’, Ishwari, Lazza (Embodiment of Modesty), Buddhi, Divya Gyan, Pushti, Thsti, Shanthi, and Kshanti Swarup, Khadgini, Shulini, Gadini, Chakrini, Shankhini, Dhanushdharini, Sowmya, Soumyatara, Apeksha Sundari; How could one be able to commend You!! Devi, You are most humbly requested to spread Your ‘Mayajaal’ or the Wide Net of Illusion over the two Demon Brothers of Madhu and Kaitabha, wake up Maha Vishnu from the Yoga Nidra and facilitate Him to destroy the demon brothers who tended to grow in form and might minute by minute! Bhagavan Vishnu woke up and fought with the Demon Warriors for five thousand years relentlessly, but there was no sign of surrender of the Asuras as they were apparently fighting by their turns whereas Vishnu was battling single handed. Maha Maya advised Vishnu to seek a boon from the brothers as they were indeed invincible, but out of bravado, they asked a boon from them instead. Cashing immediately on the offer made by the Demon Brothers, Vishnu asked them to die in their hands; the Brothers agreed to die in His hands on the condition where there was no trace of water in that Vast Universe which was full of Water. Lord Vishnu expanded his thighs far and wide, thus materialising a dry area of his massive thighs and killed the Evil Brothers who threatened Lord Brahma! (Markandeya Purana )

### **Brahma’s boon to Satyavrata, Matsyavatara, Pralaya and Srishti again**

As detailed in the Matsya Purana, in the past, King Satyavrata / Vaivaswa Muni, the son of Surya Deva, entrusted his Kingdom to his son and did ‘Tapasya’ for innumerable years to Brahma Deva who was finally pleased and gave the Muni a boon of saving the ‘Sthaavara Jangama Jeevas’ or all moveable and immobile Beings at the time of next ‘Pralaya’ or the Great Annihilation of the Universe. In course of time, as Satyavrata was doing Pitru Tarpana in a waterbody and noticed a tiny fish in his palms and entreated him not to throw away but keep in his ‘Kamanadolu’ (water-vessel) as the big fish would swallow it in the water. Satyavrata took pity, retained the fish and transferred it in a Well. As the fish larger size and filled up the Well, he transferred it to a ‘Sarovar’ and within days it was growing in size further and further. Satyavrata finally transferred the huge fish to an Ocean and recognised it as Vaasudeva himself. Bhagavan informed the King that very soon there would be a Pralaya when Prithvi (Earth) would get

submerged in deep waters with mountains, forests etc. as a mammoth Ship, constructed by Devas would arrive and that he should keep ready samples of various species of 'Svedaja' (born of sweat), 'Andaja' (born of eggs) and 'Udbhija' (born out of Earth) as also 'Jaraayuja' (born from womb such as human beings, animals etc. which were subject to birth and death). Bhagavan further suggested that when the ship arrived he should tie it with the horn of the giant fish. As the Pralaya approached, there would be severe drought in the Universe for spells of years, fiery winds would blow all over, severity of Sun would burn off most of the species, there would be 'badabaagni' / sulphurous fumes from the Seas devastating the flora / fauna as also mountains and forests, and then there would be incessant rain from the Seven clouds of Pralayakaala named Samvarta, Bheemanaada, Drona, Chanda, Balaahak, Vidyudpataak, and Shona. The Seven Seas would flow in a single flood submerging Earth totally. In this Pralaya, only Surya, Soma, Brahma, Narmada River, Maharshi Markandeya, Shankara, Four Vedas, Puranas, and Suvrata who after the post Pralaya age who would become the Prajapati as the famed Vaivasvata would be the survivors and the rest of Creation including even Devatas. As predicted, at the end of the Chakshusa Manvantara, the ship appeared and along with it a huge rope like serpent was materialised with which Satyavrata connected the ship and the horn of Matsyavatara Bhagavan Vishnu and got seated by the ship too. As the Pralaya subsided, Matsya Bhagavan explained to Prajapati Satyavrata who became the Vaivasvata Manu about the re-creation of the Universe and its end again, the creation of humanity, Manvantaras, the illustrious personalities among human beings, 'Bhuvana Vistaar' or the expansion of Srishti, Daana dharma vidhi, Varna and Ashrama vidhaan, reappearance of Devas, Rakshasas, and so on.

Punah Srishti: At the beginning, Swayambhu Vishnu created water first and placed his seed in it and a Golden Egg emerged outside which Bhagavan Aditya and as Vishnu recited Vedas Brahma was in position. The latter divided the Golden Egg into two parts viz. Swargaloka and Bhuloka as the space in between were created the 'Dishas' (The Directions) and 'Akash' (The Sky). From the 'Jaraayu Bhaag' of the Egg appeared Seven Mountains like Meru and from the 'Garbhaashaya' (womb), 'Vidyutmegha Mandal' or the Clouds with Lightning and Rivers, Pitruganas, Manus, and Seven Seas full of 'Ratnas' (Precious Stones) and Salt, Sugarcane juice, Sura, etc produced out of the water from inside the egg. As Prajapati Deva desired to create out of the Egg which was no longer alive, he materialised 'Martanda' from the dead Egg and hence the name of Mrita+Anda. The 'Rajoguna' of that Mahatma generated 'Chaturmukha Brahma' who in turn crafted Devatas, Asuras, and the entirety of the World including humanity. Matsya Bhagavan continued to describe to Manu that the Chaturmukha Brahma performed very rigorous Tapasya by the power of which the Vedas were rediscovered and Six Vedangas viz. Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Jyotisha, and Chhanda were materialised and so did were the 'Upangas' viz. Puranas, Nyaya, Meemaamsa, and Dharma Shastra.; besides, 'Pada-paatha' or the 'Nirdharana' (methodology) of reciting Vedic Mantras as well as the 'Krama' or the seriatim was decided. There after, Shastras and Puranas were created of which the latter comprised crores of 'Shlokas'. From Brahma's mouth then emerged Eight 'Pramaanas' or Evidences of Meemamsa viz. 'Prathyaksha', 'Anumaama', 'Upamaana', 'Shabda' (Aaptavachana), 'Anupalabhi', 'Arthaapatti', 'Aaitiha', and 'Swabhava' as well as 'Nyaya Shastra'. Brahma desired to produce ten 'Manasa Putras' out of his 'Manosamkalpa', viz. Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu, Pracheta, Vasishtha, Bhrugu, and Narada. Also Brahma created motherless sons, viz. Daksha Prajapati from his right hand thumb, Dharma from chest, Kusumaayudha / Kamadeva from his heart, Lobha (avarice) from his lips, Krodha (Anger) from his eyebrows, Moha (infatuation) from his Buddhi, 'Mada' (Arrogance) from his Ahankara (Ego), Pramod or Joy from his Kantha (throat), 'mrityu' from his eyes and Bharata Muni from his elbow. The tenth child of Brahma's body was a girl named 'Angaja'. Viswvasu Manu enquired of Matsya Deva

about the link of Buddhi- Moha-Ahamkara-Krodha and the reply was that there were the Three Gunas (Features) of Satva-Rajas-Tamas represented by Brahma-Vishnu and Maheswara respectively. Then 'Mahatatva' got generated which led to 'Ahamkara' and the latter led to the creation of Ten 'Indriyas' or Sense Organs, viz. Five 'Jnaanendriyas' governed by Buddhi called Shrotra (Ears), Twacha (Skin), Netra (Eyes), Jivha (Tongue) and Nasika (nose), besides Five Karmendriyas Hasta (Hands), Paada (feet), Vaani (mouth), Paayu (anus) and Mutrendriya. The Ten Indriyas experience ten activities viz. Shabda (sound), Sparsha (Touch), Rupa (Vision), Rasa (drink), and Gandha (smell); also there are Ten Karyas or Deeds viz. 'Utsarga' or ablutions, 'Aanadan' or providing joy, 'Aadaan' (giving away), 'Gaman' (movement) and 'Aalaap'. Besides the Ten Sensory Organs, the Eleventh Organ is 'Manas' of Mind. From these 'Indriyas' or sensory organs, there is a 'Sharir' or Body constituting 'Tanmatras' or Physical Properties. When the urge for 'Srishti' (Creation) is felt by Brahma, the 'Shabda Tanmatra' materialises Aakaasha (Sky); from Aakaasha is Vayu (Air) is generated by the interaction of Shabda and Sparsha. Then Vayu and Sparsh together materialised 'Tejas' or Illumination; hence the interaction of Shabda, Sparsha and Rupa which was the amalgam of three ingredients led to the creation of 'Jal' (water) and the amalgam of Akasha, Vayu, Tejas, and Jala led finally to the creation of **Prithvi**.

This was how the sum total of Twenty Four Tatvas (covering, five jnaanendriyas, five Karmendriyas, Pancha Maha Bhutas, Five Tanmatras, one 'Manas', one Buddhi, One Ahamkaara and final one Unique Paramatma); the twenty fifth was of Purushanamak Tatwa. Added to this was the Twenty Sixth Tatwa called 'Jeevatma' which is controlled by Paramatma and Sages Kapila and other Sankhya Yogis called it as 'Jnaana' with which Brahma aimed at scripting 'Jagat Racchana' While doing so, Brahma divided his body into two parts, one half as a woman and another as a man. The woman Sarasvati came to be known as Shatarupa, also called Savitri, Gayatri and Brahmani. Brahma was astonished at her beauty and as he performed 'Pradakshina' (circumambulation) around him, he was unable to take away his looks on her and thus while staring away he materialised five heads in the four directions and on the sky above. Then he instructed his Manasa Putras like Marichi to go ahead and create human beings and various other species. He wedded Shatarupa who gave birth to Swayambhu Manu. Shatarupa and Brahma also gave birth to Rati, Manas, Tapa, Buddhi, Mahaan, Dik and Sambhrama. Brahma on his own created earlier Vama Deva the Trishula dhaari who in turn created Brahmanas from his face, Kshatriyas from his arms, Viashyas from his thighs and Shudras from his feet. The latter also created Bijli (Lightning), Vajra (Diamond), Megha (Clouds), Indradhanush (Rainbow/ Vibgyor), Chhanda (Prosody), and eightyfour crore Saadhyaganas who were ageless and there after Brahma disallowed further Srishti by Vamadeva who thence onward became a 'Sthanu' or ineligible for Srishti. Swayambhu Manu then initiated the process of Maithuni Srishti (man-woman creation) by wedding a Kanya named Ananti, after Tapasya and by their union begot Priyavrata and Uttanapada. Prajapati Priyavrata had the distinction of demarcating the Sapta Dwipas, while Uttanapada and Sunruta / Suruchi gave birth to the illustrious Dhruva who attained a higher position than that of Saptarishi mandala on the Sky! Agni Kanya- Dhishana- and King Pruthi's son Havirdhan gave birth to Prachina Barhisha Prajapati among other sons and in this lineage was born Daksha Prajapati who gave birth to eighty crores of children by Sankalpa (thought), Darshana (vision) and Sparsha (touch). He also gave birth to ten Dharmas, thirteen Kashyapas, twenty seven Chandramas, four Arishtanemis, two Shukras, two Kushvaswaas and two Kanyas named Angirasaas. Their descendants included Ten Vishwadevas, Twelve Sandhyas, Thirty nine Marutvatis, Ashtavasus or Eight Vasus viz. Aapa, Soma, Dhruva, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Prathyusha and Prabhasa as also Dwadasa Suryas, Arundhati, Muhurta, Lamba, Yami and Sankalpa. Marichi's son Kashayapa had thirteen wives

viz. Aditi, Diti, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Taamra, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kaddu, Viswva, and Muni. Aditi's sons were Devaganas who were Manvantara specific. Diti's sons included Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu. Danu begot hundred sons, Vinita's sons were Garuda and Aruna the charioteers of Vishnu and Surya respectively. Surasa and Kaddu gave birth to the famed serpents like Sesha, Vasuki, Karkotaka, Shankha, Padma, etc.; Surabhi gave birth to Cows and bulls; Arishta created Gandharvas and Kinnaras, Ira produced trees, and related things; Vishwa created Yakshas and Rakshasas, and Muni created Apsaras and so on. After describing the highlights of Adi Sarga and Prati Sarga, there was Pratyeka Sarga, in which Pruthu of Surya Vamsha became the 'Adhinayaka' (Chief) of Prithvi, when Brahma appointed Chandrama as the Head of 'Aushadhis'(Medicines), Pitras, Yagnas, Vratas, Tapas, Nakshatras (Stars), Dwijas, Trees, and related entities. Varuna was made in charge of water, Kubera of 'Dhana'(Prosperity), Vishnu in the care of Aditya, Agni of Vasus, Daksha of Prajapathis, Indra of Maruds, Prahlada as the Chief of Daythas and Danavas, Yamaraja of Pitaras; Shiva as in charge of Pishachas, Rakshasas, Pashus, Bhutas, Yakshas, and Vetalas; Himalayas of Parvatas, Samudra as in Charge of Rivers, Chitraratha as the Head of Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, and Kinnaras, Vasuki as the in-charge of Nagas, Takshak of Serpents, Iravata as the Head of Elephants, Garuda as the Leader of Birds, Uhaishrava as the head of horses, Lion as the Chief of Animals, Vrisha as the in-charge of Cows etc. Also Brahma appointed as the in charge of Sargaambha of Dishas / Directions, Shankha paad as in charge of East, Shanarapaad as the head of South, Suketuman as the Chief of the West, Hiranya Roma as of North.

**How Bhumi was a renamed as Prithvi!** In the past, there was a Prajapati named Anga during the regime of Swayambhu Manu who married the daughter of Mrityu called Sunita, who was very ugly and from their union, a very powerful Sovereign called Vena was born. When Vena came to power, there was predominance of 'Adharma' (Non-Virtue and Injustice) as Vena himself was cruel, non-scrupulous and malicious. As the good advices of Maharshis fell flat on Vena's ears and there was 'Araajakata' or utter lawlessness, the Maharshis gave curses to him and the Brahmanas trapped Vena and killed him. From Vena's body emerged the shadow of a dark and ferocious woman from the dead body of Vena and from the right hand of the body manifested a Figure resembling Prajapati Anga who was a symbol of Dharma and Nyaya, with a 'Kireeta and Kavacha' (golden headgear and body shield), 'Dhanush and Baana' (Bow and Arrows) etc. Since the manifestation came out of the 'Pruthu bhujas' or fat shoulder of Vena, the Figure was named Pruthu. The Brahmanas who killed Vena made Pruthu the 'Chakravarti' and gradually he became the undisputed Chief of the entire World, turned out to be a Super King by virtue of his valour, fame and Tapasya and endeared him as a role-model. He found that there was no Swadhyaya, Vashatkara and Dharma in the Rule of Vena and being extremely annoyed with Bhumi for the negligence of the Moral Values took up his arms and chased her to burn off the sins of moral depravity. Devi Bhumi was frightened and tried to escape in the form of a Cow. He hounded her but could not run further and out of desperation stopped over and surrendered to Pruthu; she asked him as to what could she do for him and the reply was that the whole 'Charachara Jagat' or the moveable or immobile inhabitants of Earth should be free from any desire whatsoever. Then Pruthu converted Swayambhu Manu as a calf and started extracting milk from Bhumi as cow its udder which turned out to be 'Shudda Anna' with which there were no wants on Earth for the Citizens. On seeing this, Rishis took the example, turned Sun God as the Cowherd, Indra as the calf and milked Prithvi to satisfy their Dharmik desires. Devatas too were tempted, turned out to be the Cowherds, requested Yama Dharma Raja to be the calf, and squeezed 'Swadha Rasa' into golden vessels to fulfill their own respective desires. The Pitruganas brought their silver vessels to

extract as much milk as they wished. Nagas were not far behind as the Nagaraja was the cowherd, Takshak was the calf and filled up a copper vessel to squeeze 'Visha' (poison). 'Asuras' jumped into the queue and milked 'Maya' by converting Virochan-the son of Prahlad as the calf. Yakshas were for long desired to learn 'Antardhana Vidya' or the Lesson of Vanishing, and thus converted Kubera as the calf and extracted the Vidya from the Cow. Pretas and Rakshasas organised themselves and deputed Ropuanabha Preta as the cowherd and Preta Sumali as the calf and extracted blood from the udder. Apsaras and Gandharvas brought Chatraratha as the calf and milked the sweet smell of Lotus leaves from the Kamadhenu, while Natyacharya Gandharva Vararuchi as the cowherd. Mountains too were tempted to fulfil their wishes of milking 'ratnas' (precious stones) and Aushadhis (herbal medicines) into a 'shila patra' or rock vessel; Mahachala Sumeru was the cowherd and Himavanta was the calf. Trees extracted the milky liquid while cutting them from the Cow into a Palaasa Patra, while Shala Vriksha along with flowers and leaves was the Cowherd and many other trees took the form of a calf. Likewise, many species including each and every human being fulfilled their own wishes. In the regime of Maharaja Pruthu the population was prosperous, happy, long living and highly contented. There was no pauper, no sinner, no fear of Adhi Bhoudhika, Adhi Daivika or Adhyatmika problems (Physical, God-made and Internal). None had diseases nor mutual illwill, no greed, no fear, and no external and internal threats. Little wonder Bhu Devi was called the Prithvi! Matsya Purana

The current Sweta Varaha Kalpa too, Brahma requested Shri Hari to save Prithvi from the onslaught of Demon Haranayaksha who tried to be dump her in Rasatala and Shri Hari assumed the incarnation of Varaha Murti and rescued Prithvi by his 'dumshtras'( tusks). A grateful Prithvi prayed to Narayana and the latter bestowed the boon to her that hence forth, she would be worshipped by Munis, Manus, Devatas, Siddhas, Danavas and Manavas as and when there would be activities of construction like Griha Pravseh, Griharambha, irrigation projects etc. and those 'Murkhas'(Idoits) who would not do so would go to hell! Meanwhile, Devi Prithvi and Varaha Deva gave birth to Mangala Deva who became a Planet eventually. Maharshi Narayana then advised Narada about the procedure of Bhumi Puja by first invoking her with the Mula Mantra viz. *Om Hreem Shreem Vasudhaayai swaahaa/* Bhagavan Vishnu himself prayed to her as follows: *Yagna sukarajaayaa twam Jayam dehi Jayaavahey, Jayey Jayey Jayaadhaarey Jaya sheeley Jaya pradey/ Saraadhaaraey Sarva beejeey Sarva Shakti samanvitey, Sarva kaamapradey Devi Sarveshtam dehi mey bhavey/ Sarva shasaalaey sarvashasyaadhaye Sarva shasyaharey Kaaley Sarva shasyaatmakey bhavey/ Mangaley angalaadhaarey Mangalye Mangala pradey, Mangalaarthey Mangaleshey Mangalam dehi mey bhavey/ Bhumey Bhumipa sarwasvye Bhumipaala paraayaney, Bhumipaahankaara rupey Bhumim dehi cha Bhumidey/* ( You are Yagna Varaaha's wife, the provider of Victory and the mainspring of Victory with the basic feature of victory! You are the principal sustainer and supporter of the entire world, the Bija Swarupa and the Emblem of all Powers and the bestower of all desires; kindly grant me each and everything of significance to me. You are the personification of harvests; the provider and also the destroyer of crops! You are also the symbol of auspiciousness, its major hinge and the pride of 'Bhumipalakaas' or (Kings) and large farmers. Do grant me unending property, Devi!) Brahma Vaivarta

Maharshi Narayana apprised Narada that whosoever recited the above 'Stuti' to Bhu devi would for several successive births become Kings, huge Landlords and property owners of great substance. Further, any person who gives 'Bhu daan'(charity) becomes eligible to reach Vishnudhaam; if a piece of Earth with standing crops is donated the person concerned stays in Vishnudhaam for a very long period of time. Those who donate to Brahmanas sizeable villages and huge chunks of agricultural lands would be

residents of Vaikuntha. Even those who encourage the deeds of donation would be the beneficiaries of Punya. Contrarily, those who steal land especially from virtuous Brahmanas, or abet in such shady transactions would be destined to Kaala sutra, Kumbhipaka or Asipatra and Rourava narakas depending on the intensity of cheating in the transactions, besides suffering in the on-going lives too great losses of physical well being, family losses, loss of property and wealth and ignominy in the Society finally ending up with fateful and tragic end of life. Having described the pluses and minuses of donations of misuses of Land, Maharshi Narayana had not only described the Procedure of worship by way of Bhumi Puja by performing 'Shodasopacharas' or the Sixteen Services with Pushpa, Gandha, Deepa, Dhupa and Naivedyas, he also cautioned not to keep on bare earth, certain items viz. Deepas, Shivalingas, Bhagavan/Bhagavati Murtis, Shankha, Yantra, Shalagrama, pushpa, japamala, pushpamala, Karpura, Chandana wood, Rudraksha mala, pustaka and Yagnopaveeta. At the time of Earthquakes or Grahanas (Eclipses), there should never be breaking Bhumi which might eventually cause sufferances of the limbs of persons responsible.

Bhu Devi is complemented by several epithets such as 'Kaashyapi' as she was the daughter of Kashyapa Muni; 'Sthira' as she is stable; 'Vishvambhara' as she carries the burden of the world; 'Ananta' or of Endless nature; 'Prithvi' as the provider of desires in the form of a Kamadhenu at the behest of King Pruthu and 'Bhumi' as the base for building 'Bhuvanas' or Residences of Comfort to one and all as per their own luck and deservedness! Brahma Vaivarta.

**Universal Dissolution and Revival of Bhu Devi ( Earth):** As the impact of Kali Yuga intensifies, significance of Vedas, Sastras, Holy Scriptures, Puranas would eventually diminish. Sraddhas, Tarpanas, Devotion, Yoga, Rituals, Vratas, austerities and all Godly acts would disappear. The Institution of Marriage, Property Rights, Temples, Purity of Thought and Action, Celibacy, Chastity, Respect for Elders, Family Ties, Concepts of Social System and Culture would vanish. Deceit, Ego, Falsehood, Cruelty, and Utter Lawlessness would prevail. Nature too would not cooperate as rivers, water bodies and crops would be affected. Earth quakes, Famines and Outbreaks of Endemics and Epidemics would be the order of the day. As the Kali Yuga reaches the peak, the whole world would be full of Atheists; trees would be of the size of a hand and men and women would be of thumb size. Lord Vishnu would then incarnate as Kalki and ride over a high long horse killing persons left and right with a long sword over three days and nights and disappear, when never-ending rain would start and the whole world would be submerged in water, indicating the commencement of a Pralaya ( The Great Dissolution). The entire Earth would disappear as there would be water only all over. Two Danavas, Madhu and Kaitabha, who would initially give tough time to Maha Vishnu Himself, get into their own trap as Vishnu would offer a boon to the brothers and they in their bravado would reply that they would give a boon instead! Then Vishnu grabs the opportunity and asks for the boon of the death of Danava brothers and they agree to be killed only where there is no water; Maha Vishnu expands His thighs and so do the bodies of Danava Brothers but Vishnu's expansion of thighs would be limit-less and the bone-marrow of the killed Danavas gets mixed with the Earth lifted by Virat Svarupa from deep waters and hence Her name as 'Medini'. Virat Svarupa's skin pores get merged with the mixture, which after 'Panchikarana' or the combine of five elements viz. one fourth each of four other 'Bhutas' ( Elements) viz. Light, Water, Wind and Sky, besides Earth mix up. Thus emerges Maha Prithvi or the Great Earth. That is the re-incarnation of Bhu Devi. Along with Prithvi, come mountains, Seven Seas, Seven Islands, Forests, Sumeru, the Sun, the Moon, other Planets, Indra Loka, Brahma Loka, Vishnu Loka, Siva Loka, Seven Heavens, Seven Nether Lokas down to Patala, Dhruvataru and so on as also Bharata Varsha, its Rivers, Sacred Places and so on.

In the ages of yore in Varaha Kalpa, Brahma requested Maha Vishnu to take the incarnation of a Boar ( Varaha) to rescue the Earth from sinking down to Patala by Demon Hiranyakasipu and thus Bhu Devi is known as Varahi the female form of Earth. From their union was born Mangala Deva ( Planet of Mars). Goddess Varahi is traditionally worshipped at Ambuvacha (Jataka) Ceremony, when Foundation Stone is laid before construction, when one enters a new house, as tilling is taken up anew, and digging of a well or tank is commenced and so on. She is worshipped by the Seed Mantra: *Om Hreem Klim Sreem Vasundharayai Svaha*. Maha Prithvi is a memorable example of Patience in carrying the mammoth load of all living and non living entities, the Provider of Grains, Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers, Precious Stones and Metals and is directly responsible for life of all species including those in Seas, Rivers and waterbodies as also vast multitude of non moving objects. Sins perpetrated on or in the offensive of Mother Earth are to be considered as those that attract lowest-grade punishments post-life. ( Devi Bhagavata)

**Varahaavatara uplifts Prithvi from Rasaatala:** As Prithvi was gradually getting pulled down under into Rasatala and like a weak cow unable to resist the force of the drag into the slush, Bhagavan Vishnu decided to haul up the massive attempt being made by the Daitya Hiranyaaksha. The helpless Prithvi appealed to Narayana who took up the ferocious Form of Varaha Deva to boost it and save her. She cited the example of reinstating Indra and Devas back to Swarga by incarnating Bhagavan as Vamana Deva. As the ‘Dhaata’/ the Creator, ‘Vidhata’ the Preserver and the ‘Samharta’/ the Destroyer, his unique powers were displayed everywhere as Manus, Prajapatis, Yama Deva, Agni, Pavana Deva, Megha /Clouds, Varna Dharma, Ashrama Dharma, Samudras, Mountains, Trees, Rivers, Dharma, Kama, Yagna and related activities, Vidya, Human and other Beings, Shri / Opulence, Kirti / Fame, Dhairya /Courage, Kshama / tolerance, Puranas, Vedas, Vedangas, yoga, Sankhya, Janma/Birth, Marana /Death, Bhuta /the Past, Bhavishyat / the Future etc. . Bhu Devi commended Paramatma further saying: *Bhaasi Vaasi Pratipaasi twam paasi vichestasy, Kruddhyamasi Ksaantimaayeesi twamdeepayaasi varshasi/ Twam haasyaasi na niryaaasi nirvaapayaasi Jaagrasi, Nih seshayaasi Bhutaani KaaloBhutwaa Yugakshaye/* (Paramatma! You shine, you flow, you heat up, you save, and you act decisively; also you get angry, you cool down, you display radiance and heat, you pour rains; You laugh, you stay still, you hit and kill, you wake up and at Pralaya times you destroy and terminate). Interestingly, Bhagavan re-creates the Universe again out of the ‘sehsha’ or the remainder and hence is called the *Sesha*. Even as Brahma, Indra, Varuna and all other Devatas are subject to an end, Vishnu is permanent and thus known as *Achuta*; since others Deities are of the ‘haran’ type or the ephemeral unlike Narayana, the latter is called *Hari*; since Brahma and other Devas could not perceive his ‘Anta’ or the End, Bhagavan is known as *Ananta*; even for thousands of crores of ‘Kalpas’ Vishnu remains without ‘ksharata’ or damage, he is *Akshara*; as he is capable of ‘Vishtambhana’ or obstruction to the ‘Charaachara Jagat’/ mobile or immobile worlds, Bhagavan is titled *Vishnu*; as Rishis defined water as ‘Naara’ and as Bhagavan resides in it, Vishnu who rests on water is *Narayana*; as Prithvi which is characterised as a ‘Gov’ / Cow gets submerged in water at the end of each and every Yuga, Bhagavan Narayana is *Govinda*; in the context of Tatwa Gyana, ‘Indriyas’ or Human Limbs are excitable with emotions or ‘harshikas’ and thus Govinda is called *Hrishikesh*; at the Pralaya, all the Beings from Brahma downward take refuge in Vishnu and also get absorbed into him, Narayana is designated as *Vaasudeva*; in each and every Kalpaanta / Yugaanta, Total Existence is subjected to ‘Akarshana’ or gets magnetised to Vishnu and hence he is known as *Samkarshana*; since Bhagavan separates distinct sectors of Devas, Rakshasas and Asuras, he is known as *Samkarshana*; as ‘Dharma Viseshajna’, he is *Pradumna*; and as no Praani / Being could resist him, he is

called *Aniruddha*. I am your refugee, Bhagavan! As Prithvi was desperate, Bhagavan replied that since she rendered the Madhaviya Stotra with extraordinary devotion, she would never be let down and be afraid of any untoward happening. He then assumed the form of a ‘Varaha’: *Shata yojana vistirnarmucchritam dwigunam tatah, Naala jeemuta samkaasham meghastanitanihswanam/ Girisamhananam Bhimam sweta teekshanaagra damshtinam, Vidyudagni prateekaashaama adityasama tejasam, Peenavrittatayataskandham drupta shaardulagaaminam/ Peenonnata kateedeshey Vrushalakshana pujitam, Rupasaasthaaya vipulam Vaaraahamajitho harih/* (The Varaha was invincible to any Being in ‘Srishti’; its body was spread over hundred yojanas across and was double its height; was like a huge mountain; ferocious and white, its top part with most powerful horns; unvisionable and radiant like lightning and fire; illuminated like Surya Deva; had magnificently broad shoulders, royal gait, etc. with the features of a massive sized bull.) *Pruthvyuddharanaiva pravivsha Rasatalam, Vedapaado yupadamshtrah kratudanti schutibhushanah/ Aajyanaasah struva tundaha Samaghoshaswano Mahaan, Satya dharma mayah Shrimaan karmavikrama satkrutah/ Praayaschhita nakho ghorah Pashujaanurmukhaakritih , Udgeetha homalingostha beejoushadhi mahaakalpah/ Vayavyaaraatmaa yagnaastha vikrutih Somashonitah, Vedaskandho havirgandho havyakavya vibhagavaan/ Pragavamsha kayo dhurutimaan naanaa deekshaaabhiranvitah, Dakshinaahrudayo yogi Mahaasatramayo Mahaan/Upakarmoshtha ruchakah Pravargyavatartha bhushanah/ Naanaachhando gatipatho gruhyopanishadaasanah, Chhaayaapatnee sahaayo vai mandishringa ivocchhitah/ Rasaatalatalo magnaam Rasaatala talam gataam, Prabhurloka hitaayaarya damshogrenojjawahara taam/ Tatah Swasthaanamaaneeya Varaahah Pritheedharah, Mumocha purvam manasaa dhaaritaam cha Vasumdharaam/ Tato Jagaama nirvaanam modini tasya Devaaya sambhavey/* ( Vishnu as Varaha thus entered ‘Rasatala’; its four feet were like four Vedas; its teeth like Yagnas, its face was like the Yagna Kunda; its tongue was Yagna; Brahma was like Varaha ‘mastaka’/ head; Agni was like his tongue; Kusha grass was like his body hairs; day and night were like his eyes; the Six Vedangas were like the ear-ornaments; Ghrutahuti or the oblations of ghee in a homa was his gulp; Sama Veda was like his raised sound of groan; Prayaschitta like his his fierce nails; his ‘rupa’was like Yagna; Vayu like his Antaratma; his blood was like Somarasa; Vedas were like his shoulders; Dakshina was his heart; Upakarma was like the region between his lips; Veda-gamana Marga and Upanidhads were like seat; and Chaaya was like his wife. Such Varaha Murti dived into the depths of Rasatala and with the sheer push of his tusks lifted Bhudevi in one huge lift-up, deposited her on the tusks and in one giant leap emerged to keep her in her original position. Thus the unique ‘Achintya’ relieved the helplessness of Prithvi Devi forever.) Matsya Purana

**Varaha Deva rescues Bhu Devi, His description, Stuti and Worship :** As the entire Universe came to stand still when ‘Dishas’ (Directions), ‘Grahas’ (Planets), and Celestial Beings got stuck excepting Thri Murthies, Bhu Devi and Brahma appealed to Bhagavan Vishnu to uplift Her as She was sinking under deep Ocean and to save the Universe. Bhu Devi prayed to Vishnu desperately saying: ‘Praseeda mama Devesha Lokanadha Jagatpathey, Bhaktayaam Sharanam aashraya praseeda mama Madhava’: ‘Hey, Jagatpathi Devesha Madhava, Kindly have mercy and save me and Devotees like me; You are Surya, Chandra, Yama, Kubera, Indra, Varuna, Agni and Vayu; You are the ephemeral and Eternal; You are the Dishas or Directions, Vidishas or Direction-less; You are the Ten Incarnations; You are the Constant despite passing Yugas; You are the Earth, Wind, Sky, Water and Fire; You are the Sound, Touch, Form, Taste and Smell; You are the Stars, Yama, ‘Rasi Chakra’ or the ever-moving Cycle of Raasis; You are the concept of Time like months, fortnights, weeks and days; days and nights, Years and Seasons and Six

‘Rasas’; You are the Rivers, Oceans, Mountains and Maha ‘Sarpas’( Giant Snakes); Meru, Mandhar, Vindhya, Malaya and Dardura Mountain, Himalaya, Nishidha; Sudarshan Chaka, Pinaka Dhanush, Yoga and Sankhya Shastra; You are the Srishti, Sthiti and Laya Karaka; You are the Sukshma and Brihat Swarupa; You are the ‘Maha Yajna’, Embodiment of Vedas; Producer of Amrit with which the Deva Lokas are sustained; You are the Adi (Initial), Madhya (Middle) and Anthasswarupa or Antaryami; You are the Medha, Buddhi and Smriti; You are the Griha Devatha and Griha Mangal Kara; Sarva Swarupa, Sarvesa, Sarva Vyapaka! Do save me from sinkng; thus prayed Devi Prithvi’! The ‘Phala Sruti’ of Vishnu Stuti by Bhu Devi would heal the sick, bless with progeny, grant a husband / wife, release from prison or legal entanglements and provide contentment in life. In reply to the ‘Stuti’ by Bhu Devi, Maha Vishnu assured that as a result of Her Bhakti (devotion) He would lift Her up along with mountains, forests, Samudra, Rivers, Seven Dwipas and all the rest; He assumed a colossal manifestation of six thousand yojanas of height, three thousand yojanas of width and one thousand yojanas of Varaha Roop; He liberated Prithvi by His left ‘damshttra’ (Jaw) along with the totality of mountains, forests, Sapta Dwipas and their contents including Oceans and Rivers all in tact!’Bhu Devi was indeed excited at the unprecedented miracle that had happened and immediately requested Lord Varaha about the **Varaha Puja Vidhana**’.She posed innumerable queries on the method of Sthapana, Avahana, and Visarjana; the precautions to be observed on the preceding day of the Puja, the best timings to perform the Puja, restrictions of eating during the Puja time and so on. Bhagavan replied that He might not be impressed by thousands of charities or several Yajnas, but even simple-minded persons with concentration and earnestness performed His Bhajan, although full of imperfections, would definitely deserved His consideration! All the same, since Bhu Devi asked certain questions, Varaha Deva gave suitable replies: Whoever prays to Him midnight, or at the time of dusk, or at mid-day and whoever observed fast on Dwadasi days would never be neglected. Merely performing ‘Karma’ or an act of Puja devoid of devotion and sincerity would not necessarily impress Bhagavan Vishnu. But if a devotee with detachment and concentration did the Dwadasi fast and offered water in his ‘anjali’(palms) facing Sun God reciting ‘Om Namo Narayana’ Mantra, he would be sure of ‘Swargaloka Nivas’ for as many drops of water as spilt out from his palms! Those devotees worshipping Narayana offered white **flowers** firmly trusting that Narayana was sitting to accept the offerings along with the Mantra: Sumanah Sumana Grihna Priyo me Bhagavan Harih, Itena Mantrana Sumano dadat; the devotee offers next ‘**Gandham**’(Sandal wood paste) saying: ‘Namosthu Vishnavey Vyaktavyaktha Sugandhi cha, Grahan Grahana Namu Bhagavatey Vishnavey/ Anena Mantreyna Gandham dadaatu’; **Dhupam** (scented incense sticks) saying: *Pravishtey me Dhupadhupanam grihnath Bhagavan Achyutah Anena mantryena Dhupam dadathu*. Bhagavan said further: Out of my affection oh Devi, I have outlined the ‘Pujakram’; while performing ‘Naivedyam’ of Bhakshya, Bhojya and such other material, devotees tend to ignore my accompaniments like Shanka, Chakra, and Gada and that should be avoided! Those who achieve the Dwadashi Puja with self-satisfaction and clear conscience are exalted and devoid of ill health, constant fear, mental confusion and discontent. (Varaha Purana)

**Bhagavan Varaha’s questionnaire to humanity about the roots of grief and Joy!** The reasons for fear, unhappiness and dissatisfaction among human beings were described by Bhagavan Varaha Himself by posing the following questions: Why should not human beings refrain from feelings of ego and possessive nature instead of turning to the Supreme? Why should persons resort to consuming and selling those prohibited and anti-social items ignoring awareness of the Supreme? Why do human beings turn away poor guests while taking food although they well afford without realising the feelings of the hapless?

How could those who are deceitful, desirous of else's wives, always complaining, jealous, evil minded and anti-social be not afraid of the Supreme? Why do people act against their own inner conscience and allow death and disease chase them closely without even being mindful of the consequences, never even blinking an eye about Almighty's Omni- presence? How is it that some persons are beautiful but arrogant, smart but sadistic, outwardly virtuous but inwardly villainous not even with a remote sense of God's existence? Some persons are highly learned and intellectual but some are deaf and dumb; this discrimination is indeed a curse of fate. Is this not a cause of unhappiness? Which worse curse has befallen between two brothers, one with good progeny and one without? Blessed with a human life and not that of an animal or a bird, a person does not even think of Narayana; which worse misfortune does he have, causing unknown mental dissatisfaction? On the contrary, a devotee shares the limited food that he had, but decides to donate half of it to a deserving guest; what more pleasure that he gets! If a bhakta performs Tri Sandhya and worships Vishnu; which better satisfaction that he achieves! Every month comes one 'Amavasya' and a pious man makes it a point to perform Tarpana to his ancestors of three generations; what better mental contentment that he would possess! If a person's urge does not get disturbed even if several charming women fail to tempt him, what more happiness does the couple achieve together! A person with two wives whom he likes equally well and the wives too are accommodative, what more of an ideal situation there could be! If a person treats his aged parents with respect and care and if the person's wife too is respectful and affectionate to them, could Lord Narayana bless them all in the family any better! Varaha Purana

**Varaha Deva describes 'Aparadhas' (Offences) to be avoided:** Having narrated the causes of grief or joy to Bhru Devi, Bhagavan Varaha described certain 'Aparadhas' to be avoided in one's mundane life. No doubt, symbolic eating of Bhagavan's Prasad by humans is not disapproved but offering 'Bhog' not suitable to be offered to Devas is unpardonable. In fact, offering of that kind of 'Bhojan' or food which is unfit for consumption to anybody is considered as an 'Aparadh'. Going near to a person without 'Dantadhavan' or cleaning teeth, tongue and face especially if the person is performing 'Dharmik Karma' or a Virtuous Deed is considered as second 'Aparadha'. To approach near or touch the Idol of Varaha Deva is a third Aparadha. Approaching Varah Deva for His 'Darshan', let alone His worship, after seeing a female in the period of menses is noted as a fourth 'Aparadha'. Similarly, a person should perform 'Achamanam' after seeing a dead body. Worse still, if a person touches a dead body, one should take head-bath, perform the 'Samskaras' and approach Divinity. The Seventh Aparadha is to perform ablutions during worship time and worse still not to purify the body and mind to resume the interrupted Puja with 'Kshamaapana' Mantra. Wearing a blue 'Vastra' or cloth to perform Vishnu Puja is the eighth 'Aparadha'. Telling lies during Bhagavan Puja is a ninth offence. Touching with impure hands the Puja Items meant for worship is a Tenth Aparadha. The eleventh offence is that an angry person engaged in unreasonable tasks and allowed to do so. The twelfth Aparadha is to use Vishnu's name in the Society to secure favours. The thirteenth offence is to wear a red cloth while performing Vishnu Puja. The fourteenth offence is that the puja is performed by wearing a black vastra. The fifteenth offence is that somebody touches the body of the devotee. A devotee feeding an 'Agjnani' / Unethical person by himself is the sixteenth blemish. Performing puja by wearing an uncouth cloth is a seventeenth offence. Worshipping the Deva after consuming fish and meat is considered as a grave mistake. Eating chicken meat before Deva Puja is the nineteenth fault. Touching 'Dipa' (light) and without 'Achaman' and touching Devas is the twentieth mistake. Having visited 'Smashanas' (burial ground) and seeking to touch Deva's Idol without purifying the self by bath etc. is a known blunder and constitutes a grave sin. If Bhagavan Puja is

taken up, after consuming 'Pinyakam' (Pitthi), it would be construed as the twenty second offence. Worship after consuming pig meat, wine and kusumb flower are the twenty third, twenty fourth and twenty fifth offences. Whoever wears somebody else's Vastra while performing the Puja of Deva is accused of a blunder numbered twenty sixth in the series of 'Aparadhas'. Consuming the 'Anna Prasada' (food) meant for offering to Devas and Pitras before the 'Naivedya' ('Mantrapurvaka'- offering) constitutes an abject blunder and is the twenty seventh in the series. Those who wear 'padarakshas' (chappals) and perform Deva's worship would have committed a grave error which is counted as the twenty eighth 'Aparadha'. Worship after massage is considered as an affront to Varaha Deva bearing number twenty ninth in the series of 'Aparadhas'. Performers of Deva Puja suffering from 'Ajeerthi' (Stomach upset) attract the thirtieth offence. Those worshippers of Vishnu Deva offering 'Dhoop' or incense would have made a mistake for the thirty first offence since that offer has a negative effect without Gandham (Sandal Paste) and Pushpam (flowers). Finally the Door of Deva's symbolic abode ought to be opened by the resounding sounds of Bheris, conch shells and big bells; else this Aparadha too would have been perpetrated as the thirty third one! Varaha Purana

**Description of Planets:** Bhuloka is a Planet known as divided into Seven Parts, resembling a Lotus flower, each leaf with the names as above. Its length and breadth is one million yojanas or eight million miles constituting Sapta Dvipas - Jambu, Plaksha, Salmaali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkala ; Sapta Patalaas : Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala. Sapta Samudras : Sumeru , Kailasa, Malaya, Himalaya, Udyachala, Agastyachala, Suvela and Gandhamadana; and Sapta Parvatas Sumeru , Kai las, Malaya, Himalaya, Udyachala, Agastyachala, Suvela and Gandhamadana. Jambu Dweepa which is in the middle of the spiral of the Planet has a length and breadth of one hundred thousand Yojanas or 800,000 miles and is subdivided into nine regions. It is surrounded by saline water. Sumeru Mountain is like the pericarp of the lotus like Bhuloka and is the axis of Jambu Dweepa; its height is as much as the breadth of Jambu Dweepa ie. 100,000 yojanas or 800,000 miles. Pluksha Dweepa, named after Pluksha Tree, is around the Jambu Dweepa and is double the size of the former. It is surrounded by an Ocean of sugar cane juice which is also of the size of the Pluksha Dweepa. Its inhabitants- Hamsas, Patangas, Urdhvayanas and Satyangas live for thousand years and pray to Sun and Lord Vishnu; they are beautiful like demigods. Salmali Dweepa, named after Salmali Tree, is again double the size of the Pluksha Dweepa and has the Sura Sagara or the Ocean of Liquor around it, inhabiting Srutidharas, Vidyadharas, Vasundharas and Isadharas, all praying to Moon and Lord Vishnu. Among the seven Rivers of the Dweepa were Anumati, Sarasvathi, Sinevali, Raha and Kuhu and the seventh was the Home of Garuda praying to Lord Vishnu. Semi God of Moon created two fortnights, viz. Sukla Paksha and Krishna Paksha. Kusa Dweepa is again double the size of Salmali Dweepa ie. 800,000 yojanas (64,00,000 miles) and is known for Kusa Grass, used for Sacred Rituals (Homams, Yagyas and all Holy Acts) and is appropriately surrounded by an Ocean of Ghee and the form of God of Fire (in mild form). It is inhabited by Kusulas, Kovidas, Abhiyuktas and Kulakas, corresponding to Jambu Dweepa's four castes- Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vyasyas and Sudras. Krouncha Dweepa, named after the Krouncha Mountain is surrounded by an Ocean of Milk and Butter and is the second form of Varuna or Water, again the size of Kusa Dweepa, ie. of the size of 1600,000 yojanas ( 124,80,000 miles), inhabited by Purushas, Rabhas, Vanikas and Devakas. Shaka Dweepa, named after Shaka tree providing fragrance all around, has the dual form of Vayu, or Air and is double the size of Krouncha Dweepa, inhabiting four castes- Ratavrata, Satyavrata, Danavrata and Anuvrata, all practising Pranayama and mustic Yoga. Pushkara Dweepa has 64,00,000 yojanas (51, 200,000 miles) surrounded by Sweet Water and is the Seat

of Lord Brahma known as 'Karma Maya'. In the middle of the Dweepa is the Mountain Manasottara. Between the Mountains of Meru and Manasottara is so much distance as from Mountain Manasottara and Lokaloka Mountain. In other words, the distance between Mountain Meru to Mountain Lokaloka, is a quarter of the diameter of the Universe, (125,000,000 Yojanas or one billion miles).Maha Bhagavata

**Outlines of Manvantaras, 'Prithvi' (Earth) and of 'Sapta' (Seven) Dwipas :** In one Manvantara, there are thirty crore sixty six lakh twenty thousand human years. The first Manvantara was of **Swayambhu**, followed by Swarochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Chakshusha, and the current one is of Vivaswata. Swayambhu had ten sons and among the descendants was the illustrious Priyavrata who ruled Sapta Dwipas and in turn, who was responsible for measuring and dividing the 'Sapta Dwipas' named seven of ten sons(as three others opted out) viz. Agnirgha to Jambu Dwipa, Meghadhiti to Pluksh Dwipa, Vapushyaman to Shasmali Dwipa, Jyotishman to Kusha Dwipa, Rithuman to Krouncha Dwipa, Avyaya to Shaaka Dwipa and Saavan to Pundarikka Dwipa. Jambu Dwipa's Prajapati Agnirgha had nine sons viz. Naabhi, Kimpurusha, Hari, Ilavrita, Ramya, Hiranya, Kuru, Bhadra and Ketumala. The Region beyond Himalayas was given to Kimpurusha whose residents were all happy, devoid of fear of death or disease; Naabhi's son Rishabh whose son was Bharata and thus the Region under his rule was Bharata. Sumati was the name of Bharata's son but the former retired to forest life and gave the Kingdom to the descendants of Priyavrata. The entire Bhuvana loka (Earth) is stated to occupy an area of fifty crore Yojanas (Approx. 15 km one Yojana), comprising Jambu Dwipa, Pluksha Dwipa, Shalmali Dwipa, Kusha Dwipa, Krouncha Dwipa, Shaaka Dwipa, and Pushkara Dwipa, each approximately double the size of the previous Dwipas and surrounded by Oceans of Lavana (Salt), Ikshu (Sugarcane juice), Sura (Amrit), Sarpi / Ghrita (Ghee / Classified Butter ), Dadhi ( curd), Dugdha (Milk) and Jala (Water). **Jambu Dwipa** has an area of one lakh Yojanas by way of area, length and roundness, containing the mountains of Himavaan, Hemakut, Trishabh, Meru, Nila, Shweta, and Shringi. While these mountain ranges are governed by the Dikpalakas like Indra, the middle region sparkles with the prominent presence of Brahma with the four directions being blessed by Mandara, Gandhamaadan, Vipul and Suparshva Mountains on top of which are situated by the famous Trees of Kadamba, Jambu, Aswatthha and Vata respectively. On the Eastern side are the Jathar and Devakutha Mountains, which are mutually spread out as far as Nila and Nishadh, on the Meru's western side are Nishadh and Paariyaatra, Southern side are Nila and Nishadh and on the Southern side are Kailash and Himalayas. It is this Jambu Dwipa sanctified with Great Mountains, Oceans, Rivers, Sarovars, Holy Trees and fantastic range of Natural Magnificence that is known as Punya Bhumi of which Bharata is popular as Karma Bhumi, which is the springboat of Swarga, Apavarga that is the opposite, Manushyata (humanness), Naraka (Hell) and innumerable possibilities of rebirth from flies to Devas, where Karma or Action- be it Virtuous or Vicious- secures the opposite reaction. Holy River Ganga originated from Maha Vishnu's sacred feet at Dhruva Loka, passing through Chandra Mandal which was the 'Adhara' or the hold of water of the Universe.The River Water was sanctified by the hot and radiant Sunrays, fell on the Sumeru Mountain top and divided as four forceful flows and got distributed on Mandara and other Mountains. Gradually, the surging currents of Ganga occupied several /Regions, breaking Mountain boulders and travelling towards 'Chaitraratha Vana' known as Sita. It was that Sita Ganga which fell on Gandhamadana Parvat as Alaknanda and gladdened the nearby Devatas at Nandanavana, from there reached Manasarovar and fell on Himalayas where in response to the prayers of King Bhagiratha, Shambhu Deva performing 'Tapas atop Mahadri, withstood the force of the flood to fall on his head and released just a stream from His Jatajut (knotted hair). As Ganga fell on the Earth, it got divided as seven flows, three of which travelled southwards as Mahanadi and merged with the Ocean, one

stream followed King Bhagiratha's chariot to sanctify the ashes of his ancestors and three more parts fell on the western foothills of Meru called 'Vipul paad' at Suchakshu Sub Mountain; one part moved on to Ketumala Varsha and finally into the Southern Sea, another part on Rishabhadika Mountain travelling northern side and yet another part as Bhadrasona River as also as Mahanadi on Shankhakarta Mountain from where via Vrishabhadri to Kurukshetra. Thus the Holy Ganga got spread across the entire length and breadth of 'Aryavarta' and even far beyond.

**Sapta Dwipas with spot-light on Bharata, Sapta-Urthvalokas and Sapta-Adholokas:** Priyavrata, the grand son of Swayambhu Manu appointed his sons as the Kings of Seven Dwipas viz. Agnidhra to Jambu Dwipa, Methatithi to Plaksha Dwipa, Vapushman or Vasu to Shalmala Dwipa, Jyotishmaan to Kusha, Dyutmaan to Krouncha, Hayva to Shakha Dwipa, and Savana to Pushkara Dwipa. Referring about Jambu Dwipa specifically, Suta Muni explained that it had an area of hundred thousand yojanas surrounded by salt sea with clusters of rocks full of heavy deposits of minerals and precious stones with huge population and bountiful nature dotted by six major Mountain chains named Nila, Nishada, Sweta, Hema-kunta, Himavan and Shringaman. Himaalayas are always covered with snow, Hemakuta has abundant deposits of gold, Nila has blue sapphires, Nishadha is picturesque and awe-inspiring, Sweta is white and Shringaman is full of Mounts with peacock-feather colours and also deposits of gold. But Meru beyond the King of Mountains in between two circular ranges was stated to be the visiting place of Deva ganaas, Gandharvas, Yakshas and Apsarasas; it is surrounded by four Bhuvanas or Deshas viz. Bhadrashwa to East, Bharata to South, Ketumala to West and Kurus to the North of Meru.

Before elaborating on Jambu Dwipa, a spotlight on **Bharata Varsha** is given where Swayambhu like Fourteen Manus appeared and extensive Praja-Srishti was facilitated. This indeed is popularly noted as Karma Bhumi where the impact of Good and Bad deeds is experienced and carried forward; this again is the Birth Place of Vedas, Vedangas like Astrology, Astronomy, various branches of Literature, 'Chatusshaasthi Kalaas' or Sixty Four Kalas or Arts, etc. The uniqueness of Bharata Varsha is common Vedic culture and faith with marginal adaptations. The Original Bharata Varsha was stated to comprise nine divisions viz. Indra Dwipa(Andamans?), Kesharumata (Malaya?), Tamravarna (Sri Lanka?), Gabbatimanta, Nagadwipa, Sowmya, Gandharva, and Varunya; the ninth part was stated to have been submerged in the Seas even at the time of conceiving Brahmanda Purana! Enclosed three sides with Oceans, Bharata Varsha has an estimated distance of Nine thousands of Yojanas (1 yojana= 12km) from the Origin of Ganga to Kanyakumari at the southern tip of Bharat approx. Around the Bharata Varsha the surrounding Regions are stated to be predominated by Mlecchas: Kiraataas to the East, Yavanas to the West, while the hinter land comprised Brahmana, Vaisya and Kshatriyas and by and large Varnaashrama Policy of Brahmana- Kshatriyas-Vaishyas continued to be the pattern obtaining till date with Brahmanas engaged in Sacred Deeds like Yajna-Yaagas, Vratas, and abstinence; Kshatriyas with defence and Order in the Society and Vaishyas with money accounting. There are seven Kula Parvatas viz. Mahendra, Sahya, Shuktimanta, Rishya, Vindhya and Pariyatra. Also thousands of other Mountains whose Shikhiraas or Mountains were peculiar such as Mandara, Vaihara, Durdura, Kolahala, Mainaka, Vaatamdham, Nagagiri, Paandura, Tunga -prasta, Krishna Giri, Pushpagiri, Ujjayanta, Raivataka, Shri Parvata, Chitrakuta and Kuta shaila and innumerable smaller mountains. Also countless Rivers existed like Ganga, Sindhu, Saraswati, Shatadru, Chandrabhaga, Yamuna, Sarayu, Iravati, Vitasta, Gomati, Kausiki, Gandaki, Maha Nadi, Kshipra, Brahmaputra, Avanti, Narmada, Godavari, Krishnaveni, Tungabhadra, Kaveri, and thousands of others providing drinking water, bathing and enabling Yajnas, Homas, Pitru Karyas, Tirtha Yatras and incounty river-travel. Quite a few legends abound about the significance of various Mountains

and Rivers in Bharat. In fact historic and religious events were ascribed to most of the mountains and rivers such as Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Godavari and of Himalayas, Kailasa, Sahya, Vindhya, Rishyashringa and so on. The Epic Hero of Ramayana, Shri Rama was stated to have covered Dandakaranya in Mid-Bharat by foot and did miracles especially in killing Asuras and Rakshasas. To north of Sahya Mountain where River Godavari flowed, Shri Rama was reputed to have built Govardhana Nagar and planted plants of Aoushadhis especially near Bharadwaja's Ashram; this was just an example in the current Brahmanda Purana. The broad spectrum of population in the length and breadth of Bharat ranged from Anga-Vanga-Chola-Bahlika-Abhira- Panchalika- Gandhara-Yavana-Sindhu Souveera-Kekaya-Kambhoja-Kashmira-Chola-Pandya-Pulinda-Vaidarbha-Kakatiya-Andhra- Maharashtra-Kerala-Saraswata-Kirata- China- Tushara and so on and most of them governed by the Varaashrama of Brahmana-Kshatriya- Vaishya and others. All of them were motivated by the 'Chaturvidha Purushaartthaas' of Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Mokshas or Virtuous Living, Earning Livelihood, Fulfillment of Desires and Salvation!

Features of Bhugola are mentioned as divided into Seven Territories viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmala, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkara surrounded by Sapta Samudras (Seven Seas), viz. Lavana (Salt), Ikshurasa (Sugar cane juice), Sura (Wine), Ghrita (Ghee), Dadhi (Curd), Dugdha (Milk) and Swadujala (Sweet water). **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 to 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 for 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 bathing in the Lake and Parikrama of the Mountain were most certain steps to attaining Kailasa / 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 Kingdom 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 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 Krouncha 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. **Urthwa Lokas:** As a part of the Cosmic Egg beyond the Lokaloka, Suta Muni described as follows: *Lokaardha samhita Lokaa niraalokastu bhahyatah, Lokavistaaramatram tu dhyuloh sarvataa bahih/Paricchinnah samantaascha udakenaavrutastu sah, Alokaatparatas -chaapi hyandamaavrityatishthati/ Andastyantastwamey Lokaah Saptadwipaascha Modini, Bhurlokotha Bhuvarkolah 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 Bhutaadischa apyasau Mahaan, Mahamcha sopyanantena hyavaktena tu dhaaryatey/ Anantamaparivyaktam dashadhaa Sukdshamevacha, Anantamakrutaa tmaanaadi nidhanam cha yat/ Anityam Parataghoram anaalambam -anaamayam, Naikayojanasahastram Vipakashtamanaavrutam/* (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 Ayvakta or Unknown, Ananta or Endless, Aghora or Uncontaminated, Niraadhara or Unsupported, Avikara (Featureless), Sukshma (Subtle) and Avikarana (Unchanged and Undistorted).

**Adholokas:** 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! (Brahmanda Purana)

**Description of Bhuvan Kosha:** Thus Earth is stated to be spread over seventy thousand yojanas with a height of ten thousand yojanas. (Yojana is 15km. approx). Underneath the Earth are stated to be seven underground worlds with ten thousand yojanas each viz. Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Mahatala, Sutala, Talatala and Rasatala/Patala. These Patalas are described as of black, yellow, red, white, stony, kankar (brownish

sediment) or gold colours. Underneath the Patalas is surmised as Seshha Nag or Ananta Deva holding the entire weight of Earth. It is further stated that some one lakh yojanas higher than Earth is Surya Mandala.; some one lakh yojanas above the Surya Mandala is the Chandra Mandala from where Nakshatras shine about a lakh yojanas there-beyond. The Planet of Budha (Mercury) is two lakh yojanas higher than that of the Nakshatras. The planet of Shukra (Venus) is two lakh yojanas above that of Budha. Mangal is two lakh above Sukra and like-wise two lakhs each are Brihaspati (Jupiter) and Shanaischara above each other. Saptarshi loka is situated one lakh yojanas from that of Saturn and Dhruva loka is further up by one more lakh yojanas. Thus Dhruva is the ultimate of 'Bhurbhuvah Swaha' or the highest point of Thee Lokas, beyond Earth. Some one crore yojanas beyond Dhruva is 'Maharloka' where Siddha ganas like 'Kalpaanta jeevi' Bhrihu. 'Janaloka' is situated two crore yojanas above Maharloka resided by Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana and Sanat Kumaras and Siddha Purushas like the Sanaka brothers stay. Eight crore yojanas above the Jana loka is 'Tapoloka' where Devatas reside. Some nintysix crore yojanas far beyond Tapoloka is the Satya loka or Brahma loka. From Bhulok to Surya Mandala is known as Bhuvar loka and from Surya loka to Dhruva loka is called Swargaloka which is of fifteen lakh yojana area. This region is popularly called the place where Brahmanda was cut, from where the 'Pancha Bhutas' of 'Prithivyaapastejovaayurakaasas' got materialised. Around all these is said to spread 'Ahamkar' which created Maha Tatwa and Prakriti and far away from these manifestations is the Unique Paramatma of 'Vyaktaavyata' Supreme Being. *Surya Deva's Chariot* has a length of nine thousand yojanas and width of double the size, has seven horses named after seven 'Chandaas' viz. Gayatri, Brihati, Ushnik, Jagati, Trishthup, Anushtup and Pankti; and is responsible for denoting 'Samvatsaras'; 'Ayanas', Ritis (seasons), months, days and nights. The view of 'Sishumara' or the dolphin like group of planets and Stars which is some thirteen lakh yojanas away on the sky is stated to be the Swarupa of Vishnu Himself, with Dhruva at the tail which is self-revolving and rotating Chandra, Surya and other planets. The Chariot of Surya visions every month the Maharshis in various lokas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Yakshas, etc besides being the embodiment of Vedas and the 'Pratyaksha Deva' percieveable to the entire Srishti of the Super Lord's making. Similarly the chariots of Chandra and other planets were described by Agni Deva: Chandra has a tricycled chariot with ten horses moving freely among the nakshatra lokas. Agni Deva informed Sage Vasishtha that as many as 30,333 Devatas enjoyed Chandra's nector-like 'Kalas'; for example, on Amavasya day, Pitrugana were able to enjoy one 'Rashmi' (moon ray) called 'Ama' and were able absorb to only two 'kalas'. Budha's chariot is made of Vayu and Agni with eight horses; Shukra has an eight horsed chariot, like in the case of Brihaspati and Shanaischara as well as Rahu and Ketu. Prithvi comprises Seven Dwipas surrounded by Seven Oceans, the Dwipas being Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkara. The Oceans are Lavana, Ikshu, Sura, Ghrita, Dadhi and Jala. Jambu Dwipa in which Bharat is situated surrounded with salty water and is popular as 'Karma Bhumi!' (Agni Purana)

**Bharata, the Unique Karma Bhumi in Jambudwipa & an outline of other Dwipas:** The entire Bhuloka (Earth) was divided into seven major Territories viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Shyalma, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkara surrounded by Sapta Samudras (Seven Seas) viz. Lavana (Salt), Ikshurasa (Sugar cane juice), Sura (wine), Ghrita (Classified Butter or Ghee), Dadhi (Curd), Dugdha (Milk) and Swadu Jala (Sweet Water). Prithvi is stated to have a lotus-like shape, each one of the angles situated with Sapta Parvatas (Seven Main Mountians) with Himavan, Hemakuta and Nishadha in South; Nila, Sweta and Shringvan in North, in the Center is Meru with a height of eighty four thousand yojanas, sixteen thousand yojanas of depth, thirty two thousand yojanas of circumference. Bharata Varsha, Kimpurasha and Hari Varshas are to the south of Meru; Ramyaka Varsha is in North; Bhadrasha in East; and Ketumala in West. In Jambu Dwipa, there is Bharata Varsha above the Sea and below the Himalaya called Bharati with a width of nine thousand yojanas; this is known as Karma bhumi where Swarga and Moksha are accessible to those who are desirous and deserving. There are seven major Kula Parvatas / mountains in Bharat viz. Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Shaktiman, Ruksha, Vindhya and Pariyatra: *Atah*

*sampraapyatey Swargey Mukti tasmaatpraapyati vai, Tirvaktam narakamchaapichaapi yam thyatah purushah Dwijaah/ Itah Swargamcha Mokshamcha Madhyechaantey cha gacchati, Na khalvanyatra martaanaam karmabhumau vidheeyatey/* (It is in this Bharata from where attainment of Swarga becomes possible not only for human beings but even Pashu-Pakshis (animals and birds) with; ‘Sakaama Sadhana’ or Endeavors while in the materialistic world one could reach Swarga, whereas Nishkama Sadhana could even secure Moksha (Salvation). But negative results might be accrued in performing sins and would attract Narakas besides getting sucked into the whirlpool of births and deaths. There is no other place in one’s life excepting in Bharata Varsha or the Karma Bhumi where such a possibility ever exists. Spread over an area of thousand yojans long from North to South, this hallowed land is divided into Nine Regions viz. Indra dwipa, Kasetutana also known as ‘Upto Setu’, Tamravarna, Gabhastimaan, Nagadwipa, Soumya dwipa, Gandharwa dwipa, Varunadwipa and the Sea-surrounded ninth dwipa. To the east-ward of Bharata is the abode of Kiratas while the west-ward is of Yavanaas; inhabitants of the Central Region are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Sudras whose professions are Yagnas, Yuddha, Vanijya and Seva ( Sacrifices, Battles, Commerce and Trade and Service) respectively. In this Bharata, are of residents of Kuru, Panchala, Madhya desha, Purvadesha, Kamarupa (Assam), Poundya, Kalinga (Orissa), Magadha, Dakshina Pradesha, Aparanta, Sourashtra (Kathiyavad), Sudra, Abhira, Arbuda (Abu), Maru (Marvada), Malva, Pariyatra, Souveera, Sindhu, Shalva, Madra, Ambashtha, and Parasika. The Yugas of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali are applicable only to Bharata Varsha and nowhere else. While Bharata is the Karma Bhumi practising Yagnas and Daanaas, compared to all other Countries in Jambu Dwipa are Bhoga / luxury-oriented. *Atraapi Bharatam sreshtham Jambudwipay Maha Muney, Yatohi Karmabhuresha yatonyaa bhogamayah/ Atra Janmasahasraanaam Sahstrairapi Satthama, Yadacchil - labatey Janturmaanushyam punyasanchayaat/ Gaayanti Devaah kila geetakaani dhanyaastu ye Bharata bhumbhaagey, Swargaapa-vargaaspada hetu bhutey bhavanti bhuyah Purushaa Manushyaah, armanya samkalpita tat phalaani samnasya VishnoParamaatmarupey/* (Bharata Varsha is the best of all the Places in Jambu Dwipa as the former is the Karma Bhumi compared to all other Deshas which are primarily pleasure-loving. It would be only after lakhs of births that one could secure a human life after storing considerable Punya; in fact, Devas sing hymns saying that those who take birth as human beings are blessed since they are born as Manavaas who had great opportunity to qualify to attain Swarga and Moksha by following a religious and disciplined life and by following Nishkaama Dharma or without strings of ‘Plalaapeksha’ or fruits of returns).

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 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 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 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 Janradana. 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. Brahma Purana

**Bharata Varsha, its Mountains, Rivers and Territories:** Mahatma Markandeya explained further to Dwijottama Koushtik the features of Bharata Varsha as follows: Bharata Varsha comprised nine parts viz. Indra Dwip, Ksheruman, Tamravarna, Soumya, Gabhastimaan, Naga Dwipa, Gandharva, Vaaruna and *Bharat*. The ninth segment Bharat is surrounded by Oceans, its Eastern side by Kiratas, Western side by Yavanaganas and in the middle region are the Chaturvarna or four classes of Brahmana, Kshatria, Vysya and Shudras, performing their respective Varna Dharmas or the prescribed duties like Yagnas by Brahmanas, Kshatriyas of Administration and Defence, business and trading by Vyasyas and Shudras of Service and become eligible for attaining Swarga, or Moksha or reap the fruits of sins or virtues. There are Seven 'Kulaachalas' or Mother Mountains viz. Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Shaktiman, Kaksha, Vindhya, and Paariyatra and thousands of 'Upa Parvatas' like Kolaahal, Mandara, Dardura, Vaataswana, Vaidhyuta, Mainaaka, Swaras, Thungaprastha, Naagagiri, Rochana, Paandura, Pushpa, Durjjayant, Raivatak, Arbuda, Trashyamuka, Gomanta, Kutashaila, Krutasmara, Sriparvata, and Chakoraparnat, which are all very high, wide and broad. These massive Mountains and surroundings are the inhabitants of Mlecchhas or Aryans, utilising the various rivers adjacent for drinking, farming and other purposes like Ganga, Saraswati, Sindhu, Chandrabhaga, Yamuna, Shatadru, Vitasta, Iravati, Kuhu, Gomati, Bahuda, Dhutapapa, Drushadvati, Vipaasha, Devika, Ramkshu, Gandaki and Kaushiki; these are all from the Himalayas and around. Those rivers from Pariyatra Mountains include Vedasmriti, Vedavati, Vena, Vritraghni, Saanandana, Sadanira, Mahi, Para, Charmanyavati, Nupi, Vidisha, Kshipra, and Avanti. Mahanad sona and Narmada originated from Surataadri. Mandakini and Darshani Nadi are from Chitrakuta Parvat. Godavari, Bhimaratha, Krishna, Venya, Tungabhadra and Kaveri emerged from Vidhyachala. From Malay Mountain came Kritamala, Tamraparni, Pushpaja, and Utpalaavati. Additionally, there are innumerable well known and not so well known rivers dotting all over Bharata Varsha. As regards the territories in Bharata Varsha, the Northern part comprised Kamboja, Darada, Barbara, Angaloukika (Harshavardhana), Cheena, Tushara, Tamasa, Hamsamarga, Kashmira, Shulika, Kuhaka, Urna, Darwa etc. On the Eastern side, the territories included Angaraka, Mudraka, Antargiri, Bahirgiri, Plavanga, Mala, Damala, Vartika, Uttarabrahma, Pravijaya, Bhargava, Geyamallaka, Pragjotisha, Madra, Videha, Tamraliptaka, Malla, Magadha, Gomeda and so on. In the South of Bharata

Varsha, the territories included Pandya, Kerala, Chola, Kruntya, Kumara, Vanavasaka, Maharashtra, Maahishika, Karnataka, Kalinga, Aabhira, Vaishikya, Atayva, Pulinda, Vindhya, Maaleya, Vaidarbha, Dandaka, Pourika, Mouluka, Ashmak, Bhogavardhana, Naishika, Kuntala, Andhra, Udbhida, Vanadaraka, etc. On the North East, Taxila, Koshala, Tripura, Vidisha, etc. on the West, Saurashtra, Anantya, Arbuda etc. and on the South East, Utkala, Uktamarna, Dasharna, Bhojya, Kishkindhaka, Tumburu, Tumbula and Naishidha. Markandeya explained to Dwijavar Kaushtik that Bharat Varsha was a 'Bijaswarupa' or the form of various seeds which had Brahmatva, Indrastva, Devatva and Manushyatva or of the features of Brahma, Indra, Devas and Human Beings respectively. Among the various worlds, Bharat Varsha happened to be of the 'Kurmarupa' (Tortoise Avatara) of Bhagavan Vishnu comprising the various Territories spread out in various directions mentioned as above. Also, Bharata Varsha is a Karma Bhumi as Human Beings are capable of achieving anything some of which are perhaps not in the reach of even Devas or Danavas! This is so since humans could conquer innumerable hurdles, even without the infrastructural support that Devas and Danavas are blessed with; human beings excel themselves by the dint of their hard work coupled with inherent originality and diligence. *Api Maanushyamaapasyamo Devatvaathprachutaah Kshitou, Manushyah kuruthe that yatra sakyam Suraasuraih* (If one falls from Devatva down to Earth in this Bharata Varsha, whatever human beings could achieve, would be far beyond the realm of possibility to Devas or Danavas)

**'Ganga': Bhagirath's efforts, Puja to her and final restoration as Vishnu's wife:** Of the two wives of King Sagara viz. Vaidarbhi and Shaibya, Asamanjasa was born to Shaibya while Vaidarbhi delivered a 'Maamsa pinda' (piece of meat); Vaidarbhi meditated to Bhagavan Shankara sincerely and the latter arrived in the form of a Brahmana and cut the piece of meat into thousand pieces and turned out as so many sons. As they grew of age, the thousand sons accompanied a Rajasuya Yagna's horse of King Sagara and behaved flippantly with Kapila Muni while in Tapasya and the furious Muni burnt off the thousand sons into ash. As the King approached the Muni for clemency, the latter assured that if Sacred Ganga were brought from heavens to the ashes of the sons cursed by him, their souls would attain salvation. Asamanjasa and his son Amshuman resorted to Tapasya to Devi Ganga for long time and died but the son of Amshuman named the legendary Bhagirath was fortunate to vision Shri Krishna who in turn instructed Devi Ganga who in any case was to descend to Bhuloka owing to Sarasvati's curse and the pursuant dispensation of Bhagavan Vishnu. Shri Krishna blessed Ganga not only to provide Mukti to Sagara's sons but purify the sins of the troubled human beings through out Kali Yuga who would bathe in Ganga and worship her; even by saying 'Gangey Gangey' from a distance the devotees would be relieved of their sins and if per chance any Prani died while touching Ganga, that Prani would surely attain Vaikuntha! Narada Muni enquired of Narayana Maharshi about the formal procedure of worship to Ganga desirous of reaping maximum advantages. In fact, King Bhagirath was stated to have followed the following procedure as described by the Maharshi. He performed worship to six Deities before qualifying the puja to Ganga Devi, viz. Shri Ganesha, Bhagavan Surya, Agni Deva, Vishnu, Shiva and Bhagavati Parvati. Subsequently, Bhagiratha prayed to Devi Ganga as follows: 'You are pure like the white champaka flower ready to demolish the sins of those worshipping you as you have been materialised by the Vighraha of Paramatma Shri Krishna who had given you the status of thousands of 'Sharatkaala Chandras' as you are the most propitious Narayana Priya, always peaceful and smiling with adornments of Malati Pushpa garlands, 'chandana bindus' on your broad forehead shining prominently with 'Sinduri bindu'; with pearl like teeth and profusely kind eyes; with such soft feet that put the most delicate white lotus petals to shame; surrounded by Devatas, Siddhas, Muni Ganas and Tapasvis. I greet that Maha

Ganga who only knows to bestow boons, purify sinners and enhance the levels of devotees to finally reach peaks of Self-Realisation on par to Mukti. After performing Dhyana on the above lines, the devotee would carry out 'Shodshopa -chaaraas' of Asana, Paadya, Arghya, Snaana, Anulepana, Dhupa, Deepa, Naivedya, Tambula, Sheetala Jala, Vastra, Aabhushana, Maalaa, Chandana, Aachamana and Shayya. Thus dedicating his total self Bharirath requested Ganga to follow that route which passed through where the ashes of Sagara Putras were rested as a result of Muni Kapila's curse, thus receiving the epithet of 'Bhagirathi'. Maharshi Narayana conveyed an interesting episode to Narada about a Radha Mahotsava which was being celebrated on a Kartika Purnima at a Rasamanadali. Devi Saraswati took up her Veena and created melliflous tunes in perfect Tala Swaras and Brahma was delighted to gift a rare 'Ratna' as a gift. Shiva gifted an invaluable 'Mani', Krishna gifted Koustubha, Devi Radha presented a wonderful Navaratna Maala and various Devatas gifted their own gifts too. Meanwhile Bhagavan Shankara rendered a fantastic Poem which was scripted with highly invigorating usage of select words that shook up the moods of the Raasleela congregation. On hearing the extraordinary piece of rendition, the entire audience was spell bound in unbelievable rapture and ecstasy and took time to gain normalcy. But the Raasa - mandala was in deep distress as Radha and Krishna were not traceable. There was an 'Akaasha Vani' or a Celestial Voice which directed Bhagavan Maha Deva to materialise Tantra Shastra and create Mantras and Kavachas that would be appropriate to the Tantras to be thus created. In reply, Shankara made a vow by swearing over 'Gangaajal' which was present in Shiva's 'kamandalu'(vessel) which indeed was the Sangam of Radha and Krishna who were untraceable so far in the Raasa Sabha that was spell bound hitherto pursuant to Shiva's rendition! After the effect of curses by Sarasvati to Ganga and Lakshmi to assume their own Rupas on Martya Loka, lasting for Kali Yuga's five thousand years, the respective Devis reached back to Vaikuntha and including the Rupa of Devi Tulasi got materialised as Four Wives of Shri Hari; these four wives reached their positions, representing also like Four Vedas. Indeed these formations of Sarasvati, Ganga, Tulasi and Lakshmi were of Bhagavan Shri Hari's ramifications. Paramatma Shri Krishna in Goloka who created the Trinity along with his alter-ego Devi Radha or the Devi Prakriti is the Unique Paramatma Swarupa.(Brahma Vaivarta)

**Worship to Devi Ganga:** A King of Solar Dynasity Asamanja performed severe 'Tapasya'( meditation) to Bhagavan Sankara for sons and Queen Vaidarbhi delivered a mass of flesh. Asamanja prayed to Sankara again and he appeared in the form of a Brahmana and cut the flesh into thousand pieces that turned as so many sons. As they attained youth, the King asked them to accompany a Sacrificial Horse for performing Asamanja's 'Asvamedha Yagna'. The sons found the Horse was missing on the way, suspected and misbehaved with Sage Kapila in Yoga, who burnt all the thousand of them into ashes. It was the Grandson of Asamanja and the son of Ansuman- the illustrious Bhagiratha, who made persistent efforts to meditate Devi Ganga, Vishnu and Sankara and finally succeeded in bringing the Holy River from Vishnu's feet to Sankara's head and down to Bhu Loka and purified the ashes of the thousand Sagara 'Putras'(Sons) and relieved their tormented souls to Heavens.The Holy River flowing as a 'Jeeva Nadi' till date across the entire 'Aryavarta' from Gangotri to the Bay of Bengal, is a unique land mark of Bharata Varsha, blessing lakhs of devotees for bathing and purifying their sins at several points dotting from Haridvar, Varanasi, Prayaga and Patna. Even a mere bathing in the River washes off several sins, and performing it with a 'Sankalpa' or resolve especially on a day when Sun passes from one Zodiac Sign to another bestows significance thrice over. Bathing on a New Moon day according to Rituals provides further importance and on the day when Sun changes course into the 'Dakshinayana' phase is definitely beneficial while bathing on the day of 'Uttarayana' course would be twice over in destroying accumulated

sins. 'Ganga Snan' during the 'Chaturmasya' period, on 'Akshaya Tritiya' or 'Akshaya Navami', during 'Parva' days of 'Dussehra or Vasanta 'Navaratri', especially on the Tenth day, Pongal days, 'Magha Sukla Saptami', 'Bhishma Ekadasi', Sri Rama Navami, Solar or Lunar Eclipse days, and Maha Varuni day are good examples of the Sacred Bathing in Ganga. Let alone the bathings, especially on a few of the days mentioned above, even a sincere and hearty shout of Ganga, Oh Ganga would bestow fulfillment of one's material desires, even from a distance. Devi Bhagavata Maharshi Narayana explained to Narada the methodology of Worship to Ganga in brief: one should have a hearty bath in Ganga, don clean clothes, be seated on the banks of the River to perform the daily Sandhyavandana first and invoke the blessings the Six Devatas viz. Ganesha, Sun, Agni, Vishnu, Siva and Sivani. Do worship Ganesha to remove the obstacles, Surya Deva for good health, Agni Deva for purification, Vishnu for wealth and power, Siva for knowledge and Sivani for salvation. Then, imagine a mental image of Ganga Devi in fulfilled form with 'Ashta Hasta' ( Eight hands) fully decorated with a smiling face, ornaments, flower garlands, and armoury and above all an 'Abhaya Mudra' or a protective posture of two hands- one to provide security and another for giving away boons. The 'Dhyanam' or meditation is to be highly concentrated and serious without mind wavering on any other object or thought, excepting the Image of Ganga, in physical form to facilitate 'dhyana' or meditation. Then perform the Shodadasa Sevas viz. 'Asana', Padya', 'Arghya', 'Snana', 'Anulepaya ( Ointment), 'Dhoopa'( Incense), 'Dipa'( Light)', 'Naivedya' ( Offer of Food Items), 'Tamboola' ( betel leaves and nuts), 'Paniya' (cool water), 'Vastra' ( clothing), 'Abharana'( Ornaments), 'Pushpa' (flowers), 'Gandha'( Sandal Paste), 'Achamaniya' (water for sipping) and 'Arati' ( Camphor lighting). Thereafter, the devotee should render 'Stotras' ( Hymns) to say that in Vaikuntha the River is six lakh yojanas wide and four times that in length; in Brahma Loka, thirty lakh yojanas in width and five times that in length; in Dhruva Loka it is one lakh yojanas in width and seven times as long and so on. She travels through Chandra Loka, Surya Loka, Indra Loka, Tapo Loka, Janar Loka, Mahar Loka, and Kailasa. From Indra Loka onward, the River is known as Mandakini; She has a width of hundred yojanas and ten times more of length. [At the Himalayas She is known as Jahnavi. From an Ice cave at Gangotri where it touches down into Bharata Varsha, at 10,360 feet above Sea level, She is called Alaknanda and merges into the main stream of Ganges coming from another direction of Himalayas from Sukhi; the junction is at Deo Prayag and Ganga in fulfilled form turns south west to Haridwar.] Devi Bhagavata.

Kurma Purana describes **Varanasi Mahatmya: Krittivaasa, Kapardesha, Omkaresha, Madhyesha & Vishweshwara:** Suta Maha Muni quoted Veda Vyasa's reported conversation between Devi Parvati and Maheswara about the significance of Varanasi or Avimukta Kshetra, where Maha Deva was stated to have assumed Kaala Swarupa and initiated Samsara Samhara or the Universal Destruction at the time of Maha Pralaya. Parama Shiva affirmed that this was his most beloved Kshetra and the devotees worshipping there with Ganga Snaana, Daana, Japa, Yajna, Tapas, Karma, Dhyana, Adhyayana of Scriptures and Jnaanaarjana or Earning of Jnaana would have multiplier effects; those who enter the Kshetra would have their thousands of past and current sins destroyed while by chance they die at the Place- be they Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, others, women, Mlecchaas, or any other species like animals, reptiles, birds and even Krimi/ Keetaas- would instantly assume Shiva Swarupas and attain Kailasa: *Naavimukey Mritaha kaschinnarakam kilimbishi, Ishwaraanugraheetahi Sarvey yaanti Paramam Gatim/ Moksham sudurlabham matvaa Samsaaram chaati bheeshanam, Ashmanaa charanou hatvaa Vaaranaasyaam vasennarah/* (Those extreme and confirmed sinners who die at Varanasi would certainly not visit Narakaas and by the grace of Ishwara would secure 'Parama Gati'. That should be the

reason that human beings might even break their feet with stones but still prefer reside at Varanasi). Those who suffer hurdles and difficulties but still prefer to stay at Varanasi would indeed never regret as they were sure of permanent bliss instead of shirking passing troubles. Indeed there are countless Sacred Tirthaas in Bharata Desha such as Prayaga, Naimishaaranya, Shrishaila, Kedara, Bhadrakarna, Gaya, Pushkara, Kurukshetra, Rudrakoti, Narmada, Amraatakeshwara, Shaaligraama, Kubjaagra, Prabhasa, Vijayashaana, Gokarna and Bhadrakarna and so on and their Mahima too was of consequence, but those bhaktas who attain the Punya by dying at Varanasi were stated to be of unparalleled impact. Bathing in Ganga which was called ‘Tripatha Gaamini’ or the Holy River that travelled in Triloklas of Swarga-Bhumi-Pataalaas has unique significance as it washes of the blemishes of thousands of births. The presence of Ganga, the superiority of Maha Deva’s residence there and the combined effect of Shraaddha, Daana, Tapa, Japa and Vrata would indeed make the stay of Bhaktas the most important event ever and also the easiest in terms of effort. This Kshetra is called Avimukta as it should be never left away nor deserted; it provides Brahma Gyaan and those who die there are provided the ‘Upadesha’ or Instruction of Tataka Brahma by Maha Deva Himself! *Yat tat parataram Tatwamaviktamiti shrutam, Ekena Janmanaa Devi! Vaaranaasyaam tadaapnuyaat/* (That Paraatara Tatwa as instructed to the persons on death bed is called ‘Avimukta’ and that Upadesha might indeed be possible in a single life itself!) Varanasi Kshetra is basically in between the two Rivers called ‘Varuna’ and ‘Asi’. The Kshetra is famed for Five Sacred Lingas viz. Krittivaaseshwara, Madhyameshwara, Vishweshwara, Omkareshwara and Kapardeshwara. Veda Vyaasa showed the Five Lingas to his disciples and explained to them of their significance: **Krittivaasa Linga** was signified as a Daitya who assumed the Form of an Elephant used to kill Brahmana devotees in meditation of Shiva and the latter killed the elephant and sported the wearing of the elephant skin and hence the name of Krittivaaseshwara. The Mahtmya of Kapardeeshwara Linga or Shiva of Matted Locks was explained by Vyaasa to his students: Once a Tiger chased a deer-kid and killed it in the presence of Kapardeshwara Linga and most surprisingly the killed deer-kid was received by a Shiva-like Purusha and Gandharvas sang melodies and rained flowers on it! Vyasa said that those who performed **Kapardeshwara Lingaarchana** after taking bath in a Pishacha Sarovara would be blessed by Maha Deva at once and narrated the legend of a Learned and Virtuous Brahmana named Shankhukarna who was always engaged in Shiva Linga Puja with high earnestness. One day, he saw a Piscacha swooning with hunger and thirst approached him crying as it was unable to withstand its pitiable condition. Shankhukarna asked the Piscacha about his background and the latter revealed that he too was a Brahmana but he never performed any worship nor Atithi (Guest) Puja and not even a small good turn excepting looking after himself and his family. Only once he came across a Shiva Linga, touched it and greeted it with sincerity and almost at the same time died suddenly; the ‘Yama dutaas’ arrived but converted him as a Piscacha and ever since then was wandering with extreme hunger and thirst! Shankhukarna heard the story and appreciated that atleast once the Piscacha before his death visioned touched and greeted a Shiva Linga as he died and became a Piscacha! That occurrence was significant enough and asked to take bath in a Pond near the Kapardeshwara Linga; as the Piscacha took bath as advised by sincerely praying to Mahadeva and instantly the Piscacha fell and a Celestial Form emerged and flew up in a ‘Vimana’ as Gandharvas and Apsaras welcomed him into it! Shankhukarna witnessed the happening about the Piscacha and could not resist the recitation of a long Prayer to Kapardi which began and ended as follows: *Kapardinam twaam Paratah Parastaad Goptaaramekam Purusham Puraanam, Vrajaami Yogeshwara meeshitaaramaadyamagnim Kapilaadhirudham/Vrajaami nityam sharanam Guhesham Sthaanum prapadye Girisham Puraarim, Shivam Prapadye Haramindumoulim Pinaakinam twaam sharanam vrajaami/* (I seek ‘sharanam’ or sanctuary to you Paratara, Paraatpara, Adwiteeya, Sarva

Rakshaka, Purana Purusha, Yogeshwara, Niyamaka, Aditya, Agni Swarupa, Vrishabha Vaahana!- I crave for the protection of Shaanu Swarupa, Guhesha or Buddhi Incarnate, Gireesha, Chandramouli Hara, Shiva, Pinaakidhara!). As Shankukarna's Stuti ended, he fell down unconscious and Kapardi Swami appeared before him and absorbed in his fold!**Omkareshwara Linga** Mahima was explained by Veda Vyasa to his sishyas that even by pronouncing its name, massive sins get crunched. Maha Vidwaans who comprehended the purport of Jnaana realised that Pashupati was an embodiment of 'Panchaartha' viz. Ateeta Shanti or Supreme Bliss, Shanti or Harmony and Amity, High degree of Vidya or Knowledge, Pratishtha or Utmost Reputation and Nivruitti or Detachment or Path of Liberation; all these Five Essentials were derivated from Omkara Swarupa as the composite Form of the Panchayatana Rupa of Maha Deva; a devotee who had the comprehension of the Omkara Swarupa at the Time of his / her termination would enter into that Territory of Effulgence and through it would get absorbed into Parameshwara. That indeed was the most powerful worship possible to Omkareshwara, stated Veda Vyasa. Devarshis, Brahmarshis and Maha Siddhaas do realise the scope, depth and intensity of worshipping Omkareshwara as a part of 'Nyasa' or Unification of the Self and the Supreme! Veda Vyasa and his pupils visited **Madhyameshwara Linga** on the banks of River Mandakini an extension of Ganga and some of the very keen devotees of Madhyamesha enquired about Veda Vyaasa and the latter's followers introduced their Guru as Krishna Dwaipaayana Vyaasa of the 'Amsha' of Narayana himself and the regular devotees of the Linga extended their courtesies to Vyasa. It was learnt that in the past Shri Krishna performed Paashupata Vrata to this very Linga and stayed there for a year by shaving his head, applying ash and wearing Rudraksha Malaas and finally had Shambhu's darshan and secured boons. Even one time worship to Madhyeshwara in one's lifetime after taking bath in Mandakini, daana, tapas, shraaddha and Pindadaana to Pitras would annul life time sins of even Brahmahatya nature, said Vyasa. He affirmed that Mandakini snaana and worship to Madhyameshwara would yield ten times bigger fruits than that of Kurukshetra at the time of Solar Eclipse. While referring to Varanashi Kshetra Mahima, Veda Vyasa enlightened his followers about several Punya Tirthas attached to the banks of Ganga such as Vishwarupa Tirtha, Taala Tirtha, Akaasha Tirtha, Gauri Tirtha, Prajapatya Tirtha, Swarga Dwaara, Jambukeshwara, Jnaana Tirtha, Yama Titha, Agni Tirtha and so on and finally reached Brahma Tirtha. It is believed that once Brahma brought a Linga and went to have his bath and meanwhile Vishnu installed it and told Brahma that he had greater faith in Rudra Deva than Brahma but however the Linga would be known to have been installed at Brahma Tirtha. Having further visited quite a few other Tirthas, Vyasa finally had his bath along with his sishyas and performed **Vishweshwara Linga** Puja; he settled down at Varanasi for some time and asked his sishyas to settle down at their will. Mahatma Vyasa then stayed there by performing Rudraabhishekaas thrice a day while taking food from his 'bhiksha' or charity. One day, he could not secure the bhiksha and a furious Vyasa threatened that he would curse to the inhabitants of Varanasi to create 'Vighnas' or obstacles and Devi Parvati appeared and requested Vyasa not to curse but take food from herself instead. Having given the bhiksha, Devi asked Vyasa not to stay in Varanasi further since he was short tempered; Vyasa apologised and requested her to let him visit the Place only on Chaturthis and Ashtamis and Devi agreed accordingly. Suta Maha Muni gave Phala Shruti of about the Mahatmya of Varanasi as follows: as follows: *Yah pathedavimuktasya Mahatmyam Shrunuyaadapi, Shravayeda vaa Dwijaan Shaantaan sopi yaati paraam gatim/ Shraaddevaa Dauvikey Kaarye Raatraavahani vaa Dwijaah, Nadeenaam chaiva Teereshu Devataanataneshu cha/Snaatwaa Samaahita manaa damhamaatsraya varjitah, Japedisham Namaskrutya sa yaati Paramaam Gatim/* (Whoever would read, hear or narrate about the Avimuta or Vaaranasi Kshetra would definitely secure Maha Punya; if a person took bath and engaged in performing 'shraaddhaas', Deva Karyaas, either in the day or night,

on the banks of Ganga or in Mandirs, freed from ‘dambha’ or self-pride or Matsara or narrow-mindedness, and meditate Maha Deva, would indeed secure ‘Parama Gati’).

**Triveni Sangama (Prayaga) Mahatmya:** On the conclusion of Maha Bharata Battle at Kuruksherta, Yuddishtara 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 Sanagamam 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 Parayaga and the ‘Vata Vrikhsa’ 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 smaranaamasya Sarvamaayaati Sankshamam, Darshanaat tasya Tirthasya naama samkirtinaadapi, Mrittikaa labhanaad vaapi Narah Paapaat Pramuchyate/* (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 Ganaga 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 his or

her 'Sarvaangaas' in tact without any kind of illnesses through out their lives with physical fitness! Yet another Tirtha on the nothern side of River Yamuna called 'Runa Vimochana' or freedom from indedtedness.

**Broad Geographical delineation of Bharata Varsha:** In Swarga Khanda of Padma Purana, the panoramic view of Mountains, Rivers, Regions, Cities and Punya Kshetras of Bharata Varsha defied description. This ancient land produced illustrious Kings known for virtue and values of nobility such as Vaivaswata Manu, Pruthu, Ikshvaku, Yayati, Ambarisha, Mandhata, Nahusha, Muchukunda, Rishabha, Pururava, Nriga, Kushika, Gaadhi, Soma, Dilipa and so on. Seven Kula Parvatas (Mountains) are the well known the land marks viz. Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Shaktiman, Rikshavan, Vindhya and Paari yatra, besides thousands of surrounding mountains of repute dotting the length and breadth of Bharata. The famous **Rivers of Bharat** are countless including Ganga, Sindhu, Saraswati, Godavari, Narmada, Baahuda, Shadyu (Satlaj), Chandra bhaga, Yamuna, Drishaduti, Vipasha, Vetravati, Krishna, Veni, Iravati, Payoshni, Devika, Vedasmriti, Vedashira, Tridiva, Karishini, Chitravaha, Trisena, Gomati, Chandana, Kaushki (Kosi), Naachita, Rohitaarani, Rahasya, Shatakumbha, Sarayu, Charmanvati, Hastisoma, Disha, Sharavati, Bheemarathi, Kaveri, Baaluka, Tapi, Nivara, Mahita, Suprayoga, Pavitra, Krishnala, Vaajini, Purumalini, Purvabhirama, Veera, Maalavati, Papaharini, Palashini, Mahendra, Patalavati, Asikri, Kushavira, Marutva, Spravara, Mena, Hora, Ghritavati, Anushni, Sevya, Kaapi, Sadaaveera, Adhrushya, Kushachira, Rathachitra, Jyotiratha, Vishvamitra, Kapijjala, Upendra, Bahula, Vainandi, Pinjala, Vena, Thungavega, Mahanadi, Vidisha, Krishnavega, Taamra, Kapila, Dhenu, Sakama, Vedaswa, Havihstrava, Mahapatha, Kshipra, Bhaaradwaji, Kauraki, Shona, Chandrama, Antasshila, Brahmamedhya, Paroksha, Rohi, Jambunadi (Jammu), Sunasa, Tapasa, Saamaanya, Varuna, Asi, Neela, Ghritikari, Maanavi, Vrishabha and Bhasha. Janapadaas or Provinces include Kuru, Paanchaala, Shaalva, Maatreya, Jaangala, Surasena, Pulinda, Sougandha, Chedi, Matsya, Bhoja, Sindhu, Dasharna, Mekala, Utkala, Koshala, Yugandhara, Madra, Kalinga, Aparakashi, Jathara, Kukkura, Kunti, Avanti, Aparakunti, Pundru, Goparashtra, Maharashtra, Malava, Magadha, Videha, Anga, Vanga, Surashtra, Kekaya, Maheya, Aanarta, Kuntala, Kukundaka, Kashmir, Sindhusouveera, Gandhara, etc. In the Dakshina (southern) Bharata, the Jaanapadas include Dravida, Malavara (Kerala), Praachya, Mushika, Balmushika, Karnataka, Kishkindha, Kuntala, Chola Kona, Manivaalava, Vindhya, Vidarbha, etc. Mleccha sthanas in North include Yavana (Yunaani), Kambhoja, Pulastya, Huna, Parasika (Iran), etc.

**Deva-Asura-Rishi- Manava Sambandha Tirthas:** Brahma Purana is quoted : Brahma outlined some of the other significant Tirthas in the Karma Bhumi of Bharata. Within Himalayas and Vindhyas there were twelve *Deva Sambhava Nadis* of utmost importance which were closely associated with Brahma-Vishnu-Maheswaras-six of them from Himalayas to Vindhyas viz. Bhagirathi, Narmada, Yamuna, Saraswati, Vishoka and Vitasta and six more from Vindhyaparvata to Dakshina Samudra viz. Godavari, Bhimarathi, Tungabhadra, Krishnaveni, Tapi and Payoshni. Of these *Asura-Sambandha Nadis* viz. Gayasura, Kollasura, Vrittha, Tripura, Andhaka, Hayamurtha, Lavanasura, Namuchi, Shrinka, Yama, Patalaketu, Maya, and Pushkarasura. Then there were *Rishi-Sambhava Nadis* viz. Prabhasa, Bhargava, Agasti, Nara Narayana, Vasishta, Bharadwaja, Goutama and Kashyapa. These Tirthas apart there also were *Illustrious Manushya Sambhava Nadis* in the memory of Ambarisha, Harischandra, Maandhata, Mau, Kuru, Kankhala, Bhadraashwa, Sagara, Ashwayupa, Nachiketa, Vrishaakapi, and Arindama. Countless other Rivers, Sarovaras and Tirthas dotted the length and breadth of Bharata Varsha but Brahma Deva mentioned the more popular ones.

**Over-view of prominent ‘Tirthas’ in Bharata Varsha:** The entire Bharata Varsha is laced with several Tirthas, mostly to cater to the devotional feelings of persons at Places situated nearby as also to attract quite a few devotees from far off Places depending on the intensity of their Bhakti and the pull of such Tirthas owing to their reputation. Tirthas are the abodes of Rishis. It is strongly believed that Devas made frequent expeditions and Lord Brahma stayed there for long durations. In fact, only those whose physical abilities are in order, or are disciplined, non-egoistic, performers of Vratas, truthful, determined and highly devotional would reap maximum advantage rather than the run of the mill crowds without aim or purpose. For example, those visiting Pushkara Tirtha ought to observe a strict regimen of Snaana-Deva Puja-Pitra Shraaddha-Agni Karyas- Daana- Dhyana-Tapsya and total dedication, and then only the real fruits are reaped, including transfers to Brahma Loka! Casual visits to the Tirtha are of academic interest to merely publicise that they have too registered a trip! Any marginal return of Tirtha Visits of informal nature is peripheral. It is said that the best route to Tirthas is to commence the Yatra from Jambu Marg, observe single meal for five nights and worship Bhagavan Vishnu with austerity. From Jambu Marg to Tundulikashram to Agastyashram where three nights are to be spent fasting and performing Deva Puja and Pitra Puja which would give Agnishtom Yagna Phala. Further on visit Kanyashram Tirtha for worshipping Devi Lakshmi and proceed to Yayati Patana Sthan and perform ‘Parikrama’; this entire package would bestow the fruit of executing Ashvamedha Yagna. Continuing the austerity of moderate food, one should carry on visiting Mahaakala Tirtha at Ujjain, to worship Mahaa Kala Linga by ‘Abhisheka’ with milk followed by the sacred Snaana at Koti Tirtha. There after one should continue the Yatra at Umapati Tirtha at Bhadravati Sthan. The worship at these Tirthas would fetch the Punya of Godaan and joining Shivaganas. Deva Puja and Pitru Tarpan at Holy Narmada provide the fruits of Agnishtoma Yagna and automatic demolisher of sins. It is said that even the vision of Narmada River is as good as snaanas at Sarasvati and Yamuna for seven days each and a mere ‘sparsha’ (touch) of Ganga River. Narmada is said to be a highly Sacred River in Three Lokas, where Devatas, Asuras, Gandharvas, Rishis and others attain siddhis by performing Tapasya on its banks. Sage Narada told Yudhishthira of Pandavas that after taking ‘Vidhivat’ (formal) snaana in Narmada and spending even one night’s stay on its banks would demolish hundred ‘peedas’ or serious impediments of severe nature. Those who perform formal ‘Pinda daan’ with Veda Mantras at ‘Janeswar Tirtha’ would satisfy Pitras till ‘Maha Pralaya Kaal’. On the four sides of ‘Amarakanta Parvata’ are set up Koti Rudras; if a devotee were to take a sacred ‘Snaana’ (Bathing) and worship with flowers and chandana to as many Rudra Lingas as possible, the Koti Rudra Bhagavan would be extremely pleased most certainly and without doubt. On the western side of the Amarakanta Mountain, there is a Presence of Bhagavan Maheswara and worship of this Idol would provide salvation to seven previous generations! In fact, there are some sixty crore and sixty lakh Tirthas around all the four sides of Amarakanta Mountain and those who stay there for good time by observing Brahmacharya with full control of Indriyas devoid of violence and falsity would indeed be blessed by Maha Deva. River Kapila in the Southern part of the Mountain, is highly sacred and propitious and worship of innumerable Tirthas around fetch funds of Punya; River Vishalyakarana is another holy entity which tears down sins instantly and wrecks all traces of unhappiness in life! Snaana- Dhyana-Puja-Tarpana-Shraaddha-Daana- Dakshina at the time of Surya Grahana or Chandra Grahana (Solar / Lunar Eclipses) at Narmada or Kapila / Vishalyakarana would bestow ten-time more of Punya along with Pundareeka Yagna Phal. Finally, Snaana- worship at Jwaleswara Maha Deva Temple provides Swarga and death at this Tirtha would free the soul from the cycle of births and deaths! The Narmada-Kaveri Sangam, like Ganga-Yamuna Sangam, is another holy spot where Snaana, worship of Devas/ Pitras and Yagna Karyas are performed to accomplish superior levels of ‘Mahatmya’. Among the various Tirthas on

the Narmada banks are Panneswar where Devas come down to bathe; Garjan (Indrajit) which fulfills ambitions and enterprise; Brahmaavart where Lord Brahma bestows Gyan and Creative Power; Angareshwar where one worships Bhagavan Rudra for ‘Rudra Loka Praapti’; Kundaleshwar where Shankara and Devi Parvati take frequent sojourns; Pippaleswar for the benefit of Rudra loka nivasa; Vimaleswar to purify soul and if dead travel to Rudra Loka; and Pushkarini Tirtha for eligibility of half of Indra’s throne. Devas and Gandharvas greet the Sacred Narmada thus: *‘Namah Punya jaley Aadye namah Saagaragaamini, Namostu tey Rishiganaih Shankara dehaanaih srutey/ Namostutey Dharma bhrutey varaananey Namostutey Deva ganaika vanditey, Namostutey Sarva Pavitra Paavaney Namostutey Sarvajatprasupujitey’*(Punyajala Narmada! You are among the leading Rivers and my greetings to you. You are the one worshipped by Rishis as materialised by Mahadeva; you are the preserver of Dharma and Devas bend their heads down to your feet. You have the power of purifying each and every material and are worshipped by everybody.) If any Brahmana recites this Stotra would become a Veda Vidwan; a Kshatriya would attain victory in battles; a Vaishya gains profits in business, and a Shudra achieves ‘Uttama Gati’ (higher status). Apart from the above, many other Tirthas are distributed on either the banks of the Sacred Narmada such as Shulabhadra, Bhimeswar, Narmadeswar, Adityaswar, Mallikeswara, Varuneswara, Neerajeswara, Koteswara, Vamaneswara, Vateswara, Bhimeswara, Nandi Tirtha, Vyasa Tirtha, Erandi Tirtha, Suvarna Tilaka, Skanda Tirtha, Sarva Tirtha, Shakra Tirtha, and so on. Having heard about the Tirthas on the banks of River Narmada from Devarshi Narada, King Yudhishtara became enthusiastic to learn about the other important Tirthas in Bharata Varsha. He evinced interest for instance in the magnificence of Sage Vasishtha’s Ashram on Arbuda Mountain (who was the son of Himalaya) where a single night stay bestowed the Punya of daana of thousand cows. Likewise, one should visit Pinga Tirtha where the fruit of charity of hundred cows was received. One should also visit Prabhas Kshetra where Agni Deva stayed always and would be qualified for the Punya of ‘Manava Agnishtoma’ and ‘Atirathra Yagna’. Further one should witness the Sangam of River Sarasvati and the Sea on the western Bharata, where also the ‘phala’ of charity of one thousand cows would be reaped. Stay of three nights and simultaneous performance of Pitru Tatpanas at Varuna Tirtha would award Ashwamedha Yagna phal. Vara daana Tirtha was also stated to endow Sahasra Go Daana Phala. Visit to Dwarakapuri could not be missed as even now ‘Mudras’ or reproductions of Trishul on Lotus Leaves are visioned there. Snaana- Rudra Puja- Pradakshina at Shankha kantheswara Tirtha would grant ten Ashwamedha Phal and remission of sins for the entire life. Even mere reaching Vasudhara Tirtha would provide the fruit of the Horse-Sacrifice while Tarpana to Pitras would benefit far further. Not far from here were Vasu Tirtha immensely liked by the Ashta Vasus as also Brahma Tunga Tirtha for pleasing Lord Brahma by worship and Renuka Tirtha for purifying of conscience. In the near vicinity were Pancha Nada Tirtha, Bhima Tirtha and Giri Kunja Tirtha. In Kashmira Pradesh the Tirthas are Vitasta Tirtha, Malada Tirtha, Dirgha Satra Tirtha, Shashayana Tirtha (reputed for Snaanas in River Saraswati on Kartika Pournimas), Kumarakoti Tirtha, Rudra koti Tirtha and the most renowned Sangama Tirtha for bathing in the River Saraswati for destroying life-long sins. In Kurukshetra, Narada’s recommendation was for a month-long stay, where Bhagavan Vishnu was stated to have been very receptive to the desires of his devotees, where there was a Place known as ‘Satata Sthan’ or Place Forever quite appropriately. The popular Tirthas in Kurukshetra included Shalvikini, Panchanada, Soma Tirtha, Kruta Shoucha, Pampa, Varaha Tirtha, Kaaya shodhana, Lokodhhara, Kapila and Go -Bhavana. Even if the air-borne dust of Kurukshetra got deposited in the skin pores of a Pilgrim, sins of the traveller in the region evaporate away into thin air; this was what Sage Narada affirmed! From Kurukshetra, Narada desired to visit Brahmavarta and gradually reach Kasishwara to get rid of sins, proceed to Sheetavana and

Swarnalomapanayana. It was recommended that one should preferably enter Pundarika Tirtha on Shukla Paksha Dashami and after reaching Trivishtap Tirtha, take bath in the River Vaitarini to wash off sins and worship Bhagavan Shankara. Thereafter, a devotee should visit Paanikhyat Tirtha and Mishrikha Tirtha. It was stated that Maharshi Veda Vyas sought to unite the Tirthas around and hence the name was Mishrika. There was Runantak Kuup where Til daan be performed and two very significant Tirthas named Ahan and Sudina Tirthas where Snaan bestow the blessings of Surya Deva. Snaan and Pujas at Koti Tirtha would enable charity of thousand cows. Kapalamochana Tirtha on the banks of the Holy River Sarasvati and the highly popular Pruthudak Tirtha for worshipping Devas and Pitras were two holy spots with unbelievable power. The belief had been that there would be no 'Punarjanma' after worship at these two Tirthas! At the Samgam (Confluence) of Rivers Saraswati and Aruna, a three-night stay at the world renowned Tirtha would relieve sins of seven generations including Brahma hatya. From there, two Tirthas called Shathasahastra and Sasahastra are reputed too as visits and Pujas endow the Punya of donating a thousand cows. Snaan and Worships at Renuka Tirtha, Panchavat Tirtha and Sthanuvata Tirtha were all highly significant, before a devotee reached Sannihita Tirtha where sacred snaan during Solar Eclipses are stated to equate those at all the Tirthas, Jalasayas, Kupas and Mandirs. Naimisharanya, - stated to be the most significant Knowledge Center and the unique Meeting Point of Rishis and their deliberations signifying the contents of all the Holy Puranas and Scriptures addressed by Veda Vyasa, Maha Muni Sutha, Sage Shounaka and others- was the famed Region where the Kali Kala Chakra could not enter and kept the age-old Sancity of earlier Yugas in tact. From Kurukshetra to Dharma Tirtha where Yama Dharma Raja performed penance of thousands of years, folowed by a visit to Kalaapa Vana, Suvarna Tirtha and Sougandhika Vana is stated to be a great experience since the sins of seven generations would get evaporated. Pilgrimage to Gangadwar (Haridwar), Koti Tirtha Snaan and worship at Sapta Ganga, Tri Ganga and Shakravarta Tirthas would fetch the fruits of performing Pundarika Yagna and Sahasra Go Daana. The most important 'Yatra' as commended by Narada Muni related to Kalindi Tirtha. The Devarshi asserted that the 'Punya' earned from the pilgrimage to Pushkar, Kutukshetra, Bhahmaavarta, Pruthudak, Avamukta Kshetra (Kashi) and Suvarna Tirtha could be equated to that of Yamuna Snaan! Bathing in Yamuna with or without 'Sakaama' or 'Nishkama' ie with or without objective was certain like what a 'Kama dhenu' or 'Chintamani' (desire- fulfillers) would impart instantly. Those bathing in Kalindi waters irrespective of their 'Varnas' or castes would become handsome, healthy and strong and what was more, they would be highly blessed. Narada Muni said that in Satya Yuga, persons are liberated by means of Penance and Tapas; in Treta Yuga by Gyan, in Dwapara Yuga by Yagnas, and in Kali Yuga by giving away 'Daanas', but Kalindi Kanya or Devi Yamuna surpassed these limitations since even a worshipful 'Snaana' would be enough to liberate the person concerned in the present Yuga. In this connection, Sage Narada gave the illustration of a Vaishya called Hemakundal who amassed riches, although by fair means, but did not beget children for long. He followed a highly virtuous life of Deva Puja, giving away donations, Atithi-Satkar (Respects to Guests) and such other 'Punya Karyas'. As a result, he was blessed with two sons, but both of them squandered money and out of helplessness, the Vaishya retired into forests. The sons Shrikundal and Vikundal squandered the hard earned and honest money oh the father and became victims of wine, women and gambling. They died early due to vices almost simultanenously. Yamadootas took away the two brothers to Yamaloka where the elder son was sent to Rourava Naraka while the second son was sent to Swarga. This happened so, even though both the sons did same kind of vicious deeds but the second son took only two dips in River Yamuna; the first 'snaan' liberated his sins and the second dip granted him Swarga! As the Yamadootas conveyed to Vikundal that it might be possible to transfer his elder brother also to Swarga, there was

perhaps a possibility to do so if only the Punya of the younger brother could be donated to his elder brother, then the younger decided to do so; by this transfer, the elder brother no doubt was able to reach Swarga, but in view of the self-less sacrifice of the younger one in the process of donation so liberally given away to the elder brother, he too was given a berth in Swarga! Devarshi Narada described then the magnitude of Kashipura to Yudhishtara. Bhagavan Shiva and Devi Parvati adorned the Throne atop the mount of Meru Parvat once and the latter desired to know as to how his devotees could vision the Bhagavan without experiencing too many insurmountable obstacles. Parama Shiva then gave away the secret that Kashipura was the unique Place of his residence where his devotees could observe the requisite regulations of Dharma and vision him instantly. Kashipura thus came to be known as the Avimukta Kshetra which had been dear to him; whatever endeavours that human beings could perform at Varanasi by way of Daana-Japa-Homa-Yagna-Tapasya-Dhyana-Adyayana and Gyan would all be everlasting. The past sins of all the Beings stored for thousands of births would vanish even while entering Kashipura. This would be applicable to Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, Varnasankaras or of mixed varnas, women, Mlecchhas, Chandalas, animals, birds and worms and ants. *Yatra saakshan Mahadevo dehaantey Swayameeshwarah, Vyachashtey taarakam Brahma tatraivahyavi muktakey/ Vaaranaasthaa chaasya madhye Vaaranaasipuri, tatraiva samshitam Tatvam nithyamevam vimuktakam/ Varanasyam param sthanam na bhutam na bhavishyati, Yatra Narayano Devo Mahadevo Diviswarah/ Mahapathakino Devi ye tebhya paapakrutamaah, Vaaraanaseem samaasaadhya tey yaanti paramaam gatim/ Tasman mumukshurniyato vasudvai maranaantakam, Vaaranasyam Maha Devaajnaanam labdhwa vimuchyatey/* ( To those who were about to die in the Avimukta Kshetra, Bhagavan himself would preach the Taraka Brahma Mantra. The Sacred Place called Varanasi in between the two Rivers of ‘Varana’ and ‘Asi’ is full of ‘Nitya Vimukta Tatwa’ or the Philosophy of Permanance and Liberation. There was never a Place like Varanasi nor ever be where Bhagavan Narayana and Deveswara resided with luminosity. A Great Sinner or even a worse example like him would qualify for liberation as soon as he entered Varanasi. That was the reason why ‘Mumukshus’ or those desirous of achieving liberation desired to reside in Kasi with self-control and dedication till their termination and prompt Bhagavan Shiva himself to bestow ‘Gyan’ and ‘Mukti’ to them). Narada asserted that just as Purushoththama Narayana was the superior among Devas, and Maha Deva was the utmost among Ishwaras, Kashipura was the most significant among the Tirthas. This was why people of high understanding longed with the cherished hope of living and if possible die at Varanasi. At Varanasi, there is a popular Shiva Linga called Kapardeswar, where devotees perform Pujas and Pitru Tarpan; in fact, they should stay there for six months to achieve ‘Yoga Siddhi’. Also, taking baths at Pischacha Mochana Kund nearby the Temple and carrying on with Pujas to Kapardeshwar would result in demolition of ‘Maha Patakas’ like ‘Brahma hatya’. In the days of yore, a Tapaswi Brahmana named Shankhakarna performed Puja, ‘Rudra Paath’ and ‘Pranava Japa’; he decided to worship Kapardeswara always till the end of his life’s journey accordingly. One day Shankhakarna visioned a hungry Piscacha nearby and when asked by the Brahmana, the Piscacha narrated that in his last birth he was a prosperous Brahmana with a large family, but did not heed to perform pujas to Devas, Cows and Guests nor did any worthy task. The Pischacha asked Shankhakarna to suggest a way out for getting rid of his existing status. The latter asked the Piscacha to take the Sacred Name of Kapardewara and immediately jump into the Kund nearby the Temple and the Piscacha died while swimming. The Brahmana was happy that the Piscacha was relieved and he prayed to Kapardeswar as follows: ‘Bhagavan’! You wear ‘Jata-jut’ (twisted and coarse hair on head and face) and known as ‘Kapardi’; you are ‘Paratpar’, saviour, unique, Purana Purusha, Yogeswaa, and ‘Agni Rupa’, mounted on the Sacred Nandiswar; I take refuge in you; You are ‘Ru’ or the Distancer of Sorrows thus known as Rudra; you

extend all over the Sky, Brahma Swarupa! I seek your protection; you possess thousand feet, eyes, heads and Forms; you are incomprehensible even to Vedas; You are ‘Lingarहित’ or beyond understanding as a man or a woman; ‘Aloka Shunya’, Swayam Prakash’ or Auto-illuminated; You are ‘hara’ or the eliminator of obstacles; ‘Bheda Shunya’ or ‘Adviteeya’ (Exclusive)’! I seek your fortification! By so saying, Shankhakarna fell down the Earth while reciting ‘Pranava Mantra’ and integrated into ‘Shivaswarpa’ which was Eternal and Blissful.From Varanasi to Gaya, Narada suggested the course to perform Pinda Daana at the Vata Vriksha named Akshaya vat and after taking bath at Maha Nadi, execute Tarpanas to Devas and Pitras. This would firm up ‘Kulodhaara’ or purify the ‘Kula Vamsa’. Thereafter pay visits to Brahmaranya, Dhenuka Tirtha, Grudhnnavati (for Bhasma Snaan), Udaya Parvat (for Darshan of Savitri and to render ‘Sandhyopaasana’ to obtain the benefit of rendering Gayatri Mantra for Twelve Years), Yonivaasa (to avoid the nine-month Garbhavaasa), Phalgu River Snaan, Dharma Pushti Yatra, Mani Naga tirtha, Brahmarshi Gautami Vana, Ahalya Kunda Snaan, Gandaki Nadi atra, Maheswari Dhara, Narayana Sthaana ( where Brahma, Devas, Rishis, Twelve Adityas, Eight Vasus, and Eleven Rudras worship Janaardana), Shaaligrama Tirtha (where a Well contained the waters from Four Oceans), Jatismara Tirtha, Vateswara, Patakanashini Koushiki, (Kosi Nadi), Champakaranya, Koushala Nadi, Kaala Tirtha (where charity of Twelve Bulls was excised), Sona-Jyotirathi Sangam, Pushpavati Snaan, Mahendra Parvat, Matanga Kshetra, and finally Gokarna Tirtha. Sage Narada made a special mention of Prayaga as one of the most Sacred Tirthas of Bharata Varsha where Brahma and Narayana were both ready to bestow their blessings to mankind. This is also the unique ‘Sangam’ (Confluence) Point of two illustrious Rivers of Bharata viz. Ganga and Yamuna. It was stated that the Region between these two glorious Rivers constituted the middle portions of Prithvi. Prayag’s name, if heard, or sung was worthy of prostration. Being the Yagna Bhumi of Devatas, the Sangama Snaan is known as the most outstanding experience witnessed ever by Devas. Even a small ‘Danaa’ at Prayaga is stated to have a snow-balling effect to assume manifold times. The saying was that one should perform Tapasya at Pushkara, Daan on a Mahalaya day, and Upavas (fasting) at Bhru-gu-tunga. Mere Snaanas at Pushkar, Kurukshetra and Ganga would register freedom of sins for seven generations in the previous births and seven generations ahead. The moment that a person touched his or her backbone in Ganga, that person’s details would get recorded. Where ever Ganga flows, all the Regions and Tapovanas on the River Banks are known as Siddha Kshetras. If a person were unable to actually visit Prayaga and experience the Sangama Snaan, atleast even mental desire would yield Punya. Also, Punya begets Punya and those who possess strong faith would certainly fulfill their desires to take up the pilgrimage. Qualifying further the ‘Mahatmya’ of Prayaga, Suta Maha Muni narrated the illustration of Yudhishtara; he experienced untold misery that the icon of Kuru Vamsa like Bhishma, Gurus like Drona and Kripacharya, First Cousins, Karna and countless close relatives were all mercilessly killed and could not overcome the grief yet, quite after the passage of time. As though in response to the predicament of Yudhishtara, Mahatma Markandeya visited Yudhishtara. He assured that what Yudhishtara and other Pandavas had done was not only a duty of a Kshatriya, but also a grand vindication of Dharma and justice vis-a-vis the vicious and highly sinful actions perpetrated by Kauravas; the Elders and some of the Virtuous personalities who sided the wrongdoings had to suffer too in the bargain. Having fully justified the actions of Pandavas and assuaged the personal feelings of Yudhishtara, Mahatma Markandeya recommended Tirtha Yatra to Prajapati Kshetra starting from Prayaga to Pratishtanapura. Lord Brahma and Devatas were in complete charge of this memorable Tirtha. Vishnu and Maheswara too protect Prayaga and the adjoining Region with vehemence. A three-night stay fasting at Prayaga, especially after bathing, Pinda daana and charity of cows, gold and Bhumi would readily bestow the fruits of Ashwamedha Yagna and more than that great

mental peace to have killed so many enemies at the Maha Bharata Battle, assured Markandeya. Any person performing Panchagni Sewa between at the Sangam area of Ganga and Yamuna would never have physical disabilities and diseases, besides Swargawas in as many years as hairs on the body. A death at Prayaga would secure relief from the cycle of further lives and deaths. Accordingly, Panadavas did the ‘Sevas’ at Prayaga and several Tirthas around by way of daily Snaanas, liberal Daanas, fastings, Pinda Daanas, Keshava Pujas and so on.

**Pancha Tirthas - Mahatmya and Puja Vidhana Pancha Tirthas - Mahatmya and Puja Vidhana:** In Brahma Purana , Brahma Deva briefed the formal procedure of worship at Pancha Tirthas (Indradyumna Sarovara, Markandeyahlada, Akshaya Vata, Sweta Madhava and Samudra) viz. Snaana, Daana, Darshana and Puja of Parama Shiva and Vishnu Rupas to the Munis at Naimishaaranya as conveyed by Suta Muni. On entering the Markandeya Hrida, a devotee should face Northern Direction and perform three dips in water navel- deep, reciting the following: *Samsaara saagarey magnam Paapagrasta machetanam, Traahi maam Bhaganetraghna Tripuraarey namostutey/ Namah Shivaaya Shaantaaya Sarva paapa haraayacha, Snaanam karomi Devesha mama Nashyatu paatakam/* (Bhaganetra Naashaka **Shiva!** Tripuraasura Shatru! Shanta Swarupa! I am deeply engaged in Samsaara; protect me from my sins and grant me benevolence). After the Snaana, formal Tarpana should be performed to Devas, Rishis and Pitras; then the devotees should enter the Shiva Temple, perform three Pradakshinas, recite Markandeswaraaya Namah and Mula Mantra / Aghora Mantra and invoke Paramashiva with the following: *Trilochana Namastestu Namastey Shahi Bhushana, Traahi maam twam Virupaaksha Mahadeva Namostutey/* After formal worship was concluded the Shiva Linga, then three parikramaas be performed to a Vata Vriksha by saying: *Om Namomyakta Swarupaaya Mahaa Praaya kaariney, Mahdrasamopavishtaaya Nyagrodhaaya Namostuey/ Amaratwam sadaa kalpey Hareshchaayatanam Vata, Nyagrodha Hara mey paapam Kalpavriksha Namostutey/* Pradakshinas of the **Vata Vriksha Vishnu** Rupa and Garuda Rupa signifying the Paralaya Vata Vriksha of Bala Mukunda would yield the Mahaphala of Mukti from Brahmahatyaadi paatakaas, besides bestowing the Ashwamedha Yagna Phala. Following the Vata Vriksha Parikrama, the devotee would then feast his /her eyes with the darshana of **Shri Krishna, Balarama and Devi Subhadra:** first worship Balabhadra reciting the hymn: *Namastey Haladhrugraama namastey Musalaayudha, Namstey Revatikaanta Namastey Bhaktavatsala/ Namastey Balinaam Shreshtha namasty Dharaneedhara, Pralambaarey Namostu traahi maam Krishna purvaja!* Pursuant to Babhadra Puja, the devotee would then be engrossed with the recital of Dwadashaaksharan Mantra viz. **Om Bhagavatey Vaasudevaaya** and execute the formal Puja to Shri Krishna Deva with Gandha-Pushpa-Dhupa-Deepa-Phala- Naivedya-Kirtana- Natya and Pranaamas, followed by the following: *Jaya Krishna Jagannatha Jayasarvaagha naashana, Jaya Chanura Keshighna Jaya Kamsa nishudana/ Jaya Padma Palaashaaksha Jaya chakra Gadaa- dhara, Jaya Nilaamubuda shyaama Jaya sarva Sukhaprada/ Jayadeva Jagatpujya Jaya samsara naashana, Jayalokapatey naatha Jayavaanchaa phalaprada/ Samsaara saagarey ghorey nissarey dukkha pheniley, Krodhagraahaakuley Roudrey Vishayodaka samplavey/ Naanaarogormikaliley mahaavarta sudustarey, Nimagnoham Sura shreshta Traahimaam Purushotthama/ Evam Prasaadya Devesam Varadam Bhaktavatsalam, Sarva Paapa haram Devam sarva kaama phalapradam/ Peenaamsam Dwibhujam Krishnam Padmapatraayatekshanam, Mahoraskam Mahabaahum Peetavastram Shubhaananam/ Sankhachakra gadaa paanim Makutaangada bhushanam, Sarva lakshana Samyuktam Vanamaalaa vibhushitam/* Any person performed Krishna Stuti as above would indeed accomplish the fruits of Ashvamedha Yagnaas and Sarva Tirha Darshana- Veda-Yagna-Daana-Vrata-Niyama-Tapasya and Brahmacharya! Finally, a devotee should pray to Subhadra Devi as follows: *Namastey Sarvage Devi*

*namastey Shubha Soukhyadey, Traahi maam Pancha Patraakshi Katyayani Namostutey/ A devotee would thus complete the darshanas of Subhadra Devi too.*

**Tirtha Yatras' (Visits to Holy Rivers and Pilgrim Centers) :** Deva Varaha narrated the importance of pilgrimages to select 'Thirthas'to Bhu Devi,apparently as a component of human endeavour to realise 'Paramatma' in various ways and means through manifestations such as Deities, Holy Tirthas, Temples and Virtuous deeds. On the aspect of Holy Tirthas, He described the value of worship and faith as the two solid pillars of devotion as a firm stepping stone to realise the Almighty. Indeed there are any numbers of Pilgrim Centers, but made a selection of such Tirthas as have special reference to Vishnu-related ones:

**Kokamukha Tirtha:** Once a fisherman caught a massive fish in a big Lake called Kokamukha Tirtha and a kite lifted the prey but could not hold it properly and as the fish slipped on ground, a handsome prince emerged from the fish. Almost simultaneously the fisherman's wife brought pieces of meat to catch fish and as a kite took away the plate of meat the fisherman killed the kite with his arrows and there emerged a charming Princess claiming that she was from Chandrapur.The Prince and the Princess were married and as both of them had memories of their previous births recalled the strange story, thanks to the sanctity of the Kokamukha Tirtha. [The strong belief is that Kikhamukha was the confluence of Rivers of Koka and Kosi (Kousiki) running from Nepal on the Western District of Purnea in Bihar. The river is known in Nepal as Sun-Kosi (Swarna Kausiki). The ancient Kokamukhi Tirtha or Varaha Kshetra is situated on the banks of Sun Kosi now called Baraha Chhatra or the corrupted form of Varaha Kshetra] Bhagavan Varaha depicted the prominence of Kokamukhi Tirtha to Bhu Devi: An overnight stay on the banks of a River 'Jalabindu' performing fast and worship to Vishnu would fetch the knowledge of previous births! An overnight stay and bath at the 'Vishnudhara' waterfall in the Khoka region would yield the 'Punya' of performing thousand Agnishtomas'. Worship of Vishnu for three days and nights by fasting and Tarpan at 'Vishnupada Sthan' or area reserved at Krouncha Dweep.Early morning baths in a 'Sarovar'from where Bhu Devi was pulled up by the tusks of Varaha Deva would completely wash off the sins of persons of the current birth. A five night penance near the 'Pancha Shilas'or Five Rocks dedicated to Vishnu would reveal the path to 'Gomed Dwipa'.There was a Thunga-Kut named mountain with four 'Shikars'in the Koka Region and a night long stay and bath would pave the way for Kusha Dwipa. Likewise, there were several Punya Kshetras in and around the holiest Kokamukhi Tirtha; penance, prayers, river bathing and homams etc. would confer various blessings. Termination of life in the Holy Region would bestow life in 'Parama Lokas'. He who reads or hears about the Kokamukha Tirtha also confers effective means of attaining higher lokas.

**Badari Tirtha :** On top of Himalayas is situated the inaccessible Badari Tirtha which is the abode of Badarinath Narayana. It is at this Holy Place that the illustrious 'Brahmakund'is situated where a person bathing on three days on fast successively provides the benefit of executing 'Agnishtoma' or the 'Homa'/ oblation to Fire God. Performance of 'Krucchavrat' before 'Pranathyaag' or termination of life might qualify a person to attain Brahmlok or even Vishnu lok! At the Bararikashram, Tapsya at a place named Agnikunda would please Narayana Himself. At the Place famous as 'Pancha Shila'in the Tirtha, it is believed that Vishnu assumes the form of 'Himagni' and overnight fast and worship at the Agnikunda entitles the advantage of achieving Ashvamedha Yagnya. There are Five Shikharas at Badri Mountain and five waterfalls at a place known as Pancha Shikha. If one recites 'Panchakshari' at the Spot a devotee could enter Swarga Loka gardens for some time and if he dies there he would reside at that Place for good. Similarly there are many other Places of spiritual significance at Badri Kshetra like Chathustothra,

Veda dhara where Brahma recited the Vedas first, Dwadasaadithya Kund, Lokpalak Kshetra where Vishnu appointed Lokpals; Sthulakund where Mountain Top is split and Bhagavan Narayana created Soma Deva as worship on Jyeshtha Sukla Dwadasi on that day is considered extremely propitious; also Meruvar was the Place where Vishnu created Meru Parvat; 'Panchashir' where Lord Brahma's Fifth Head was plucked as a punishment; 'Somabhishek' where Vishnu appointed as Soma the Chief of Brahmanas; and 'Urvasi Kund' where Apsara Urvashi was born from Vishnu's right thigh. Varaha Deva thus described the prominence of Badari Kshetra as one of the most Sacred Spots that Narayana Himself feels delighted to stay.

**Mandara Tirtha:** Situated at the foothills of Vindhya Mountain, Mandara Tirtha has unique qualities. Named after the charming Mandara flower, its tree in the Tirtha is visible on Dwadasi and Chaturdasi days of a month. If one takes bath in a nearby waterbody and performs sincere meditation, the person concerned attains 'Mukti'. A sacred kshetra named 'Vaikuntha karak'to the north of the Tirtha leads one to a waterfall full of yellow colour like turmeric powder; it is believed that a night's stay after bath gives an experience of the company of 'Apsaras' (Celestial damsels). Some places nearby the Mandara Tirtha are Prapan, Modan and Vaikunthakaran; it is believed that stay and penance at these places till death blesses the persons with Swarga. Not far from the Mandara Mountain, a sacred place known as 'Syamanta Panchak', there are rock formations like Chakra (wheel), Gada (mace), Shankha (Conch) and Musal (plough)!

**Shalagram Tirtha:** Sage Shanlankayan of Yadu Vamsa performed rigorous Tapasya to Rudra Deva to beget a son of Universal fame. Without realising that by the grace of Rudra and Vishnu, a boy of great brilliance named Nandiswara was already born since the Sage continued the Tapasya roaming from one place to another. Finally he settled for further Tapasya under a Sal Tree at Shalagram. On a Vaisakha month's Dwadasi, Vishnu blessed the Sage with His 'Saakshatkaar' (appearance) and conveyed that a highly virtuous boy named Nandiswara was already manifested with the combined grace of Himself and Rudra and was growing at 'Vraja' Bhumi near Mathura. The Sacred Tree and the Sacred Tirtha became renowned ever since then and the Sage was overwhelmed by the excellent and relentless Tapasya executed by him as Vishnu and Rudra both blessed him to immortality. In this Holy Region of Shalagram, there are fifteen Kshetras, but the best known is that of Varaha Deva. The other Sacred Places were Bilvaprabha, Chakraswami, Vishnupada, Kaalihrida, Swayambraha, Gadakund, Agniprabha, Sarvayudha, Devaprabha, Vidyadhara, Punyanadi, Devahlaad and so on.

**'Go-Nishkramanak' Tirtha:** Situated on the Himalayan range, Go Nishkraman Tirtha has ancient reputation. Bhagavan Vishnu arranged to bring down the progeny of seventy cows of Surabhi the celestial cow to bathe in their milk the Lord Shiva, as the latter was cursed by a Sage called Aurva to go about restless and extremely thirsty all over the world; Lord Shiva entered the Sage's Ashram (Hermitage) once and the trees and fruits turned into ash by the heat of Shiva's presence in the Ashram and hence the curse. Eventually, Lord Shiva's restlessness, body heat and thirst disappeared and the Sacred Place became illustrative. Devotees taking bath in the heavy waterfall which had five streams provides extraordinary freshness and mental peace; it is stated that a person who takes bath and observes fast for five nights achieves the 'Punya' of performing five Yajnas, apart from burning off the sins accumulated. In this very Tirtha, there is a hallowed Kshetra, called 'Panchapad' where there are five massive stones and another huge stone inside a sacred waterbody. Also there are other Kshetras reputed as Brahmepad, Vishnupad, Kotivati, Vishnusar and Gosthalak. On Karthika Sukla Dwadasi, devotees take bath and observe fast

bestows the benefit of Three Vajapeya Yajnas near the water at Brahmmapada. At Vishnugar and a nearby 'Agaath'(deep valley) seen from the precipice of the mountain, there is a 'Mandalakar' (Rounded) place for doing 'Parikramas' (Circumambulation) and the number of steps taken in the last Parikrama before the death would ensure so many years of reverence in Brahmloka! Most significantly, the pilgrims could distinctly hear the high pitched voices of cows at the Gosthalak Kshetra!

**Sthutaswami (Krishna) Tirtha:** Varaha Deva prophesied to Bhu Devi that in Dwapar Yuga, Lord Krishna would be born to Devaki and Vasudeva and exterminates countless Danavas and Cruel Kings. Five Great Sages would be the Sthutaswami's (Krishna's) followers viz. Shandilya, Gaargil, Kapila, Upashayak and Bhrigu. Some five kosas from Mathura is situated the Sthutaswami Teertha and is famed to absolve the sins of devotees by bathing in it with earnestness. Besides the Five Sages aforementioned, the Sthutaswami would be prayed to by Baladev, Pradyumna and Anirudha. Varaha Deva also prophesied that by sheer force of unflinching faith and Bhakti (Devotion) the Virtuous would take firm steps to salvation, while sheer jealousy and ego would be the dominant factors among the vicious persons like Demons and demoniac Kings taking them to their ruin; indeed the most prominent feature of the Yuga Dharma of Tretha Age! The Sthutaswami Tirtha has a 'Bhutagiri' mountain nearby where there are metal-made Idols of Lord Krishna of indestructible nature; an interesting custom prevailing in the Region had been that the top (head) and bottom (feet) portions of the Krishna Idols of Metals are worshipped in awe with flowers, Sandal paste and camphor lighting, where as the middle portion of the Idols, especially under the chin and neck are touched or fondled with affection and nearness of a family member! In the same Region, there are 'Pancharuna' kshetra, 'Bhrigu Kund', 'Manikunda' and 'Dhootpap', each one of these Places possessing their own sanctity and experiences of devotees.

**Dwaraka Kshetra:** In the entire Life Story of Dwapara Avataar Krishna, the Dwapara Kshetra occupies a vital role. Dwaraka was materialised by Vishvakarma on the architectural pattern of Indrapuri of Indra himself and the citizens of Mathura were stated to have been moved out in sleep into the luxurious beds of the glorious mansions of Dwaraka! [The overnight transfer was stated to have been caused to avoid Krishna / Balarama's clashes with Jarasandha and his associated Yavans of foreign origin, since Jarasandha was destined to die in Bhimasena's hands and Yavans were destined to be destroyed by Muchukunda, son of Mandhata] The heights of popularity of Dwaraka were witnessed under the Rule of Yadu Vamsies with the rock like support of Krishna and Bala Deva. At the same time, the termination of the Vamsa too had to be witnessed by Krishna and Bala Rama pursuant to the curse of Great Sage Durvasa as he was annoyed with the light-moment pranks of some misdirected Yadu youth as to whether a boy disguised as a girl would deliver a boy or a girl and pat came the Sage Durvasa's reply that he would deliver an iron rod. Even after converting the rod into particles submerged into the Sea, the members of the clan killed each other as a result of the curse excepting those who left Dwaraka for Prabhasa Kshetra. Besides Dwaraka, **Panchasar** is a reputed Kshetra where a stay of six days continuously would provide unprecedented enjoyment and death at that place is said to bless the soul to reach 'Swarga'. In the same Region of Panchasar, there is a famous Peepul Tree whose fruits are not available to each and everybody, but a person lucky to secure the fruit is stated to secure Parama Siddhi after his life. **Prabhasa** is the most significant Kshetra, where in the days of yore, or perhaps even now to some extent, it is difficult to meet those who are obsessed with passion and envy. Those who take bath in the Sea are never disturbed by thousands of crocodiles; more interestingly, if persons offer 'Pindas' to forefathers at this place and tender the Pindas to crocodiles, the latter accept the offerings from the Virtuous persons but reject from the others the same outright! There are other important Places too in the

Dwaraka / Panchasar Kshetras like Panchakund, Brahmasangaman, Hamsakund, Kadamba, Chakra Tirth, Raivatak, Vishnusamkraman etc. all around Manipur Mountain.

**Mathura Kshetra:** Varaha Deva was so fond of Mathura Kshetra that He told Bhu Devi: ‘Na Vidyatey cha Pataaley Naantharikshey Na Maanushey, Samathvam Mathuraaya hi Priyam mama Vasundharey’! (Devi Prithvi! Neither the Human World, nor the Higher Worlds nor Patala could be compared with Mathura!) Whatever godsendings are secured from the worships of Magha Amavasyas at ‘Prayaga’ are achieved every day at Mathura; the boons equal to penance and bathing at ‘Kurukshetra’ during Sun eclipses is as good as a day’s stay at Mathura; ‘Varanasi’s’ stay a life time is like a day’s stay at Mathura and the ‘Punya’ of penance and bathing at Pushkar Tirtha during the entire Karthik month is like a day’s stay at Mathura! River Yamuna at Mathura is far more sacred than Ganga, said Varaha Deva and in the same vein He said that Yamuna at Prayag is hundred times more sacred than Ganga. Devotees taking bath at ‘Avimuktha’ Kshetra are blessed to reach Vaikuntha. Also those fortunate to take baths at ‘Vishranthi’ Kshetra are considered as worship-worthy in Vaikuntha. Indeed, the hallowed baths at Vishranti are far more superior to Yajnas, Tapas, Dhyana and Samyam or control of Senses. Three sincere ‘Pradakshinas’ of Gathasram Deva at Vishranti are like a stay in Vaikuntha. Bathing at ‘Kankhal’ Tirtha in the vicinity of Mathura is like enjoying the undisclosed happiness of Indraloka. Likewise, Dhruva Tirtha is popular for performing ‘Pitru karyas’ or Shradhs and Tarpanas; Rishi Tirtha, Moksha Tirtha, and Koti Tirtha are known for giving away charities. Bodhi Tirtha is well known for ‘Pinda daans’. Evidently, Mathura’s uniqueness is due to Krishna’s birth at this consecrated land! In the days of yore, the entire area was the most hallowed place where Lord Krishna’s escapades in childhood ought to have been lapped up in the contemporary period like the killings of countless Demons, lifting of Govardhan Mountain by a child’s little finger, controlling Varuna Deva by providing shelter to the people around, besides His personal and mystifying charm, Rasaleelas, full display of Maya and all the rest. Little wonder that Vishnu Himself incarnated as Krishna and demonstrated how magnificent was the power of Almighty and how mean and low that humanity in some parts would have stooped to. Around Mathura, there are twelve Sacred Tirthas viz. Madhuvan, Taalvan, Kundanvan, Kaamyakvan, Bahulavan, Bhadravan, Khadirvan, Mahavan, Lokajanhavan, Bilvavan, Bhaandiravan, and finally Brindavan. Each of these Tirthas has its one distinct and sacrosanct nature and popularity.

**Gokarna Tirtha:** There lived a ‘Vaisya’ (merchant) of virtue at Mathura with his wife Susheela, but they had no offspring. She was taking bath in ‘Sangam’ (Prayag) and found children playing with joy and happiness while swimming. She was overtaken by grief as she had no children, when a Sage asked the couple to worship Lord Siva of Gokarna. After a few years, the couple were blessed with a boy whom they named Gokarna. After Gokarna grew and was married, he also did not beget a child and was involved in charity for considerable time. He had then taken to his Vysya profession and decided to go out in search of fortune. On way, he found a Divine Parrot in a cage carried by its Master and was impressed by its knowledge. The parrot said that in his previous birth he was a learned person named Sukodar but was cursed by a Sage Sukhadev who had however agreed to let Sukodar to retain his memory and knowledge in his next birth aslo. The Master of the parrot agreed to give the bird away, provided Gokarna’s virtues of past good deeds were transferred to the Master. Meanwhile, the ship got caught in a cyclone and wrecked in an island and the Captain and crew said that the person responsible was Gokarna and his sins. The parrot felt bad about its Master and flew away to perform worship at a Vishnu Temple where a few Divine birds along with Jatayu their Chief were present; the divine birds decided to help the Master. The parrot showed the way, rescued the Master and took Gokarna to the Vishnu Temple, where he did

worship and Tarpan. There were Divine Women too in the Temple who were also sympathetic and allowed Gokarna to stay in the Temple as long as he wished. The parrot flew to Gokarna's parents and conveyed about the welfare of Gokarna. Meanwhile the wrecked ship too was repaired and set sailing again. But the Divine women were sad as the King of Ayodhya decided to destroy the gardens at Mathura; the Parrot tried to negotiate and the decision to destroy the beautiful Mathura Gardens was reversed. The parents of Gokarna were united with him who constructed a beautiful Suka Deva temple of Lord Shiva in the memory of the illustrious Parrot. A grand Yajna was performed and Go Daan as also many charities were performed and eventually a highly Sacred Gokarna Kshetra came to emerge as a renowned Tirtha.

**Mayapuri (Haridwar) Tirtha-A glorious incident of Vishnu Maya:** There was a highly religious Brahmana named Somasharma at Mayapuri who was an extremely dedicated devotee of Narayana. For a long time, the Brahmana executed uninterrupted Tapas, Karma, Bhakti and unique prayers to Bhagavan who had finally appeared before him and asked for any boon that he desired. The Brahmana said that one kept on hearing about Vishnu Maya in various ways and that he wanted to actually experience that 'Maya'. The Lord replied that if the Brahmana was so intensively enamoured of a glimpse of Maya, then he should go bathe at a Kubjamarak Tirtha in Ganga; Bhagavan said to Himself that He would furnish to him a Maya titled 'Lomaharshini Rohini'. As soon as Somasharma took a dip in the Ganges, he entered a Nishad girl's 'Garbha' (belly) and felt aggrieved that having carried out such Tapasya and accomplished the impossible Darshan ( Vision) of Maha Vishnu, was it not a twist of fate to have insisted on Bhagavan to experience a glimpse of Vishnu Maya! What a miserable experience this that a wreched Nishad woman would be his mother after a detestable experience of nine months with three hundred bones through nine 'dwaras' (doors), blood, excretion, horrible odour and physical hardship! 'Why did I ask a boon like this hey Madhava, after all my spiritual and devotional life?' After the delivery, the baby did not have any memory of Somasharma's past and grew up as a lovely Nishad girl, got married, begot children and after fifty years, by virtue of Vishnu Maya, took bath in Ganges one day and got converted as a hermit, sitting with the same form of Somasharma but got utterly confused as there was an identity crisis. A few Brahmanas told the hermit that they were searching him for the entire day and were happy to see him back. Then prompted by an inner voice, Somasharma went back to Kubjamarak Tirtha, pulled his head down, turned back to normalcy and got back his memory. Lord Vishnu appeared before Somasharma again and after the latter's 'Prana Tyag' he left for the 'Sweta Deepa'. Those who read this account of 'Vishnu Maya' would certainly avoid rebirths in the families of the vicious and despicable, but to a woman of high merit and blessing.

**Kubjaamrak Tirtha (Hrishikesh):** Varaharupa Vishnu described to Bhru Devi about the magnitude of Kubjaamrak Tirtha's greatness and the highly propitious baths in Ganga leading to indescribable merits. In the seventeenth Kalpa, Brahma granted boons of invincibility to two Demon brothers named Madhu and Kaitabha who were tricked to death by mutual destruction and created Prithvi afresh. He then looked around to see the most revered Maha Tapasvi Rebhya engrossed in meditation for thousand years with his hands held high. Being extremely pleased at the Sage's dedication, Vishnu leaned a hand on the branch of a Mangoe tree and the branch got bent by the weight of His hand; the Sage noticed the Lord's presence and broke into spontaneous eulogy instantly and performed 'Saastanga Namaskar' with his entire body falling on the ground. He requested Narayana to bestow him the boon of making Hrishikesh a popular Tirtha. Kubjaamrak is of Kumudaakar or Lotus shaped. Bathing in Ganga especially in the months of Karthik, Margaseersh, and Vishakh is considered excellent. In this area, there is a Manasik Tirtha reputed

for Devi Vishaalanetri and the belief is that after death, the person is born into a Vishaal vamsa with large family and long standing reputation and prosperity. Another Tirtha is named 'Maya' where bathing in Ganga would certainly bring in reputation and contentment. At 'Purnamukha' Tirtha, Ganga water is cool and transparent and visitors prefer bathing here in summer season, preferably on Marga Sukla Paksha Dwadasi. 'Karaveer' Tirtha's bathing in Ganges confers jumping kind of happiness, while Pundarika Tirtha bathing gives 'Yajna phal' or the fruit of executing Sacrifices. Penances at 'Agni Tirth' grant the boon of Ashvamedha Yajna. At 'Vayavya Tirtha', Pitra Karyas or Tarpanas to Ancestors are performed; also shaking off an Asvathh Tree on the banks of Ganges for its leaves provides Parameswar Gyan, if the tree branch shaking is performed on twelve Dwadashis. Ganga assumes different colours in Seasons at the 'Saptasaamudrik' Tirtha, some times in white like milk, some times yellow, yet another time blood red, or of 'Marakatha' Mani!

**Gokarneshwar Tirthas of Shiva:** While Varaha Deva delineated the prominence of Vishnu oriented Tirthas as above to Bhudevi, Sage Sanatkumar the 'Manasa Putra' (Mind-born son) of Lord Brahma approached the Lord and expressed happiness about the termination of Demon Tarakasura by Maha Deva as the whole World was rid of the menace, especially by Indra and Devas. But Sanatkumara felt that one mystery was still nagging in his mind as to why there were three Gokarneshwar Tirthas, one the North Gokarna, another the Dakshina Gokarna and the third was Shringeshwar. Lord Brahma explained the background in some detail: The Northern Peak of Mandarachal Mountain known as Munjavan is picturesque where a Nandana Garden existed with most alluring surroundings of glittering precious stones and heaven-like ambience of streams, flowers and fruits where Devas made their temporary resting places and so did Celestial Beings like Kinnaras who sang their sweetest tunes and performed their dances. Most significantly, Maha Deva used to often grace the Place in the form of 'Sthanu Parameswara'. In the subsequent Treta Yuga, a Maha Muni called Nandi carried out a rigorous Tapasya for thousand years experiencing icy cold and extreme heat and Parameswara having tested his steadfast fortitude and unnerving faith finally gave 'Sakshatkar' and asked boons to bestow; but Nandi never yielded for 'Prabhutva, Amaratva, Indratva, Brahmatva, Lokapaalatva -Royalty, Immortality, the position of Indra, Brahma, Lokapaala -but his Bhakti should be eternal, or else there should not be Bhakti at all! Very gladly, Shankara awarded the World's highest windfall that Nandi would be unique like Shiva Himself, that he would be the conduit between all Devas and Danavas, Indra and Brahma and all the Highest Powers that be as Shiva's own conscience! Thus Nandi the Head of Nandi Ganas became Trinetra, with Trishul, Danad, Pinaki, etc. like Second Shankara! In course of time, none could ever witness Shankara's physical form as He had turned Himself as a Deer in the Sleshmatak Forest, a fact not known to Nandi even! Led by Nandi, all the Deities including Indra made vigorous searches the World over but to no avail. Lord Brahma in His inner vision over Tapasya discovered Parameswara as a Deer in the Sleshmatak Forest not far from the renowned Pasupathinath Temple in Nepal. Indra, Brahma and Narayana reached the Forest and found the uni-horn Deer, chased it and nearly caught hold of the horn - Indra the top portion, Brahma the middle and Vishnu the lower portion. Unfortunately for them, the horn gave way into their hands as three parts and all the three cursed their own helplessness. A voice was then heard that the three of them were able to catch only the horn and that too in three pieces. If only the entire body were caught and installed then Dharma Dhenu (the Cow of Virtue) would have been on all four legs. Anyway, they should install their respective pieces of the horn-the upper portion as Uttar Gokarneshwar, the middle portion as Dakshina Gokarneshwar and the lower portion at Slesheswar. Lord Shiva further said that on the foot hills of Himalayas called Nepal, He would in any case emerge on His own with four

resplendent faces in four directions which would be famous as ‘Sariresh’ (Pashupathinath); Sudarshan Chakra of Sri Krishna tore the Mountains enabling Indra to terminate several Demons like Daman and the place became occupied with Mlecchhas eventually but Surya Vamsa Kshatriyas uprooted Mlecchhas and established a Hindu Kingdom. It is at this Illustrious Place where the Sacred Bagamati River originating from Himalayas flows that **Slesheshvar** Param Guha or the Sancrosant Cave had surfaced. There are any numbers of streams flowing where even a touch of the waters would destroy sins. To the South of Slesheswar is situated the ‘Anashak’ Tirtha which allows firm steps towards Mukti. Another Tirtha called ‘Bhrigu Prapatan’ destroys ‘Arishat Vargas’ (Six Enemies) viz. Kama (Desire) and Krodha (Anger); Groups of ‘Apsaras’ (Celestial Dansueses) take off by Vimans from this Place to ‘Swarga’. Lord Brahma Himself established ‘Brahmodabhed’ Tirtha which has the reputation of abolishing ‘Rajo guna’ if a devotee takes bath with Indriya-Nigrah or limb control for a year to qualify him to ascend to Brahma Loka. There is also a ‘Gorakshak’ Tirth a visit of which would bestow the benefit of ‘Sahasra-Daan’ or Charity of Thousand Cows. A Climb of Gauri Shikhar provides Devi- Sayujya. Down under the Mountain a bath in Baghmati River at ‘Ratna Kund’ blesses attainment of Skandalok. Even a simple bath at ‘Panchanadi Tirtha’ bestows the Punya of performing ‘Agnishtoma’. To North of Slesheswar is ‘Pranthakapaniya’ Tirtha where Gandharvas were renowned to worship Shiva. To North West, a sincere bath in ‘Brahmodaya Tirtha’ along with ‘Sandhyopasana’ would assure that there would be no visit to ‘Mrityu loka’ and that there would not be any difficulties for the rest of life. The devotees who perform Pitra Tarpana and Shraddha in the Sangam Place of Bhagmati and Manivati Rivers would most certainly accomplish the best of Shiva Devas’ blessings! Lord Indra situated the top portion of the ‘Shringa’ at Swarga itself. Brahma set up the middle portion of the Deer Horn at Gokarna and Lord Vishnu set it up at Shringeshwar. But Bhagavan’s body without the Horn has infinite forms! For example, Ravanaasura secured one linga which got entrenched in Earth because of the trickstery of Ganesha and tried to pull it tight and gave up! [Gokarna in North Karnataka is a Siddha Linga at Mahabaleswar Temple; the coverings of the Atma Linga sought to have been brought by Ravana fell at Dhareswar, Gunavantheswar, Murudeswar and Sajjeswar Temples, as popularly believed]

Skanda Purana vividly signifies **River Narmada**: Narmada’s Origin, significant events ascribed to the River and her Mahatmya: In the Reva Khand of Skanda Purana, Sage Suta enlightened a Congregation of Rishis about a query of Yudhishtar (of Pandavas) to Maharshi Markandeya about the origin of River Narmada. Several Holy Persons and Brahmanas approached King Pururava to let a Holy River descend from Heaven so that various religious activities aimed at Devas and Pitras by human beings were facilitated and the King performed relentless Tapasya to Parama Siva who in turn asked Narmada Devi to descend. She desired to have a strong base to do so and Siva asked Paryank, the son of Vindhya, to bear the brunt. As Narmada descended, there were floods of water and the Deities requested her to diminish her size and taught Pururava the details of the Rituals to perform tarpans to his ancestors which were followed by generations thereafter. But since Narmada was a virgin, she did not allow her divine touch to Deities and therefore agreed to marry King Purukutsu, who actually was Samudra Deva but was cursed by Brahma to become a human being as the King Purukutsu also learnt from Narmada about the rituals to liberate his ancestors. It was stated that Narmada ‘Snaans’ at various points of Her Course cutting the Vindhya Mountains and peaks every where on way were not only refreshing and cool but are Sacred and divinely and those who perform the baths, especially of early hours of a day, secure Punya of several Snaans of Ganga! The Sacred Snaans at that time are instant destroyers of sins committed in the current and previous lives. On the northern side of the River is situated *Anantapur* where Anantasiddhi Linga is

popular and is stated to be the hub of Maharshis like Saavarni, Kaushik and Aghamarshan performing Vratas and Tapas. Sage Valmiki is also stated to have lived here for long till attainment of Moksha. Another important Tirth named *Dipeswar* or *Vyasa Tirtha* is known for Vrishabha daan (Charity of a bull) on Kartika Krishna Paksha Chaturdasi bestowing Swargavaas after life. At the *Narmada-Varangana Sangam* is popular to wash off physical ailments and nearby the Sangam is situated the *Siva kshetra* where rituals of ‘Snaan and Daan’ during Solar Eclipse award the same impact as at Kurukshetra; this is the abode of Narmada, Siva and Vishnu the latter being called Utpalaavarta having thousand heads! It is the belief that even flies and birds here reach Haridhaam, let alone human beings. *Tripuri Kshetra* is noted as a popular and powerful Tirtha where eight Swayambhu Lingas manifested on their own, where any act of Virtue would have manifold fruits of life. Sage Markandeya recalled an interesting happening about the Tripuri Kshetra: Swayambhu Manu-the first Manu-heard at Ayodhya while sleeping the remote sounds of bells and Vasishtha explained to Manu that those sounds were heard from Tripuri on the banks of Sacred Narmada, from the aeroplanes taking off from the roofs of virtuous human beings destined to celestial worlds like Kailasa, Vaikuntha and Indra loka. Swayambhu Manu immediately left for Tripuri and performed several rituals including Aswamedha Yagna and prayed to Devi Narmada who blessed the Manu that in his lineage one famous Bhagirath would be borne in Treta Yuga and would succeed bringing Pavitra Ganga to ‘Aryavarta’ from the Celestial Worlds! In the Tripuri Kshetra itself, Sage Bhrigu prayed to Trilochan Siva being desirous of the darshan of His Third Eye and as Siva obliged with His appearance, the Sage asked for the boons of obtaining Siddhis, formation of *Bhrigu Tirtha* with His presence always, manifesting Eight Rudras in the Bhrigu Tirtha named Bhrigu, Shooli, Ved, Chandra, Mukha, Attahaas, Kaal and Karaali; and granting benevolence to visitors of Bhrigu Tirtha as a sin-destroyer. Similarly Bhagavan Soma (Chandra) prayed to Siva to set up *Soma Tirtha* as the Sangam of the three Rivers viz. Ganga, Jamuna and Narmada. *Narmadapuri* on the bank of Narmada was indeed worthy as Sage Jamadagni prayed to Maha Deva and secured a Kama Dhenu and King Kartaveeryarjuna being jealous of the prized possession, took away the Holy Cow by force after killing Jamadagni and the Sage’s son Parasurama not only killed the most powerful King of the Time but also uprooted the concept of Kshatriyas and Kings by waging twenty one battles; he set up a Memorial named Devadroni (Kapila Dhenu) where Pinda daanas continued to be performed to Jamadagi and ancestors. Sage Markandeya narrated the renowned happening of a ‘Nishad’ (Hunter) to Yudhishtar about the formation of *Trinetra Kund* as the high devotee of Siva Linga discovered that the Third Eye was missing on the Linga, cut his own eye as a replacement to it by resisting extreme pain and flow of blood and pasting it on the third eye position of the Siva Linga; Maha Deva appeared before Nishad with blind faith, extreme sense of sacrifice and unnerving devotion and granted him ‘Siva Sayujyam’(Attainment of Oneness with Siva). *Sapta Sarasvat Tirtha* came into being since a Gandharva, who was an excellent singer of hymns extolling Parama Siva, got into the habit of drinking and Nandi cursed that the singer be born to a Chandala. The Singer became extremely repentant and entreated Nandi to show a means of reversing the curse; the Chandala had luckily retained the memory of his earlier birth as Gandharva and reached the banks of Narmada and sang hymns of Siva at ‘Shankarasthanil’ or Siva Vedi when a Siva Linga appeared by name Sapta Sarasvata and the Chandala regained the earlier life as Gandharva. *Shandileswar Tirtha* was formed after the famous Sage Shandilya (the Founder of the Shandilya Gotra) whose Tapasya to Maheswara in his hermitage on the banks of Narmada was exemplary; along with two other Lingas viz. Pancha Brahmeswar and Pushpeshwar, the Shandileswar was well known as among the ‘Tirtha Traya’ where worship of the Lingas and Pitru Tarpan / Pinda Pradaanas were performed. Markandeya narrated to Yudhishtar the story of Chakravarthi *Mandhata*, who performed Yagnas near Amarakashtak

Mountain and prayed to *Omkareswar*. He was a gift of a powerful Yagna by his father, King Yavanashva, who drank by mistake the ‘Mantra Jala’ meant for his wife. Yuvanashva got pregnant instead and delivered a boy by the opening of his belly. Devas and Indra visited the child and wondered as to who might feed milk to the boy; Indra said: ‘Esha Maa Dhata’ and fed Amrit-like milk by inserting his middle finger in the baby’s mouth and hence the child’s name became Mandhata. As the boy grew he became a model King of virtue, valour and justice. Omkareswar appeared in response to Mandhata’s prayers and gave the boon of naming the Mountain of Vaidurya as Mandhata. *Jaleswar* or Bana Linga was the manifestation of Siva; Banasura, the son of Bali Chakravarti, meditated to Maha Deva for thousand divine years and obtained the boons of impregnability of his City by any body excepting Mahadeva Himself and also flying mobility along with him and to those whom he chose any where. As Siva gave the boons, Vishnu and Brahma too bestowed the same kind of boons and Banasura thus emerged the Great Mighty King of ‘Three Puras’ or as the dreaded ‘Tripurasura’, who came to attack Deva Lokas and Bhuloka. Sages, Devas, Brahma and Vishnu were all alarmed and approached Siva, who decided to fight the Demon by Himself and smashed him with His Aghora astra which could absorb its heat and force by Narmada only after its attack. Banasura was badly hurt and realising his foolishness prayed to Maha Deva once again. The most lenient and gracious Bhagavan granted that Banasura would not have another birth and that a Siva Linga would be manifested as Bana Linga or Jala Linga. Another instance narrated by Markandeya to Yudhishtar related to the memorable King *Indradyumna* who performed Maha Yagna on the banks of Narmada, had darshan of Omkareswara Linga and visioned a radiant spectacle of an Inner Linga of Maha Deva in the central portion of the Principal Omkareswar Linga; he also had a special visualization of Bhagavan Vishnu in His full resplendent and ornamented form with four hands with Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Lotus at the top portion of Omkareswara Linga and prayed to Him; the King also invoked various Holy Rivers especially Ganga to join the Mahanadi Narmada at the bottom of the Linga; and to Narmada to manifest Seven Branches from the north to south to facilitate Daanas, Homams, Vratas, Tarpans and Pinda Pradaans to Pitras and other rituals. The King’s prayers were all granted adding to the magnificence of the entire Region in which the Sacred River Narmada flowed.

**Sarasvati River:** Stated as an ‘antarvaahini’ at Prayaga Triveni Sangama of Ganga-Yamuna and extensively referred to in Skanda- Padma- Vamana adi Puranas and extolled many times in Rig Veda, for eg. ‘Mother Sarasvati the renowned of Mothers, Rivers, Devis, we are indeed not worthy of our prostrations, but grant us merit and mind! Rig Veda 2.41.16. Similar prayers to bestow milk and ghee (RV.18.21.18) ; ‘to purify me with plentitude of richness in substance of thought and awakening of our consciousness (RV. 4.58.1) **Devi Sarasvati in ‘Kamakshi Vilasa’** ( Markandeya Purana) is quoted describing Hasti Shaila an ornament of Hari Kshetra and was famed among the Punya Koti Kshetras of Bharata where Mahendra became an Elephant as a victim of Devi Saraswati’s ‘shaapa’(Curse). At one stage, Saraswati assumed self-pride and arrogance that she was the Goddess of Learning in the whole Universe. Similarly, Devi Lakshmi felt egoistic that she was the root-cause of Wealth and Prosperity par excellence. Both Saraswati and Lakshmi entered into arguments claiming mutual seniority of status and importance and reached Mahendra to decide. **Indra** replied that Lakshmi was indeed superior since not only because he was the consort of Narayana but also because she was the Root Cause of ‘Bhoga Bhagyas’ or of Wealth and Fulfillment and moreover she was the mother-in-law of Saraswati. On hearing this Saraswati got furious and became highly critical of Mahendra as characterless as ‘Ahalyaachara’ or the Spoiler of Ahalya Devi, arrogant, partial-minded and power monger and as such cursed him to turn out to be an elephant. Devi Lakshmi was ever-merciful and understanding ; she assuaged his hurt feelings

with the curse and stated that none could cross the lines of Fate or 'karma praarabdha'. She counselled Indra that on descending from Swarga to Bhuloka he should as an Elephant serve and worship at Simhachala Kshetra near Dandakaaranya to worship Nrisimha Deva as also commend Prahlada; seek from Prahlada the 'Naarasimhaanishtubha Maha Mantra' to qualify for entry into Hari Kshetra in Kanchipura and meditate the compassionate Hari. Indra followed the precise advice of Maha Lakshmi; *Samgruhya Mantra -raajaanam Naarasimha mahamanum, Tadeka Dhyaanatasshakra Divya Jnaanamprajaayatey/ Tadjnaana kushalatwam hi Harikshetra praveshadam, Avashaaccha bhavetatra Mantramadhaanumuttamam/* (After securing the Maha Mantra, Indra entered Hari Kshetra and performed concentrated Dhyana on a mountain) Then Narakesari witnessed Indra in the Form of an Elephant, pierced his sharp nails through its thick skin, broke into his heart with his Yoga Shakti by assuming a 'Bimbaakaara' when Indra was engrossed in deep Dhyana. While seeing the Bimba, Indra was surprised to see two Brahmana Boys on the mountain. Indra asked as to who they were; they replied that they were the sons of Shringabheri Muni of Shandilya Gotra, that they were named Hema and Shukla, that their Guru was Gautama Maharshi who instructed them to fetch water from Bhadra River, that while bringing the pots of the water they kept the pots down and went up a tree to cut 'Samidhas'(twigs), that a lizard fell in the pot of water and that one Yaksha cursed the boys to become lizards. The lizards fell on the back of the Elephant while they were cutting the twigs and that elephant was none other than Indra! The boys then said that per chance, they as lizards fell on the back of the Elephant who entered Hari Kshetra. Indra who too got relieved of the Saraswati Shaapa touched the lizards who became Brahmana boys again and thanked Indra profusely. Indra in turn commended the Hasti Shaila as the most Sacred Mountain and blessed it: *Mudaa Shailaaya Devendro Dattavaanvaramuttamam, Ekaadashyamahoraatram Vishnossankeertanena cha/ Yatphalam Tatphalam Nrinaam Hasti Shailasya Darshanaat, Iti datvaa Varam Shakro Gatasswabhavanam Mudaa/* (Those 'Maanavas' who visit the Hasta Giri and worship it day and night on Ekadashaas by fasting and singing 'Harinaama' would indeed reap memorable fruits. Lakshmi and Saraswati asked Brahma to give his honest opinion as to the superiority between them and almost immediately Brahma favoured Lakshmi Devi. Saraswati was highly disappointed and even annoyed with Brahma and took away the 'danda' or an Insignia that Vishnu once gave to her which was the power of Brahma enabling the latter to undertake Srishti or Creation of 'Charaachara Jagat' or of the Moveable and Immovable Beings. Thus the action of Brahma to create was disabled. Brahma did not wish to entreat Saraswati to return the Srishti Danda but left for Himalayas to perform penance to Vishnu to request for an Emblem with Vishnu Amsa to Create instead of a Saraswati-oriented Crest. Vishnu was pleased with Brahma's Tapas and directed Brahma to perform hundred Ashwamedha Yagnas. Brahma then decided that instead of performing hundred such Yagnas it would be sufficient to execute one Yagna at the Hari Kshetra and asked Vishwakarma the Architect cum Builder of Devas to construct a huge Yagna Shaala right opposite the Idol of Narasimha; he discarded Saraswati as his partner at the Yagna but preferred Buddhi Devi as his 'Yagna Patni' to share the duties of a wife as prescribed. Brahma invited Devas, Devarshis like Narada, besides Gandharva-Yaksha- Kinnara-Apsara; Siddha- Saadhya-Muniganaas and decided to perform a Year- long Yagna; he worshipped Ganeshwara first to facilitate the Yagna without obstacles and then worshipped Yoga Narasimha Swami and initiated the Yagna with formal Mantras by appointing Kumara Swami as Adhavarvu, Maheswara as Udagaata, Varuna as Prastota, Yama Dharma Raja as Hota and Indra who performed hundred such Yagnas in the past as the Yagna Brahma. Since Brahma did not invite Saraswati to participate, she was furious and created powerful flames with her Maya Shakti with a view to destroy the Yagna but the Saviour of the Hari Kshetra viz. Vishnu arrested the Maya Shakti's both the hands and disabled her.

Saraswati took it as a challenge and released Kapalika Shakti but Vishnu in the Form of Nara Simha destroyed the Shakti. Enraged by her discomfiture, Devi Saraswati released ‘Daithyastra’ but Daityaari Narayana made the Astra futile. Vagdevi then created ‘Karaala Vadana Kalika’ and instructed the Maha Shakti to demolish the Yagna but Vishnu assumed an Eight-Hand Swarupa and having suppressed the Shakti sat firm on her shoulders. Finally with all her powers being overcome, Saraswati was humiliated and swooned out of anger and frustration and took the Form of ‘Pralaya Swarupi’ called Vegavati River with disastrous speed from Brahmaloaka down to Earth heading towards the Hari Shaila. Vishnu sensed the impending danger and decided to resort to her ‘maanabhanga’ or assault her physically; having become nude he stood before the lightning flash of gushing waters and like a Huge Log lied across against the flow. Saraswati having visioned Narayana’s nudity was thus put to shame and without being able to face him entered a ‘Bhu bila’ or a big fissure of Earth and escaped. Then the Yagna commenced without any hindrance; the Yagna Pashu or the Sacrificial Horse was let loose and returned invincible and at the successful completion of the year long Yagna, the ‘Purnaahuti’ or the Ultimate Offering to Agni as the climactic Homa of Cow’s ghee was accomplished and Brahma visioned a Massive Flood of Illumination on the Eastern Sky and offered wide and palmful of concentrated homage to that Spendor . That was the most awaited Moment of Sweta Varaha Kalpa’s Vaivasva Manvantara- Krita Yuga- Nrisimha Bhagavatmika Samvatsara- Vaishakha -Shukla Paksha- Chaturdashi’s Hasta Nakshatra Suryodaya when Devadhi Deva the Supreme Lord of the Universe manifested himself from the Yagna Homaagni’ as **Varada Raja Swami** and handed over the Insignia of Srishti to Brahma Deva. The latter went into raptures and placed the Insignia on his chest with tears of joy and got non-plussed momentarily. After recovering from the pleasant shock, Brahma Deva installed Bhagavan on the Hasti Shaila on a ‘Suvarna Simhasana’ or a Golden Throne in the presence of Devas and other Celestial Beings and Maharshis; in order to cool down the charged and excited atmosphere as also to supposedly quench the thirst of Narayana who was just manifested from Agni, Brahma performed ‘Abhisheka Snaana’ to Varadaraja with potful thousands of Kamadhenu’s ghee with chantings of Sacred Veda Mantras and offered ‘Shodashopacharaas’ or the traditional Sixteen Services such as Aasana- Vastra-Yagnopaveeta- Gandha-Dhupa- Deepa-Pushpa- Phala-Naivedya- Tambula-Mantra Pushpa-Sangeeta-Veda Pathana- Tambula-Chhatra-Chaamaraas. **Vegavati / Sarasvati Prabhaava:** Markandeya Maharshi greeted Devi Saraswati who was frustrated and as Vegavati merged with River Payoshni but having departed from the latter after fifteen yojanas made her Sangama (final fusion) with the Eastern Ocean; Vegavati was also reputed as ‘Punyakoti’ since is she entered the Punya Koti Kshetra. As she had the ‘Maanabhanga’ by her view of Vishnu’s nakedness, she went to Paataala and resorted to a highly austere Tapasya to Narayana with the request to him to absolve her from the sins of disrupting her ‘Pativratya’ and ‘Maanabhanga’ and purify her body and mind; she prayed to Vishnu to give her the boons of ‘PavitraTatwa’ and attainment of normalcy in her strained relationship with her husband Brahma. The ever-merciful Narayana assuaged Saraswati’s wounded feelings and stated that she should leave her ego and repent for her arrogant deeds of fighting with Brahma and even himself, that she was after all of his ‘Amsha’, that she should merge with the Saagara and at that very time she would be blessed with his boons so that Chaturmukha would possess her back as his own and everything would be a closed Chapter. Thus Saraswati secured the pardon of Brahma and Vishnu and they both gave boons to Vegavati as whosoever bathed and swam in that River would pave their paths to Moksha eventually.

**Padma Purana eulozises Prayaga** in Uttara Khanda as follows: *Jahnavi Ravisutaa Parameshthiputri Sinnadhutrayaabharana Tirthavara Prayaga, Sarvesha maamanugrahaana nayaswa chordhwam*

*antastamo dashavidham dalaya swadhaamnaa/* ( Prayaga Tirtha Raja which wears the ornament of three Unique Rivers of Ganga from Vishnu paada-Yamuna the daughter of Surya-Saraswati the daughter of Brahma! Sarveswara! Be very kind to me and lift my stature and demolish the ten folded ‘Avidyaandhakara’ or the Darkness of Ignorance and enlighten me into knowledge of brilliance!) *Vaageesha Vishnaveesha Purandaraadyaah Paapapranaashaaya Vidaam Vidopi, Bhajanti yatteeramaneela neelam sa Tirtha raajo jayati prayaagah/* (Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha Raja! You are so illustrious that Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva- Indraadi Devas as also Rishi-Maharshis vie with each other to rejoice the Pure White and Blue waters of three Maha Nadis converging together!) *Kaalindajaa sangamavaapya yatra pratyagataa swargadhuni dhuneti, Adhyaatma taapatrayam janasya sa TeerthaRaajo jayati Prayagaha/* (Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha Raja! Manushyas on accomplishing the Sangama of Ganga- Kalindini-Yamuna witness themselves the complete destruction of ‘Tapatrayas’ viz. Adhyatmika or Issues of Psychological and Mental nature, Adhi daivika or God made problems and Adhibhoutika or of physical ailments !) Padma Purana further states: Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha! You assume bright blue colour and its varying shades which indeed do pacify human beings from the cyclical tribulations of deaths and births. Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha Raja! Brahma and all the Devatas do frequently take reprieve from their own duties only to enjoy your comforting diversion and even Yama dharma Raja too sometimes frees himself from wielding his ever whipping ‘danda’ just to refresh and rejuvenate himself with the tranquility of the Sangama Raja. Victory to you Prayaga Tirtha Raja! Those persons who dive and bathe in this Sangama of three illustrious Rivers viz. ‘Brahminaputri Tripatha-striveni’ would reap the ‘Akshata Yaga Phala’ and make way to Brahma Loka! *Lokaanaam akshamanaa –naam Makhakritushu Kalou Swargakaamair japastutyaadi shtotrairvachobhik kathamamarapada prapti chintaaturaanaam/ Agnishtomaashwamedha pramukhamara phalam samyagaalocchhya saanga Brahmaadyaisteertha rajobhimatada upadishtoyameva Prayagah/* ( In Kaliyuga, human beings no doubt are desirous of attaining Swarga but are unable to execute Yagjna-Yaagaas but could resort to Japa-Stuti-Stotra-Paatha and the like; at same time they are desirous of achieving Ashwamedhaadi Yagjna phala too; so Brahma and Devatas thought over and materialised Prayaga Tirtha Raja to achieve the similar phala by merely but sincerely observe the bathing regulations and secure Salvation). *Grahaanancha yathaa Suryo Nakshatraanaa yathaa Shashi, Tirthaanaamuttamam tirtham Prayagaasyamanuttamam/* ( Just as among the Grahas Surya is the outstanding and among the Stars the Moon, Prayaga indeed the the Unique among the Tirthas) *Prayage tu Naro yastu Maagha snaanam karoti cha, Na tasya phala samkhyasti shrunu Devarshi sattama/* (Those who perform Maagha Snana at Prayaga, they have no measure of Phala sampatti!) To know about the further ‘mahima’ or Unique significance of Prayaga, one might refer to Matsya, Kurma, Agni Maha Puranas also! The very fact that there is a Sangam of three Maha Nadis lends the credential of Prayaga to be the King of Tirthas in Bharat. As there are three distinct river flows have their confluence, this Tirtha rightly designated as Triveni distinguishes itself as Agni Swarupa or of Yagjna Vedi; the intermediate region of Ganga-Yamuna is of ‘Garhapatyagni’; where as the region beyond Ganga viz. Pratishtanpur-Jhansi is of ‘Ahavaniyaagni’ and the Region beyond Yamuna ie. Alarkapura and Araila is to be considered as ‘Dakshinaagni’. Hence those who decide to stay at Prayaga for three nights representing the Three Rivers signified as three types of Agni, would derive the benefit of three Sacred Rivers and three forms of Agni! There is a Magha month celebration at Prayaga and those visiting the Maha Tirtha are in this month are designated as Kalpa Vasis! Several such Kalpavasi Yatris residing at the Triveni Sangama make it a point to reside here during Soura Maasa Makara Samkranti upto Kumbha Sankranti and as per Chandramaana stay right up to the end of Maagha Month. Now every twelve years there is a Maha Kumbha at Prayaga when Brihaspati is in Vrishabha Raasi and Surya is in

Makara Raasi; every such six years, Ardha Kumbha is observed and then again there is a strong arrival of yatis and a big Mela is organised at Prayaga. Duties at Prayaga: Yatis to Prayaga Tirtha are expected to observe Upavasa or fasting, Japa, Daana, and worship. 'Mundan' is a normal duty for males and widows whereas for married women, 'Veni daana' or cutting of long head hair edges duly tied together smeared with Mangala Dravyas like turmeric powder and scented sindura powder are to be slashed with scissors and the hair pieces so cut along with recitation of Mantras blessing long marital life with longevity of husbands; there after 'Mangala Snanas' or Sacred and auspicious bathings are performed again with Mantra recitals while leaving the discarded pieces of their hair edges so slashed formally to the flows of Holy Triveni Sangam. The concerned husbands who would have already bathed earlier should once again perform three dips in the flow by holding the shoulders of their wives. There after at the designated Sangama Sthala where the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna waters of brightness and blueish hues and distinct temperatures of coldness and mild warmth-with Saraswati as the under current, puja is to be performed with three dips again possibly or if travelling by boat, by sprinkling of the Sacred Sangam flows on heads. Pinda Puja/ Tarpana and Pinda daana in favour of Pitru Devas would be the next duty to be observed on banks of Prayaga Sangam. Main Devasthanas at Prayaga: *Trivenim Madhavam Somam Bharadwaajam cha Vaasukim, Vandekshaya vatam Shesham Prayagam Tirtha naamakam/* (Triveni, Bindumadhava, Someshwara, Vaasuki naaga, Akshya Vata, and Sesha Naaga or Baladeva are the principal Tirthas worthy of including in the Prayaga Yatra itinerary. Veni Madhava is a renowned Vaishnava Peetha nearby Triveni Sangama adjacent to Akshaya Vata. This Bindu Madha in water form comprises twelve Madhavas viz. Shankha Madhava, Chakra Madghava, Gada Madhava, Padma Madhava, Ananta Madhava, Bindu Madhava, Manohara Madhava, Asi Madhava, Sankashtahara Madhava, Adi Venu Mahava, Adi Madhava, Shri Veni Madhava; these Madhavas are either Murtis, or Sacred Rocks or of Jala Swarupa Sthanas. Akshaya Vata is near Patalapura Cave as a dry tree bush on Yamuna River bank where several Murtis are on display like Annapurna, Maha Lakshmi, Gauri Ganesha, Bala Mukund, Maha Deva, Saraswati, Vishnu, Nrisimha, Rama Sita Lakshmana Hanuman etc. Besides these, the other Mandirs are Mankemeshwar Mandir of Shiva and Somanatha reachable by boat, Bindu Madhava already mentioned, Naga Vasuki and Bala Deva or Shesha Mandir, Shiva Kuti or Koti Tirtha, Bharadwaja Ashrama, all on Ganga Banks. Lalitha Devi Mandira as mentioned in 'Tantra Chudamani' is one of the Shakti Peethas at Prayaga where Devi Sati's right hand finger fell following her mortal body parts slicing off by Vishnu Chakra and Devi's name is called Alop Devi. Prayag's Antarvedi Parikrama is stated to take a couple of days commencing from Triveni sangama Snaana and Bindu Madhava worship followed by Yamuna bank's Paapa vimochana Tirtha, Parashurama Tirtha, Govardhana Tirtha, Pischacha mochana Tirtha, Manah Kameshwara Tirtha, Kapila Tirtha, Indreshwara Shiva, Takshaka Kunda, Takshakeshwara Shiva, Kaaliya hrada, Chakra Tirtha, Sindhu Sagara Tirtha near Kakaraghaat, and on the road to Pandava Kupa, Varuna Kupa in Gadhayi Sarai, Kashyapa Tirtha, Dravyeshwara nadha Shiva, Surya Kunda and so on. There after, Hanumam darshana and Triveni Snaana would terminate the Antarvedi Parikrama. Bahir Vedi Parikrama is stated to be taken up about ten days but after this one has to undertake Antar vedi parikrama too. Kurma Purana details an account of Prayaga Mahatmya by narrating of Yudhishtara's remorse and anguish on the conclusion of the Kurukshetra Battle where not only Kaurava cousins but even Bhishma, Karna his own elder brother, several uncles, Gurus and associates were killed; as he desired to perform 'Prayaschitta' or formal atonement/ expiation the Vedic way, Maharshi Markandeya suggested Prayaga Titha darshana and penance., since this Kshetra was protected against Evils by some sixty thousand bows and arrows in favour of Ganga and Sabita Deva riding seven horses protected River Yamuna, while Devi Saraswati flowing under ground has the

protection of Brahma himself; Indra and Devas kept constant vigil, Vishnu is ever protective and Maha Deva resides on the Vata Vriksha / banyan tree on the banks of the Sangama. The Purana is quoted: *Prayaagaam smaranaamasya sarvamaayaati sankshamam, Darshanaat tasya Tirthasya mnaamasamkirtinaadapi, Mrittikaa labhanaad vaapi Narah paapaat pramuchyate/* (The very thought of Prayaga would suffice to destroy sins; Prayaga darshana and naama samkirtana or even the touch of Prayaga sand would evaporate all sins). Along with the banks of Yamuna and Ganga are countless Tirthas each of which has a description; Kurma Purana highlights Yamuna's southern side two Maha Nagas Kambal and Ashwatara who were great devotees of Parama Shiva stayed at that Tirtha and Snaanas there would ward off 'sarpa badha' forever. Another Tirtha named 'Hamsa prapatana' near Pratishtaanapura and the belief is that Apsara landed there by Hamsa/ Swan and bathing there enriches beauty of body and heart; Koti Tirtha bathing and possibly death is stated to ensure Swarga nivasa for crores of years. On Ganga's eastern side is Sarva Samudra Gahvara or Cave and stay there for three days and nights observing fast and celibacy and mental control performing meditation would fetch Ashwamedha Yagna phala. Sangama snaana in Maagha month for three days ensures enormous material fulfillment and at the termination of life the assured passage to higher Lokas. Those who could perform 'karishagni seva' or tapasya within a circles of flames of dried cow dung on the banks of the Sangama Place would bestow and preserve diseaseless body and physical fitness. Yet another Tirtha on the northern side of River Yamuna ensures Runa Vimochana or freedom from indebtedness.

**Genesis of Gautami River and benevolence of Lord Rudra to Sage Gautam:** Sage Gautami was blessed by a boon from Brahma after a severe Tapasya in Dandaka forest that he should have abundant supply of 'Dhanya' (food grains) and provide good food to Guests daily. As there was 'Akal' (famine) once, several Brahmanas were fed with food. Some of the 'Sapta Rishis' (Seven Great Sages) like Marichi were not happy of Gautami's popularity and created an illusory cow ( Maya Cow) and left it moving around the kitchen and Gautami threw some water on the cow and the latter pretended death. The Sapta Rishis wantonly left the place as they alleged the killing of a cow as a pretext. Repenting the 'Gohatya' which was actually never done, Gautami performed penance to Rudra Deva and requested Him to release a piece of His 'Jatajut' (twisted hair) so that Bhagirathi was created and revived the 'dead' cow. The Sapta Rishis were surprised at the tenacity of Gautam and addressed the Sage as: 'Sadhu' 'Sadhu' as a gesture of admiration to the long penance to Rudra. Gautam was indeed not amused as the jealous and flippant action of Sapta Rishis' creating a Maya Cow, made him feel that he did a crime and as a result he had to perform Tapasya for long time. Gautam cursed the Sapta Rishis that they would lose all the knowledge of Vedas and would be unfit for Vedic tasks. The off-shoot was that Sacred River Godavari was born. As regards the curse of Gautam to Sapta Rishis, the latter said that this time the curse might not materialise, but in Kaliyug the curse would indeed become true, since there would be many fake Sages, doers of Kshudra karma (evil acts) to destroy others, smokers, liquor consumers, womanisers and such other unscrupulous persons. But there would be a few virtuous devotees who bathe in Pavitra Godavari and perform Pitru Tarpan especially when Brihaspati Graha enters Simha Rasi and that they would certainly attain salvation to the Pitras as well as themselves after their end. Such was the assurance of Lord Rudra Himself!

Vamana Purana details Gajendra Moksha: Maharshi Pulastya narrated futher to Brahmarshi Narada further that Bhakta Prahlada extensive tours of Tirthas like Naimisharanya, Brihadhwaja, Maha Nadi, Soma Tirtha, Mangunika, Ashwa Tirtha, Varanasi, Avimukteshwara, and so on and reached **Trikuta Mount** which was the residence of Rishis anf Yogis. He worshipped Sarvyva Vyapi Pundarikaaksha and

sighted the famed **Gajendra Moksha Sarovara** which was the legendary and Sacred Tirtha encircled by the Mountain Range. Nearby the Sarovara was a thick jungle inhabited by cruel animals, birds, and vegetation inhabited by large groups of wild elephants too. The chief of a herd of elephants Gajendra entered the Sarovara for a bath of cool water along with its group and a huge crocodile caught hold of one of the feet of Gajendra dragged into deep waters as the Elephant struggled but could not escape the sharp and powerful grip of the crocodile, even as Gajendra and its companions made desperate efforts for thousand years while Devas were witnessing the prolonged suffering of the Elephant King. The Elephant was stated to be the King of Pandya an extreme and dedicated Narayana Bhakta and the crocodile was a Gandharva called Huhu who was cursed by a Sage ; when implored by the Gandharva, the Muni forecast that Narayana Himself would slice the crocodile head and qualify him for Salvation. As Gajendra was desperate and distressed, he remembered the Script of a Vishnu Stotra in his erstwhile birth and frantically chanted the Prayer by offering a ‘Pushpamaala’ with his lifted trunk and imagining the Swarupa of Artaa- Janardana with tears in his eyes as as follows: *Om Namō Mulapratrutaey Ajinaatha Mahatmaney, Anaashritaaya Devaaya Nispruhaya Namostutey/Nama Aadyaaya Beejaaya Arshayaaya Pravartiney, Anantaraaya Choukaaya Avyataaya Namō Namah/ Namah Shivaaya Shantaaya NischitaayaYashaswiney, Sanaatanaaya Purvaaya Puraanaaya Namō Namah/ Namō Devaadhi Devaaya Swabhaavaaya Namō Namah, Namō Jagat Pratishtaaya Govindaaya Namō Namah/ Namostu Padmanaabhaaya Namō Yogoddbhavaayach, Vishveswaraaya Devaaya Shivaaya Harayey Namah/ Namotu Tasmai Devaaya Nirgunaaya Guptaataney, Narayanaaya Vishvaaya Devaanaam Paramaatmaney/ Namō namah Karanavamanaya Narayanaayamita vikramaaya/ Shrishankha charaasi Gadaadhaaraaya Namostu tasmai Purushottamaaya/Guhyaya Vedanalayaaya Mahodaraaya Simhaaya Daityanidhanaaya Chaturbhujaya, Brahmendra Rudra Muni chaarana Samtutaaya Devottamaaya Varadaaya Namochyutaaya/ Nagendra deha Shayanaasana supriyaaya Goksheera Hema Shukhaneela ghanopamaaya, Peetaambaraaya Madhu Kaitabha naashanaaya Viswhaaya Charumukutaaya Namojaraaya/ Naabhiprajaata Kamalastha Chaturmukhaaya Kshirodarakaana vaniketa Yashodharaaya, Naanaa Vichitra Mukutaangada Bhushanaaya Sarveshwaraaya Varadaaya Namō Varaaya/ Bhaktipriyaaya Varadepta Sudarshanaaya Phullaravinda Vipulaayata lochanaaya, Devendra vighnashamanodyata pourushaaya Yogeshwaraaya Virajaaya Namō Varaaya/ Brahmaayanaaya Tridashaananaaya Lokaadhi naathinaathaaya Bhavaapanaaya, Mahaa Varaahaaya Namaskaromi/ Kutasthamavyata -machintya rupam Naarayanam Kaaranamaadidevam, Yugaanta sesham Purusham Puraanam tam Devadevam Sharanam prapadey/ Yogeshwaram Charuvichitra mouli magneyamagravam Prakruteyh parasthatam, Kshetrajnamaatma prabhavam Varenyam tam Vaasudevam sharanam prapadye/Adrushya mavyata machintya mavyayam Mahashiyo Brahmamayam Sanaatanam, Vadanti yam vai Purusham Sanaatanam tam Deva guhyam sharanam prapadye/ Yadaksharam Brahma vadanti Sarvagam nishamya yam Mrutyu mukhaat pramuchyatey, Tameehwaram truptamanuttamai - gunaaaih paraayanam Vishnumupaimi shaswatam/ Kaarya Kriyaa Kaarana maprameyam Hiranya baahum Varapadmanaabham, Mahaabalam Vedanidhim Suresham Vrajaami VishnumSharanam Janaardanam/ Kireeta Keyura Mahaarha nishkairmanyuktamaa -lankrita sarva gaatram, Peetaambaram Kanchana Bhakti Chitram Maalaadharam Keshava mabhyupaimi/ Bhavodbhavam Veda vidaam Varishtham Yogaatmanaam Saamkhyavidaam Varishtham, Aditya Rudraashvasuprabhaavam Prabhum prapadyechuta maavatmavantam/ Shrivatsaankam Mahadevam Devaguhyamanoupamam, Prapadye sukshmamachalam Varenyamabhayapradam/ Prabhavam Sarva bhutaanaam Nirgunam Parameshwaram, Prapadye muktamamkaanaam yateenaam Paramaam gatim/ Bhagavantam Gunaadhyakshamaksharam Pushkarekshanaamc Sharanyam Sharanam Bhaktya Prapadye*

*Bhaktavatsalam/ Trivikramam Trilokesham Sarvesham Prapitaamaham, Yogaatmaanam Mahaatmaanam pradyeham Janaardanam/ Adidevamajam Shambhum Vyaktaavyaktam Sanaatanam, Naraayana – maneyamsam prapadye Brahmana priyam/ Namō Varaaya Devaaya Namō Sarvasahaayacha, Prapadye Deva Deveshamaneeyaamsa manauh sadaa/ Ekaaya Lokatatwaaya Paratah Paramaatmaney, Namah Samahsahasra shirashey Anantaaya Mahaatmaney/ Twaameva Paramam Devamrishayo Vedapaaragaah, Keertayanti cha yam Sarvey Brahmaadeenaam Paraayanam/ Namstey Pundareekaaksha Bhaktaanaamabhayaprada, Subrahmanya Namastostu traahimaam Sharanaagatam/* (My salutations to you Mula Prakriti Swarupa, Invincible Mahatma Vishnu who is Nirashraya or free to act in your own volition; You are the Adyabija Swarupa or the Primeaval Germinator, Aradhya Deva or the Principal Target sought to be achieved by Rishis and Yogis and the Unique and Unknown powerhouse of the Kalachakra or the Supreme Time Machine; You are indeed the Sarva Vaapi or All-Pervasive; the Undisclosed Guna Swarupa and at the same time the Nirguna or Featureless; You are beyond the barriers of reasoning and logic, impossible to achieve by rationality or prudence, the Immeasurable; the Foremost Form of auspiciousness, Ever Peaceful, Decisive, the Embodiment of Eminence and Fame and the Origin of Knowledge and the Ageless and Timeless! Devadi Deva, Swabhavarupa, Jagat Pratishtha Kaaraka, Govinda, Padmanabha, Yogodbhava, Vishveswara, Deva, Shiva, Hari, Nirguna and Gunatma alike; Viushwatma, Narayana, Deva's Paramatma, Karanavasha Vamana -rupa or of the Form of Vamana owing to Exigencies; Atula Vikrama; You are the Holder of Shankha, Chakra, Sword, and Mace and Purushottama; You are the Mysterious and the Unidentified; the Emitome of Vedas; Mahodara readily assuming Leonine Form to eradicate the race of Daityas, the Chaturbhuj or the Four Handed Swarupa; You are the Dheya or the Worshippable by Brahma, Indra, Rudra, Maharshis, and one and all. You lie comfortably on the Sesha Naga's Unique Body as your Bed; wearing vastras of different colours; the annihilator of Madhu-Kaitabha Daityas; the wearer of a charming Kirita or head gear; who has always youthful and never has old age; has Brahma seated on a lotus top that sprouted from his navel; has residence on Ksheera Sagara or the Ocean of Milk; he is multi ornamented on his various body parts; the provider of boons and the Emblem of Boons; Bhakta Premi or the Beloved of devotees; the Eternal Embodiment of Radiance; with eyes resembling fully bloomed Lotus flower; the trouble shooter of Devendra; and the provider of boons to him; The 'Aadhaara Swarupa' or of the Murti worshipped by Brahma and all the Devas; Triloka Naatha; Bhava Hatha; Maha Varaaha Swarupa; I seek refuge in Kutastha, Avyakta, Achintya Swarupa; Kaaranaswarupa; Adi Deva Narayana; the Great Survivor Maha Swarupa at the End of Yugas; Ajeya; Sarva Sreshtha; The One who exists far beyond Prakriti; the Kshetrajna; Atmaprabhava; Varenya, Vaasudeva; Aadrushya, Ayakta, Achityaneeya, Ayaya, Brahma maya and Sanatana Purusha and Deva guhya my Pranaams / greetings; I was at the Mrityu Mukha or at the Devouring Point of Death; I seek protection and safety from you Bhagavan; You are Atmatrupta or Self-Satisfied; Shaswata Ashraya Swarupa; Karya-Kriya-Karana Swarupa; Agamyaa; Hiranuabaahu; Mahabala shaali; Veda nithi; Sureshwara-Janardana-Vishnu; I seek asylum from that Jishnu who was ornamented by Kireeta-Kayura-Atimulya Mani malaas; Peetaambara Dhaari; Swarnima Patra Racaha naalin -krita; Mala Dharana Keshava; Samsaarotpannakara; Vedavidsreshtha; Yogatma; Sankhya Shastra Jnaata Sreshtha; Aditya-Rudra-Ashvini Kumara-Vasu Prabhavaachyuta; Atma Swarupa Prabho! Shri Vatsa Dharanakara; Maha Deva; Devataaguhya; You are the Unparalleled one defying description, with the Epithet of Nirguna, Nissanga, Niyama Paalaka; My I seek refuge in you Gunaadhyaksha, Akshara, Kamala Nayana, Ashraya Karana Yogya Swarupa, Sharana Pradata and Bhakta Prema kara. I prostrate before you Bhagavan as the measurer of Three Feet covering the the Trilokas, Prapitamaha, Yoga Murti, Mahatma Janaddana, Adi Deva, Ajanma, Shambhu, Vyaktaavyakta Swarupa,

Sanatana, Parama Shukshma, Brahmana Priya Narayana! I bend my knees before you Sreshtha Deva, Sarva Shaktimaan, Sukshmaati Sukshma Devadevesha, Lokatatwa Swarupa, the Unique Paratpara Paramkatma, Sahasraseersha Paranatma, Ananta, Dedaparagami Rishi sannuta! You are the final shelter to Brahmadi Devaas; Pundarikaaksha, Bhuaktaabhaya Pradata, Subrahmanya, Sharanu, Sharanu (Save me, Save me)!

As Vishnu Deva was pleased with the heartfelt and desperate supplication of Gajendra appeared in his full glory with four arms adorned with Shankha, Chakra, Gadaa and Saranga descended from Garuda and sliced off with his Sudarshana Chakra the neck of the crocodile and relieved from the curse of Devala Muni to the Gandharva Huhu and simultaneously rescued Narayan Bhakta King of Pandya. **Phala Shruti** : Brahma Deva affirmed- *Ya idam shrunuyaa nityam Praatarutthhaaya Manavah, Prapyuyaat Paramaam siddhim dukkha prastasya nishyati/ Gajendra mokshanam Punyam sarva Paapa pranaashanam, Kathitena smrutey naatha Shrutena cha Tapodhana, Gajendra mokshaneneha sadyah paapaat pramuchyatey/ Yasmin kiloktey bahu paapa bandhanaat labhyet Moksho Dwiradena yaddhat, Ajam Varenyam Varapadmanaabham Narayanam Brahmanidhim Suresham/ Tam Devaguhyam Purusham Puraanam Vandaamyaham Lokapatim Varenyam/* (Whosoever reads, hears or cogitates about the Gajendra Moksha Stuti with purity of body and mind in the mornings would be relieved of difficulties of the day and the cumulative sins of the past; Its Pathana-Shravana-Manana would dissolve the sins and provide liberation as in the case of Gajendra. May I salute Vishnu Bhagavan who is Ajam or birthless, Varenya or the Supreme, Sreshtha or the Topmost, Padmanabha or Lotus-navelled, Narayana or Existent on Water, Devaguhyaa or absorbed among Devas , Purana Purusha or the Most Ancient, and Loka Swami or the Super Lord of Lokas!)

Kurma Purana details: **Tirtha Mahima: Gaya, Pushkara, Sarasvata, Kaalanjara and many other Tirthas** : Romaharshana (Veda Vyasa) addressing the Sages at Naimisha Forest provided brief descriptions of several Tirthas and a few of them are mentioned here-below: **Gaya:Gaya** *Tirtham param guhyam Pitrunaam chaativallabham,Krutwaa pinda pradaanam tu na bhuyovjaayatey narah/ Sakrud Gayaabhigamanam krutwaa pidam dadaati yah,Taaritam tarastena yaasyanti Paramaa Gatim/* (Gaya Kshetra is one of the most beloved Tirthaas of Pitru Devataas and human beings who offer Pindas to Pitras have no rebirth. Even if once the sacred deed of ‘Pinda Pradana’ is executed at Gaya, Pitraas would be freed from Narakaas and are forwarded to Parama Gati.). At Gaya the most hallowed signs of Rudra Deva’s feet are imprinted on a Stone and offering Pindaas there would most certainly bless the Karta and redeem the Pitraas. Even while a person is in a position to visit Gaya and perform the Pinda Pradana, he is lazy or careless and the Pitras would feel disgruntled and dissatisfied. The Pitraas would avow: *Yadi syaat paatakopetah swadharmarati varjitah,Gayaam yaasyati yah kaschit sosmaan santaarayishyati/* (Even if a person in my Vamshaa were highly sinful for any reason and did not observe ‘Swadharama’ but had visited Gayan Tirth and gave away Pinda Pradana, he would still be liberated!).

**Prabhasa:** is a Holy Place where Bhgavan Shri Krishna and Yadava Chiefs spent the last months of their lives there. Worship at that Kshetra by way of Snaana, Tapa, Shraaddha and Brahmana Puja would have lasting benefits including Uttama Loka Prapti. **Traiymbaka Tirtha** is worshipped by Devas and ‘Rudraaraadhana’ at the Jyotir Linga there would bestow Jyotishtoma Yajna phala; ‘Aaraadhana’ of Kapardi and ‘Suvarnaaksha’ Maha Deva would yield Gaanapatya Pada prapti. **Someshwara Linga Tirtha** and puja there grants Sarva Vyadhi Nivaarana or relief from all kinds of diseases. **Vijaya Tirtha**

housing Vijaya Maheshwara Linga is known for a Six-month long day-time Upavaasa ending with Evening worship would grant Parama Gati. **Ekaamra Kshetra** is famed for Shankara in the banks of Maha Nadi especially during Eclipse Timings; Snaanaas and worship would secure devotees the Ganapatya Phala and Kingship in their instant lives. **Viraja Nadi Snaana** assures of Brahma Loka; **Purushottama Kshetra** puja of Narayana grants of Vishnu Loka Prapti; **Gokarneshwara Lingaabhisheka** with milk and bilwa secures Shiva Sayujya.

**Pushkara Tirtha:** The unique Tirtha of Brahma is widely renowned in the World as Pushkara whose mere thought is enough to secure a wipe-out of sins and ensure an access to Brahma Loka. It is believed that besides human beings, Deva-Gandharva-Yaksha-Naaga-Raakshasa-Siddhas were constantly engaged in the worship of Parameshthi Brahma Deva and when one worshipped at the Tirtha. Indra darshan too is available at the Tirtha besides fulfillment of wishes and also of Brahma Loka Prapti.

**Saptasaaraswata Tirtha** is a well known Place of Shiva worship that is stated to fetch Ashwamedha Yagna Phala. The belief was that one Muni named Manganaka who was an unparalleled Shiva Bhakta excelled in the constant Japa of the Panchaakshari Mantra of *Om Namah Shivaaya* for several years and started performing Shiva Tandava with ecstasy. Shankara once approached the Muni and asked for the reason of his excessive joy and an over confident Muni replied that his happiness was due to his devotion of Shiva and the effect of constant Panchaakshari Japa. Shiva decided that the Muni became arrogant and decided to show down the Muni; he surpassed the Muni's Tandava and revealed himself with thousand heads, eyes and feet with fire all round and fearful. The Muni got frightened and intensified his Rudraadhaaya Japa and prostrated before Maha Deva. The latter then cooled down and having embraced the Muni rewarded him with his vision of Tripurasamhaara Maheshwara along with Devi Parvati. Maha Deva then warded off the Muni's terror and explained about himself to the Muni: *Aham Sahasra nayanah Sarvaatmaa Sarvao mukhah, Daahakah Sarva paapaanaam Kaalah Kaalaaro Harah/Mayaiva preryatey krutnam Cheanaachetanaatmakam, Sontaryami sa Purusho hyaaham vai Purushottamah/Tasya saa Paramaa Maayaa Prakritistrigunmaatmikaa, Prochatey Munibhih Shaktirjagardyonih Sanaatani/ Sa yesha Maayayaa Vishwam Vyaamohayati Vishwavit, Naraayanah Paro Vyakto Maayaarupa iti Shrutih/ Yevamekajjagat Sarvam Sarvadaa Sthaaapa-yamyaham, Yojayaami Prakriyaaham Purusham Pancha vimshikam/* ( I am the thousand faced and thousand eyed Sarvaatma who demolishes sins of my devotees; I am Kaala as also the Creator of Kaala; it is through me that the Chetana ( Conscious and fully aware) or Achetana or unaware Jagat gets materialised. I am the Antaryami or the Hidden Purushottama whose Prakriti Rupa of Three Gunas is called Maya the captivator and whom Munis realise as Sanatatana Shakti which is the the root cause of the Universe. I am the Sarvajna Purusha who through the Maya Shakti mesmerises and whom Shritis acclaim as the Narayana, Para and Avyakta. This is how I establish the World and act as a catalyst of Prakriti in creating the Maha Tatwa which in turn was the product of the Twenty Five Tatvas.)---*Evametaani Tatwaani Pradhaana Purusheswaraah, Vishnu Brahmaacha Bhagavaan Rudrah Kaala iti Shrutih/ Trayamedanaadyantam Brahmanyeva Vyavasthitam, Tadaatmakam Tadvayaktam Tadaksharamiti Shrutih/Atmaanandaparam Tatwam Chinmaatram Paramam Padam, Aakaasham Nishkalam Brahma tasmaayanna Vidyatey/*( This is how all these Tatwaas are of Pradhaana Purusheswara. Shritis confirmed that the three Entities of Vishnu, Brahma and Kaala Rudra are manifested out of the same Parama Purusha who was Avyakta /Unknown, Akshara Imperishable, Atmaananda Swarupa, Parama Tatwa, Chinmaya, Parama pada Rupa, Aakaasha Rupa and Nishkala (Spotless) Brahma and none else. In fact, there is none and nothing else beyond!). Manganaka Muni heard every word of Maha Deva, who blessed the Muni to secure Shiva Loka.

**Kalanjara Tirtha:** A King named Shweta at Kalanjara was a passionate devotee of Rudra Deva and having formally installed a Linga with high dedication worshipped for several years. On one auspicious day Maha Deva granted his appearance but as a scary and dancing Figure with a Trishula in his powerful hands with garlands of human skulls and serpents; the Rajarshi got startled and holding the Shiva Linga tight recited ‘Shata Rudriya’ loudly with disbelief and shock. Shiva consoled the King and transformed himself into a peaceful Swarupa along with Devi Parvati as the King prayed to him still in a trance:

*Namo Bhavaaya hetavey Haraaya Vindhwa sambhavey, Namah Shivaaya dheematey namopavarga daayine/ Namonamostutey Mahaa Vibhutaye namah, Vibhaagarupiney namo Naraadhipaaya/ Namostutey Ganeshwara prapanna dukkha naashana, Anaadi nithya bhutaye Varaaha shringa dhaariney/ Namon Vrishabhahwajaaya tey Kapaala maaliney namah, Namon Mahaa nataaya tey namon Vrishabha - dhvajaya tey/* (Salutations to Bhava the Cause and Creation of the World; Hara; the bestower of Moksha; Maha Vibhuti Swarupa or of Manifestations and Faculties of Shiva; the Destroyer of Sorrows of those dedicated to him; You are the one without beginning and termination and indivisible too; You are the Shringa or horn of the Varaharupa (with which Bhu Devi was rescued from Rasaatala); You are the wearer of skulls as garlands and Vrishabha Vahana). As the Prayer was over, Maha Deva granted ‘Ganapatya’ or the Status of the Chief of ‘Ganaas’. Such was the background of Kalanjara Tirtha, where ‘Shiva -Araadhana’ was stated to be of immense consequence.

**Other Sacred Tirthaas:** **Mahaalaya** is a Secret Tirtha where a ‘Shilaatala Charana’ or the Sacred Feet of Maha Shiva got materialised as a proof and warning to Nastiks or Non-Believers and is continued as a Maha Tirtha where ash-smearred bodied Bhaktas engaged in recitations of ‘Maha Nyasa’ are visible to date. **Kedara Kshetra** continues to attract global attention, despite natural deterrents of snow and other difficulties of access on high- altitude where Vrishaketu Maha Deva Linga is venerated with singular devotion after taking bath in the Kshetra, besides performing Shraaddhas, Daanaas and other ‘Karmas’ with great sense of endurance and fulfillment. **Godavari and Kaveri River Banks** are dotted with Kshetras where Pitru Tarpanas and Shraddhas are performed on all occasions like Eclipses and ‘Parva Dinas’ of localised popularity besides being the Halllowed Places of ‘Nimajjanaas’ or formal immersionsof human ashes adfter deaths. **Brahma Tirtha** enjoys international fame for Pitru Karyas like Shraddhas and Brahma Puja, where Sacred River Saraswati literally goes under ground and provides glimpses at intermittent places like Prayaga Sangama before merging into the Ocean ; the much famed Vyasa Tirtha in a mountain cave exists as per belief from where Vyasa Muni scripted Maha Bharata while noted by Ganeshwara himself from a nearby cave by telepathy. **Maanasa Sarovara** snaana is stated to result in ‘Indra’s Arthaasana’ or of half of Indra’s half throne. This is a popular Mountain of extraordinary vegetation and natural surroundings of medicinal properties and there is a strong belief that bathing in the Pushkarini near by would wash off ‘Brahma Hatya Maha Pataka’ or the heinous sin of killing a Brahmana; the Puranic belief was that Indra who killed Vritrasura a Brahmana suffered the chase of Brahma Hatya ‘Paapa’ Devi who could not locate Indra hiding in the stem of a lotus flower inside the Sarovara and that was how the disappearance of Indra led the temporary crowning of King Nahusha as Indra as the former performed ninty nine Ashwamedhas; the qualifier to become Indra was to perform hundred such Yagnas. On reaching **Badarikaashrama**, human beings would have got rid of sins typical of Kali Yuga. This is the hallowed Kshetra where Nara-Narayana Mahashris stayed and performed great Tapasyas. Also, Badari had been the spot that Mahadeva as particularly fond of. Also, Badari is the Place where Pitru Pujas are immensely valuable as the process of redemption to Pitras is stated to be quick and effective.

**Rameshwara Tirthas:** Besides the holy dip at the Agni Teertha in the Bay of Bengal- where Jatayu fought a valiant fight with Ravana to save the latter's abduction of Devi Sita, Rameswaram is one of the famed Jyotir Lingas with countless Sacred Tirthas [ 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, Vaidhyath at Deogarh (Bihar), Nagesha near Dwaraka in Gujarat, Rameswara in Tamilnadu, and Ghrishneswar near Ellora Caves in Aurangabad in Maharashtra] According to Skanda Purana, there are 24 Tirthas that are important, of which, 14 are in the form of tanks and wells within the precincts of the temple. Bathing in these tanks is a major aspect of the pilgrimage to Rameswaram and is considered equivalent to penance. Twenty-two of the tanks are within the Ramanathaswamy Temple. 22 TEERTHAM are inside temple premises , where we took bath .Order was 1-Mahalkshmi Teertham 2-Savithri Teertham 3-Gayathri Teertham 4- Saraswati Teertham 5- Setumadhav Teertham 6-Gandhmadan Teertham 7-Kavacha Teertham 8-Gavaya Teertham 9-Nal Teertham 10-Neel Teertham 11-Shanku Teertham 12-Chakkara Teertham 13-Bramhathi Vimochana Teertham 14-Surya Teertham 15 Chandra Teertham 16-Ganga Teertham 17 Yamuna Teertham 18-Gaya Teertham 19-ShivaTeertham 20-Sadyamirta Teertham 21-Sarva Teertham 22-Kodi Teertham . Water was fresh and little different in taste from each well. Taking bath from the water of these wells ,absolve you from some or other type of sin and endows you with blessing of many deities. Baths from these wells takes about an hour.

**Origin of River Vitasta and several other Sacred Rivers in Kashmira:** Kashmira represented Devi Uma who was worshipped at Vriddha Tirtha as Vishoka; the River Vitasta named after Devi Lakshmi; the Sacred Place called Bhogavati of Vasuki the Head of Nagas; River Trikoti signifying Aditi the mother of Devas; Harshapatha River after Sachi Devi the wife of Indra as encouraged by Kashyapa; River Chandavati as Devi Diti as suggested by Kashyapa; Yamuna as part of Vitasta River, and River Karshini of Devi Sati's Amsha who was the wife of Hara Deva. King Gonanda asked Guru Brihadashva as to how all the Rivers viz. Sati, Sachi, Ganga, Aditi, Diti, Yamuna and Karshini agreed. Aditi, Diti, Sachi, Yamuna and Ganga readily agreed but Sati Devi kept quiet; Kashyapa prayed to Maha Deva who requested Sati to help Kashyapa. Devi Sati told the Prajapati that the entire Desha was of her own body which was Sacred but Kashyapa replied that some human beings had the tendency of Piscachas and there would be a need for absolving them of the sins. Then Devi Sati asked Hara Deva to break the mountain with his Shula to enable the emergence of a River at the Rasatala that would flow up the route of Balarama's plough engraving it up to Sindhu River; Maha Deva himself named the new River as 'Vitasta' but she saw sinners like the killers of Brahmanas and others and thus disappeared earlier two three times and did not get materialised. Then Kashyapa prayed to the Holy River as follows: *Namastestu tey Parvataraja kaney, Namastestu Tubhyamarshivaryajushtey/ Namesestu tubhyam Harasangalabdha pavitra bhaavey varadey Vareney supunyatoye Surayoshitaabhis -chakreeda maanaabhi rupeta therey /Devadwijaadyaiva rupaguuhyamaaney susheeta toy vimalay Vishokey, Yeshaam hi bheetya prapaalayasi twam twad darshanaada Devi vimuktapaapaah/ Vrittaa naraastey gatasarva paapaah twaam bhaasayantah prabhayaa mahatyaa, Saptaarchi dagdhasya yathaa shuchitwam twad darshanaad Devi shuchitvam/ Sarvam Pavitram bhavateeha taddhat paapam Maheshaai kuru prasaadam, Papaanaam paavanaarthaaya praarthitaasi Mahanadi/ Tasmaat paavaya paapaani maa pranashaam vrajaashugey/(My greetings to you Parvataraja Putri, Devi Parvati, worshipped by Maharshis, the provider of boons and the beloved of Hara Deva; you are a personification of purity and happiness; sacred and coolness sought after Brahmanas for washing contamination and dirt and burning their sins off.Do*

give us your appearance with free flow, Mahanadi! The Holy River Vitasta then responded to Kashyapa and replied that she might not help great sinners of 'Maha Patakaas' or the inexcusable sins and that only Lakshmi the consort of Vishnu who could destroy sins of any magnitude even far better than Aditi, Diti and Ganga. The Prajapati who was bent on purifying the Kashmira Desha extolled Devi Lakshmi as the illustrious daughter of Samudra Deva, saying that she was not only the prime river of Kashmira but also of the Amsha of Uma; the Unparalleled River of the worst forms of crimes and indulgences ever; the inseparable better half of Keshava and the water was likened to the sweetness of Amrit and Milk! Bhagavan Govinda asked Lakshmi to hurry up as Devi Vitasta was fast arriving at the Ashram of Dhaumya Muni as the holy combine of Sati, Trikot, Harshapada, Chandravati and Sindhu /Ganga and Vitasta /Yamuna. Out of veneration for Kashyapa, Ganga's daughter Tapana too joined the Union, reflecting the auspiciousness as superior as of Prayaga! ( Nilamatha Purana)

Nilamatha Purana also describes **Tirtha Yatras in Kashmira and their rewards**

King Gonanda requested Sage Brihadwasha to narrate an account of Sacred Tirthas in the Kashmira Desha as well as the fruits of visiting them. Brihadashwa commenced the narration by an ascent to Grudhrakuta Mountain after a bath in the converging point of the Rivers Vitasta and Madhumati, which would accord a reward of giving away thousand cows in charity and 'Swarga Prapti' after life. Bathing in the River Kumunari followed by ascent on Indranila Mountain would accrue similar 'Punya'. One would achieve the reward of performing 'Vahnishtoma' by a darshan of Bhagavan Chakresha installed by Sage Sandilya on the banks of River Madhumati after taking a formal bath at the Krishna-Vitasta 'Samyoga' (confluence). Further, *Shandilya Madhumatyoschya snaato yah Sangamey Narah Sarva paapa vinur - muktah Swarhalokam sa gacchati/* ('Snaana' at the confluence of Shandilya and Madhumati would demolish the sins of persons concerned). Darshana of the Deity Rajavaamsa Hari at Rajovinirmala would be another firm sure step for sin-demolition. Vision of Gouri Shankara Mountain Peak and darshan of Durga Devi soon after her so-called first monthly period should bless a person with access to Chandra Loka. Interestingly, even during the Krishna Paksha or the dark period of a month, the Kashmira Region would normally be bright! Separate 'snaanas' in the two Rivers Telala and Bhurjala would fetch those persons the advantage of 'Shata Go-daana' while bathing at the confluence would carry the benefit of performing Vajapeya Yagna. The meeting point of these two rivers with Madhumati Nadi would yield the advantage of Gaja daana and also of appreciation from Rudra loka. Bathing in the River of Uttara Manasa bestows the 'Gosahasra daana phala'. Haramunda Sarovara Snaana provides the benefit of ten cows being given in charity, while climbing the Haramunda hill would equal to 'Rajasuya yagna phala'. 'Ganga-Manasa Sangama Snaana' too would accrue similar result. Bathing in Agastya Tirtha which was built by 'Vaalakhilyas' would secure the 'Teja' or Radiance of Maharshis. Then *Kalodakam Nandikundam Shankham Chakram Gadam tathaa, Padmam Sa Kapila Tirtham Tirthou Vaatikashandikou/ Tirthamapsaraam punyam Brahmanah Parameshtinah, Kripaani tirthamaasadya pratekam Goshtam labhet/* (Visits to the Tirthas viz. Kalodakam, Nandikutam, Shankham, Chakram Gada, Padmam, Kapila Tirtham as also Vatika and Shandika, the enchanting 'Apsara Tirtha', Brahma Tirtha and Kripaani Tirtha would all attract 'Goshata Daana' at each of the above Places. *Brahmano Yaga bhumischa tatra puraya Mahipatey, Shakra Tirtham Deva Tirtham Tirtham Brahmana kundika/ Drushtva aikaikeyam yaitebhoy Goshatasya phalam labhet, Hamsadwaram cha Sangamya Swargamaapnotyasamshayam/* (At the Brahma Yaga Bhumi, there are Tirthas viz. Shakra Tirtha, Deva Tirtha, Brahma kundika and by visiting either of these would award the 'Punya' of charity of hundred cows' while Hamsadwara Sangama would grant achieving Swarga loka). On reaching the Starting Point of River Sindhu, one is

stated to have executed Rajasuya Yagna, while one would have performed the Pundarika Yagna if the person concerned bathed in 'Bindusarasa'. There are other Rivers of sanctity viz. Chitrapatha, Mriganandana and Mriga and purification in any of these is stated to equal the value of bathing in Rivers like Godavari, Vaitarani, Mandakini, Chandra bhaga and Gomati viz. charity of hundred cows, burning off sins and Swarga prapti. Chitrakuta was the most hallowed Mountain where Devi Uma and Maha Deva were wedded and the popular belief was: *Tatraanulepanam Divyam yena liptatanunnarah, Surupah - bhaagi bhavati subhajas –chaiva jaayatey/* (A heavenly ointment was available there and its application was endowed excellent physical charm and beauty).

Brihadashwa informed the King further: *Pada Gavya sarastatra Panchagavyasarah prudhak, Tatraanye Pancha Bhupaala Punyam Taila Saras–tatha/ Udvurtana Sarah Punyam Punyam chaapyatasisarah, Siddharthaka Sarastatra tathaamalakavaarinah/ Madhuparka Sarah Punyam Punyamrushnodakam tathaa, Ekamekamayai tebhyo drushtwaa Swarlokama -apnuyaat/* (Besides Gavyasara and Panchagavyasara, five consecratedLakes were popular viz. Tailasara, Udurtanasara, Apyatasisara, Siddhadhakasara, Amalakavaarina and Madhuparkasara as also Madhuparka -sara and Ushnodaka. Any one of these would assure access to Swargaloka). Proceeding further up the ChitrakutaMountain, one could sight the Saptarishi Tirtha which would bestow fulfillment of all desires. Another significant Tirtha was Vishnupada which was 'Kramasara' too as Vishnu stalked his steps over the worlds by foot and Brahma himself was stated to have performed Veda Yagnas; this Tirtha ensured that there no remnants of sins left in favour of the pilgrim concerned. Bathing in the River Koundinya which emerged from the mouth of Kramasara Lake was as powerful as executing a Pundarika Yagna while the River Kshira gave the benefit of 'Shata Go Daana', but the 'Snaana'at the meeting point of both these Rivers would gain Sahasra Go Daana.

'Snaanas' at River Vishoka and its confluence with Koudini would result in Devasathva and Vajapeya Yagnas while those at Vriddha Tirtha-the abode of Vasuki the Chief of Serpents and at Devasara would bestow the fruits of 'Gosava'and 'Devaloka prapti'. Similarly bathings at'Agni Tirtha' would fetch Agni Loka; Vinataaswami and Kadruswami Lakeswith hundred Go-daanas each; Sandhya Pushkarini (Swarga Prapti); Brahmakunda and Nilakunda (Ananta Punya);Vinashana Tirtha (VajapeyaYagna); Vitasamajjana (thousand cows); Chaturvedi Tirtha (gift of daughter's wedding); Confluence of Vitasta and Dhyana - dharini (Vajapeya); Harshapatha (gold); Deva Tirtha (securing a son); Triloki (famein Trilokas); Kapoteswara (attainment of Rudra Loka); Pundarika Tirtha ( Pundarika Yagna);charity at the confluence at Vitasta and Dhyanaadharini (unending Punya till next fourteen Indras);Katha Tirtha ( ten cows); Auojasa Tirtha ( Vajapeya Yagna); Shaila prastha and Vaiswana Tirthas ( instant wealth); Kama Tirtha ( immediate realization of desires); Apsara Tirtha ( attractiveness and charm); Tirthas of Rishikulyta, Deva Kulya, Ashwa Tirtha, Prabhasa, Varuna, Vahni Tirtha, Chandra Tirtha, Naga Tirtha, Chakra Tirtha and Vamana (godaana Phala); Nanda Tirtha, Skanda Tirtha, and Sureshwara ('Mahima' from Swarga); Pandava Tirtha (successful fulfillment of Pancha Yagna responsibilities of each house holder); Ucchaisha Tirtha (Recognition in Rudraloka); Ramaahlada Tirtha (lot of gold); Sindhu-Kanakavasini Sangama (Rajasuya Yagna); River Pavana and Rajobindu Vinirmala (PundarikaYagna); Lake Manasa on Ashadha Purnima (Agnishtoma); Meeting Place of Lake Maha Padma and River Hiranya ( Ashvamedha); Bahurupa ( appreciation from Vishnu loka); and Tirthas of Shatashringa, Vaishravana, Bhujaswami as also of Vasus, Rudras, Sadhyaas, Maruts, Bhrgus and Angiras ( Ten Go-Daanaas).

Highlighting the significance of River **Vitasta**, Brihadashwa informed about the trilateral confluence of Palasha-Shilama and Vitasta, bathing at that Place would fetch the fruit of ‘Shata Godaana’ (hundred cows). *Palaashaacha Shilaamaacha Vitastaam yatra gacchati, Gosavasya phalam tatra prateyakam kathitam pura/ Nadi Kularaaneecha swamujjatey Vithastathaa tatra Snaathswaa Kulam sheeghram puneetey Maanavottamah/* (Instant body purification would be assured to the entire family and ‘Kula’ or its Sect by a thrust into the Sacred waters where the hallowed Vitasta met River Kularani). Taking baths at the Separate Meeting Points of Pushkara-renowned for the frequent visits of Sapta Rishis- and of Vaaraaha Tirthas with the Holy River of Vitasta would earn ‘Atiratra and Agnishtoma Phala’ in the former case as also ‘Vishnuloka prapti’ and ‘Kuloddharana’ in respect of the latter cases respectively. Snaanasa at the area where Tirtha ‘Narayana Sthaana’ and River Vitasta met should also bestow the same results as in the previous case. Referring to the River **Mahuri**, Sage Brihadashwa said that *Maahuri tu Nadi Punya Mathuraiva viseshatah /* Maahuri River is as significant as Mathura; its tributaries are all the Sacred Rivers like Shatanila, Shamaala, Vimalodaka, Rahula, Shrimaadhya, the second Mahanadi Shuddhaa, Samula and Surasa; holy dips in the ‘Sanagamas’ of these Rivers with Mahuri would fetch ‘Dasha Godaana Mahima’, while bathing in another nearby Tirtha called Anantawould gladden the hearts of Nagas. Similar ‘Punya’ of Go-danaas would accrue to those devotees taking plunges in Bindu Nadeshwara Tirtha, Soma Tirtha, Tungesha Tirtha Kshetra, Utankaswami, Rama Tirtha, Bhriugu Tirtha, and Angirasa Tirtha.

In conclusion, Sage Brihadashwa gave a vivid description to King Gonanda of the illustrious Kashmira, its Origin, people of virtue, its significance and innumerable Sanctified Places dotted all over; Oh King! all the Rivers, Lakes and Mountains in Kashmira are indeed most sacrosanct and hallowed; the Sacred ‘Pratimas’ / Figurative Representations of Deities installed by Maharshis or Respected Personalities of Fame in Kashmira were unique icons highly worthy of veneration; all the Tirthas and Rivers which were recognised by all Nagas as hallowed symbols of Purity and Virtue; ‘Punya Snaanaas’ in these Tirthas and Rivers are indeed worthy of hundreds of Gold and Ornaments, especially the bathings of the Holiest Vitasta and its various Tributaries; this Outstanding River of Kashmira would relieve all kinds of sins- except of course the worst ‘Mahapatakas’- and added to such abolition of sins would bestow further the boons of performing ‘Agnishtomas’! Sacred Baths before sun rise especially on the ‘Shukla Trayodashis’ in winter with Goroja ointment applied on one’s heads would demolish all sins, fulfillment of all desires, Yagna Phalas, and ‘Moksha Prapti’, possibly through out the year. After bathing with sincerity and devotion, one should offer ‘Naivedya’ of cooked rice and pulses with ghee to the Holy River and provide the ‘Prashaad’ to Brahmanas and this act of veneration would indeed result in unimaginable ‘fruits’. Such acts of devotion must be performed at the Holy Places along the River Vitasta at the Spots like the Ashramas of Vitastaakhya, Dhomesha, Vitasta- Sindhu and several of such confluences.

**Nadi Pushkara Nirnaya:** Among the great crowd pullers and festivals, Nadi-Pushkaras are significant which occur every twelve years invariably during Chaitra- Vaishakha-Jyesththa months normally coinciding April-June excepting in respect of Kaveri in September. Also the most distinguished Rivers are stated to be associated with the Janma Raasis or Birth Charts of human beings viz. Mesha/ Aries for Ganga River; Vrishabha / Taurus for Saraswati River; Karka / Cancer for River Yamuna; Simha / Leo for Godavari River; Kanya/Virgo for River Krishna’ Tula / Libra for Kaveri; Vrishchika / Scorpion for Bhima River; Dhanush /Saggitarius for Brahmaputra; Makara/ Capricorn for Tunga- Bhadra Rivers; Kumbha / Aquarius for Sindhu and Meena/ Pisces for Pranahita or Parinita River. For instance Ganga Pushkaras for

twelve days are calculated from April 22-May 5,2023. Like wise the Pushkaras for Narmada during April 22-May 5, 2024; Saraswati from May 15-26, 2025; Yamuna from June 2-15,2016; Godavari from Ashadha Chaturdasi enters Simha Raashi ie from July 14-25, 2015 again in 2027; Krishna Pushkaras from August 12-23, '16 ; Kaveri from Sept. 12-23, 17; Bhima from September 12-23, 217; Tapti / Brahma putra in Assam from March 29, 2019; Tungabhadra from March 39-April 10, 2020; Sindhu from April 6-17, 2021; and Pranahita / Parineeti from April 13-24, 2022.

**Bhumi Putra- Bhoumika / Narakasura - Deepaavali- Mangala Deva** :Bhu Devi's son was **Bhoumika or Narakaasura** the son of Lord Vishnu himself in his 'Varahavataara'. He was conceived when Vishnu took the form of Varaha, the boar, to rescue Bhu Devi from the clutches of Hiranyaksha, the demon who had dragged her under the sea. Both Varaha and Bhu Devi rose, they made love and so passionate was their embrace, that Bhumi as earth in the flat condition was crumpled, giving rise to mountains and valleys. Varaha buried his powerful tusks into the Earth and she gave birth to all vegetation and it is from that union that Naraka was born. Asuras in association with the nether region have ties with vegetation and fertility as Asura Guru Shukracharya - the Planet of Venus possessed Sanjeevani Vidya or the Knowledge of Revival and was thus revived as **Mangala Graha**; indeed demons who were killed were revived again at the harvest season; hence the connection of Evil- vegetation-reharvestation as revived crops. And so every demon who is 'killed' during harvest time comes back next year as the next crop. Demons never die and so humans always have food on the table. By calling the vegetation that was harvested and threshed and stored as 'demons', early man perhaps sought to allay his guilt. Naraka at one level was the son (crop) of God and Goddess, Vishnu and Bhu-devi and at another level a demon (harvest)!

The end of notorious Bhoumika, the son of Bhumi ( Demi-Goddess of Earth), is celebrated till date on the moon fall day preceding Kartika Month of every year as '**Deepavali**'(The Festival of Lights). Krishna, accompanied by Satyabhama flew by Garuda to 'Pragjyotisha', Capital City of Bhaumasura [now in Assam] , surrounded by mountains and ramparts defended by fire, water and unmanned automatic weapons as also protected by 'Mura Pasha'- thousand miles-long deadly and sturdy wires as designed by Demon Mura. It was at Indra's distress call that received Krishna's attention as Varuna's Royalty Insignia, a Mother- Figure Aditi's earrings, and 'Mani Parvata'( Mandara Mountain) where Demi-Gods reside were among the abominable acts of the Demon. As a gesture of good-will, Satyabhama desired to accompany Krishna as she was happy that Indra transferred the 'Parijata' Tree (which emerged in the churning process of Ocean) to her garden from the Heaven. Krihna shattered the defence buttresses and blew His Panchajanya (Conch shell) with deadening reverberation as Demon Mura's frontal fortification was destroyed. When provoked, the Demon tossed his powerful club which was slashed by Krishna's Sudarsana Chakra into pieces and devastated Mura. Seven deadly sons of Mura, who had the knowledge of weapons as fully as their father, pounced in a group but Krishna's Supreme powers were no match and they too were cracked. Bhaumasura shot at his 'Sataghni'- the powerful disc with hundred blades- and later on with his mighty spear with which he defeated Indra too both of which proved futile. Finally Krishna gave His nod to Satyabhama to use Sudarsana Chakra (Wheel) to pull down the Demon and exterminate him. Demon was arrowed down by Satyabhama herself, as he secured a blessing from Lord Brahma that only his mother Goddess of Earth ( Bhumi) could kill him; Satyabhama was the reincarnation of Goddess Earth!

## II.

### AAPAS ( WATER)

*Naaraa Apah samaakyaataastaasaamayanaamaaditah, yatastavan bhootabhavyesha tat-Naarayanashabdita/ Naaraanaam aaditah ayanan yasya sah/* (from the beginning (aditah) you are resting in (ayanam) that is why (yasya sah), the Supreme Lord of the past and future you are called Narayana! The term 'Nara' denotes water in Beings- 'Aayan' as Narayana. Again, 'Nara' -'Aayana' or humans take shelter in Him and aim at Him for Bliss; Nara is thus related to Moksha as both being rooted to the Element of Water as one of the Pancha Bhutas. Narayana Upanishad reads: *Om Namō Narayanayeti mantra upasaka Vaikuntha bhuvanam gamishyati*, or "Whosoever chants the 'Om Namō Narayana' mantra reaches the ultimate goal Vaikuntha . Yajurveda states: *Om adha nitya Narayan ha, brahma narayanaha, shivasca narayana ha, shankarsca narayanaha and kalacha narayanaha, sarva bhutasca mekam via narayana Karan purusha makarana parabramahan' and ultimately it says 'Savo deve eko Narayana na dwitiyacha kaschit* (Only Narayana second to none!. He Himself expands as Brahma the Srishti Karta, Vishnu the Srishti Bharta and Shiva the Srishti Harta! Srimad Bhagavatam *Yesha tu Narayanam devam adevam isham* ('Narayan is the lord of the lords beyond him there is nothing exists').

#### Snaana Prakarana in Parashar Smriti:

Snaana Prakarana: *Snaanaani pancha punya vikeerintaani manishibhihi, Agneyam vaarunam Braahmam Vaayavyam divyamevacha/ Agneyam bhasmanaa snaanamavagaahamtu vaarunam, Apohishtheticha Braahmam Vaayavyamgorajsmrutam/* (Maharshis classified punya snaanas in five catogries viz. Agneya, Vaaruna, Braahma, Vayavya and Divya). While performing aachamana before commencing snaana, both head and neck should not be covered nor koupeena is removed, nor also the hair on head kept unpleated and certainly not without yagnopaveeta. After performing snaana or drinking water, or after waking up from sleep or while concluding bhojana or while walking on roads or even while dressing up, one should refrain from sneezing; but if inevitable, the person concerned must perform two aachamanas. It is stated that as an alternative to aachamana, one could touch the right ear; the same could be done after spitting, yawning or mouth watering. As the water flows tend to touch Sun rays early inn the mornings, snaanas at that time are stated to purify best but snaanas in the nights, especially around late night are prohibited, excepting if there were a Lunar elclipse. This exception for snaanas at Chandra grahana timings as prescribed is considered as a duty since Vasu-Rudra-Aditya-Devatas would be yearning for 'Soma Paana' and hence snaanas are essential after the eclipse. It is further stated that night bathings are approved at Khala Yagna while taking Dhanya home from the agricultural fields, at the Vivaha timings, Sankraanti as sankramana of Chandra takes place, but not otherwise.

*Nityam naimittikam kaamyamiti karma tridhaa matam, Tividham taccha vakshyaami grihastyaa--vadharyataam/* ( There are three kinds of Snaanas 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 snaanas 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 snaanas 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 maarjanam, Mantraih praamstriraayamyam*

*Souraishchaarkam vilokayet/ ( Snaanas are better performed with appropriate marjana Mantras like : Apohishthamayo bhuvah ta na oorje dadhatana, Maheranaaya chashase yo vah shivatamorah, Tasya bhajayateha nah, Usateeriva Matarah, Tasmaa arangama vah yasya bhajayateha nah usateeriva Matarah, Tasmaa arangamaamah vah yasya kshayaya jinvatah, Apo janyatah nah/ Om Bhurbhuva - ssuvah/). Vyasa further explains: Tikshthan sthitvaa tu Gayatreem tatgah swadhyaayaaarambhet, Ruchaanyacha Yajushaam Saamnaayaamatharvanangirasaamapi/ Itahasapuraanaam vedopanishidaam Dwijah, Saktyaa samyak pattenithamalpa mantra madhyamalpamapamapyasamaanaat/ (While standing and reciting Gayatri, the dwija at the bath might commence Swadhyaaya 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 Kaamyaa Snaana, Malaapakarshana Snaana and Kriyaanga Snaana too among the Naimittika Snaanas. Kaamyaa Snaana in Holy River on Pushya Janma Nakshatra, besides Vyatipaata Vaidhruti Amavasya timings yields the benefit of satisfying seven generations of Pitru Devas. Chaitra Bahula Chaturdashi Ganga Snaana 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 pratah kala snaanas would yield similar results, especially observing Brahmacharya Vrata. Pratah snaanas during the four month period of Ashadha till Kartika coupled with Anna daana concluding Vishnu Vrata thereafter 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 Snaanas 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.

Shoucha Vidhi: *Divaa sandhyaasu karnasha Brahma sutra udanmukhah, kuryaassutra purushetu tatrou chedakshinaa mukhah/ (Yagnyavalkya suggested that both during the morning and evening, the ablutions be done with one's yagnopaveeta be worn around the ear facing towards south in nights and in the the north in the day time) Angira Muni prescribes: Kritvaa mutra purishamvaa yadhaa -naivodakam bhavet, Snaatvaa labdhodakah paschaat sachelam tu vishudhyati snaanam/ kritvaa Ardravaasaastu vinmutre kuruteyadi, Praanayaamarayam kritvaa punassnaanena shudhyati/ Tailaabhyange tathaa vaantao kshurakarmani maithune, Anaachamyottaran viprastriraatramashuchir bhavet/ ( In case there is no access to water for ablution, then later 'sachela-snaana' along with discarding clothes to be done thereafter to self purify one's self. Later, after discarding the earlier clothes 'Shudda Snaana' be formed and there after, perform three prana yaamas. Similarly after oil maaasge and hair cut too a Vipra should perform three Praanaa Yamas) Manu states: Na mutrampathi kurveeta na bhasmani na govraje Vaavyagnim vipramaadityam apah pashyamsthaivagaam/ Na kadaachana kurveeta vinmutrasya visarjanam, Na*

*phaalakushte najalena chityaam nachaparvate/ Na jeerna Devaayatane na valmeeke kadaachana, Na sasatveshu garteshu na gacchaannaapi cha sthitah/ Na nadeiteeramaasaadya na cha na parvatamasteke, Pratyagnim prati Suryam cha prati Somodakadvijaan, Pratigaam prati vaatam pragjnaa nashyati medhatah/* (Ablutions are prohibited to be performed in water flows, ash, with cows around, facing Fire, in between plough draggings, facing cows, mountains, dilapidated temples, pits with snakes or other beings, while standing, walking, on river beds, facing Agni, Sun, Moon, Dvijas etc. as such acts would retard mental capabilities.) Also while wearing footwear, umbrellas, and facing ‘Gobrahmana strees’, one’s ablutions be avoided. Devala Maharshi prescribes Shuddhi as follows:*Maanushaasthivavasaam vishtaam, Artavam mutra retasi, Majjaanam shonitam vaapi parasyayadi samsprushet/ Snaatvaapamrija lepaadeena- achamyasashuchirbhavet, Taanyava svaani samsprushya pu tasyaat parimaarjanaat// Gangaa toyena kritsnena mribhaaraaischa nagopamaaih, Amrityoraacharan shoucham bhaavadushtona shudhyati/* (On touching bones, cough, stools, menses, urine, blood, and such other material, one must purify by bath; of course an evil minded person could never be purified even if the entire Ganges or a hill like quantity of earth are applied!) *Kaalognih manasasshuddhihi udakaadyanulepanam, Avigjanacha bhutaanaam shadvidham shouchamuchyate/* (Bodhayana Maharshi describes six sources of Shoucha or ‘Baahyaantara Shuchi’ viz. passage of time, Agni, mental cleanliness, water resources, outer paint like coverage and significantly enough a fund of ignorance!) *Shouche yatnah sadaakaaryam shouchamulo dvijaskrutah, Shouchaachaara viheenasya samastaa nishphalaa kriyaa/* (Boudhaayana emphasises the paramount significance of Shuchi or cleanliness especially to a ‘dvija’ who ought to be always purified as without ‘Shouchaachaara’ or Purity and tradition as prescribed, what all he desires to perform is a waste!)

Gandusha Vidhi: *Kritvaadha shoucham prakshaalya hastou cha mrijjalaih, nibaddha shikhakacchastu gandushaachamanam charet// Viprasya dakshine bhaage devaastishthanti nityashah, Aassena yevagandushaan Vaama bhaage visarjayet/ Apaam dwadasha gandushaan purushotsarjane dwijah, Mutretu chaturah kuryaat bhojhaantetu shodasha/Paraashara Maharshi describes Shoucha after ablutions as cleaning the feet and hands with eartha and water, tighten the tuft, arrange the dhoti by way of drawing down the feet and lifting from the rear side, arrange the upper garment on the shoulders, and clean the mouth with water thrice over. Vyasa Maharshi states that Devas prevail on the right side of Vipras and that is why one should never throw mouth water on that side but do so only to one’s left side. Vyasa also states that a dwija should clean up twelve times after stools, four times after ‘mutra visarjana’, and after meals clean the mouth sixteen times; this is the Gandusha vidhi to cleanse the limbs and rinse the mouth!*

Achamana Vidhi: *Prakshalya paadou hastou cha mukhamadbhissamaa hitah, Dakshinam baahum-uddhrutya krutvaa jaanvantare karou, Achamyas praangmukhah pashchaaddanta dhaavaa maacharet/ Dakshinam karam kritvaa gokarnaakritivat punah, Trih pibed dakshinaambu dviraasyam parimarjatet/ Samhataangulinaa toyam griheetvaa paaninaa dwijah, Muktvaaangushtha kanishthetu sheshena achama - nam charet/ Musha majjana maatraastu sangrahya trih pidepah/* (Vyaasa delineates the Achamana Vidhi in detail: wash the hands, legs, and face, slowly raise the right hand seated east faced and clean the teeth with water and perform ‘achamana’; drink water from the cup shaped right hand palm thrice and clean up the face twice over; take water from the right palm with closed fingers thrice over and with the the three right palm fingers leaving the thumb and the little finger, sip water thrice of the small size of a ‘maasha’ seed or black gram and this is the process of ‘Achamana’). *Anushtaabhih apenaabhiradbhisteerena dharma vat, Shouche psu sarvadaachamedekaante praanmukhah/ Hridgaabhi puyate viprah kanthagaabhistu bhumi pah, Vaishyadbhih praashitaabhistu shudrassaprishtaabhirantah/* (Manu suggests that while doing bath in a water body, one should be clean standing at a place which is warm,

preferably inside water without froth and alone faced either east or north. A Vipra could dip and stand in water upto heart level, a Kshatriya upto neck, a Vaishya up to the mouth level while others could bathe standing upto the buttocks!) *Na bahurjaanuraachamet naasanasthona chotthitah, Bhuktvaasanasthopya achaame anya kaale kadachana/ Naanteerayaika deshasya krutvaachavottareeya kam, Aachanna dakshinaam sastu naachaametthu kadaahana/ Vinaa yagjnopaveetena tathaadhoutena vaasanaa, Muktvaa shikhaam vaachantena kritasvaiva punah kriya/Yaabhya pratyagmu khatvena kritama - achamanam yadi, Praayas- chityai tadaa kuryaat snaanamaachamanam kramaat/* ('Achamana' is required to be performed without being seated or stretching hands outside the knees. Only after bhojana, one can seated on a seat but not otherwise. Achamana should not be done with dhoti or the main garment and the upper garment together, or covering the right shoulder. Without yagnopaveeta and open up the tuft while performing 'achamana' is banned. Achamana should not be performed west faced and if so done prayaschitta or atonement is required by taking bath and perform 'Punara-achamana') *Taavannaapa -sprushed vidvaan yaavadvaamenana sprushet, vaamehi Dwaadashaadityaah Varunaascha Jaleshwaraah/ Kaamse paatre chayattoyam yattoyam taamra bhaajane, Souvarnam raajate chiva naivaashuddham tu karhichit/* (Yama Dharma Raja mentions that learned persons are aware that they are restrained to touch the left side of the body as that side Dwadashadityas, Varunas and Jaleshwara are there; he further certifies that water in the vessels of bronze, copper, silver and gold are pure) Manu Shastra describes about Brahma and other Tirthas: *Braahmena viprasteerthena nityakaalamupasprushet, Kaayatraidashikaabhyaam vaana pitrena kadaachana// Angushtha mulasya tale Braaham teertham prachakshate, Kaayamanguli moolegre Daivam Pitryam tayorathah/* (One should be in touch with Brahma Tirtha and three sides of one's body regularly although the Pitru Tirtha be touched occasionally. Brahma Tirtha exists at the right thumb bottom, Agni Tirtha at the finger bottoms, Daiva Tirtha on the top of the fingers and Pitru Tirtha under the fingers)

Shounaka Muni prescribes the procedure of Achamana: *Prakshaalya paadou hastoucha tripibed -ambu veekshitam, Maashamagnantu tadvaari hridgatantu vishudhyati/Samvritaangushtha mulena vidvih pramrujyaattadhoshthakou, Sangulaambhiih samyak avaacheenah sprushenmukham/ Angushthaanaa - mikaambhyaantu chakshushi samupasprushet, Angushtena pradeshinyaaghraanam spurushyad ananta - ram/ Kanishthikayaangushthena shrotrou samyagupasprushettatah, Andushtha madhyamaabhyaantu baahu samyak sprushet/ Angushthaagrena naa bhintu hridayam tisribhistatah, Sarvaabhistu shirah paschaat evamaachamanam charet/ Jaanorurthvam jale tishthanaahaantah shuchiyaamiyaate, Adhastaa -chhata krutvopi samaachaanto na shudhyati/* (After washing hands and feet, consume a drop of water from the right palm thrice to clean up one's heart and soul, clean up the thumb twice, touch the face with all the fingers together westward. Touch the eyes with thumb and ring finger, then touch the thumb and the pointing finger with nose, the thumb and the smallfinger with ears, thumb and the middle of all other fingers touch hands; thumb and navel; heart with three fingers and finally touch the head with all the fingers and perform Achamana finally. Till the time of Achamana , one should be seated in water upto knees and in the same position perform hundred achamanas for shuddhi or pure cleanliness.) Paraashara Maharshi describes: *Prabhaasaadeeni tirthaani Gangaadyaassaritastathaa, Viprasya Dakshine karne santeeti manurabraveet/ Adityo Varunah Somah Vahnirvaayustadaivacha, Viprasya Dakshine karne nityam tishthanti devataah/* (Prabhasa and such other Tirthas and Ganga and other Sacred rivers exist in the ears of a Vipra as stated by Manu, while Surya, Varuna, Chandra, Agni, Vayu Devas too are stationed in the right ear as believed by Paraashara). Parashara further states: *Satyaamaachamana - ashaktou abhaava salilasyavaa, Purvokteshu nimitteshu dakshinam shravanam sprushet/* (In the event of

inability or when worthy water is unavailable, then as an alternative one's own the right ear be touched).

Snaana Vidhi: Vyasa opines: *Praatah kaaletu sampraapte kritvaa chaavashyakam budhah, Snaayaannadeeshu shuddhaasu shoucham kritvaa yadhaa vidhi/* ( A virtuous person would perform his morning routine and then take bath in rivers or running waters) *Balam rupam yashodharmam jnaanamaayussukham dhritim, Arogyam paramaapnoti samyak snaanena maanavah/* (Satyavrata assures that a full bath provides a person good strength, body form, reputation, virtue, knowledge, longevity, happiness, courage and health) Atri explains further: *Asnaataasheemalam bhuktehyajapah puyashonitam, Ahuutaashee krimim bhuktehyadaataa vishamashnute/ Snaana mulaah kriyaa sarvaah shrutismrityuditaa nrinaam, Asnaatastu pumaannaarhah japahomaadi karmasu/ Praatar madhyaahnoh snaanam vaanaprastha grihasthayoh, Yatestrishavanam snaanam sakruccha brahma chaarinaam/ Sarvepi sakrit kuryuh Ashaktaochodakam vinaa, Saamardhyechaambu sadbhaave yathaa shastram hitat bhavet, Snaanam cha sarva varnaanaam kaaryam shochaparassaram/* (A person who is not bathed but eats food, that food is as bad as excretion, just as a person does not meditate and eats food that food is as horrible as consuming blood; food without performing Agni Homa is stated to eating worms and food without daana is to be considered as poisonous! Both Grihasthas and Vaanaprasthas ought to take bath twice in the morning and evening, Sanyasis thrice and Brahmacharis on 'sakrit' basis or as when water is unavilable or not possible physically beyond the minimum a day. In fact, this clause of Sakrit is available to all, but subject to one's own ability and shortage of water the escape clause is not applicable. In any case, the first bath in the morning is compulsory!) *Jala madhyesthito viprah shuddha bhaavo harim smaret, Snaatva achaanto vaari magnah trih pathedadhamarshanam* ( Shaunaka Muni states that a vipra should go deep enough into water, pray to Shri Hari and after snaana, achamana and drowning thrice perform 'Agahamarshana' thrice.) Daksha explains details: *Dhaayennaaraayana Devam snaanaadishu cha karmasu, Brahmaloakamavaapnoti na chaiha jaayate punah/ Sankalpah Suktapathanam maarjanam chaaghamarshanam, Devataa tarpanamcheti snaanam panchangamuchyate/ Apravaahodaka snaanam viprapaadaavanejanam, Gayatri japamarghyam cha Aadityaabhimukha scharet/ Srotasokhimukhah snaayaan maarjane chaaghamarshane, Anyatraarka mukhe raatrou praagudanmukha yevavaa, Sandyhaaa muhkastu sandhyaayaamk daivedaivonmukhastathaa/ Shikhaam badhvaachamya tatam prakshalya xdarbhaannidhaaya darbha paanin, Jalam natwaa prayataanjalih praagmukho avagaahya kakshaadi, Nimrujya snaatvaadviraachamya darbha paanina raapohishthaadyaih/ Abdevataih maarjanam kritwaaghamarshanam kurvaat punah snaatwaa dwiraachamya tarpanam kuryaat/* (While taking bath Narayana Smarana and dhyana puts one on the path of Brahma Loka. Sankalpa, Purusha Sukta Pathana, Marjana, Aghamarshana, Devata tarpana are stated to be the 'Panchaangas'! Jalapravaha snaana, vipra paada prakshalana, Gayatri Japa must be performed facing Surya Deva. Jalapravaha marjana and aghamarshana snaana must be facing the flow of water, while the other acts like snaana and worships need to face Surya only. While in the water flow, the tuft be twisted, achamana be performed, carry darbhas and on greeting with folded hands, get into the waterflow facing east, clean the armpits and body parts, perform Achamana twice, recite the mantra: 'apohishthaa mayobhavah'etc. to please 'Jala Devatas'while doing 'maarjana', 'Aghamarshanas', repeat snaanas and tarpanas) Skanda Purana prescribes: *Udayhaatpraak chatasrastu naadikaa arunodayah, tatra snaanam prashamsanti sahi punya tamah smritah/ Nityam naimittim kaamyam trividham snaanamuchyate, Tarpanam tu bhavettasyaam gatvena prakeertitam/* (Four ghadis before Sunrise, bathing is stated to be the best and of assured Punya. The three kinds of snaanas are known as Nitya Snaana, Naimittika snaana, Kaamyas Snaana and tarpanas ought to precede the snaanas.) Vishnu Purana prescribes that the Tarpanas directed to Deva, Rishi, Pitru

Devas ought to be performed with wet clothes after the snaanas only. Bharadvaja Maharshi provides many other details about ‘Snaanaas’: *Tarpanam Devataadibhyah svasva tirthena tarpayet, Goshringa maatramudhrutya tarpane jalamstrijet/ Yaina tirthena grihneeyaattena dadyaajjalaanjalin, Anya teerthena grihniyaat tattedyo rudhuram bhavet/ Purvaashaabhimukho Devaanuttarabhi mukhastrusheen, Dakshinaasyastu pitrunaam jalamadhyetu tarpayet/ Devarshi tarpanam kritvaa Yakshaanaam tarpayettate, Yanmayaa dushitam toyam shareera mala sanchayaat, Taddosha parihaaraardham Yakshaanaam tarpayaamyaham/* (Deva tarpana is to be performed by the same water as fetched by the Karta and not with any other water resource as tarpana done with any other water would be like that of blood! Tarpana to Devas is to be directed to eastern side, to Rishis directed to north, and Pitru Devatas to the Southern side and all these are to be performed within the water flows only. After performing Deva-Rishi tarpana in the water, yaksha tarpana is to be done on the banks stating that since the body was unclean due to the water flow, the yaksha tarpana is being performed on the banks. Even as the clothes are wet on the banks, the Karta should try to drip out the water of his clothes and perform Pitru Tarpana with the mantra: *yekechaasmatkule jaataa/* or may all the souls of the deceased in my Vamsha be blessed.

Snaana bhedas: *Snaanatu dvididham proktam gounamukhya prabhedatah/* Shankha Maharshi made broad classification of Snaanas viz. Gauna and Mukhya. Daksha Prajapati defined eight kinds of Snaanas: *Agneyam Vaarunam Braahmyam Vaayavyam divyamevacha, Maanasam Paarthivam chivatvashtamam navamam snaanamuttamam/* Bharadvaja suggested: *Praangmukhascharanouhastou prakshaalyaachamya purvakam, Praanaanaayamyam sankalpya bhasma snaanam samaacharet/ Aadaaya bhasitam svetam Agnihotra samudbhavam, Ishaanenatu mantrena svamurdhani vinikshipet/ Tatah aadaaya tadbhasma mukhe tatpurushenatu, Aghoraakhyena hridaye guhye vaamaahvayenacha/ Sadyojaataabhidhaanena bhasma paadadvaye kshipet, Sarvangam pranavenaiva mantrenodhdalayettatah, Yetadaagneyakam snaanam uditam paramarshibhih/* (There are eight kinds of Snaanas viz. Agneya, Vaaruna, Braahma, Vaayavya, Divya, Maanasa, Paarthiva and Kaapila; the ninth being Saarasvata. One should face east, wash hands and feet, after Achamana, Praanaayaama and Sankalpa, perform ‘Bhasma Snaana’ or the Sacred Ash Bath by picking up adequate Bhasma from Agnihotra and by reciting Ishana mantra place it on one’s head. Then apply the bhasma on face reciting Tatpurusha mantra, on the heart area with Aghora mantra, at the guhya pradesha with Vaama Deva mantra and on both the feet with Sadyojaata mantra. By reciting the Pranava mantra apply all over the body and this is called Agneyaka snaana by Saints.) Vyasa defines Vaaruna snaana for executing Pitru tarpana by dipping into the water flow reciting Abdevata mantras: *Snaanam abdevatairmantraih jalemajjana gaahanaih, Tarpanam Pitrudevataanaam snaanam Vaarunamuchyate/* Katyayana defines Braahmya Snaana: *Apoishthaadibhirbaahyam mantra snaanam hitatatsmatam, Kushaagrairmaarjanam kuryaaddeva tirthenavaadvijah/* (Braahmya snaana is to perform ‘maarjana’ with ‘kushaagraas’ by reciting ‘apohishthaadi’ mantras and dipping into water flow) Brihaspati describes the rest of the Snaana vidhis: *Vaayavyam gorajah proktam astam gacchati gopatou, Vidvat sarasvati praaptam snaanam Saarasvatam smritam/ Uttaraayana madhyetu yadaa varshati Vaasavah, Aatapena saha snaanam Divyam snaanam taduchyate/ Chaturbhujam Maha Devam shankha chakra gadaadharam, Manasaadhyayate Vishnum Maanasam snaanamuchyate/ Shuchideshaanmrudam gruhya kuryaat gatropalepanam,mantraih pardhiva samyuktaih Bhoomam snaanam taduchyate/* (As Sunset approaches, snaana by smearing godhuli on the body is called Vayavya Snaana. After attending to ‘vidvadgoshthi’ of learned persons of Sarasvati Swarupa is called Sarasvati Snaana. Sometime during mid ‘Uttarayana’ when there occurs rain with sunshine and bathing at that time is named Divya Snaana. Snaana while praying in one’s mind about Maha Vishnu with four hands sporting shankha-chakra-gada-

sarangas is illustrated as Maanasa Snaana. Smearing earth from a clean and sacred surrounding on one's body parts and performing bath is known as Bhouma Snaana) Snaanas at well deserved Places: Nadeeshu Devakhaateshu Tataakeshu Sarassucha snaanam samaacharennityam gartaprasravaneshucha/ (Manu says that Snaanas be taken among the water bodies like Jeeva Nadis or ever flowing rivers, divine water bodies like Pushkar and Manasarovara, and wells and deep water pits) *Puraanaanaam Narendraanaam rishinaamcha mahatmanaam, Snaanam kupatataakeshu devataanaam samaacharet/Bhumishthamudhru-taatpunyam tatah prasravanodakam, Tatopi Saarasam punyam Gaangam punyantu sarvatah/* (Markandeya describes that in the past there were some water bodies dug up in which Kings, Rishis and Mahatmas bathed and performing snaana at such places are worthy indeed. Water dug up from the depths of earth is sacred and so are the water falls and of flows; reputed Sarovaras and Rivers like Ganga are highly sacred) Yoga Yagnyavalkya prescribes that whenever one has to take bath elsewhere, then snaana be done by discarding palmful of water seven times first and then proceed. Also, wherever there is a running River of Sacredness nearby, one should prefer bathing in it rather than in any stored water!

Samudra Snaana: The general saying is: *Ashvattham manda vaaretu Saagaram parvani sprushet, Ashvattha Saagara sevyou kadaachana/*(Ashvattha tree is worthy of touch on Saturdays and so is Samudra on Pournamis; indeed both these are worthy of worship and not to be touched indiscriminately) Bharadwaaja Muni instructs: *Krishnaangaara chaturdashyaamyobdhou snaanam samacharet, Tasya janma sahasreshu sarvam paapam pranashyati/ Seturnaapekshate kaalam nityam snaanam prashasyate, Nishedhah kaalabhedasya setoranyatra karhichit/* (Samudra Snaanas on Tuesdays of Krishna Paksha and Chaturdashis would destroy sins of thousands of previous births. However Setu snaanas could be done without any restrictions of days or times.) Vyasa Maharshi describes: *Kurukshetram Gayaam Gangaam Prabhaasam Naimisham tathaa, Tirthenyetaani sarvaani snaanakaale smaredbudhah / Aapayeva putaah taasaam vahnirvishodhakah, Tasmaatsarveshu kaaleshu ushnaanbhah paavanam smritam/* (All the persons of virtue should bathe at Kurukshetra, Gaya, Gangaa, Prabhasa, Naimisha and while so bathing announce the Sacred names of the Places concerned. While water purifies and is clean, Agni purifies far more and hence hot water baths are stated to be more preferable at all the places and times)

Naimittika Snaanas: *Tatopsumagnah triraghamarshanam tadvishnoh paramam padam, Iti vaa Savitreem Vaayumjate mana ityanuvaakam/ Vaa Purusha suktam vaa japitvaa Snaatvaa vaa japitvaa snaatvaardra vaasaa devarshi, Pitru tarpanam ambhasthaha eva kuryaat/* (Vishnu Maharshi instructs that one should perform Naimittika Snaanas by dipping fully into a water body, perform Aghamarshana thrice reciting 'Tadvishnoh paramam padam' or 'Saavitreem yunjate manah' or 'Purusha Sukta' Japa, and then observe Pitru Tarpana Vidhi while being in water itself!) *Divaa keertimudakyaam cha sutikaam patitam tathaa,, Shavam tatsrishtinam chaiva sprushtyaa snaanena shudhyati/* (Manu prescribes that sparsha or touch of a barber, a woman in the stage of menstruation, a woman in the immediate post delivery period, a fallen woman, or a corpse or those who would interact with a corpse would require purification by discarding the clothing and taking bath for purification) *Dussvapnam yadi pashyettu vaante cha kshura karmani, maithune preta dhume cha snaanameva vidheeyate/* ( Bad dreams, vomiting, hair cuts, union with women, smoke of dead bodies would most certainly demand naimittika snaanas, says Parashara) However, Smaarta view is some what relaxed: *Sankate vishame chaiva durge chaiva visheshatah, Hatta pattana marge cha yadhaa sambhavimishyate/ Trina kaashthaadi ghaatena kudye naantarite tathaa, Gibaala vyajana vaapi snaanam tatra na vidyate/* (At the times facing difficult and fearful situations, visiting places of high altitudes, market places etc. snaanas are not compulsory but optional. Snaanas are also not called for by touching grass heaps, wood, walls, cows and children.) But Apastamba Sutras

require that formal bathing is compulsory when dog bites, wash the place affected, draw fire nearby the affected area, wash the feet and perform sachela snaana and ‘Aachamana’. However the Sutras exempt snaana in a few other contexts: *Na snaayaadutsaveteete Mangalyam vinivartyacha, Anuvrajya suhrud bandhun archayitveshta devataah, Na snaanamaacharet bhuktvaa naa turonamaha nishi/*(No bathing is called for after attending Celebrations, Shubha Karyas, seeing off friends and relatives, after worship to Devas, while in illness, after taking meals and at mid-night times!) Manu underlines the need for snaanas even at the late nights in specified contexts: *Raahu darshana Sankraanti vivaahaatyaya vriddhi - shu, Snaana daanaadikam kuryaansishi Kanya Vrateshu cha/* (Ratri snaanas are specially called for in the context of Grahanas or Eclipses, Vivaha dosha graha yoga kaala, and in connection with ‘Kanya Vratas’ and the adjunct activities of ‘grahanas’ viz. Snaana Daanas.) More is stated about Grahanas by Maha Bharata, Vyasa Muni and Vasishtha respectively: *Gangaa snaanam prakurveeta grahane Chandra Suryayayoh, Mahaa nadishu chaanyaasu snaanam kuryaat yadhyadhya dhaa vidhih/Sdarvam gangaa saam toyam sarve brahma samoddvijaah, Sarvam Bhumi samam daanam grahane chandra Suryahoh/ Gavam koti pradaanenasamyak dattena tatphalam, Gangaasnaane tatphalam syaadraahugraste Nisha kare/ Chandra Surya grahechaiva yovagaaheta jaahnavim, Sasnaatah sarva tirtheshu kimardhamatate Maheem/* (At the Solar and Lunar eclipses, one must perform formal baths in Ganges or other Sacred Rivers, states Maha Bharata. Vyasa states that in connection with the eclipses, all the waters assume the significance of Ganga in all the rivers, while all the dvijas turn out to be equivalent to Brahma and any charity would be as good as Bhudaana! Vriddha Vasishtha assures that Ganga Snaana at the time of Chandra Grahana bestows the fruits of koti godaana! He further exclaims that any person performing Ganga Snaana during the Chandra-Surya Grahanas would reap the benefit of Sarva Tirtha Snaanas.) Shaataatapa Maharshi assures: *Snaanam daanam tathaa shraaddham anantam Rahudarshaney!* ( At the time of Rahu darshana, all virtuous deeds like snaana- daana- shraaddhas would attract endless fruits!)

Samkramana: *Samkraanyaam yaani dattaani havya kavyaani Maanavaih, Taani tasya dadaatkaryah sapta jhanmasu nischitam/* (Whatever beneficial fruits of havya-kavya-daanas at the time of Samkramana are stated to be directly received by Surya Deva and are repaid back for seven births ahead!) *Samkraanti samayah sukshmah durjeyah pishitekshanaih, Tadyogaadapyadhah cha urtham trimshannaadayah pavitritaah/ Ayanedve vishavedve chatastrasshada sheetayah, Chatusro Vishnupadyas -cha samkraantyo dwaadasha smritaah/*(Devatala Maharshi explains that the precise time of Samkranti is difficult to ascertain and that is why a margin of thirty nadis to and fro is reckoned as sacred. Of the two Ayanas, there are two Vishus, Shadsheetis two, Vishnupadis four and Samkrantis twelve). *Ayane vimshatih purvaa Makare vimshati paraah, Vartamane tulaameshe naadayastoobhayato dasha/ Ayane koti punyam cha sahasram Vishave phalam, Shadashetyaam sahasrantu phalam Vishnupadepicha/* (Brihaspati explains that in the dakshinayana time, the samkramana is to be reckoned as twenty ghadis before and twenty ghadis ahead in respect of Uttaraayana kaala; in the case of the latter after Samkramana, the Punya Kaala is twenty ghadis and during Tula Mesha Samkramana the punya kaala is of ten ghadis. Whatever deeds of virtue are performed during the Ayana are rewarded by crore times, thousand times during vishu time as also the ‘shadasheeti’ and vishnupada timings too).

Rajasvalaa Snaana: Katyaayana Maharshi defines the shuddhi for menstruation: *Rajasvalaa chaturdhehni snaatvaa shuddhi mavaapnuyaat// Prathamehani chandaali dwiteeye sutikaa bhavet, Triteeyehi svadharasthaa chaturdhe patito yadhaa/ Sangavaante chaturdhehni snaanaacchuddhi mapaapnuyaat, Ekavimshatithaalipya sarvaanam shuddhayaamrudaa/ Kritaa snaana shatam pashcaachuchirbhavati naanyadhaa, Snaanaante Bhaskaram drushtvaa putram praardhya sumangali/ Trivaaram praashye -*

*dannam nacheddoshavati bhavet/* (A female on the first day of menstruation is known as a Chandali, second day as Sutika, third as Svadharmastha, fourth day as Sankramana and the fifth day as Patita; on the fourth day would be Shuddhi or Purification as the body needs to be cleaned up twenty one times with 'mittika' and take bath hundred times. Thereafter she should greet Surya Deva worshipping him to bestow 'Sumangalitva' or long life for her husband and sons and eat food thrice, or otherwise it would not balance her body) *Rajasvalaaaam snaataayaam punareva rajasvala, Ashtaadasha dinaadarvaaga shuchitvam navidyate, Unavimshati dinaadarvaagekaaham- ashuchirbhavet/*(Once the bath is performed as above, till the eighteenth day there is no 'Ashuchi' which commences there after.)

**Kaamyaa Snaanasa:** *Deva yatraa Vivaaheshu yagjneshu prajkruteshu cha, Utsaveshu cha sarveshu sprushtaasprishtirna dushyati/* (The general ruling is the criterion of touch or no touch restriction is not applicable to Deva Yatra, Weddings, Yagnaadi Sacrifices and Celebrations) Pulastya Rishi defines Kaamyaa Snaanasa as follows: *Pushyecha Janma nakshatre vyatepaatecha Vaidhrutai, Amaayanacha nadi snaanam punatyaa saptamah kulah/ Ravyangaarashanervaa snaanam kurvantiye naraah, Vyaadhibhiste napeedyante mrigaih kesarinoyathaah/Chaitra krishna chatur dashyaam yah snaayaacchiva sannidhou, Na pretvamavaapnoti Gangaayaam cha visheshatah/*(Pulastya Muni states: Baths in Sacred Rivers on Janma Nakshatras, in Pushya month, vaidhruti vyatipaata graha yogaas, and Amavasyas would provide salvation for seven past generations. Persons performing snaanas on Sundays, Tuesdays, Saturdays would be free from physical diseases as intense as hurt by lions and deers. One should consciously take sacred baths in the premises of Lord Shiva on Chaitra Krishna Chaturdashi, possibly in the Ganges to avoid 'pretatva' for ever.) *Amavasyaa bhavedvaare yadaa bhumi sutasyavai, Jahnavi snaanamaatrena gosahasraplalam bhavet/ Kaartikam sakalam maasam nitya snaayi jitendriyah, Japan havishyabhuk snaatvaa sarva paapai pramuchyate/ Tulaayaam Makara meshe praatah snaayi sada bhavet, Havisham brahmacharyam cha maha pataka naashanam, Tushyatyaa mamalakai Vishnurekaadasyaam visheshatah/* (Shataatapa Muni prescribes Amavasya Mangala Vaasara snaana in Ganga to qualify for the fruits of charity of thousand cows. During the entire Kartika month, regular snaanas in rivers, performance of japa-homa-havish bhojana would bestow total annulment of all accounts of past sins. Early morning snaanas during Tula-Makara-Mesha Rashis followed by havirbhojana and celibacy should destroy 'Maha Paapas'. Worship of Vishnu and naivedya of Amla fruits on 'Eakaadashis' would fetch blessings of the Lord.)

**Malaapakarshana Snaanasa:** Bharadwaaja Maharshi details these snanas as follows: *Abhyanga snaapane yogyaa vaaraaye tithibhissaha, Kathyate tethunaa spashtam pushtaye balavridhdhaye/ Indorbudhasya sourescha vaarebhyangam prashasyate kaantim, Shriyam tathaa dadyuh bhogaan vaaraadhipaah kramaat/ Dwiteeyaadyaashchatastrascha prashastaah Saptami tathaa, Navami Dashami chaiva Trayodashyapi cha smritaah/ Bhaanu bhoumaamaraachaarya Shukravaareshu sankrame, Vyatipaatecha Janmakshenaabhyangam snaanamaacharet/ Ekadashyaam charurdashyaam Ashtamyaaam pratipadyapi, Shashtyaam Parvaani chaabhyanga snaanamnaiva samaacharet/Uttaraa phalguni jyeshthaa Shavanaardraasu raatrishu, Abhyanga snaapanam dheemaan sukhardhi varjayettathaa/ Shishurogaarta vridhdhaanaam yathaakaalam shareerinaam, Abhyangoshnodaka snaanam naiva doshaavaham smritam/*

(**Abhyangana Snaanasa** prescribed for health and strength are prescribed as follows: Monday, Wednesday and Sunday are excellent for these as they grant brightness, opulence and enjoyment respectively. Tithiwise, Dviteeya-Triteeya-Chaturthi-Panchami, Saptami, Navami are Trayodashi auspicious. But, Sunday-Tuesday-Thursday- Friday, Samkramana timings, Janma Nakshatras, Vyatipata timings are avoidable. Also, Ekadashi, Chaturdashi, Ashtami, Prathama, Shashti and Pournamai are unworthy. Uttara

Phalguni, Jyeshtha, Shravana, Ardra nakshatras are to be avoided. Children, persons suffering from diseases and old aged are exempt from the above restrictions and might bathe with hot water)

Naraka Chaturdashi Snaana: *Aashvayu krishna pakshetu chaturdashyaaminodaye, Tailaabhyangam cha kartavyamsnaanam ushna vaarinaa/* (One must perform ‘tailaabhyanga’ or oilbath with hot water in the early morning hours of Ashviyuja Krishna Chaturdashi.) *Chaturdashi yaashvayuja sya krishnaa svaatyarkayuktaa cha bhavetprabhate snaanam samabhyajya naraistu kaaryam, Sugandhitailena vibhuti kaamaiah taile Lakshmirjale Gandaa Deepaavai dinevaset Alakshmi parihaaraartham abhyanga snaana maacharet tata Aabharanam vastram dhaarayet sarva sampadah labhet/* (Naraka Chaturdashi coincides with the Swati Nakshatra yukta Ashviyuja Krishna Chaturdashi in the morning. Those who are fond of gaining opulence have to exucute formal perfumed oil bath at that auspicious time as the belief is that Lakshmi resides in oil and Ganga turns water all around. The oil bath is a must to obliterate poverty and unhappiness. There after, one wears new clothing and jewellery to signify the arrival of Devi Lakshmi! It was that very Krishna Chaturdashi when Lord Vishnu in the incarnation of Krishna freed humanity from the evils of Narakaasura and hence all those who are afraid of Naraka and hell ought to perform ‘Abhyanjana Snaana’ and secure fullfillment of one’s life!) Yama Dharma Raja certifies: *Ghritam cha saarshapam tailam yattailam pushpavaasitam, Na doshah pakva taileshu snaanaabhyangeshu nityatah/* (Ghee, Sarshapa oil, flower oils are always worthy of boiling before use for ‘ abhyangana’)

Nadee Snaanaas: Brahmanda Purana signifies the following most famed Sacred Rivers: *Godaavari Bheema Rathee Tungabhadraa cha Venika, Taapipayoshnikaa Vindhya Dakshinetu prakeertitaah/ Bhaaeerathi Narmadaa cha Yamunaa cha Sarasvati, Vishokaa cha Vitastaa cha Vindhysyottara sanjnataa, Dwaadashaitaa Mahaa Nadyo Devarshi kshetra sambhavaa/* (The following Sacred Rivers down the Vindhyas are Godavari, Bheema Rathi, Tungabhadra, Krishnaveni, Tapati and Payoshnika; in the northern Bharat are the noted Bhagiradhi, Narmada, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Vishoka and Vitasta are among the Maha Nadis in Uttara Bharat.) *Gangaa cha Yamuna Godaavareesyaa- tthungabhadraa, Kaveri cha Maha Punya Maha Nadyaah prakeertitaah/Aadou karkatake sarvaa Maha Nadyoh rajasva - laah, Tridinantu chaturdhehni shuddhaasyurjaahnavi yadhaa/ Chatram cha harat paadam Ardham harati paadukou, Yaaam heretripaadam tu sarvam harati dolikaa/ Yescharyaallobha mohaadvaa gacchedyaana abhistuyah, Nishphalam tasya teertham tasmaadyaanaadi varjayet/* (The Maha Nadis are stated to be Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Tungabhadra, and Kaveri and during the first three days of Karkataka Rashi, these rivers are stated to be affected by menses and on the fourth day they attain Shuddi or Purity. While one proceeds on Tirtha Yatras, the Yatris carrying umbrellas get discounted of thier ‘Punya’by a quarter, carrying foorwear lose half of it, going by a ‘Vahana’ lose two thirds and nil going by the comfort of a ‘Palki’ carried by human beings! Thus the genuine yatris should note these facts!

Dharma Sindhu prescribes the Snaana Vidhis: After Danta dhaavana, the **Snaana** in a river or waterbody includes a Sankalpa: *Mama kaayikavaachika maanasika dosha nirasana purvakam Sarvakarma sushuddhi sidhyartham paatahsnaanam karishye/* (With a view to uproot my physical, vocal and mental borne shortcomings and to achieve cleanliness in all my actions in the day ahead, I shall perform my morning bath). On cleaning the body parts, one should do **Aachamana** ie sipping water three times facing east or north but not west or south , leaving out the right thumb and the forefinger as the other three fingers are bent while reciting the **Marjana Mantraas** of *Apoishthaa mayo bhuvah taanaurjey tathaatana, Maheranaaya chakshasey yo vah shivatamorasah/ Tasya bhajaayatehanah Usiteerava Maatarah, Tasma aranga maamavah Yasyakshayaaya jinvatah/ Aapojanayata cha nah Om Bhurbhuvaassuvah/* ‘Hey Waters of auspiciousness, the immense source of happiness and contentment!

Do shower your pure and abundant love on us and enhance our faculties to acquire more and more knowledge; indeed the juicy source of your uniqueness and omniscience is such that we humans get readily attracted to you and worship you. Do enable us to secure fulfillment in our lives and channelise our energies to obtain excellent progeny among other desires). Then saying *Imam mey Gangey* perform 'Jalaalodana' or swimming and **Aghamarshana** with the Mantraas : *Rutamcha Satyam cha abheedaat tapasodhya jaayata,tato Raatrasya Jaayataa tatassamudro Arnavah/ Samudraarnava vaadadhi Samvatsro Ajaayata, Ahoraatraani vidadhadviswasya mishato vashi/ Suryaa chandramasou Dhaataa yathaa purvamakalpayat Divam cha Prithiveem chaantariksha mathoswaha/*. This would be followed by the recital of Paapa Vimochana Mantra viz. *Drupaadi vamunchatu Drupaadi venmu- chaanah, swinnasnaatvi malaadiva putam pavitrenyvaajyam Aapahshuddhantu mainaasah /* (May Paramatma cleanse up my ignorance and demolish my inexcusable sins just as a person is freed from a punishment rock or is profusely sweating and gets sanitised by His grace) as also perform Triraachamana and Tarpana: **Tarpana** is done with 'Savyopaveeta' first to Brahma and other Devatas, then with Upaveeta as a maala / garland around the neck to Dwaipayana and other Rishis and at the end with 'Apasavyopa - veeta' to Somah Pituman, Yamogiriswaan, Agnishvaattaadi Pitaras. Pursuant to the snaanaadi at a river or water body, the Brahmana takes **Punah Snaana** at his house with hot water if need be reciting the Mantraas viz. *Shanno Devi, Aapah punantu, Drupadaadiva, Rutamcha and Apohishtha/* Griha snaanas might not repeat the Sankalpa-Aachamana-Aghamarshana-Tarpanas once again. Snaanaantara **Vastra dharana**: After removing the wet cloth with which the Snaanaas are done, a dry and white Vastra and Uttareeya are worn. Do not carry the left over wet vastra on one's shoulders but his dress code is stated to be incomplete without 'Uttareeya' and Underwear and no Brahmana could perform Shrouta and Smarta Karmas without these. **Snaana Vidhis**: While Praatah-Maadhyahnika-Saayam Kaala Snaanas are of Nitya or regular nature, quite a few naimittika snaanaas are prescribed such as the Sparsha Snaanaas by touching Chandalas, Sutakaas or after deaths, Prasuti after births, Rajaswalas, Chitaa Kashthas or burnt wood, dead bodies, or just born babies or touch of shadows. Chandalaadi Sparsha requires snaanas by ripple effect ie by way of transfer from person to person. Marana-Janma-Shraaddha-Janmadina-Asprushyataas require cold water Snaanas. In the Nitya Snaana there may not be the restriction of having to perform Tarpana but taking meals after Nitya Snaana certainly calls for Upavasa Vidhi. Grahnas and Sankrantis involve that bhojana without Naimittika Snaanaas would call for eight thousand Gayatri Japa. Even a mere touch of a dog, crow or chandala would require Snaana and without it a meal would entail Upavasa for three nights. In addition to the Nitya Naimittika Snaanas, there is a need for 'Kamya Snaanas' or those Snaanas readying for Karyas in the observance of Amavasya, Vyatipaata, Ratha Saptami, Kartika-Maagha Snaanaas and so on. Further, there are 'Gouna Snaanaas' such as the following: Mantra Snaana is in the context of reciting the Mantras like 'Apoishtha'; Gaayatra Snaana is on account of Prokshana after Dasha Gayatri Japa; Agneya Snaana is smearing Bhasma from Homa Karyaas all over one's body ; Kapila Snaana is to perform 'marjana' all over one's body with a wet piece of cloth; Vishnu Charana Jala Snaana and Guru Paada Jala Snaana are self-explanatory. Incidentally, all these and such Gouna Snaanaas do bestow Shuddhi or purification but Shaddha Snaanaas do not yield the same kind of Shuddhi.

Grahana Snaanas: As long as one could vision Chandra and Surya Grahanaas (Eclipses), one would reckon as the Punya Kaala or the auspicious time. Even if the Grahana were not visible due to the obstruction of clouds or so, even then on the basis of the information available as per the calculation of 'Shashtraas' about the 'Sparsha' (beginning) and Moksha (end), one should observe the required 'Snaana-Daanaas'. Surya Grahana on Sundays and Chandra Grahana on Mondays are called 'Chudaamani' and 'Daanaadi Karyaas' bestow endless Punya. One should take bath for 'Baahyaantara Shuchi' or external and internal cleanliness as soon as the Grahana Sparsha or the First Touch; during the course of the Grahana, one should perform Homa-Devarchana-and Shraaddha. When Grahana is receding, then Daanaas are required to be executed and at the time of Moksha, one should take bath once again; the bath at the 'Sparsha Kaala' and Moksha Kaala are of distinct waters; the Mukti Snaana is defined as follows: *Sheetamushnodakaat punyamapaarakyam parodakaat, Bhumishthamudhrataa punyam tata prasaravano -*

*dakam/ Tatopisaara sampunyam tatah punyam Nadi jalam, Tatastirthanadi Gangaa Punyaa punyastom - bhudhi/* (Cold water bath is more propitious than with hot water; better bathe with one's own water; fresh water from the depths of Bhumi is better from well water exposed and stored; water from a flowing water is better than in a waterbody; Tirtha water like Ganga is better than that of a from a river; and bathing in Samudra water is by far better than even a river like Ganges!). Grahana Snaana should be with the same clothing as during the Grahana and then only the bath would be stated as Mukti Snaana; that bath need not be by reciting Mantras. 'Suvasini Strees' or house wives who have their husbands alive could have neck-deep bath but those women who like to be purer to take head- bath do have the option to do so. Those women who are in the menstrual stage should keep her utensils seperated and should not squeeze her wet clothes after the bath. Fasting three days before or atleast one day before would bestow 'Maha Phala' but those Grihastis with sons and daughters need to take up the fast. But they should perform Deva-Pitru Tarpana. Persons of all the 'Chatur Varnaas' should wet the clothes after an Eclipse as they would be subject to the regulations of 'jaataadi sutaka' or 'Ashuchi' / impurity of births and deaths as they would have been deemed as having visioned the Rahu Graha: *Sarveshaametavarnaanaam sutakam Rahu Darshaney*. During the 'Grahana Kaala', Go-Bhu-Hiranyaadi Daanaas would accord far-reaching benefits. It is stated: *Sarvam Gangaa samam toyam, Sarvey Vyaasa samaah Dwijaah, Sarvam Bhumi samam daanam grahaney Chandra Suryayoh/* (On occasions like Lunar or Solar Eclipses, all kinds of waters are like Ganga water; all Brahmanas are like Vyasaacharya; and all kinds of charity are as good as Bhu daana).

Monthwise Snaanas: Chaitra: Sharannavaratri Snaanas; Vaishakha Snaanas: Vaishakha Snaanaas are scheduled during Chaitra Shukla Ekaadashi to Purnima with the arrival Mesha Samkraanti: *Vaishaakham sakalam maasam Mesha sankraman Raveh, Praatassnimaya-ssnaassy preeyataam Madhu Sudanah/ Madhu hantuh prasaadena Brahmanaamanugraaat, nirvighnamastu mey Punyam Vaishaakha snaanamaham, Maadhavey Meshagebhaanow Muraarey Madhusudana/ Praatassnaanena mey Naatha Phalado Bhava Paapahan/* (During the entire Vaishaakha Maasa when Mesha Sankraanti occurs, I resolve that I shall take formal baths by which Madhusudana would be pleased; give my devotion to Him and th blessings of Brahmanas, may the series of th Snaanaas be completed without hindrance and break; in the exception of a break if need be, at least three Snaanas be performed from Tayosashi onward. As stated earlier, Manvaadis are on Purnimas; in case, Chaitra Krishna Trayodashi coincides with Shatabhisha that day is reckoned as a 'Vaaruni' and is worthy of Snaanaas on the days of 'Grahana'. If there is Shubha Yoga or auspicious coincidence of a Saturday and Shatabhisha Nakshatra, then that day is called Maha Vaaruni. Further, there is a belief that Snaanas in Ganga on Chaitra Krishna Chaturdashi on a Tuesday in the presence of a Shiva Temple could even get rid of a person from Pishaachatwa! In Vaishakha Maasa's Vrishabha Sankranti time ie. sixteen Ghadiyas before the First day, Tila Tarpana and Ghata Daana are stated to be significance. Vasanta Puja to Brahmanas with Sandalwood paste( Gandha)-Jaggery water and Plantain fruits is also of great value. In Vaishakha Maasa (as also in Jyeshtha) when summer gets intense, then after Nitya Puja keep a full vessel of Sandalwood water and Tulasi leaves with 'Panchopachaaraas'to Vishnu and perform 'Maarjana' or sprinkle drops to purify 'Griha Dwaaraas' and on retaining the same Tirtha pour around an Ashwatta (Pipal) Tree by doing Pradakshinas on the next morning then several Pitru Devataas are stated to redeem their souls; also the skin-itches of cows are believed to be cured. In the Vaishakha Maasa, voluntary 'Nakta Bhojanas' are stated to fulfill longstanding desires of the persons concerned. Shiva Lingaarchana with cotinuous pourings of Sacred Water as Abhishkaas along with Namaka-Chamaka Mantras would bestow far reaching Punya. Similarly Chhatra-Paada raksha daanaas would yield Maha-Phala.

[ Vaishakha 'Snaanaas' (popularly called AKAAMAVAI SNAANAS viz. the Snaanaas of Ashwiyuja-Kaartika- Maagha-Vaishakha) are concluded on Vaishakha Purnami or even earlier on the previous Shukla Dwadashi itself. On the occasion of the 'Snaana Udyapaanas', Go- Paduka- Chharta- Vyajana Daanaas are commended.]

Gangaavataarana Snaanasa and worship on Jyeshtha Shukla Dwaadashi: The most auspicious time that the most Sacred River Ganga was born was stated to possess ten Yogaas: *Jyeshtha Maasi Sita Pakshey Dwadashyaam Budhahaspatayoh Vyateepatey garaanandey Kanyaachandrey Vrusho Ravou!* These yogaas are Jyeshtha-Shukla Paksha- Dashama Tithi- Budha Vaara-Hastaa Nakshatra-Vyateepaata-Gara Karana-Ananda Yoga- Kaanyaa's Chandra-and Vrisha's Surya. Even if this happens to be an Adhika Maasa, there is no objection to observe the 'Gangaa Vrata'. Those who are fortunate to reach Ganga on this day, especially in Varanaasi make the Sankalpa after stating the Desha Kaala and recite as follows : *Mamaitatjanma janmaantara sumudbhuta trividhakaayika Chaturvidha vaachika trividha maanasika swarupa Skaandokta dasa vidha paapaniraasatraya strimshacchata Pitruddhaara Brahma lokaavyaaptaadi phala Praaptyhardham Jyeshthamaa Shukla Paksha Dashami Budhavaasara Hastaanakshatra Gara karana Vyatipaataananda yoga Kanyaastha Chandra Vrishastha Suryeti Dasha Yoga Parvanyasyaam Mahaa Nadyaam Snaanam Tirtha Pujanam pratiyaamaam Jahnavi pujaam Tilaadi daanam Mula Mantra Japamaajya homam cha Yathaa shakti Karishye!* ( I have the great satisfaction to bathe in the Holy River of Ganga and seek to wash off the cumulative sins of this and previous birth on account of three kinds of Physical ailments, four kinds of vocal problems and three kinds of mental agonies as described in Skanda Purana. The 'Snaana' is also to redeem three thousand thirty three Pitru Devataas besides attaining Brahma loka. This type of Sacred Snaana is ideal in Jyeshtha Shukla Paksha-Dashami Tithi- Wednesday-Hasta Nakshatra- Gara Karana-Vyatipaata and Ananda Yoga as also in Chandra in Kanya Raashi, and Surya in Vrisha Raashi- all totalling ten Yogaas when Ganga was materialised. It is in such Most Illutrious and Highly Sacrosanct River that Snaana- Tirtha Pujana-Tila and other Daanas, Mula Mantra Japa and Homaas would be performed by me as per my capacity!) After making this Sankalpa or Determination, the devotees concerned should dip in Ganga ten times, render Stotraas, wear dry clothing, perform Nitya Karma, Tirtha Puja, Pitru/ Tila Tarpana by taking ten handfuls of Ghee and jaggery mixed Pindas in favour of Pitru devataas and finally invoke Ganga stating: *Namo Bhagavatyai Dasha Paapa haraayai Gangaayai Naraayanyai Revathai Shivaayai Dakshaayai Amritaayai Vishwa Rupinyai nandinyai tey Namoh Namah/* After the invocation as above, render 'Aavaahana' Mantra viz. *Om Namasshivaayai Narayanyai Dasha Paapa haraayai Gangaayai swaaha,* thus inviting Narayana, Rudra, Brahma, Surya, Himavan, Bhagiratha and execute 'Shodashopachaaraas'. 'Pujaanantara Stotra' addressing Ganga as given in Skanda Purana after the Puja is as follows: *Namasshivayai Gangaayai Shivadaayai Namoh Namah, Namastey Rudra Rupinyai Shaankaryetey Namoh Namah/ Sarva Deva Swarupinyai Namoh Bhashaja Murtaye, Sarvaswa Sarva Vyaadheenam Bhashak Shreshthyai Namoh namah/ Sthaanu jangama sambhutaVisha hantrai namonamah, Bhogopabhoga daayinyai Bhogha Vatyai namonamah/* --- ( Devi Ganga! You are the auspicious Form of Rudra, Vishwa Swarupa, Brahma Murti and Sarva Deva Swarupa, the Curer of all kinds of ailments and diseases; the destroyer of pousons of animate and inanimate beings; the bestower of all kinds of happiness; Bhogavati! Mandakini! 'Swarna Daata' or the giver of gold and precious Stones; you are the Triloka Maata! Your unique presence at Gangaa Dwaara, Prayaga and Saagara Sangama grants immense joy to us; I greet you with several titles as Nanda, Loka Dhatri, Linga Dharini, Narayani, Vishwa Mukhya, Revati, Brihati, Tejovati, Vishwa Mitra, Prithvi, Shiva, Amrita, Suvrusha, Shanta, Varishtha,Varada, Usra, Sukhadrogi, Sanjeevani, Brahmishtha, Brahmada, Duritaghni, Pranataarti bhanjani, Jaganmata, and the extinguisher of all possible difficulties and Mangala! Devi Ganga! Kindly stay secure and firm always by my sides ahead and behind as my very existence in your waters is solely due to your courtesy; in fact, your presence in Srishti-Sthiti-Laya is a known realism as you are the Mula Prakriti, Narayana, Shiva, Paramatma. Those who recite your Stotra with faith and devotion by the means of hearing or pronouncing or by mental concentration should definitely extinguish all kinds of sins and fulfill any type of desires.) Among the tangible sins the ten prominent ones are: acceptance of other's material without permission; commit acts of violence disapproved by Shastras and other Scriptures; and desire for other women : these are by way of Physical acts; Parusha Bhashana or Utterances of Unsavoury language, lies, gossip, etc. are of 'Vaachaka' or vocal-based; 'Paradravyaabhilaasha' or interest in other's money-property-belongings; thinking of and doing acts that hurt others; and useless ego problems which are all mind-based. Devi Ganga! You have the unique distinction of redeeming the Souls of Three thousand thirty three Pitru

Devaas! You are seated on a white Crocodile, hold a 'Kalasha' with a 'Kamala' by your hands, wear a white silk Vastra; and is a Brahma-Vishnu-Rudra-Rupini. You are the Sacred Water in Brahma's Kamandulu utilised for 'Srishti'; the Water with which Bali Chakravarti washed the consecrated feet of Vamana Deva; and the hallowed water of Ganga retained in the 'Jataajuta' or the curled and twisted coarse hairs of Parama Shiva a strain of which was released in response to the earnest prayers of Bhagiratha to redeem the Souls of the latter's ancestry. Such indeed is the illustrious history of Ganga that even a 'Smarana' or thought of the River from hundreds of yojanas would suffice to wash off sins and Vishnu Loka Prapti!

Chaturmaasa Vrata is stated to have terminated on Shravana Purnima. For those Grihastis observing The Vrata as also to Yatis / Sanyasis, Vyasa Puja is scheduled on the Purnima's Sunrise presuming that the Tithi is valid at least upto six ghadis thereafter. Vyasa Puja commences after the Kshura Karma or shaving the head-hair and beard. During these four months or atleast a mimum of two months, the Yati is required to stay at the same place. After the shaving of head, the Karta or Yati has to perform twelve 'Mrittikaa Snaanaas' followed by Vyasa Puja. The Sankalpa is : *Chaaturmaasya Vaasam kartum Shri Krishna Vyasa bhaashyakaaraanaam saparivaaraanaam pujanam karishye/* In this Sankalpa, the Placements of the 'Saparivaaraas' are: Shri Krishna in the Centre along with Vaasudeva- Sankarshana- Pradyumna- Aniruddha are invoked first; to the South of Krishna be Vyasa-Sumantu- Jaimini- Vyashampaayana-and Paila; to the left of Krishna and others be the Bhashyakaara Adi- Shankara and Padmapaada- Vishwarupa-Trotaka-and Hastaaala; to the sides of Shri Krishna would be Brama and Rudra; and on the four sides would be Sanaka-Sananaa- Sanaatana-Sanatkumaaraas; BrahmaVasishtha-Shakti-Paraashara-Vyaasa-Shuka-Goudapada-Govinndapaada and Shankaraachaarya; then Ganesha in Agneya, Kshetrapaala inIshana, Durga in Vaayavya, Sarasvati in Nirruti, and staring from the outer East the Ashtapaalakaas. After the Avaahana Puja, Narayanaashtaakshara Mantra and Omkaara Namasshabda mantras be recited. After Lakshmi-Narayana wosrship is performed, there must be prayers in favour of married Grihastis to mean that the Chaturmaasa Vrata should nowterminate successfully and there shoud not be mutual absence from each other. At the end of the Nakta Bhojana,the couple should perform the Krishna-Lakhmi 'Shayya' (bed) and Pratima daana and the Brahmanas should bless the couple observing the Vrata succssfully that the Vrata should bestow them 'Akshya Daampathya Sukha', 'Putra-Dhana-Vidya yoga' and 'Sapta Janma Sukruta Phala'!

On Shravana MangalaVaaraas, Mangala Gauri Vrata is definitely prescribed especially by the newly married 'Grihinis'. Shravana Shukla *Panchami* is popularly called *Naaga Panchami* and is observed.

Upaakarma Vidhi: Among the formal and initial 'Veda Karmas' is the Upaakarma . Bhavishya Purana stated: *Sampraaptey Shravanasyaantey Pournimaasyaam Dinodaye, Snaanam kurvaanti Matimaan Smriti Shruti Vidhaanatah/ Upaakarmaadikam proktamrusheenaam chiva Tarpanam, Shudraanaam Mantra rahitam snaanam daanam cha shyaashyatey/ Upaakarmaani kartavyamrusheenam chaiva pujanam/* ( On the arrival of Shraavana Maasa Pournami's Sun Rise, Wismen perform Upaakarmaadika Karmaas including Tarpanam as per the Intructions ofVeda Shastraas; even Shudraas are required to perform snaana daanaas without Mantras. After the Upakarma, the duty is to perform Puja).

To Rigvedis, 'Upaakarma Kaala' is determined on Shravana Shukla Paksha Purnima in Shravana Nakshatra and Panchami's Hasta Nakshatra; rather the former option. Upaakarma is performed during the period when there is no Grahana or Samkranti and this principle is followed by both Rigvedis and Yajurvedis. Otherwise, during Hasta-Panchami Yoga or atleast Hasta or Panchami seperately is allowed. In case, Shravana Nakshatra is on two days of Pournami and the next, then the earlier day's Suryodaya and upto the next day's Suryodaya, there could be a carry forward of three muhurtas to allow the Upakarma on the Pournami ( broadly stated from sunrise to midday) . Even otherwise, ie. even if the Shravana Nakshatra is over on the day, the next Nakshatra of Dhanishtha is allowed. However, the 'Sesha' of the previous Nakshatra to Shravana viz. of Utraraashaadha is not suitable.

To Yajurvedis also, Upaakarma Kaala is suitable to Shravana Purnami's Shravana Nakshatra. In case there is a Khanda Purnima ie. if Purnima entered after the Sunrise of the previous day and extends to the next day upto six muhurtas then all Yajurvedis would consider the suitable time for Upakarma as on the next day. However there are different opinions based on the number of Ghadis extended after Sunrise of the Khanda Purnima on the subsequent day; in case both the days happen to extend beyond Sunrise, then all the Yujurvedis agree that the Upaakarma Kaala is on the previous day. In case Purnima occurs on the previous day's Muhurtha and extends to the next day by two or three muhurtaas but by less than six muhurtaas, then Taittireeyas consider that the Upaakarma Kaala would be on the next day's Purnima; but Yajurvedis other than the Taittiriyaas consider the Kaala in favour of the previous day's Purnima. Hiranyakeshi Taittireeyas consider the 'Aavaraniya (extended) Purnima as the Upaakarma Kaala. Other wise, they might consider Shraavana Maasa Hasta Nakshatra, Apastambha Sutrasthaas no doubt prefer Shraavana Purnima but alternatively could consider Bhadrapada Purnima. Bodhayanaas too prefer Shravana Purnima or as an alternative Ashaadha Purnima be considered. Kanva/ Madhyam Dinaas or Katyaayanaas feel that either 'Shraavana sahita Purnima' or Hastaayukta Panchami or since Shravana Maasa is full of controversies Bhadrapada Purnima or Panchami would be suitable. The short point however is that Shravana Pournami is the appropriate tithi for the Upaakarma, while taking into account the different permutations of muhurtas at or after the Sun Rise of the Khanda Pournami Tithi. If Shravana Pournami for any reason or interpretation is not fully satisfactory, then another alternative would be either Bhadrapada Pournami or Panchami.

As regards Saama Vedis, the decision is as follows: *Saam Vedinaam Bhadrapada Shukley Hastaa Nakshatram Mukhyakaalah, Sankraantyaadi doshana tatraa sambhavey Shraavana aasey Hastograahya iti Nirnaya Sindhu/* (To Saama Vedikaas, Bhadra pada Shukla Paksha Hastaa Nakshatra is the best option for performing Upaakarma; in case however there is a Sankraanti Dosh then, Shravana Shukla Hasta Nakshatra as stated by the Nirnaya Sindhu.) Another School of Thought is that while Upakarma is performed on Shravana Pournami but should be activated till Bhadrapada Hasta! If there is a Hastaa Nakshatra Khanda carried forward to the next day then the remainder Hasta must extend up to Aparahna, since to Saama Vedis, Upakarma kaala is Aparahna.

To Atharva Vedis, both the options of Shraavana Purnima and Bhadrapada Purnima are equally acceptable. Purnima however has to be Udaya Vyapini or should span upto Sun Rise next.

[ In sum, Upaakarma by Rig Vedis prefer Shravana Nakshatra on Shraavana Purnima spanning atleast from Sunrise to mid day or Panchami's Hasta Nakshatra. Sama Vedis prefer Shravana Purnima's Hasta Nakshatra or Bhadrapada Shukla Hasta. Yajur Vedis basically approve of Shravana Purnima but for interpretations of Purnima's extensions after Sun Rises on the next day as detailed above ]

Krishnashtami, Raksha Bandhana and Kusha sangrahana are the highlights of Shravana Month, demanding snaana phalitas.

**Siddhi Vinayaka Vrata** is celebrated all over Bharata Desha on Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi with the Chaturthi extending upto Madhyaahna. If Triteeya and Chaturthi are on both the days, then the determining factor is whether Triteeya is longer or Chaturthi is on that day. If the Vrata falls on a Sunday or Tuesday, it has an added significance. *Atra Chaturdhyam Chandra darshaney Mithyaabhi dushana doshastena Chaturthaamuditasya panchamyam darshanam Vinaayaka Vrata dinepi na doshaaya/ Purva diney saahaynamaarambhya pravruttaayam haturtheem Vinaayakavrataabhaavepi purvadyureva Chandra darshaney dosha iti sidhyati/ Chaturthaamuditasya na darshana miti pakshetu Avishta panchashnar muhurtamaatra Chaturthi dinepi nishedhaapattih/Ideenaam lokaastu eekatarapakshaashrayena Vinaaka Vrata diney eva Chandram na pashyanti na tudaya kaaley darshana aaley vaasatvaa satvey nyamena ashrayanti/ Darshaneyjaatey taddosha shantaey:* On this Chaturthi, Chandra darshana is believed strongly to 'Mithyaapavaada' or false allegations. In case, Chaturthi occurs in that evening and Chandra Darshana was performed but Vinayaka Vrata is performed on the Chaturthi day, it does not matter. But Chandra Darshana on the next morning must be avoided at any cost. People tend not to do so and this

would result in the ‘dosha’; the ready remedy is to perform the Vrata sincerely and avoid Chandra Darshana on that day but certainly witness the same on Panchami Raatri on Chandrodaya. If by mischance, Chandra darshana is seen on Chaturthi, then the atonement Mantra be recited viz. *Simhaha Prasenavadheessimaho Jambavataah hatah, Sukumaarodeestavahyeshas- shamantakah/* Iti Shlokla Japa Karyah/ ( A lion killed Prasena the younger brother of Satraajit; Jaambavanta killed the lion and gifted away the ‘Shyamantaka Mani’ to you Kumara! This Shloka be rendered for the Praayaschitta definitely). *Vrata Vidhaana:* After accomplishing ‘Praana Pratishta’ the formal Mantrik- Way of according life to Ganeshwara Idol, the Devotees of each and every of family-relations and friends should then perform ‘Shodaashopa-chaara’ or the formal Services to Ganesha with Dhyaana-Aavaahana-Vaahanaadis and Shoddhodana Snaana- Vastra-Yagnopaveeta-Gandha-Pushpa-Phala- Naivedya of Modaka-Laddu and so on with twentyone ‘Durva Yugmaas’ reciting Ten Names of Ganesha viz. Ganaadhupa, Umaaputra, Aghanaashaka, Vinayaka, Isha Putra, Sarva Siddhi Pradaayika, Ekadanta, Hastimukha, Mooshaka Vaahana and Kumara Guru.

**Mahalaya Pakshas:** Shraaddhaas are required to be observed in the Mahaalaya Paksha starting from Bhadrapada *Krishna Pratipada till Amavasya. Shraaddham Kanyaagatey Baanou yo na kuryaad Grihaashrami, Dhanam Putraa kruta tasya Pithru kopaagni peedanaat/ Yavaccha Kanyaa Tulaayoti kramaadastey Divaakarrah, Shunyam Pretaapuram taavad yaavad vrischika darshanam/* ( If a Grihasti does not perform Mahalaya Shraaddha, how could he deserve prosperity, propitiousness and excellent progeny! He would surely be subject to the severe curses of Pitru Devataas as their Souls are not liberated when Surya moves from Virgo and Libra to Scorpio. In turn they should most certainly rebuff their golden opportunities in their lives). Those who have the ability execute the Ceremonies are indeed blessed. Those who are unable to do so might perform from Panchami or Shashthi or Ashtami or Dashami or Ekadashi till Amavasya. If even this is not possible, then atleast Mahalaya Amavasya might be the last resort but those must be ‘Sakrun -Mahalayas’ or with pinda pradaana. In case only Mahaalya Amavasya Shraaddha is performed, then the avoidable Tithis are Pratipada, Shashthi, Ekaadashi, **Chaturdashi** and Shukravaara besides the tenth and nineteenth Tithi from one’s own Janma Nakshatra as also Rohini, Magha and Revati. Some believe that Trayodashi, Saptami and Sunday/ Tuesday too are avoidable. However, if the Tithis of Father’s or Mother’s Death anniversary falls on any of the Mahalaya Paksha Tithis there should not be any objection to perform fulfilled Shraddha. Another important aspect of Mahalaya Paksha Shraaddha is expected to be performed on the same lines as the Abdika Shraaddha as explicit in the Stanza: *Mahaalaye Gayaa shraaddhey Maataa Pitromriteyhani, Krutwedaahopi kutveetapinda daanam yathaavidhi/* (Mahaalaya Shraaddha is just like that which is performed as ‘pratyabdika’ or an Annual Ceremony). The Out line of the Deva Sankalpa Mantra- which needs to be amended as applicable to individual cases – is as follows: *Pitru Pitaamaha Prapitaamahaanaam Maatru tatsapatni pitaamahi tatsa patni prapitaamahi tat sapatni naamastatsaaptnya maatuditivaa Maataamaha Maatuh Pitaamaha Maatuh prapitaa-mahaanaam sapatneekaanaam yathaa naama gotraanaam Vasu Rudraaditya rupaanaam paarvana vidhinaa Patnyaaha Putrasya Kanyaayaah Pitruvyasya Maatulasya Bhraatuh Pitrushvasuh Maatrushvasuraatma Bhaginyaah Pitruvy putrasya jaamaturbhaaginey yasya swasurasya swarwaah Achaaryasya Upaadhyaayasya Guroh Sakhyussishyasyai teshaa yathaa naama gotraanaam purusha vishaye sapatneekaanaam streevishaye sabhatrika sapatyaanaam Ekokodishta vidhinaa Mahalayaapara paksha shraaddham vaa Sa Daivam sadyah karishey/* In case of those who are alive, those designations be deleted from the Sankalpa. However the expression of ‘Saptneekam’ is used in respect of women in case of grand mothers etc are alive but if the husband is alive the expression of ‘Sabhatreekam’ is not essential. Further, *Mahaalaye Gayaashraddhey Vruddhou chaanvashtakaasu cha, Nava Daivata Manreshtam sesham shaatpourusham viduh/ Anvashtakaasu Vruddhoucha Prati Samvatsarey tathaa , Mahaalaye Gayaayaamcha Sapindikaramaatpuraa, Maatusshraaddham Pruthakkaryamanyatra Patinaa saha/* ( In respect of Mahalaya Shraaddha, Gaya Shraddha, Vriddhi Shraaddha / Nandi Shraaddha and Anvashtaka Shraaddha there are Nine Pitru Devataas and for the rest, there should be ‘Shaddevataas’ or Six only . In case of the above mentioned Shraaddhaas and the Regular Abdikaas, Sapindikarana for Maatru Shraaddha is accounted separately. For other Shraddhaas there

should be three Paarvanaas as mother's Shraaddha is already included among all the three generations of father-grand father and great grand father. Some opine that there should be four Paarvanaas as the fourth one represents the wives of the three generations in which case, Pitru Devataas are counted as twelve. (Anvashtaka Shraaddha relates to the nine Navami Tithis of Bhadrapada, Margaseersha, Pushya, Maagha and Phalgunaas in Bahula Paksha. Nandi Shraaddha is performed during the start of any happy occasion or Sixteen religious rites like Karmaanga Shraaddha at Garbhaa Daana or Vriddhi Shraaddha at the birth of a Child. Tirtha Shraaddha is like Gaya Shraaddha ). Thus the procedure of determining the nine Pitru Devataas for Mahalaya Shraaddha is the same as that of the afore-mentioned Anvashtaka Shraaddhas too. Now, in the case of Mahalaya, Vishwa Devataas are called 'Dhuri Vilochanaas' and if one could afford in terms of money or availability of Brahmanas then two extra priests could be arranged. At the close of the ceremony, one Brahmana be detailed to represent Vishnu. Incidentally, if there is no availability of adequate number or none of Brahmanas, then at the 'Swagriha Deva Shtaana' one could improvise a Brahmachari with Darbhaas Mahalaya Shraaddha be performed as a last resort but the Sankalpa should not include Arghya daana, Samantrakaavaahana, Agnoukarana, pinda daana, Swadhaa vachana Sananklpa ought to be avoided!

(Background of Shraaddhas : There are Shannavati Shraaddhaas (Ninety Six) viz. Fourteen Manvantasaas; Four Yugaadi days of Krita-Tretaa-Dwapara-Kali; Twelve Sankramana Days of each year; Twelve Amavasya Days; Fifteen Days of the Krishna Paksha of Bhadrapada Maasa; Twelve Vyatipata Yoga days in a year when calamities might happen; Twelve Vaidhruti or forbidden days of the Year; Five Purvavedu or Saptami days of Krishna Pakshas of Bhadrapada, Margashira, Pushya, Maagha, and Phalgunaas; Ashta Tithis of Krishna Pakshas of the afore-mentioned Maasaas; and Anvashtaka Krishna Navamis of the same Months. These include Ardhodaya days of Sundays associated with Amavasya-Shravana Nakshatra and Vyatipata Yoga/ and Mahodaya. Matsya Purana mentioned Nitya, Naimittika and Kamya Shraaddhas viz, Daily /Regular, Periodic and Kaamya Shraaddhas. If daily Shraaddhais not possible, Darsha Shraaddha be performed at least on Amavasya days; if not do perform on Chaitra-Bhadrapada-Ashviniyuja Amavasyas; even this is not possible, do accomplish Mahalaya Amavasya Shraaddha atleast or at any suitable day of Mahalaya Paksha! Additionally there could be any number of Kamya Shraaddhas ranging from Shuddhi, Pushti, Yatra, Ghrita- Dadhi, Daivika, Hiranya or Gold / Uncooked food, Hasta or foodgrains and so on.)

[ Brahma Purana describes Shraaddha Kalpa Varnana as follows: At the Naimisha forest at the congregation of Munis requested Veda Vyasa to explain in brief the procedure of Shraaddha Karma: and the latter explained as follows: those who belonged to the Vranaas of Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishyas were required to perform Shraaddhaas as per their own Kula Dharma according to the prescribed 'Veda Mantrocchaarana'. When done by only Women and Shudras, the relevant Mantras were not to be recited nor Agni Homas done while doing Shraaddhas on their behalf. The hallowed places where Shraaddhas could be performed included Tirthas like Pushkara, Holy Temples, Mountain tops, Sacred Places, Holy Rivers, Sarovaras, Sangamas, Sea shores, own residences, Holy Tree root bottoms, and Yagna Kundas. There are three kinds of Shraaddhaas viz. *Nitya, Naimittika and Kaamya* Shraaddhas. At Jaata Karma and such other occasions, Abhudaayika or Vriddhi daayika Shraaddha too is required to be performed. *When Surya is in kanya Rasi*, Saaddhaas are best performed for fifteen days: Padyami Shraaddhaas bestow Dhanalaabha, Vidiya Pashu sampada or the benefit of cattle, Tadiya Putras, Chaturthi Shatru Naashana, Panchami Aishwaryaprada, Shashthi Loka Puja, Sapatami Ganaadhipatya, Ashtami Jnaana prada, Navami Stree Labha, Dashami Sarvaabhista, Ekadashi Veda Sampannata, Dwadashi Vijaya Labha, Trayodashi Santaana Vriddhi and Deergaayu, Chaturdashi Shraaddha blesses those who perform to appease the Souls of those who died in battles and Amavaasya Shaaddhyaas provide all-round well-being. **Gaya Shraaddhas** would yield long term benefits, especially when performed with jaggery, honey and black 'tilas', since Pitru Devas would look forward to such opportunities to their 'Vamseeys'; they crave for tarpanas in the rainy season of Magha-Phalguna months and Gudaanna / Rice-Jaggery Payasas mixed with honey; they hope that atleast one son might turn up at Gaya to offer Pinda Pradaana and that was

their desire when alive to procure many sons; they wished that at least one kanyaa daana or one Nila Vrishabha Utsarga might be executed! Pitru Shraaddha during Kritika Star provides passage to Swarga; Rohini Nakshatra gives good progeny; Mriga Shira Nakshatra Shraaddha gives Tejas, Ardra secures Shourya; Purvasu Kshetra darshana prapti, Pushyami Akshayadhana, Aslesha purnaarydaaya, Magha Santaanapusti, Purvaphaluni soubhaayga, Uttara phalguni uttama santaana, Hasta Shraaddha yields Shashtra vidya phala, Chitra secures tejas and santaana, Swaati Vyaapaara laabha, Vishakha putraprada, Auradha Nakshatra Shraaddha provides Chakravartitwa, Jeshtha gives Aadhipatya, Moola excellent health, Purvaashadha gives fame and name, Uttaraahaashaadha demolishes grief and troubles, Shravana provided Shubha lokas, Dhanisdhtha dhana samruddhi, Abhijit gives knowledge Vedas, Shatabhisha Vaidya Siddhi, Purvabhadra gives goat-sheep sampada, Uttaraabhadra provides Go Sampada, Revati Rajata samruddhi, Ahwavi Ashwa Sampatti, and Bharani nakshatra shraaddha provides ‘Deerghayu - raarogya’; thus Gaya Shraaddha at any time during any Nakshatra bestows all kinds of auspicious tidings! When Surya is in Kanya rashi, those who offer Shraaddha Pindaas would fulfill all their desires as Pitras look forward to them; in fact the entire fortnight during this **Mahalaya Period**, Tarpana Pinda Pradaanaas are stated to be of high value resulting in Raajasua -ashwamedha Phalaas. Shraaddhas are to be offered at this time with water, leafy vegetables and ‘kanda mulaas’ or ground sprouted ones only. Devotees would do well in performing such Shraaddhas as Surya enters Uttara-Hasta Nakshatra timings; such offerings when Ravi would enter Hasta in Vrishchik Raasi, but beyond Vrishchika raashi, Pinda pranaanaas are not only counter-productive but might have adverse effects as Pitru Devas might even curse them for belated offerings! ]

Devi Navaraatraas commence from Ashviniya Shukla Pratipada to Mahanavami and Vijaya Dashami signifying ‘Karma Praadhanyata’ or performing Acts of Dharma Karmaas of which Puja is the essential along with Upavaasa Stotra, Japa etc. As per one’s own ‘Kulaachara’ or family tradition, Upavaasaas are observed as Eka Bhukta, Nakta Bhojana or Ayaachita Bhojana; recitals of Stotras of ‘Sapta Shati’, Lakshmi Hridaya, Lalitha-Lakshmi-Durga Sahasra Naamaas are rendered daily and formal Pujas to Devi are executed with dedication and involvement during the concerned Tithis regularly. Navaraatra Pujas begin on the Pratipada Tithi morning after Sunrise upto six ghadiyas or two Muhurtaas since the Puja is not to commence with an extension of time of the previous Amavasya into the Praatipada. In case the Pratipada Tithi does not occur even ten ghadiyas after Sun rise, then the Sankalpa could still be done looking East upto the Abhijin-muhurta upto ‘Madhyaahna’ but certainly not in the ‘Aparaahna’. The Navaraatra Pujas could be observed by all of the Chaturvarnaas and even ‘Mlecchaas’. But Brahmanaas should perform only ‘Saatvika Puja’ with Japa-Homa-Annabali-Naivedyas; in fact *Naivedyascha niraamishaih Madyam datvaa Brahmanastu Braahmanyaa Deva heeyatey, Madyamapeyamadeyam/* (Thus Brahmanaas have no authorization to resort to Raajasa Puja since they have no access to Madya-Maamsa). *Madya paaney Maranaanta praayaschittokteyhi, Sparsham tadangachedokteyschaalpraayaschittena doshaanapoa gamena paatityaapaataat/* ( ‘Madya paana’ attracts the extreme ‘praayaschitta’ or atonement of life unto death to a Brahmana and the limb of his body is required to be mutilated ) . Even in the case of Kshatriyaas-Vaishyaas and others , Maamsa-Madyaas are totally banned in respect of Nitya Pujas although these Varnaas might resort to them in the case of Kaamyas Karmaas. However in reference to Kamyas karmaas too their worship would secure additional and quicker results without Madya-Maamsaas. In any case, Japa-Homaadi Karyas need to be necessarily executed by Brahmanaas alone.

Navaraatri Vidhis: *Atra Nava Raatrey Ghatashtaapanam Pratarmadhyaahney Pradosha kaaley cheti Trikaalam Dwikaalam-Eeka kaalam vaa Swaswa Kula Devataa pujanam Saptashatyaadi japokhanda deepah Achaaraprapta maalaa bandhanam Upavaasa Nakthaikabhaktaadi niyamah Suvaasini bhojanm Kumaari bhojana pujaadi antey Saptashatyaadi Stotra Mantra Homaadi ityetaani vihitaani/* ( During these Navaraatraas the Duties required to be performed include Kalasha Sthaapana followed by daily Trikaala Puja as per ‘Vamshaachara’, Saptapadi and other Japaas, Akhanda Deepa, Maalaa bandhana as per Kulaachara, Upavaasa, Nakta-Eka bhuktaadi niyama, Suvaasini –Kanyaa pujaas and Bhojana and

Homa Karyaas). Kalasha Sthaapana should not be performed in the nights. The Kalasha should be arranged on a Clean Vedika / Platform made of Pancha Pallavaas, milk, fruits, 'taambula'/betel nuts and leaves, Kunkuma, Dhupa , Deepa and such other requirements of Puja. On Pratipaada morning after 'Abhyangana' or head bath, be seated by Grihastis along with wife and make the Sankalpa as follows: *Mama saha kutumba syaamuka Devataa preeti dwaaraa Sarvaapadccaanti purvaka Deerghaayurdhana putraadi vriddhi Shatru Jaya keertilaabha pramukha Charurvidha Purushaartha siddhyartha Madhya Prabhruti Mahaa Navamiparyanta trikaala mekakaalamvaamuka Devataapujaamupavaasaa Naktaikabhaktaanyata niyama sahitamakhandaa deepajwaalana Kumaaripujana Chandi Saptashati paatha Suvaasini bhोजनाadi rupam Sharada nava raatrotsavaakhyam karma karishye!* After the Sankalpa as above Kalasha Sthaapana follows; *Tadadou Nirvighnataa siddhyartham Ganapati Pujamam Punyaahvachanam Chandi Saptashati Japaadyartham Brahman varanam karishye/* As the Kalasha Sthapana is being performed, Bhumi is prayed to and touched with the Mantra *Mahaadyou;* to perform 'Ankuraaropana' collect some 'Mrtittika' for the Ankuraaropana and recite the Mantras: *'Aoushaddhayassa- Akaleshu- Imammey Gangey- Gandha dwaaraa- Kandaatkaanda- Ashwattevah-Syonaa Prithivi-Yaah phalineeh-Sahiratnaani Hiranya Rupam-Uvaasu vaasaa-Purnaadarvi-Tatwaayaami/* by inferring various acts of collecting Aoushadhis from Mrtittika to fill up the Kalasha with the Sacred Water along with Pancha Pallavaas, Ratna-Hiranyaas, and perform Puja to Varuna Deva, Kula Devata and Devi in various Forms as follows: *Jayanti Mangalaa Kashi Bhadra Kaali Kapaalini, Durgaa Kshamaa Shivaa Dhaatri Swaahaa Swadhaa Namostutey/ Aagaccha Varadey Devi Daithua darpa nishudini, Pujaam grahaana Sumikhi namastey Shankara priye!* There after along with other Stotraas like Shri Sukta, Purusha Sukta and Prathama Ruks and formally worship with 'Shodasopachaaraas' like Aasana-Padya-Vastra-Dhupa-Deepa-Naivedyas and *Sarva Mangala Maangaley* and other 'Praarthanaas'. Offer of 'Bali daana', Kushmaanda daana, 'Kushmaanda Khandana' and Shanti mantraas ending up with *Om Shaantissaanthisshaantih/* Finally at the end of the daily Nava Raatri Puja there should be resolve : *Akhanda deepakam Devyaah preetaye Nmava traatrakam, Ujjwalaye dahoraatra mekachitto Dhruddha Vrata/* (I resolve with unswerving devotion that the Akhanda Deepa shall be firmly set aflame all through the Nava Raatris and the daily formal worship as prescribed!)

*Chandi Saptashati Pathana Vidhaana:* With the resolution of reading Chandi Sapta Shati or Narayana Hridaya or Lakshmi Hridaya, one should be seated comfortably and commence with Salutations to Bhagavan of *Om Namu Narayanaaya Namah, Om Naraaya Narottamaaya Namah, Om Sarasvatyai Namah, Om Vyaasaaya Namah.* Reading the book holding in hands is not in order. There should not be a break while reading and if so it should start again from the beginning. Reading must be done by clearly pronouncing the letters and understanding the meaning; the voice must be uniform and modulated and in proper 'Swara'. *Shanti karmani sarvatra tathaa Dussapna darshane, Graha peedaasu chograasu Mayatmyam shrunuyaanmaya/* ie. when Shanti Karmaas are being done or when bad dreams occur or while entering frightening places, reading the Devi Mahatmya would bar any kind of impediments. While entering water and forests or sudden out breaks of fire or attack by robbers or enemies, recitation of Sapta Shati happens to be a sure remedy. Its recital thrice wards off 'Upadravaas' or calamities; 'graha peedaa nivrutti' is assured by the recital by five times; undergoing 'Maha Bhaya' is overcome by seven recitals; For Shaanti and Vaajapeya Phala praapti by nine times; Raja Vasya by eleven times; Shatru naashana by reciting twelve times; 'Stree-Purusha Vasyata' by fourteen times; Putra-Poutra-Dhana-Dhaanya-Arthaas are attainable by the 'Paath' of the 'Shati' by sixteen times; Raja bhaya naasha by seventeen times; Vana Bhaya by twenty times; freedom from shackles by twenty five times; and concentrated recital of the Sapta Shati by hundred times would accomplish curing of Impossible diseases, Kulaccheda nivaarana, Ayur -naashana and so on. 'Sahasra Paatha' of the Sacred Sapta Shati would indeed bestow 'Shataashwamedha phala' and Moksha Prapti!

*Kumaari Puja:* Excepting a baby of one year, Kanyas from two to ten years of age are worthy of worship. Such Kanyaas are designated as *Kumari, Trimurti, Kalyani, Rohini, Kaali, Chandika, Shambhavi, Durga and Bhadra.* 'Aavahana' or Invocation of such Kumaris in their Puja would be as follows:

*Mantraakshara mayeem Lakshmin Maatranaam Rupa dhaarineem, Nava Durgaatmikaam Saakshaat kanyaamavaa hyamyaham/ Jagatpujye Jagadwandye Sarva Shakti Swarupini, Pujaam grihaana Koumaari Jaganmaatarnamostutey/* After the Avaahana Mantra the Kanyaa Puja is commenced with Paada prakshaalana or washing the feet of the Kumari and offering Vastra-Kumkuma-Gandha-Dhupa-Deepa-Bhojanas. During the Puja, recitation of Chandi-Paatha is required while others prescribe Lalita Sahasranaamaa too. *Upaanga Lalita Vrata:* This Vrata is scheduled on Ashwiyuja Shukla *Panchami* and ‘Aparaahna’ is suitable; if Aparahna is not available on Panchami, then the previous Aparahna would be suitable. Some opine that Lalitha Puja is better performed in the night.

*Saraswati Puja:* This popular and Sacred Puja of Devi Saraswati is performed on Ashviiyuja Shukla Paksha Saptami but significantly in the *Moola Nakshatra*. Sthaapana has to be in Moola, Avaahana and Puja are to be in Purvaashaadha Nakshatra, Bali daana in Uttaraashaadha and Udwasana in Shravana: *Mooleshu Sthaapanam Devyaah Purvaashaadhaasu pujanam, Uttaraasu Balim tadyacchravaney na visarjayet/* But Rudraamala Grandha states: Avahana and Anga Puja be done in Moola Nakshatra, detailed Puja in Purvaashadha without Avahana, Bali daana in Uttaraashaadha, and Anga Puja before Visarjana in Shravana Nakshatra. In any case, Avahana of Saraswati is to be done three muhurtaas before ‘Suryastama’ but if Moola Nakshatra is unavailable at that time then Aavahaya is done next day’s Moola’s dwiteeya paada.

*Mahaashtami Nirnaya:* If Ashtami is mixed even by a negligible time at the Suryodaya Kaala then Ashtami is called as Namavi. Similarly if Saptami is mixed with Ashtami at the Sun Rise even by one ghadi then that Tithi is not determined as Ashtami. The combination of Tuesday and Ashtami Tithi are notable and highly auspicious. Incidentally, those who have sons should not observe Upavaasa on this Ashtami; at least they should consume even a little food.

*Maha Navami Nirnaya:* In case the previous day has sixty ghadiyas and on the following day there is a muhurta or so, then the previous day is taken as Navami and excepting Bali daan, Upavaasa and Puja be performed in the Ashtami Viddha. Similarly, Navami- yukta Balidaan be performed in Dashami Viddha Navami. In the Ashtami and Navami Sandhikaala one has to perform a Sandhi Puja separately. There is a need to implement a Homa after Navami Puja. Since no homa is done in the nights, this has to be necessarily done in the day time itself. This homa needs to be accomplished with the Durga navaakshari Mantra or with the Sapta shati Mantra of Namu Devavyai Maha Devayai etc. The Homa dravyaas include ghee mixed with white Tilaas, ‘Paayasam’/ ‘Ksheeraanna’, Kishuka Pushpa, Yava, Durvaasa, Shri phala, Rakta Chandana, Nuts /Supari, bilwa etc. The Homa Sankhya is to be one tenth of the Japa Sankhya. At the end of Navami Vrata and Homa, Brahmanas should perform Devtodwasana, Paarana, Brahmana Bhojana and Dakshinaadi Daanaas.

As regards *Bali Vidhana* ( sacrifice) in the Nava Raatraas, ‘Maasha Sahitaanna’ or ‘Kushmaanda’ or Pumpkin are the appropriate items as far as Brahmanas are concerned; as already mentioned above in the Preface of Navaratri Vrataas, *Brahmanena Pashu maamsa Madyaadi Bali daaney, Brahmantwa bhrashtata!* ( If Bali is given by Brahmanas in terms of Madya Maamsaas, Brahmantwa is lost forever!

*Chhatra Puja:* During the Nava Raatraas, the ancient custom followed by Kings was to observe ‘Lohaabhisaarika Vrata’ and Chhatra Puja during the first eight days from Patipada to Ashtami of Ashwiyuja Shukla Paksha. The Puja involves installation of the Pratima of Indra’s Divine Horse called ‘Ucchaishrava’ and worshipped by Homaas and formal Puja while ‘Pratyaksha’ or live ‘Gajaashvaas’ are duly bathed, cleaned and displayed along with their Royal Insigniyas or ‘Raja Chinaas’ like ‘Chhatra Chaamaras’ or Umbrellas and Huge Hand-carried Fans with colourful Vastras on their backs. The Divine Horse as also the live Royal Animals are worshipped with ‘Neeraajana’ or camphor light. The ‘Ashirwaada’(blessing) Mantras signify: ‘ Let the Ashva-Gaja generations thrive forever and let their ‘Vamshaas’ generated out of the grace of Brahma, Soma and Varuna continue for ever to serve the Kings and their families well to enable their administration providing peace and contentment to their Subjects.

*Vijaya Dashami Celebrations:* The Treatise of ‘Nirnaya Sindhu’ states that even there is a fraction of Shravana Nakshatra yoga at the ‘Aparaahna’ of that day, then that day be considered as Dashami or else on the following day. The custom had been that none should leave the boundaries of their village or township on that day without performing Aparajita Devi Puja. It is on this day’s Aparaaahna that the residents of the villages or townships assemble at the ‘Shami Vrikshaas’ towards Ishaanya, clean up the area, decorate a raised platform with ‘Ashtadala Padma’/ or Lotus of Eight Leaves and perform Puja to the Idols of Aparajita Devi and Vijaya Devi with ‘Shodashopachaaraas’ or the prescribed Sixteen Services and at the end of the worship pray to them reciting : *Imam Pujaam maya Devi yadhaa Shakti Niveditam, Rakshaarthantu samaadaaya Vraja swasthaana muttamam/* After the prayers the Vrata is concluded reciting : *Haarnena tu Vichitrtena bhaswat Kanaka mekhala, Aparaaajita bhadrataa karotu Vijayam mama/* (May the Mangalakaari Aparajita Devi as ornamented in gold with Kati Sutra or waist band and so on bestow to us with propitiousness and victory always. Brahmana priests would convey the blessings of the Devi to the King and Subjects to say : *Yatrayam Vijaya Siddhartha!* Those who are desirous of undertaking any type of Auspicious Task including Travel on Vijaya Dashami day are most certainly blessed, irrespective of Muhurta, Taaraa Phala or Chandra phala: *Ashvayuja Shukla Dashami Vijayaakhyaakhiley Shubhaa, Prayaaney tu visheshena kim Shravanaanvita!* ( Ashvayuja Shukla Vijaya Dashami is the most auspicious day to take up travels or any other Shubha Karyaas; more so if that day is of Shravana Nakshatra!)

**Deepavali Celebrations: Naraka Chaturdashi Nirnaya:** *Ashwina Krishna Chaturdashyaam Chandrodaya vyaapinyaam Naraka bheerubhishtila tailaabhyaangana snaanam karyaam/* ( Those who are afraid of Narakaas should perform oil and tila snaana in the early hours of Amavasya and thereafter wear Tilaka or Sindur). Thereafter the Grihastis should execute *Yama Tarpana* reciting *Yamaaya Namaha-Yamaam tarpayaami* with tilodakaas three times either in ‘Savyopaveeta’ in the normal position of the Sacred Thread to Devataas and in ‘Apasavya’ manner invoking Jeeva Pitrus; in both the cases the Karta should face South but in the case of Devataas, the Tarpana has to be from the right finger tips and in the case of Jeeva Pitrus [ Kashyapa, Atri, Vashishtha, Vishvamitra, Goutama, Bharadwaaja, Jamadagni, Angira, Kutsa, Bhruyadyi Rishis; Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanaatana, Sanatkumaara, Kapilaadi Divya Manushyaas] from the middle of Angushtha and Tarjani /Thumb and fore-finger. To Yama Devata the invocation would be as follows: *Dharma raajaaya namah, Mrityavey namah, Antakaaya namah, Vaivaswataaya namah, Kaalaaya namah, Sarva bhuta kshayaaya namah, Dadhyaya namah, Neelaaya namah, Parameshthiney namah, Vrikodaraaya namah, Chitraaya namah, Chitraguptaaya namah/* At the pradosha time of Chaturdashi, there would be *Deepa prajjvalam* or fulfilled illumination all over in the temples, praakaaraas, streets, Goshaalaas, Hasti-Ashwa shaalaas, market places and in each and every house! This kind of illumination should for three evenings in a row! *Tulaasamsthe Saharaamshou pradoshey Bhuta darshayoh, Ulkaahastaa Naraah kuryuh Pitrunaam maargadarshanam/ Tatra Daana mantrah: Agni dagdhaascha ye jeevaapyadagdhaah kuley mama, Ujjvala jyotishaa dagdhastey yaantu oparamaam gatim/ Yamalokam parityajja aagataa ye Mahaalaye, Ujjvala jyotishaa varta prapasyantu vajrantu tey/ Asyaam Nakta bhojanam mahaa phala pradama/* (While Surya is in Mesha at Pradosha time on Chaturdashi, human beings should show the way in the full illumination made for Naraka Chaturdashi by way of Ulkaas to Pitru Devataas who would have arrived for their Shraddhaas in the Mahalaya Pakshaas. The relevant Mantra for giving away Daana in this connection in favour of the visiting Pitru Devaas is: May all the Pitru ganaas who were dead and burnt in Agni -or not burnt in Agni formally- be redeemed to attain Mukti. May those Pitraas who came out from Yama loka to receive the Shraaddha Tarpanaas offered by their progeny on Earth in connection with Mahalaya Pakshaas be shown the way by the illumination made on Chaturdashi celebrations from Earth through by the Ulkaas or Meteors! Human beings experiencing the Illuminative Celebrations on the Ashwiyuja Shukla Chaturdasi Pradosha are suggested to better observe Nakta Bhojana on that day.

**Amavasya vidhis on Deepavali day:** After performing Yama Tarpana and Pitru Marga Darshana on the previous day, there should be the observance of ‘Pratah kaalaabhyangana’ in the early morning hours of Amavasya, Nitya Karmaas followed by ‘Aparaahna Parvana Shraaddha’ to Pitru ganaas and at Pradosha

Samaya the worship of Devi Lakshmi. In view of the Darsha Shraaddha in the Aparahna and Pradosha Puja of Lakshmi, bhोजना during the Amavasya Day is disallowed except for children and the elders.

**Kartika Snaanas:** Kartika Snaanaas are observed commencing from *Ashwiyuja* Sukla Dashami, or Ekaadashi or Pournami waking up even from two ghadiyas before Sun rise and after ablutions praying to Vishnu Bhagavan with Arghya as : *Namah Kamala naabhaaya namastey Jalashaayiney, Namastestu Hrishiksha grihaanaarghyam namostutey/ (Snaanam) Kartikeyamkarishyaami Praatahsnaanam Janaardana, Preetyartham tava Deva Devesha jalesmin snaatumudyatah/ Tava prasaadaat paapam mey Damodara Vivasyatu/ (Punararghyam) Nityey naimittikay Krishna Kaartikey Paapa naashaney, Grihaanaarghyam mayaa dattam Raadhyaa sahito Harey!* Thus the Karta offers 'Arghyam' to Bhagavan Vishnu, 'Snaana' to Him and 'Repeat Arghyam'. As there would be added significance to the Snaanaas in the Tirthaas like Kurukshetra, Ganga, Pushkara etc. the Snaana kartaa resolves as follows: *Kartikam sakalam maasam nitya snaayi jitendriyah, japa havishya bhuktaancha sarva paapaih pramuchyate/ Smritwaa Bhaageeradheem Vishnum Shivam Suryam Jalam vishet, Naabhi maatra jaley tishthan vratey snaayaadyathaavidhi/* ( One should perform formal bathing by entering water waist deep through out the entire Kartika Maasa by observing piety after the morning duties and Japa-homaas consuming only the 'havishaanna sesha' or the left over offerings to Agni Deva and praying to Bhaagirathi, Shiva, Vishnu and Surya Deva). Thus Kartika Snaanaas should be accomplished each morning and evening in the rest of Kartika month. In case however the Kartika snaanaas are not possible although, these may be executed at least three days in the month.

**Mantra Grahana Diksha:** On Kartika Shudda Ekaadashi Shiva Vishnu-adi Mantra grahana can be done by a Guru after referring Chandra-Taaraa bala on that day. Maharshi Narada was quoted having stated: *Kartiketu kritaa deekshaa Nrinaam Janma mochani/* ( Any Mantra Diksha in Kartika is highly significant as it paves way to Janma Vimochana.) Yaamala Tantra provides the 'Utpatti' or the root meaning of Diksha: *Divyam Jnaanam yato datthaat kuryaat paapasya sankshamam, Tasmaat diksheti saa proktaa Munibhihstantra vedibhih//* It states more damagingly further: *Adikshitaanaam Martyaanaam dosham shunvantu Saadhakaah, Annam vishtaasamam jneyam Jalam mutra samam tathaa/ Adikshita kritam Shraaddham Shraaddham chaa Dikshitasya cha, Griheetvaa Pitarastasya Naraakey chaashu daaruney!!* (To those who have not taken up Diksha, Annam is as bad as defecation and water as as bad as urine. The Shraaddhas offered by a person without Diksha would not save Pitrus from Narakaas!)

**Chaaturmasya Vrata Samaapti:** The end of the Chaturmasya Varata on the Manvaadi Tithis of Kartika Shukla Dwadashi or Pournami there should be Daanaas, offering of Vastra dwayaas in connection with Nakta Vrataas, Ekaantaropvaasa, Go Daana, Bhu shayana, Shashtha kaala Bhojana Vrata Go daana, Swarna vreehi Swarna Godhuma daana, Goyugma daana in the context of Kruccha Vrata, Godaana in the context of 'Shaakhaahaara' Vrata, Ksheera Bhakshana / Ksheera Varjna pursuant to Payo Vrata and Go Daana; Vastra daana and Go daana in connection with Madhu-Dadhi- Ghrita Varjana Vrata; Suvarna daana on account of Brahmacharya paalana, Vastra yugma daana due to Tambula tyaaga Vrata; Ghantaa daana for observing silence; Deepa-Vastra dwaya daana for observing Deepa Vrata; Kaamsya Paatra/ Go daana for Bhumi Bhojana Vrata; Lavana Purna Tamra Paatra daana for Lavaana Varjana Vrata and so on. Again it would be the Udyapana of Laksha Pradakshina- Laksha Namaskaara Vrata initiated on Ashaadha Purnima or Maagha Purnima. Pushpa-Patra Laksha Vratodyapana too is scheduled on Kartika Shukla Dwaadashi and among these Pujaas, Bilwa patra Laksha Puja endows Lakshmi Prapti; Durvaapatra Laksha puja grants Arishta Shanti; Champaka Laksha Puja provides longevity of life; Atasi laksha puja gives Vidya; Tulasi Laksha Puja grants Vishnu Prasada; Godhuma-Dhanya Lajksha Puja entails Duhkha naashana and Sarva Pushpa Laksha Puja yields Sarva Kaamaavapnoti. Such Laksha Pushpa- Patra pujas are commenced in Maasa Traya of Kartika- Maagha-Vaishakhaas and their Udyapana or Auspicious Terminations are best executed on Kartika Purnimaas.

The four month period from Margashirsha to Maagha Maasa is stated to be suitable for performing **Ashtakaa Shraaddha** on the Krishna Paksha- Ashtakaas; on the preceding Saptamis *Purvedyu Shraaddhas* are scheduled and on the following Navamis *Anvashtaka Shraaddhas* are required to be executed. However, there are views that the Ashtaka Shraaddhas be performed in Bhadrapada Krishna paksha-Ashtamis and some others opine that these be done in Pousha Krishna Pakshas. In any case, if one is able to perform only one Shraaddha in the concerned periods then that too is not unacceptable. Even if that might not be possible, there are Pratyamnaayaas or alternatives; for eg. Vrishbha has to be fed with dry grass, Agni too be offered grass and water pots to Veda-Vetthaas; as a last resort Shraaddha Mantraas be recited and Upavasa be observed. Inability to perform Ashtaa Shraaddha then the prayaschitta is to fast on the lines of Praajaapatya krucchra; if Anvashtaka is not performed, atonement is to recite the *Yebhirdyubhi-ssumanaa* Mantra hundred times.

In Pushya Maasa, if *Makara Sankranti* is in the day time and Punya Kaala is upto forty ghadis and thus the remainder time is small and negligible, then Snaana- Daana- Shraaddha- Bhojanaas are required to be completed on the previous day itself, since Shraaddha Karmaas are not to be performed in the night of the Sankranti. Thus Punya Kaala is to be counted as on the previous day. But if Sankranti occurs in the night, the next day is of Punya and of course the earlier part of the following day, especially some five ghadiyas before Sunrise are 'Punyatara' or of immense propitiousness. In case this Sankranti occurs on Poushya Shukla Saptami, it is considered as much of great significance as Grahana. The duties to be performed at that time are very important: *Ravi Samkaraney praaptey na snaannadyastu Maanavah, Sapta janmasu rogeesyaannirdhanaschaiv jaayatey!* ( Those persons who do not bathe at the time of Ravi Sankranti would become diseased and unfotunate for Seven Births hence) and that is why Snaana at that time is compulsory). Again, Shraaddha karma is of equal importance, albeit without Pinda Daana: *Sankraantou yaani duttaani havya kavyaani daatrubhih, Taani nithyam dadaadyarkah punarjanmani janmani/* ( Those daanaas and such virtuous karmaas like Havya-Kavyaas or Homas and Shraaddhaas that are acted at the time of Ravi Sankranti would repeatedly get fructified by the grace of Surya Deva). That is why 'Tridinopavaasaas' or fasts for three days are to be accomplished. Further, at this Uttaraayana Kaala, Tila-Dhenu Daanaas, Tila Taila Deepaas at Shivaalayaas and Tila-Tandula Shiva Pujaas, Tila Snaanaabhyangaas, White Tila Pujaas to Devaasas and Black Tila Tarpanaas to Pitru Devataas and above all Ghritaabhishkaas to Shiva Lingaas are of far reaching impact!

**Maagha Snaanaas:** Commencing from Pousha Shukylakaadashi or Purnima or Amaavaasya, Maagha Snaanaas would continue upto Maagha Dwaadashi or Purnima; or else Maagha Snaanaas could take place from Makara Sankramana to Kumbha Sankarana. The Snaana Kaala should be at Arunodaya to Praatah kaala; it is emphasised that bathing in the waters at the time of Suryodaya would purify even those who are the sinners of Brahma hatya or Suraa paana; any human being irrespective of caste, age or sex could take Maagha Snaanaas. Again the Snaana Phala as per the type of waters at different places are stated as follows: *Taptena Vaarinaa snaanam yadgrihey kriyatey naraihi, Shadbadam phaladam taddhi Makarasye Divaakarey/ Vyaapadou Dwaadashaabda phalam Tadaagey taddwigunam Nadyaam tadtrigunam, Mahaanadyaam Shatagunam Maha Nad sangamey tadchaturgunam/ Gangaayaam Sahasra gunam angaa Yamunaa sangamey yetadcchadgunamiti, Yatra krutraapi snaaney Prayaaga smaranamkaryam/ Idam Samudrepyati prashasttam/* ( Maagha Snaanaas with hot waters at one's own home would allow the fruits of six years; Well Snaanaas of twelve years; Tataaka (Water body) Snaana Phala twice over; Nadi Snaanaas by four times; Snaanaas at Maha Nadis bestow the Punya by four times; Ganga Snaana by thousand times; Snaanaas at Ganga-Yamuna Sangama by another hundred times while any Snaana anywhere in waters should be announced as Prayaga Snaana. But the best Snaana ever is in the Seas / Oceans. The Snaana vidhi is to resolve with the the 'sankalpa': *Maagha Maasa mimam Punyam snaasyeham Deva Madhava, Tirthasyaasya jaley nityamati Sankalpya chetasi/--Duhkha daardrya naashaaya Vishno- stoshanaayacha, Paatahsnaanm karomyadya Maaghe Paapa Vinaashanam/ Makarasthey Ravou Maaghey Govindyaachyuta Maadhava, Snaaneynaanena mey Deva*

*Mayokta phalado bhava/* ( Hey Madhava! As I have resolved that I would perform Snaanaas every day during the entire Maagha maasa, I shall do so to alleviate my sorrows and poverty as also to please you. Do grant me Govindaayhuta Madhava! the Snaana Phala as per your pleasure if I deserve). The regulations to be followed in this Vrata are to sleep on the ground, defray the ‘nitya naimittika’ duties including Tila-Ghrita Homaas, Deva Tarpanas, Havishyaashana or eat only the havishya bhojana, and observe Brahma charya during the month of Magha Snaanaas. Also performing daanaas of Vastra-Paada raksha- Chhatra-Ghrita-Tila Purna Ghata-Suvarna and Anna as also of Dampati Pujaas are among the requirements of the Maagha Snaanaas.

**Kumbha Sankranti:** Kumbha Sankranti occurs on Maagha Amavasya and some sixteen ghadiyas before that is stated to be the Punya Kaala; Prayaga Veni Snaanaas are significant at the Kumbha . Skanda Purana in its Naagara Khanda states: *Maaghaamaasyaam Mrigey Bhaanou Mesha Raashimatey Gurou/ Kumbha Yoge bhaveyattatra Prayaageytwati durlabhah/* In Maagha Month Prayaaga Kshetra witnesses the Kumbha Sankranti where there is the Sangam or confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna Rivers: *Sitaasmitay tu yassnaanaam Maagha Maasey Yudhishtara, Na teshaam punaraavrittihi Kalpa koti shatairapi/* ( Krishna Bhagavan assured Yudhishtara of Maha Bharata fame that the Sweta-Krishna Ganga-Yamuna Sangama Snaana on the Kumbha Sankramana time would signify that there would not be rebirths for crore Kalpa kaalaas together!) The Punya that accrues to the Maagha Snaana at Prayaga is equivalent to the Kumbha Snaana at Kurukshetra Ganga and ten times better than the Gangaa Snaana at Vindhyaachalaas and hundred times superior than that of Kashi Ganga Snaana! On the occasion of Kumbha Sankranti Tila Patra daana is stated to be of high significance: *Taamra paatretyilaan krutwaa pala shodasha nirmitey Sa Hiranyam Swa Shaktyaavaa Vipraaya pratipaadayet/*( Tila daana in a copper vessel along with Hiranya Dakshina to a Vipra is the requirement on this occasion). While offering the Daana after Vipra Puja, the Prayer to Bhagavan Vishnu is: *Deva Deva Jagannaadha! Vaanchitaartha phalaprada, Tila Paatram pradaasyaami tavaagrey samshitohyaham/* (Deva Deva! The Provider of all my desires: I am hereby offering the Tila Paatra Daana under your own auspices!) Further Prayer states: *Tilaah Punyaah pavitraascha Sarva Paapa Haraah smritaah, Shuklaaschaiva tathaakrishnaa Vishnu gaatra samudbhavaah/ Yaanikaanicha Paapaani Brahma hatyaa samaanicha, Tila paatra pradaanena taani nashyantu mey sadaa/* ( The white and black Tilaas are generated from Vishnu’s body itself and thus are of unique propitiousness and sin-destroying; this is why I resolve to offer the Tila Patra Daana).

**Veni Daana at Prayaga:** When any person pays a visit to the Maha Tirtha of Prayaga for the first time, then a Prayaschitta is required to be observed by way of ‘Veni Samhaara’; this requirement is for Garbhini Strees, children after their ‘Chudaa karma’ and ‘Sabhatrika Strees’-all in their first visits. To the ‘Sabhatrika Strees’ women visiting along with their husbands would have to scissored the ends of their head hairs by two inches after their husbands’ approval and after the Snaana should perform Puja to the Sangama, place the kesha khandaas on a matted container in their palms and leave the container in the Sacred Flow of the Sangama while Brahmanas bless them in response to their prayer stating: *Venyaam Veni pradaanena mama paapam vyapohatu, Janmaantareyshwapi sadaa Soubhagyam mama Vardhataam/* (By way of this Veni daana to Triveni Sangama or at the confluence of Ganga-Yamuna and the Antarvaahini Sarasvati, may my sins be destroyed and my Sowbhagya be increased). Dharma Sindhu also describes that **Deha Tyaaga** at the Tirtha is ‘Swarga prada’. **Jeevat - Shadraaddha Vidhi** or Shraaddha even when is alive in the case of those without progeny is also prescribed by way of Pinda Daanaanta Godaanaas and Vishnu Dhyaana -Tila Snaana-Tila Homa-Tilodaka Deva PujaaTarpanaas.

**Ratha Saptami:** Maagha Shuka Saptami popularly called Ratha Saptami has to be in Arunodaya or else the previous day’s Shashthi-Saptami yoga be considered as suitable for the Snaanaas provided the Saptami ghadiyas are not too far away from the Arunodaya of the previous day. The Arunodaya Snaana Mantra states: *Yada Janma krutam paapam mayaa janmasu Janmasu, Tanmey Rogam cha shokam cha Maakarihantu Saptami/ Yetatjanmakrutam paapam yaccha janmaantaraarjitam, Manovaakkaayajam*

*yaccha jnaataajnaatey cha ye punah/Iti Sapta vidham paapam Snaanmey Sapta Saptikey, Sapta Vyaadhi samaayuktam hara Maakari Saptami / (May the entirety of my sins accumulated in my present and previous births on account of conscious and unconscious acts or those perpetrated by my vocal or mental roots be dissolved on this Makara Saptami and may this Sacred Snaana with my earnest and heartfelt supplications and obeisances to you Surya Deva, in the form of Seven kinds of Sins and Seven types of Diseases be destroyed for ever!). The Arghya Mantra to the 'Pratyaksha Devata' Bhagavan Surya states: Sapta Saptivaha preeta Saptaloka pradeepana, Saptami sahito Deva gruhanaarghya Divaakara/ (Divaakara! You are affectionate of riding on the chariot driven by Seven Horses with Seven Names and bestow splendour to Seven Lokaas obviously fond of the numeral of Seven; Bhagavan! may I have the privilege of offering 'Arghya' on this Saptami Tithi to mark my reverence!*

**Maagha Snaanodyaapana** or the Formal Termination of Maagha Snaanaas with worship to Surya Deva with the Sankalpa stating: *Savitrey prasavitrey cha Paramdhaama Jaley mama, Twattejasaa paribhrashtam Paapam yaatu Sahasradha/Diwaakara Jagannaatha Prabhaakara Namotutey, Paripurnam karishyeham Maagha Snaanam tadaagayaa/* On Shukla Chaturdashi the Kartaas intending to perform the Udyaaapana and on the following Purnima accomplish Ashtottara Shata Homa and offer thirty 'Vayanaas' of Tila-Sharkara Modakaas and Shadrasa Bhojanaas and Vastra Daanaas to Brahmanaas and Suvasinis with the recital of the Mantra: *Suryomey preeyataam Devo Vishnu Murti Niranjanah, Itih/ Evam Maaghaplavi yaati bhitwaa Devam Divaakaram, Parivraadyoga yuktascha Ranechaabhi mukho hatah/* ( Those who have successfully concluded this Maagha Snaana Vrata or Yogis or Parivraajakaas or those who never looked back waging a battle and attain Veera Swarga are all acclaimed as breaking through the Surya Mandala!)

**Shiva Raatri Vrata:** Shiv Raatri has to extend into the Nisheeha or mid- night, that is two ghadiyaas past the fourteen ghadiyas therebefore; of such time extension occurs then Shiva Raatri is reckoned as on the following day or therewise on the preceding day. This significant day coinciding with Sun Day or Tuesday attains added Shiva Yoga. A person intending to implement the Shiva Raatri Vrata needs to observe 'Ekabhukta' or single meal on the Trayodashi and having done the Nitya karmaas in the morning of Chaturdashi and recite a Mantra Purvaka **Sankalpa:** *Shiva Raatri Vratam hyetat karishyehum Mahaa Phalam, Nirvighnam kuru Devaatratwat prasaadaa Jagatpatey/ Chaturda-shyaam niraahaaro bhutwaa Shambho parehani, Bhaksheyham Bhuki Muktyartham Sharanam my Bhaveshwara!* (Jagadeshwara! This is my resolve to perform the most propitious Shiva Raatri Vrata and pray that with your grace the Vrata be completed without any kind of obstacles! I further resolve that on shall keep up fast on Chaturdashi and conclude it next forenoon only after the completion of of the formalities. Do bless me to achieve fulfillment!). Then the Vrata Karta should take Tila Snaana again, keep 'Tripundra Bhasma' on the forehead and Rudraaksha Maalaas, enter Shivaalaya /Pujaa Griha at the Pradosha Time, be seated as 'Uttaraabhimukha', after 'Aachamana' and Sankalpa with *Shiva preetyartham Shiva Raatrou Shiva Pujaam karishye* and initiate the Puja: **Prathama Yaama Puja:** The Text of the Puja is: *Asya Shri Shiva Panchaakshari Maha Mantrasya, Vaama Deva Rishih, Anushtup chhandaha Shri Sadaa Shivo Devataa, Nyaasey Pujaney Japey viniyogah, Vaama Devaaya Rishiye namah, Shirasi Anushtupchhandasey namah; Mukhey Shreem Sadaa Shiva Devataayai namah, Hridi Om Nam Tatpurushaaya namah, Hridaye Om Nam Aghoraaya, Paadayoh Om shim Sadyojaataaya namah, Guhye Om Vaam Vaama Devaaya namah, Murdhini Om yam Ishaayaaya namah, Mukhey Om Om Hridayaaya namah, Om Nam Shirase swaaha, Om mam Shikhaayai vashat, Om shim Kavachaaya hum, Om Vaam Netratrayaaya voushat, Om Astraaya phat/* This was how 'Nyaasa' was done, then perform Kalasha Puja and take to **Dhyaana:** *Dhyaaye nityam Mahesham Rajata giri nibham chaaru Chandraavatamsam, Ratnaakalpojjvalaangam Oparashu Mrigahraabheeti hastam prasannam/ Padmaaseenam Samantaatsutamamara Ganair vyaaghrakruttim vasaanam, Vishvaadyam Vishwa vandyam nikhila bhaya haram Pancha Vaktram Trinetrām/* After Dhyaana, **Shiva Linga Prana Pratishtha** be done while touching the Linga and performing **Aavahana:** *Om Bhuh Purusham Saamba Sadaa Shiva maavaahayaami, Om Bhuvah Saamba Sadaa Sadaa Shiva maavaahayaami, Om Swaaha Saamba Sadaa maavaahayaami, Om Bhur-*

*bhuvahswaha Saamba Sadaa Shiva maavaahayaami/ Pushpaanjali: Swamin Sarva Jagannaatha Yaavat Pujaavasaanakam, Taawatwam preetibhaavena Lingesminsannithim kuru/ Upachaaraas (Services): Om Sadyojaatam prapadyaami Sadyojaataayavai namonamah-Aasanam samarpayaami Om namasshivaaya; Om bhavey bhavey naati bhavey bhavaswaam Om Namasshivaaya Paadyam samarpayaami; Om Bhavodbhavaaya Om Namasshivaaya Arghyam samarpayaami; Om Vaama Devaaya namah Om Namasshivaaya Achamaneeyam samarpayaami; Om Jyeshthaaya namah Om Namasshivaaya Snaanam samarpayaami . These Upachaaraas would be followed by the Mula Mantraas as also Panchaamrita Snaanaas with Aapyaayasva Mantraas and Shuddhodaka Snaanaas with Aapohishthaa Mantraas. Brahmanaas would then render group recitals of Ekaadashi (or atleast one) Rudraas and Purusha Sukta while performing Abhishekaas mixed with Chandana-Kumkuma-Karpura waters. The Abhishekaas shall follow Tarpanaas as follows: Om Bhavam Devam Tarpayaami, Om Sharvam Devam Tarpayaami, Om Ishaanam Devam Tarpayaami, Om Pashupatim Devam Tarpayaami, Om Ugram Devam Tarpayaami, Om Rudram Devam Tarpayaami, Om Bhimam Devam Tarpayaami, Om Mahaantam Devam Tarpayaami, Om Bhavasya Devasya Patneem Tarpayaami, Om Sharvasya Devasya Patneem Tarpayaami, Om Ishanasya Devasya Patneem Tarpayaami, Om Pashupater -devasya Patneem Tarpayaami, Om Ugrasya Devasya Patneem Tarpayaami, Rudrasya Devasya Patneem Tarpayaami, Om Bhimasya Devasya Patneem Tarpayaami, Om Mahato Devasya atneem Tarpayaami/ Tarpanaanta Puja is executed then: Om Shreshthaa namah, Om Namasshivaaya, Shri Saamba Shivaaya namah Vastram samarpayaami/ Om Namasshivaaya Achamaneeyam, Om Rudraaya Om Namasshivaaya Yagnopaveetam, Om Kaalaaya Namah Om Namasshivaaya Shri Chandanam, Om Balavikaranaaya Om Namasshivaaya Akshataam Samarpayaami, Om Balavika -ranaaya Namah Om Namasshivaaya Pushpaani –Bilva dalaani Samarpayaami . This Service with Pushpa-Bilva-Akshataas should be offered while reciting Shivaashtottaraa- Sahasra Naamaavalis. There after other Services should follow: Om Balaayanamah Dhupamaa ghrapayaami, Om Bala -pramathanaaya namah Deepam darshayaami, Om Sarva Bhuta damanaayanamah Naivedyam samarpayaami, Om Manonmanayaa namah Taambulam samarpa -yaami, Om namasshivaaya Vedaahametam Saamraajya bhojyam Shri Saambashivaayanamah Neeraajanam darshayaami, and the Mantra Pushpam samarpayaami viz. Om Ishaanassarva- Vidyaanaam Ishwarassarva Bhutaa -naam Brahmaadipatih Brahmanodhipatih Brahmaa Shivomey astu Sadaa Shivom/ The Prathama Yaama Puja would thus be concluded by reciting the Twelve significant Shiva Naamaas viz: Shivaaya namah, Rudraaya namah, Pashuopataye namah, Neelakanthaaya namah, Maheshwa raaya namah, Hari keshhaaya namah, Virupaakshaaya namah, Pinaakiney namah, Tripuraantakaaya namah, Shambhavey namah, Shuliney namah and Maha -Devaaya namah/ Finally after Aparaadha Kshamaa- Pradakshina-Saashtaanga Namaskaaraas, the Karta would leave Akshataas and water on the ground stating: Anena Pujanena Shri Saamba Sadaa Shiva preeyataam/ Three more Yaama Pujas should be accomplished on the same lines with Jaagaranas, Hara naama Stutis, Purana Vachana especially of Shiva, Linga, Skanda, Markandeya orientations, Bhajanaas and so on with full involvement. Next morning after Nitya Karmas and Punah Pujaas, Paarana- Brahmana Bhojana Daanaas are concluded and the Vrata samapti be fulfilled by dedicating it to Maha Deva: Yanmaadyakrutam Punyam tadrudrasya Niveditam, Tatprasaadaan Maha Deva Vratamadya samarpitam, Prasanno bhavamey Shriman sadgatih pratipaadyataam/ Twadaalokana maatrena Pavbitrosmi na samshayah/ ( What ever Sukruti is achieved by this Vrata is dedicated to you as I am purified by your grace without doubt; do kindly accept my offerings and bestow Sadgati to me.) Samsaara klesha dagdhashya Vratenaanena Shankara, Praseeda Sumukho Naatha Jnaana drishti padobhava/ ( Shankara! Kindly be pleased with this Vrata executed by me as per my ability and devotion; Parameshwara! As I am in the deep distress of the Ocean of ‘Samsaara’, do kindly grant me ‘Jnaanaa Drishti’ and liberate me with your grace and benevolence!).*

From Phalguna Shukla Praatipada upto twelve days hence is the period of **Payovrata** as prescribed in the Maha Bhagavata Purana. **Holika Puja** and Holika Mahotsava are to take place on Phalguna Pournami depending on Pournami-Bhadraa Nakshatra, provided the third phase or ‘triteeya paada’ does not cross Pournami. Having constructed a platform hallowed with ‘Go Maya’ (Cow dung) one should arrange a

stack of sticks with Agni and perform Holika Puja with the ‘Sankalpa’ and ‘Aavaahana’ of *Sakutumbasya mama Dhundhaa Rakshasi preetyartham tatpeedaa parihaa –raartham Holikaa pujanam karishye/ --- Asmaadbhirbhayasantrastaih krutaatwam Holikeyatah, Atastwaam Pujayishyaami bhutabhuti pradaabhava/* ( As were afraid of you Holika Devi! we seek your compassion and thus are resorting to shodashopacharaas to you. Do kindly show us fearlessness and prosperity!) The Mantras addressing Holika Devi state that the ten days from Panchami and Purnima are quite propitious and during these days even stealing of ‘Indhana’ or fire-wood ignored to celebrate Holi Fire on the Purnima Day when throwing of water, smearing on other’s faces with colours and using of indecent language etc. are ignored as gestures of friendship especially with neighbours and friendship circles ; there would be group singing, dances and extravaganza of merriment all through the day and night. This is how the Raakshasi would be satisfied. Next morning, a Chandaala is touched before taking bath and after carrying out nitya karmaas, Holika Devi be greeted and take up one’s own duties so that the year ahead would be devoid of diseases, difficulties and mental problems. The five days before the Holika Puja on Pournami are of ‘Kari Sangjna’ and thus Shubha Karyaas are not to be performed in that period. On the days of Holi, Grahana, Uttaraayanaa and Dakshinaayana, Auspicious Tasks are not performed due to the Kari Sangjna (Stigma of an Elephant) is attached to it.

### III. TEJAS -AGNI

Matsya Purana traces the Description of Agni Vamsha-Origin of Main Line Agnis: Agni Deva was Brahma Manasa Putra (the mind-born son). From Swaha Devi, Agni begot three sons viz. ‘Paavaka’ (Dakshinaagni), ‘Pavamaan’ (Garhapatya), and ‘Shuchi’ (Aahavaniya) who are also known as Agni. Paavaka is also called ‘Vaidyut’ or produced from the currents of water, Paavana as ‘Nirmathya’ or created by Nirmathana (friction) and Shuchi is ‘Soura’ or created purely from Surya’s radiation. All the Agnis are stated to be of ‘Sthira Swabhava’ or of stable nature. Pavamaan’s son is called ‘Kavyavahan’; Paavak’s son is ‘Saharaksha’ and Shuchi’s son’s name is ‘Havyavahana’. Devata’s Agni is Havyavaah, who was Brahma’s first son. Saharaksha is the Agni of Asuras, while Kavyavaahan is the Agni of Pitru Devas. Thus the three Agnis are of Deva-Asura- Pitaras and their progeny-sons and grandsons-are as follows: Pavana’s son or the grandson of Brahma is known as ‘Brahmaodanaagni’ called ‘Bharat’; ‘Vaiswanara Agni’ carries Havya for hundred years; if ‘Pushkar’/ Aakash (Sky) is resorted to ‘Manthana’ (skimming), Athavarka Rupa’s Agni was created and that Agni is called ‘Dadhyangaartha Varna’ or Dakshinagni. The Ahavaniya Agni which is the favourite of Devas and Brahmana’s too got divided into sixteen parts into Kaveri, Krishna veni, Narmada, Yamuna, Godavari, Vitasta or Jheelam, Chandrabhaga, Iravati, Vipaasha, Kaushiki (Kosi), Shatadru (Satlaj), Sarayu, Sita, Manaswini, Hladini and Pavana. The Agni which emerges from these Rivers is called ‘Dhishnu’ or ‘Dhishnya’, which caters to the purposes of Yagnas on the banks of these Rivers. Thus this Agni moves about to the banks of various Rivers to facilitate various punya Karyaas by the names of ‘Vibhu’, ‘Pravaahan’, ‘Agnirgha’ and such other Dhishnu Rupas. In addition, there are certain ‘Anirdeshya’ and ‘Anivarya’ (unforeseen and inevitable) circumstances, when ‘Vasavi’ Agni also known as ‘Kushanu’ is always available on the northern part of alternative Vedika or Platform of Yagnas. This Vasavi Agni has eight sons whom Brahmanas venerate, viz. Barhish (hotriya Agni Havyavahan), Pracheta (Samsahayak), Vishwadeva (Brahmanaachhamsi), ‘Swambhu’ Agni called Setu; Avabhruta Agni originating from Varuna, Hridaya nama Agni or popularly known as ‘Jatharaagni’ originating from the food items, Manumaani Agni which is Badabaagni emerging

from deep Seas and Saharakshak Agni residing in households fulfilling desires of human beings. Besides, Agnis are meant for Kaamna Purti (fulfillment) or to those who perform Yagnas viz. Rakshoha Agnis also known as 'Yatikritas'. Additionally there are eight Agnis viz. Surabhi, Vasuratna, Naada, Haryaswa, Rukmavaan, Pravagya, and Kshemavan who were all the progeny of Shuchi.

Bhavishya Purana describes: 'Agni Kunda Nirman' and 'Shodasopacharas' in 'Agni Puja': Depending on the purposes for which 'Agni Karyas' are meant, or the number of 'Ahutis' or Offerings are decided, Agni Kundas are constructed accordingly and these are broadly of ten types viz. Chaukore, Vruth, Padma, Artha Chandra, Yoni Akrutika, Chandraakar, Panchakona, Saptakona, Ashtakona and Nava kona. Indeed, no 'homa' or Yagna is ever attempted without an Objective-either for a personal gain or for 'Jana Kalyan' or General Propitiousness or sometimes even negatively motivated! Also the number of 'Ahutis' (homas) might vary from modest numbers to hundred, thousand, Ayut, Lakh, Crore! Graha Shanti is the normal objective aiming at 'Shanti' and 'Pushti' or Peace and Well-Being; but when Yagnas are organised for General Objectives like Success in Battles, Eradication of Epidemics, Floods, Earth Quakes etc. the number of Ahutis is to be at least ten thousand or even a lakh. But if homas are performed for Evil Purposes, the results might initially be fruitful, but in the long run, they tend to be self-destructive! Agni Kunda has to be blemishless without impurities like hair, bones and excreta; the entire bhumi must be dug up deep, watered and seeded to ensure quick sprouting of seedlings. The Kunda area must be purified with Omkara, sprinkled with kusha grass water of a holy river preferably; in fact there are eighteen prescribed 'Samskaras' of Purifying Exercises before installing Agni in the Fire-Pit. At the time of Installation of Agni in the Kund, the Agni Beeja Mantra viz. 'ram' as also Shiva Beeja Mantra 'Sham' be recited to infuse Shiva Shakti into Agni along with sprinkling of Kusha grass water. This process ensures the fulfilment of the targetted objective of the Ahutis. Having installed Agni in the Kund, worship of Devi Bhagavati and Bhagavan is to be performed with 'Arghya', 'Paadya' and 'Achamaneeya'. The relevant Mantra to propitiate Agni is *Pithru Pingala daha daha pacha pacha Sarvajnaajnaapaya swaaha/* Agni Deva is stated to utilise three of his 'Jihvas' (tongues) viz. Hiranya, Kankaa and Krishna (The Sapta Jihvas are stated to be Viswa Murti, Sphulingini, Dhumravarna, Manojava, Lohitasya, Karaalaasya and Kaali, as described elsewhere). The Samidha material used for different kinds of Homas vary too; for example, in Ayyahoma Tri Madhu (Milk, Sugar and Honey) is used, likewise, Anna and Payasa, Gold, Padmaraga, Bilwa patras, Tilas (in Pitru homa), Candana, Agaru, Camphor, Gandha etc. are used in different types of Yagnas such as Naitthia Karma, Ikshu homa, Deva Homa, Padma homa etc. Full care must be taken while the specified material is utilised as otherwise adverse effects might have to be faced!

Before taking up Agni Puja with Shodasopacharas, a devotee should invoke the Moola Devatha Trinetra Ishwara by offering red flowers. Then welcome Kamadeva, Indra, Varaaha and Kartikeya at the four entry points. The Sixteen Services to Agni Deva should be provided as follows: Aasana Mantra: *Twamaadh Sarva bhutaanaam Samsaara -arnava taarakah Paramajyoti rupastvamaasanam saphalee kuru* (Agni Deva! You are the uplifter and saviour of the humanity from the deep Oceans of 'Samsara' and also the 'Parama Jyoti'; do accept a Seat before we initiate our sincere Puja); Prarthana Mantra: *Vaiswanara Namastestu Namastey Havyavaahana, Swaagam tey Surashreshtha Shaantim kuru namostutey/* (Vaiswanara Deva! Havyavaahana! We are beholden on your arrival and welcome sincerely; kindly grant us Peace); Padya Mantra: *Namastey Bhagavan Deva Aaponarayanatmaka, Sarvaloka hitaarthaya Padyam cha prati -gruhnataam/* (Jala Swarupa Narayana! Accept water for washing your feet and bless us) Arghya Mantra: *Narayana Paramdhaama Jyoti Rupa Sanatana, Gruhaanaarghya mayaa dattam Viswarupa Namostutey* (Vishwa Rupa! Jyoti Rupa! Sanatana Deva! Paramdhaama! Narayana! My

salutations to you; Please accept this ‘Arghyam’ being offered by me reverentially); Achamaneeya Mantra: *Jagadaaditya rupena Prakaashayati yah sadaa, Tasmai Prakaasha Rupaaya Namaste Jaatavedasey/* (As you are resplendent in the Form of Aditya Rupa, Jata Veda, Prakasha Swarupa and Vaisvaanara, do oblige us by accepting this Achamaneeya water!); Snaaneeya Mantra: *Dhananjaya Namasteystu Sarva Paapapranaashana, Snaaneeyam tey mayaadatam Sarva kaamaartha siddhaye/* (My greetings to You Janaardana! Kindly accept this holy water to bathe you in a formal manner and grant us accomplishment of various ‘Siddhis’ or Spiritual Achievement); Anga prokshana evam Vastra dhaarana Mantra: *Hutaashana Mahaa baaho Deva Deva Sanaatana, Sharanam tey pragacchhaami dehi mey paramam padam/* (Devadeva! Sanaatana! Hutaashana! Mahabaaho! I am in your shelter. Kindly acknowledge this ‘Anga Prokshana’ or Sprinkling of water over Your Body Parts and also clothing); Alankara Mantra: *Jyotishaam Jyoti Rupastvamanaadi nidhanaatchyuta, mayaadatthamalankaaram kuru Namostutey!* (Agni Deva! You are such as would never step down from your high pedestal; You have neither beginning nor end; You are the Parama Jyoti Rupa; my reverences to You; kindly accept these ornaments and ‘Alankaras’ or beautifiers and oblige); Gandha Mantra: *Deva Deva mudamyanti yasya Samyak samaagamaat, Sarva doshopashaantyartha Gandheyam pratigruhyataam/* (Deva! All the Deities do calm down in Your august Presence; do accept this Sandal paste as a symbol of Your kind acceptance); Pushpa Mantra: *Vishnustwamhi Brahmaa cha Jyotishaam Gatirishwara, Gruhaana Pushpam Devesha Saanulepam Jagad bhavet/* (Devesha, You are Brahma, Vihnu and the route to Jyotisha and Eshwara; do accept these flowers since they would enhance the fragrance of the whole World); Dhupa Mantra: *Devataanaam Pitrunaamcha Sukhamekam Sanaatanam, Dhupayam Deva Devesha gruhnataam mey Dhanamjaya\_* (Deva Devesha Dhanamjaya! You are the unique provider of happiness to Devatas and Pitras; please allow this ‘Dhupa’ to bring this aroma all over); Deepa Mantra: *Twamekah Sarva Bhuteshu Sthavareshu Chareshu cha, Paramatmaa Paraakaarah Pradeepah pratigruhnataam/* (Paramaatma who is stretched all over among the Beings in the Universe! Your Profile is indeed outstanding and stupendous; please increase the splendour manifold by accepting this token Light and endowing us with happiness); Naivedya Mantra: *Namostu Yagnapataye Prabavey Jaatavedasey, Sarvaloka hitaartaaya Naivedyam pratigruhnataam/* (Yagnapati Jaataveda! You are the Almighty and the Supreme Source of Propitiousness; This Naivedya or offering of ‘Anna Prashad’ is being proffered to You for the contentment of the whole Universe); besides these there are more Services offered to Agni Deva such as Mantra Pushpam, Pradakhisna, Mangala Arati, Veda Parayana and Swasti. **Purnahuti** denotes the successful conclusion of any Agni Karya, without which the holy task remains inconclusive and fruitless. Recital of relevant Mantras at the Purnahuti normally covers ‘Sapta tey’--, ‘Dehi mey’--, ‘Purnaa darvi’--, ‘Punantum’ etc. Purnahuti needs to be performed while standing, but never seated. Also, depending on the type of the Yagna, the relevant Mantras describing the concerned Rishis, Chanda and Devatas invoked would be essential. During the Japa-sessions, count of the necessary number of the Mantras is crucial too. The number of Ritvijas is also as prescribed. The purpose for which the Yagnas are performed should be fulfilled indeed, if executed as prescribed.

Features of ‘Nava Grahas’ and Procedure of Navagraha Shanti Homa: *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 samudhitah, Saptaashvah 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). *Sweta 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/* (Dhrrani 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 vikrutaananah, 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/* (These are all beneficent Grahas worthy of ornamentation with ‘Kiritas’/head gears and be of hundred eight inches of Pratimas / Idols).

A ‘Vedi’(platform) is to be prepared with white rice grains with Surya Deva the Center, Mangal in the South, Brihaspati in the North, North East with Budha, East as Shukra, South East as Chandra, West as Shani, South West as Rahu, and North West as Ketu. The Adhi Devatas to each of the Planets are as follows: Shiva for Surya, Parvati for Chandra, Skanda for Mangal, Vishnu for Budha, Brahma for Brihaspati, Indra for Shukra, Yama for Shanaischara, Kaala Devata for Rahu and Chitragupta for Ketu. The Pratyabhidevatas respectively are Agni, Varuna, Prithvi, Vishnu, Indra, Aindri, Prajapati, Sarpa and Brahma. Besides, Vinayaka, Durga, Vayu, Aakasha, and Ashvini Kumars and these are also to be invoked by individual names. While visualising the various Grahas, one has to visualise Mangala and Surya as of red colour, Chandra and Shukra as of white colour, Budha and Brihaspati as yellow, Shani and Rahu as black and Ketu as grey. The Kartha who is to perform the worship the Grahas should try to secure these coloured Vastras (clothing) and flowers as also apply Gandha (Sandalwood paste), offer Dhupa, Dipa and fruits. By way of Naivedya, Surya has to be offered ‘Anna Payasa’/ kheer; Chandra to be offered material made of ghee and milk; Mangala to offer cow’s products, to Budha cooked rice and milk, Brihaspati curd rice, Shukra ghee and cooked rice mix, Shanaischara to be offered ‘Khichidi’ or cooked rice with lentils and ghee, to Rahu cooked corn grain and to Ketu ‘chitraana’ to be offered. On the Northeast side of the Vedika, a ‘Kalasha’ (vessel) has to be arranged containing ‘Akshatas’ (raw rice grains mixed with turmeri powder) and curd inside, covered on its top with tender mango leaves, and duly wrapped around with new cloth, with fruits kept besides. In side the Vessel should be placed ‘Pancha Ratnas’ and ‘Pancha Bhang’ or the roots of Five Trees viz. Peepal, Bargad, Paakad, Gular and Mango. Into this Vessel, ‘Avahana’ or salutary reception/ invocation of waters of Varuna, Ganga and other Sacred Rivers,

Samudras, Sarovaras should be performed. Then the Chief Priest would pre-collect the Earth of Riverbeds, Goshaalas etc and apply to the 'Karta'/devotee and recite the Mantra saying: *Sarvey Samudraah Saritah Saraamsi jaladaa nadaah aayaantu Yajamaanasya duritah kaarakaah/* ( May all the waters of Samudras, Rivers, Rivulets, Sarovars and cloud / rain waters be prayed to clean up and purify the Karta. Later on, let 'havan' be initiated with ghee, rice, yavas, til /sesame seeds; then 'samidhas' or the bark / branches of specified trees viz. 'madaara', 'palaasha', 'khaira', 'chichinda', 'peepul', 'gular', 'duub' and 'Kusha' should be used to appropriate 'Grahas'. To each of the 'Grahas', there should be one hundred offerings (or atleast twenty eight) 'Ahutis' should be made along with honey, ghee and curd; the measurement of 'Samidhaas' must optimally be of the size of thumb-top to pointing finger-top made of branches, barks and leaves. The Purohitas / Priests should address each or the specified Grahas with the relevant Mantras as designed appropriately and slowly in proper intonation. Again, the samidhas with ghee are to be offered ten times. There after, each Graha has to be appeased one by one: Surya should be pleased with the havan as per the Mantra *Akrishnena Rajasaa vartamano nivesayannamrutam marthaumcha Hiranyayena savitaa rathena Deva yati bhavanaani pasyan;* then to Chandra with the Mantra : *Apyaayaswa sametutey Viswataassoma vrishniyam, Bhavaavaajasya sangadhey;* to Mangala by the Mantra viz. *Agnirmurdhvaah Kakuppatih Prithivyaa Ayam, Apaagum retaamsi jinvati/* ; to Budha with the Mantra: *Udbhudhvassajney prati Jaagruhey namishtaa purtey sagum srujedhaamayamcha, punah krunnvag sya pitaram yuvaa namanvaataagum srujethaa mayamcha/* ; to Guru by the Mantra: *Brihaspatey ati yadaryo arhaaddyumadwi bhaati kratumajjeneshu, yaddeedayaccha vasarta prabhaata tadasmaasu dravinam dehi chitram;* to Shukra by the Mantra: *Sukramtey anyadyajatam tey anyadwishah ruupey ahaneedyouri vaasi, Vishwaahi maayaa avasi swadhaavo bhadraatey puushanniharaatirastu/;* to Shanaischara with the Mantra: *Sham no devirabhheshtaye* or alternately with the Mantra : *Shamagniragni bhiskarachannastapatu Suryah sham vaatovaa tvarasaa Apasridhah;* to Rahu, the relevant Mantra is: *Om kayanaschitra Aa Bhuvadutee Sadaa Vrudhaas –sakhaah kayaa shachishthayaavrutaah/;* and to Ketu, the relevant Mantra is: *Om Ketumkrunnanna ketaveypeso maryaa Aa pesasey Samushadbhirajaayathaah/*

After seeking the blessings of the Nava Grahas, other significant Deities are also to be pleased by performing 'havans': To RUDRA DEVA first corresponding to Surya: *Aa Vo Raajaana Madhvasarasya Rudram* or alternatively: *Kadrudraaya prachetasey meedushthamaaya tavyasey, vochema shantamagum hrudey;* to DEVI UMA corresponding to Chandra: *Apo hi shtha mayo bhuvah taana oorjeядadhaatana, Maheranaaya chakshusey yoh vah Sivatomorasah tasya bhaajahateha nah/ Usiteerava Maatarah/ Tasma arangamama vah yasya kshayaaya jinvatha, Apo janaayata cha nah/ Om Bhurbhuvassavaha* or alternatively *Gowrimimaaya salilaani takshatyeke padi dwipati saa chatushpadi, Astaapadi Navapadi babhuvushi Sahasraakshaaraa paramevyoman;* to Swami KARTIKEYA : *Syona Prithivi Bhavaanruksharaa nivesani yacchaanassarmasa prathaah;* to Vishnu: *Idam Vishnurvichakramey tredhaa nidadhey padam, Samoodhamasyapaagum Surey;* to BRHAMA: *Taneeneesaanam Jagatasthasdhushash pati dhiyam jinwamavasehoo maheyvayam, Pusaano yatha Veda Saama Sadvradhey rakshitaasaayu radabdha swastaye/* OR- *Brahmaajajnaanam prathamam purastaadwi simatassuruchovena aavah, Sabuddhniya Upamaa Asyavishtha assatascha yonimasatas cha nivah;* to INDRA: *Indram vo Visswatassari havaamahe janebhuh Asmaatamastu kevalah;* to Lord YAMA: *Ayam Gowh prusni rakrami dasananmaataram punah pitaramcha priyamtsuvah;* to CHITRAGUPTA: *Sachitra chitram chitayamtasmey chitrakshatra chitratamam vayodhaam/ Chandram rayim puruveeram Bruhantam Chandra chandraabhirgrunutey yuvaswa/* to AGNI: *Agnim dutam vruneemahey hotaaram*

*Vishvavedasam, Asyayajassya sukrutum/ to VARUNA: Imam mey Varuna shrudhee havamadya cha mrudaya twamanassuraachakey, Tatwaayaami Brahmanaa vandamaanasta daasaastey Yajamaano havirbhiih/ Ahedamaano Varuneha bodhuru sagmusma maa na Ayuhu pramosheeh, Yacchidhetey visho yathaa pradeva Varuna Vratam meemaamsi dyavidyavi/ Yat kinchidam Varuna Daivye jenobhidroham mamaanushyaascharaamasi, Acchithee Yattaava dharmaa yupomimaa nastamaadenaso Devari rishah/ Kitavaaso yadrirupurna deevi yadvaagha satyamuta yannavi, sarvaa taa vishya sthitireva devatha te syaama Varuna priyaasaha; PRITHVI Mantra: Prithivy –antariksham etc.; to VISHNU DEVA : SahasraRirshaa Purushah sahasraakshas –sahasrapaat, Sa bhumim Vishwato vrutvaa Atyathishthaddashaangulam/ ; to Devi DURGA: Om Jatavedasey sunamaava Soma araati yato nidahaati Vedah, Sanah parushadati Durgaain Viswaanaaveya Sindhum diritaadyaghnih; to PRAJAPATI: Praja patena twadetaanyanyo Vishvaa jaataani paritaa babhuva, Yatkaamaastey juhumaastanno Astuvagagg syama patayo rayeenaam; to VINAYAKA: Om Ganaana – antwaa Ganapatigum havamahey Kavim Kaveenaamupashramastapam, Jyestha raajam Brahmanaam Brahmanaspata Aanashrunvannooti - bhisseeda saadhanam/ to VAYU: Tava Vayavrtaspatetwashtarjaamataradbhuta, Aavaasya vrinee mahey/ to ASHWINI DEVATAS: Kraanaashishmura heenaamhinvanrutasya deedhitam, Viswaaparipriyaa bhuvadadhvitaa/ Aaditpratannasya retaso Jyotih Pasyanti vaasaram paroyaddhyatey Divaa/ Thus satisfying the Deities above and others with appropriate Mantras with ‘Havans’ with ‘Ajam’, that is ghee plus other suitable materials, POORNAHUTI should be performed commencing with *Muurthaanam Diva etc.* including fruits, flowers, dry fruits, and other suitable materials including vastras, gold etc. as a grand finale with musical instruments, ‘Veda ghosha’, and parikramas of Yagna Purusha. This would be followed by ‘Abhishka’/ ‘Mangalika Snaan’ to the Karta and his wife along with Mantras saying: May Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara purify you; may Vaasudeava, Balaraama, Pradyumna and Aniruddha bring in Victory to you; may Indra, Agni, Kubera, Yama, Nirruti, Varuna, Pavan, Sehanaaga and Dikpalakaas protect you; May Kirti, Lakshmi, Dhurti, Medha, Pushti, Shraddha, Kriya, Niti, Buddhi, Lazza /modesty, Shanti, Tushti, Vapu and Kanti-the wives of Dharma bless you; may the Navagrahas safeguard you; may Deva, Danava, Gandharva, Yaksha, Naga, Daithya, Rakshasa, Sarpa and the entire Srishti provide you ‘raksha’. After the ‘Ashirvaad’/blessings, the chapter of ‘Daanas’ to satisfy the Brahmanas would commence. There are prescribed Danaas as follows: to propitiate Surya Graha, the Daana is a Kapila cow, Chandra a Shankha, Mangal a bull; to Budha gold, Brihaspati yellow clothes, Shukra a whirs horse, Shanaischara a black cow, to Rahu the suitable Daana of a Metallic ‘Vastu’/ material and Ketu a goat.*

#### Varaha Purana : Creation of Agni Deva, his several names and implication of worship

When Maha Vishnu created ‘Panchabhutas’ (Five Elements) and Loka Pitamah Brahma and commanded the latter to initiate creation, Brahma could not do so and he was extremely confused and hence angry and the rage created thousands of flames called Agni who became extremely thirsty. When Agni asked Brahma as to how his thirst could be quenched, Brahma showed three types of satisfying it viz. sharing the ‘Dakshinas’ received by Devas and hence Agni was known as ‘Dakshinagni’; the second way of Agni’s thirst was by carrying the Havans (Homas and Yajnas) performed in the Trilokas (Three Worlds) in favour of various Deities as their ‘Vahan’, thus becoming Agni popular as ‘Havyavahan’; the third way is that since Agni is present in each ‘Griha’ or household, he is known as ‘Garhapatyagni’. Brahma further named Agni as ‘Vaisvanara’ as the latter provides the means of bestowing ‘Sadgati’ (Salvation) to the virtuous beings performing havans and other good deeds. Agni is ‘Jataveda’ or protector of both Known and Unknown material; ‘Naaraa Prashamsa’-‘Naar’ or people, especially ‘Dwijas’ or twice born

Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vysyas do 'Prashamsa' or praise; Known as 'Dravinoda' as Agni provides money power. The other popular names accorded by Brahma to Agni are 'Tanunpath' (Agni protects Sharir/Asharir), 'Prapura' (full of everything) and many other names. Agni desired to Brahma to designate a day of each Month so that all concerned would perform worship to Him. Since this was a unique request made by any Deity for the first time, Brahma confirmed *Pratipada* as a day of significance for Agni. Brahma blessed Agni that Pratipada be popularised among all the Lokas and worship to Agni by way of fasting (Upavas) or at the most by taking milk would qualify a devotee to acquire prosperity and Tejas (radiance) during the current birth and to secure Kingship in the next birth and certainly please the Pitru Loka.

Brahmanda Purana describes Agni as the base of the study of Jyotisha and Astronomy: Maha Muni Suta explained to Sages some basic concepts before delving deep into the Science of Astrology. Solar Movement which is stated to be responsible for the origin of all the Planets is strongly believed to be based on Agni by the Vedic Age. Rig Veda prescribed various Agni Karyas and Puranas also endorsed the belief. It is not only to determine the Solar Movement but also to the preservation of Tri Lokas that Agni is rudimentary. The rays of Surya which are able to captivate water from various sources are indeed due to the absorptive capacity of Agni of the Sun Rays and hence the cycle of rains, the Ritus or Seasons, Ayanas, Samvatsaras, Kalamaana, Planetary positions, and the eventual impact brought about on the human and other beings.

There are three types of Agni viz. Devata related, Bhoutikaagni and Water generated Earth-related Agni called Vidyut Sambhava or Born out of Lightning or Abyoni; as the night is over the Unknown Brahma desired to visualise water and Earth in the darkness and assumed the form of a tiny 'Khadyota' (glow-worm) and viewed Agni for illumination and named it as 'Parthivaagni' or Terrestrial Fire and divided into three forms viz. 'Vaidutaagni', 'Jatharaagni' and 'Souraagni'. Vaidyutaagni is not assuaged due to rains nor human bellies but only due to friction of wood. Jatharaagni has no illumination and is not visible. Souraagni gets terminated by the Sun Set and enters Agni and gets revived at Sun Rise. Illumination and Heat promote and increase each other. Alike in the Northern and Southern hemispheres, when Sun rises the night enters water and water gradually gains heat and radiation ; at the time of Sun Set the day enters waters and thus the latter gains transparency next morning. Thus in this order the Earth's hemispheres the Sun Rise and Sun Set or the day and night respectively enter water. Surya Deva absorbs water through his rays and hence called 'Shuchi' or pure. This is related to Earth-related Agni and hence called Shuchi; the latter means Agni with thousand rays which absorb water from various sources like oceans, rivers, wells and all water-bodies. The rays of Agni create both cold water and hot water as also four hundred peculiar forms; those rays which could produce heavy rains are called chandana, Sadhya, Kutana, Akutana and Amrita. Besides these rays, there are three hundred other rays which produce snow. The Snow-fall creating rays are known as Drisyaas, Meghaas, Yaamyas, Hradinyaas (resounding ones) and they have limited illumination and such rays are called Chandras. Those rays which create heat are white in colour numbering three hundred are called Shuklas, Kuhakaas, and Vishvabhuts. Surya Deva distributes these rays to human beings as well as Pitru Devas equitably and satisfy them. Surya helps utilise these rays to Human beings by way of herbs and vegetation, to Pitras by way of Swadhaa-Homas and to Devatas by way of Amrita. In the Vasanta or Spring and Greeshma or Summer seasons, Surya blazes three hundred rays of Agni to heat up the World while he showers in Sharat Kaala or rainy season by four hundred Agni-Kiranas ; in Hemanta or early winter and Sishira or late winter Seasons three hundred rays are utilised.

## Dharma Sindhu details Homa Prakriyas

Performing Nitya Auoposana Homa by one- self is far better than by proxies as that tends to reduce the fruit by half. However the proxy could be one's wife, son, daughter, brother, brother-in-law, son-in-law, any other relative or by Ritviks; but what is important is to perform the homa. On 'Parva dinas' or festivals and the auspicious days, this is better performed by the self. Well before the Suryodaya or Suryasta, Agni or Gruhaani is readied and the Agni Karya is initiated after the Sun Rise or Sun Set. At the 'Agni Prajvalana' or when the Agni is at full bloom till its end, the Homa is executed with the recitation of 'Om Bhurbhuva Swaha' by way of continuous 'Ghritaahutis'. The Aahutis are offered during the ten ghadiyas after Sun Rise ie till the ninth ghadi before the Sun Set and any extension thereafter should be done after Prayaschitta by way of four additional Ahutis with the Mantra *Doshaavastarnamah Swaaha* and Samskara (Purification) of Homa saamagri. After the Shrouta Homa, Smaarta Homa be performed too. Some persons perform Smarta Homa earlier. In the context of Aadhaana and Punadaadhaana, Homaarambhas are always performed in the Saayankaalas only. The homaas in the morning and the evening are to be done only by the same Homa Dravyaas. However, the Kartha might not be the same.

Ashvalaayana Smaarta Homa Prayoga: After Aachamana and Pranayama, there should be a Sankalpa: *Shri Parameshwara preetyartham Saaya –moupaasana homam / Praataroupasana homam vaamuka dravyena karishye/* Reciting *Chatvaari Shringaa Mantra* as Dhyaana, the Karta would sprinkle water thrice all around with his hand, touch the darbhas that are spread over, lift the north placed darbha, light the Samidhas and Homa dravyaas with its pratibimba or reflection of the lit darbha and pray to Prajapati with the Ruk viz. *Vishwaani na*, place the Samidha in Agni and offer hundred rice grains to Agni saying *Suryaaya swaaha* as the Prathamaahuti. On mentally announcing that the offer of more than hundred rice grains be made, the Dwiteeyahuti is made to Prajapati with the invocation *Prajaapataye namaha/* Then 'Agnypasthaana' is made without Paristraana ( counting the number of Kushas) but with Parisamuhana ( Sprinkling water around the Sacrificial Fire) and Paryukshana ( directing the right hand of the Karta from one direction to another direction, spreading darbhas and initiating the worship service). *Agna Aayumsheeti tisrunaam Shatam Vaikhaanasaa Agnih Pavamaano Gayatri Agnyupastaaney viniyogah/ Agneytwanna iti cha tisruu-naam Goupaayano Loupaayano vaa Bandhuh Subandhuh shruta Bandhurvipabandhu schaagnir –vipadaa viraat Agnupasthaaney viniyogah/* ( The Upasthaana of Agni is performed by reciting the three Ruchaas of *Agna yaamyushi* Mantra whose Rishi is Shanta Vaikhaanasa, Agni is Pavamaana Devata, Chhanda is Gayatri; the four Ruchaas of *Agney Twanna Mantra* whose Rishis are Goupaayana or Loupaayana and Bandhu-Subandhu-Shruta bandhu and Vipra bandhu Rishis, Agni as Devata and Chhanda as Dwipada Virat; *Prajaapatay Hiranya Garbhah Mantra* whose Rishi is Hiranyagarbha, Devata is Prajapati, Trishthup as Chhanda; *Tantum Tanvandeva Mantra* whose Devataa is Agni, and Jagati as Chhanda; and *Hiranya garbho Hiranya Garbhah* whose Rishi is Hiranyaarbha, Devata is Prajapati, Chhanda is Trishthup; thus all these Mantras are in Viniyoga for the Upasthana. These Mantras are to be recited standing in Vaayavya Disha. After the Upasthana, the Karta is to be seated and would recite *Maanastoka etc. Mantraas* while applying 'Vibhudi' on the forehead and the body finally praying to Vishnu and stating *Anena homa Karmana Shri Parame -shwara preeyataam* ( May Parameswara be pleased by this Homa.). In the morning, there would be the Viniyoga of Suryopa - sthaana with three Praajaapatyaas viz. *Suryono divassuryaschakshuh Suryo Gayatri Suryopa sthaaney viniyogah; Udyam Kanvah Praskanvaha Suryo Gayatri Suryopasthaaney; and Chitram Devaanaa - mangirasah Kutsa Suryastrapshut Suropasthaaney viniyogah/* (For the Suryono Mantra the Rishi is Sourashya Chakshu, Surya is Devata, and Gayatri is Chhanda; the Udyukatm etc. Mantra has Kanva-Praskanva as Rishis, Surya is Dvata and Gayatri is Chhanda; Chitram Devaanaam Mantra has Angirasa-Kutsa as Rishis, Surya as Devata and Jagati as Chhanda; and to Namu Mitrasya Mantra the Rishi is Soumyobhitapa, Surya is Devata and Jagati as Chhanda; in all these cases, Suryopasthaana is Viniyoga. Some Vidwaans however believe in the reciting of *Tantumtanvan* in the Suryopasthaana in the morning. It may however be cautioned that when the Homa Prayoga is done by the Kartha's wife or daughter, there should not be the Viniyoga of the Dhyaanopasthaana Mantras.

Hiranyakeshiya Homa Prayoga: The Hiranya Keshiyaas propose the Sankalpa seeking the willingness and Satisfaction of Parameshwara and initiate the Homa to perform ‘Parisamuhana’ and ‘Paryukshana’ with the Mantra *Yathaaha tadvasava/* from Dakshina (South) to Purva (East); the first mention of the Mantra is *Aditenumanyusva* from Dakshina to Purv; then *Anumatenu manuswa* from Paschima to Uttara; the third Paryukshana is *Sarasvatenu manyuswa* from Uttara upto Purva and finally the fourth Paryuksana in all directions from North to North with the Mantra: *Devasavitah prasuva*. Then quietly take the samidhaas on hand and perform ‘parishena’ in all the directions and into the Homa kunda. Then recite: *Aditenvamaggasthaah AnumtENVAMAGGASTAah Saraswaten -maggahthaah Deva Savitah praasaaviv* and perform prokshana or sprinkling water in all the directions circularly. *Udyutyam and Chitram Devaanaam etc.* Mantras are used for Prahakala Upasthaana while *Agnirmurthaa Diva and Vaangmaney Pushkataadadhi* Mantras are utilised in the Saayamkaala’s Upasthaama.

Aapastamba Vidhana Homa: In the evening, the Aapastamba Sutris make two Aahutis , one by the Mantra *Aganaye swaaha* and *Aganaye swishtakrutey swaha/* In the morning their Aahutis are made with the Mantras *Suryaya swaha* and *Aganayey swishrakrutey swaaha*. That is all the difference and the rest would be as in the case of Hiranya keshi vidhana.

Katyaayana Homa Prakaara: To Katyaayanaas the Saayam Kaala Homa at Suryastama is the one which was done at the Pratah Kaala Homa before Suryodaya. From the Pratahkaala’s Upasthana till Sandhya Karma and Gayatri Japa is carried out in this. Then Sankalpa is made as earlier and after picking up darbhas from the deposit, transfer three darbhas from the left to the right hand and offer them to Agni, take water to perform prokshana with Akshataas around the Homa Sthaana and recite the Swaaha Mantra viz. *Aganaye swaha Prajapatayey Swaaha /* The Homa is done with curd or rice grains. In the morning the Homa is performed with the Mantra: *Suryaaya swaahaa, Prajapataye swaha*. The Upasthaana in the evening is done with *Samastwaaya* and in the morning with *Vibhraat*. In case there is any shortcoming in the Homa then the Prayaschitta is the recitals of Ashtottara / Sahasra Gayatri Japa.

Homa Dravyaas and Homa Lopa Prayaschitta: The normally utilised material in the HomaKaryas include Dhanya, Yavaas, rice and wheat in raw form, tilaas, milk, curd, and ghee .The materials for ‘Uttaraahutis’ are to be larger in quantity than in the Purnaahutis. Samidhaas include Arka, Palaasha, Apamarga, Peepul, Gular, Shami, Durva, Darbha, Bel, Vata etc. all with skins and of the length of ten to twelve inches long. If Homa and Aahutis are performed together, then the Mantra *Yatra veta vanaspatey* be recited. If Nitya Homa suffers from a break, then ‘Aajya Samskaarana’ be resorted to and offered to Agni four times ie Ekam, Dwi, Trini and Chatvaari while reciting *Manojyotirjusha taam/* In the event of Nitya ‘Homaatikramana’ or ‘Homa Lopa’ ( default or deficiency in the Homa) then the Ghee’s samskara or purification is done and after filling the ghee with the ladle by four times and homa is performed with the Mantra *Manojjyoti turshataam/* If twelve days continuously there occurs a Homa Lopa and there should be a Praayaschitta by doing Samskaara or purification of Homa dravyaas and additional Aahutis twice over in double count. Besides this, there should be Upasthaana of Agni, Surya and Prajapati without Homa so that the memory of that prayaschitta should sink in the Karta’s inner self. When there is Ashoucha or any such unavoidable situations, then also similar praayaschittaas need to be observed. While this is the manner in which Hiranyakeshis observe, Aapastamba Sutris observe Prayaschitta for three days. As Agni naashana occurs for more than twelve days, the Kartha himself has to perform the Homa but not by proxies. When Agni is sought to be revived by the Self himself called ‘Atmaaropana’ then after three days again then there should be repeat ‘Aadhaana’ of Agni to ensure that there should not be ‘Avaropana’ again.

Saayam Pratah Homa’s dispensation: In case both the Saayam-Pratah Kaala homas are done together, then there should be a Sankalpa to say *Saayampraatarhomousamasya karishye* and at the Homanta ‘prokshana’ or sprinkling water in a circular manner and ‘Samskarana’ or purification of the Homa Dravyas are performed. Then the Samidhaas are placed in the Agni, ‘Aahutis’ given with *Suryaya Prajapataye* and

after Havishyaanta Upasthana is achieved with the recitation of the Mantra *Pancharchascha Vama Devassurya Vaishanarou trishtup/*

Paksha Homa: On the Maasa Pratipada Tithi, there would be a Sankalpa: *Adya Saayamaasaa- rambhya Chaturdashisaayamavadhikaan Pakshahomaatasrena karishye/* (Commencing from this Pratipada evening till Chaturdashi's evening, I resolve to observe the Homa on the pattern of Paksha Homa Tantra). Placing rice in two Patraas or vessels and following the Principle of Vriddhi-Kshaya or Increase-Decrease, fourteen measures in a day-descending manner of rice is offered to Agni with the *Agnaye Swaahaa* with the first vessel rice and the second vessel measure addressing *Prajapati* in the homaas. In the same manner the second morning homa is done with the Sankalpa: *Adyavidhi Parvaprapartara vidhaanakaan Pakshahomaanstatrena karishye/* (That is: I shall perform the morning homa on the Parva days on the format of Paksha homa tantra as was done on the previous evening). If there is any hindrance in the Paksha Homa some time half way through, then the 'Atikranta' homas should be done additionally in the third paksha; however if the obstacles are still not surmounted, there would be the risk of having to do the Paksha homaas through out the life.

Samaaropa Vidhi: Agni Samaroha or Creation of Agni is accomplished by Arani Prakriya ie rubbing wooden pieces and rope by Brahmans in the 'Nirmanthana' or wood churning in highly significant Ceremonies reciting very powerful Mantras. After executing a homa, if Agni is produced by Arani method or with a feeling of the same by reciting the Mantra *Ayam tey yoni*-whose Rishi is Vishwamitra, Agni is Devata, Anushtup Chhanda- then that process is called Agni Samaaropa. 'Pratyavaroha' is the process of placing the Samidhas in the Agni so created by Arani or the feeling of the same; this procedure of 'Agnyaadhaana' or creation of Agni and its Pravaroaha-Pratyavaroha along with the recitation of *Aajuhwaana and Udbhudhaswa Mantras* is observed for Parva dinaas or twelve days of immense significance both in the evening and morning sessions. The Samaaropa and Pratyavaroha are to be executed by the Karta himself and not proxies except by his wife who might perform the Pratyavaroha part. But if there is any Pravasa or Ashoucha mid- way, then Pratyavaroha might have to be done by Ritviks since Samidha Sparsha of Agni needs to be maintained during the Twelve day Samaaropa Vidhi. On the return of the Pravasa or Ashoucha, the Karta has to perform 'Anugamana Prayaschitta' to revive the Gruhaagni and after Sarva Prayaschitta for the full eligibility.

Punaraadheya Prayaschitta: As the samidhaas of Agni are spent away, the procedure of its revival is known as Punaraadheyana with prayaschitta. After obtaining all the material required, the process starts with the Sankalpa of *Gruhyaanyanugamana Prayaschittam karishye,* Agni Sthaapana and 'Ghritaahutis' or Aahutis of Ghee with the recital of Mantras like *Ayaascha* and then Sarva Praayaschitta homaas. This would be followed by Upavasa of either of the Couple for twelve nights and / or Repetitive Ghrutaahutis for as many days. Some opine that if Agni is put off for three nights, then the Karta should observe hundred Prayayamas; beyond that for twenty nights the Agni is off then one day Upavasa; beyond that upto two months then Upavasa for three nights; and if the 'Punara -adhaana' is not done for one year then one Praapatya Kruccha and beyond that one Kruccha Vrata for each year's loss. Thus the Sarva Prayaschitta is done and Sankalpa made: *Nashtasya Gruhyaagneyh Prayaschittam karishye.* In the case of Vivahas and such other needs of Gruhyagni then : *Swaagni bhramenaanyaagnou swayam yajaney swagnaavanyaa yajaney vaa 'Pathikruta stasyakalipaakam karishye/* (out of an apprehension of creating a Second Agni from out of his own Gruhaagni or otherwise, the Karta creates another Agni to prepare the Sthaalipaka or Charu); he offers the same in Purnaahuti homa with the Mantra : *Agnaye Pathikrutey swaha/* In the context of post-Vivahas, or after Adhanaas or conceptions, Purnimas and so on Sthalipakaas are required to be initiated. In respect of Yaagaas, if Pratipada Tithi is missed, then the

following Tithis excepting Chaturthi, Navami, Dwiteeya, Panchami, and Ashtami before the next Parva's are suitable for performing Yaagaas. If having done Anvaadhaana or placing ghee etc in Agni on Pratipada Tithi but 'Ishti' or initiation of Yaaga has not been done then triteeya or such other Tithis would be suited for doing Sarva Prayaschittha homa and again Punar-Anvadhaana to proceed with the Yaaga Karya. In the following Parva, Atineshti and Pathikrut could be performed then. As there was time barred by not thus doing Yaaga on Pratipada, then 'Paada kruccha' be observed. In the third Praatipada too if the Anvadhana and Ishti were not done, then Ardha kruccha Prayaschitta is possible but in the fourth attempt there would not be further prayaschittha is not possible and there would be Agni Naasha. Thus the only alternative would be Punarodhaana but this type of Punarodhaana is different from Punaradheya in the context of Vivahas demanding far sterner measures.

**Agnypaghaataas:** In the event of a dog, pig, donkey, crow, jackal, monkey, Shudra, Chandala, patita, shava, Sutika, Rajaswala, mala mutras, tears, pus, sleshma, bone, meat and such highly forbidden and loathsome material come into contact with Pavitra Samidhas or Homa Kunda, then that is indicative of 'Agnypaghaata' and the Agni gets sullied and destroyed. In the first category, one has to perform 'Punadaaradheya' or revival of Agni and in the second type 'Punaraadhaana' or 'Agni Sparsha'. Alternatively, intense Samidha homa along with by lots of Ghrita is to be resorted to by reciting the Mantra: *Punastaadityaa Rudraavasava ssamidhataam Punar Brahmano Vasu neetha yagnaih, Ghruteynatatwantanuvo vardhayasva Satyaassantu Yajamaanasya Kaamaa swaaha/ Aditya Rudra Vasubhya idam namama!* (There should be Samidha Homa and Ghrityaahutis addressing Aditya, Rudra, Vasu, and Brahma). Purnahuti is done in such a way that when water is poured on the ferocious Agni it sounds like a hissing flame! Let there be Sarva Prayaschittha as though the main Ahutis merge into the swishtakrut Ahutis. Another need for a Sarva Prayaschittha arises in the context of Pitru Pinda Yagna. If Praneetaagni is weak or as good as put off then the homa karma be discontinued, Sarva Prayaschittha be performed and 'punah pranaya' be done before the homa is continued again. If there are shortcomings in the Pinda Pitru yagna, then Purnaahuti be performed as follows: *Pindapitru yagna lopeyVaishvaanara charuh Saptahotraakhya mahaa havirhotyeyaadi mantreh Purnahutirva/* ( Purnahuti be done with Vaishvaanara charu Saptahotyā –akhya Maha Havi or Hota Mantras). Also, in connection with actions like Sharanaa Karma, Sarpa bali, Ashwiyuji, Aagrayana and Pratyavarohana are not perfected, then Praajaapatya kruccha must be done. Those who have not done Aagrayana should offer Vaishvaanara Charu to Agni be way of Navaanna Bhakshana. If Ashtakaa is not done then the person concerned should observe Upavasa. If Purnendu Shraaddha is not done then too Upavasa be observed or in place of that provide a good Bhojana. If Anvaashtaka is not achieved then there should be a Japa by hundred times of the Rucha viz. *Yebhirdubhi Sumanaa Yebhirundubhih etc.* and *Imey ye Dhishnyaasa etc.* Purnahuti be done when- ever Charu homa is done.

**Lapses and remedies:** Further, certain lapses like Stree Sangam on forbidden Tithis, performance of Yagnaas on avoidable Tithis, delay in observing Darsha Purnamaasa Vrata, consumption of 'Lahsan' or garlic and such forbidden eatables, Abhojya Bhojana from Persons or of materials and so on require to be rectified by Aajya homa with the Mantras: *Punarmaataitwindriyam* and *Imey ye Dhishnyaasa* or atleast by way of Japas. In case a dove, or Kite or owl rests on a house, then the recital of *Devah Kapota Sukta* be done or ghrita homa as per Paka Yagna Tantra. On getting bad dreams, the Rucha of *yo mey Rajanyujyo vaa* be recited after Sun set. To overcome fevers or diseases, Charu homa be done with *Munchamitvaa Sukta* and perform Panchaahutis and with the sixth Aahuti the 'Swishta kruta'. On doing Prokshani and Praneeta, as the drops of water are sprinkled then recite the three Ruchas of *Apohishta* besides perform Ghritaaahutis with *Tatam mey apastadutaayatay* Rucha. In case Samidha-adhaana is not held but is reminded about it after the Aajya bhaaga, then Viparyasa Prayaschittha be done and Samidadhana again and then perform Pradhana Yaaga. If Pradhana Yaga is held even before Agni Samvidhana, that again is a blunder and demands Siddhi Prayaschitta. Either the husband or wife of a family should be present at the nearness of Agni at the time of Sun rise and Sun set. If both of them leave the house and cross the boundaries of the village or township without attending to the homa then on

return, Agni Punaraadhaana be done . If frequent lapses of Agni occur, then Agni gets the risk of Naasha or destruction. Agni also tends to decay if jala nimajjana or bathing is done after Atmasamaaropana or resort to copulation on Nishidda Tithis, or at Shudra Sprasha. If a Karta has more than one wife and if neither of the wives looks after the Agni, then also Agni naasha is expected. When the husband is away and wife neglects the Agni, then the latter gets extinguished. In fact, ‘punaradhaana’ and ‘pavitreshti’ or revival and re-instatement is not done even when the Karta neglects for a over a year then Agni Nasha is inevitable. *Rajodoshey samutpanney ritakey sutakey piva, Pravasannagnimaam Viprah punataadhana marhati/* ( When the wife is in menses, or when there occurs Sutaka due to deaths or births in thefamily, Agni punaradhana is required.) *Nachaagni homavelaayaam pravasennacha parvani/*( There should not be travels at the time of Homa or during the Parva dinas, the Karta is forbidden to travel and if so Punaraadhana is inevitable). *Pachanaagnou pachedannam sutakey mrita kepivaa, Apaktwaatu vasedraatrim punaraadhaana marhati/* (Paaka Karya or cooking of grais or charu has to be done daily in the Homaagni and even if this is not done in a night even Punaraadhana of Agni is a must. Rigvedis opine that after Vivaha homa or Griha pravesha homa, the Nityaagni Kartaas ought to perform punaraadhana of Grihaagni. Further, Aahitaagnis do not eat food cooked by others except jaggery and milk. However, they eat as an exception of what is cooked with milk and ghee only without water. In the ‘Pratarhoma’ what ever is cooked in the Homagni and is left over is mixed with that which is cooked by wife or a relative with ‘Shuchi’ or purity. In the ‘Paakaagni’ even if one day is not cooked then there sure is a case for Puna- raadhaana.

**Parashara Smriti** details Agni Karyas: Brahmanas are required to perform Shat Karmas viz. Sandhya Vandana, Snaana that precedes ‘Bahyaantara Shuchi’ or Cleanliness of the body and mind, Japa, Homa, Devaarchana or Deva Puja, Atithi Seva. As a part of the Shat Karmas- to be observed, homa vidhi is the other significant duty of Brahmanas. Just as there are time restrictions to perform Sandhya Vandana, timings for nitya homa are suggested as possibly in continuation of Pratah Sandhya as also after Saayam Sandhya. However, the tradition of Nitya homa is kept flexible as per family traditions. There could be dispensations of combining Saayam-Praatah kaala homas done together too. If not possible at all, proxies could be appointed like sons or Sishyas or Brahmanas on one’s behalf. However proxy homas are effective in yielding far less phala than by one self! As regards Homa Dravyas, the dictum states *kritam akritam kritaakritam/* that is the Homa material is of three kinds: Annam or cooked rice or wheat flour are Kritam; akritas are ‘dhaanya’ or non husked cerials and ‘kritaaakritas’ include tilas, yavas, milk, curd, ghee etc. Samidhas include unkinned twigs of Arka, Palaasha, Apamarga, Peepul, Gular, Shami, Durva, Bel, Vata and such other trees of normally ten to twelve inches long. Infringements or interruptions of Nitya Homa karyas need to be revived with appropriate ‘prayaschittas’ or self imposed punishments by way of purifications. In any case, dictates of one’s own conscience are the best judges, especially depending on the Desha-Kaala exigencies. In any case, the suggested outline of the procedure of homa is as follows:

**Agni Mukham:** The Homa Kunda or the Fire Pit is to be a cubic meter square size and before use the raised platform of sand is dressed with white rice flour. All acts inside the platform are to be performed from left to right in respect of devas and from right to left in respect of Pitru Devatas. Kunda rekhas or lines on the surface of the platform are drawn from west to east with a spoon handle bisecting the lines from south to north. The platform is sprinkled with water, twigs are arranged at the center of it and fire is kindled with camphor in a copper plate circling thrice on the twigs by way of Agni Sthapana reciting the mantra: *Chandramaa manaso jaatah, Chakshus Suryo ajaayata, Mukhad Indraschaagnischa praanaad Vayur ajaayata/* (Chandra is created from Almighty’s mind, Surya from His eye; Indra is born from His

mouth and so is Agni while Vayu is created by His breath). *Om bhur bhuvassuvah---Agnim sthaapayaami/* (Thus Fire is installed). Then ‘Agnim Prajvalanam’ is done by adding twigs. Darbha paristarana: Darbha grass is laid and spread in 3 or 5 layers around fire as the grass ends are kept in east with points to north, in the south with points to east, in the west pointing to north and north with points to east. Paatra saadhanam: To the north of Agni on a layer of darbha grass, pairs of vessels to be used in the homa are to be arranged: spoons, ajya patra or ghee vessel and prokshani patra or the vessel with which water is sprinkled. Brahma varanam or the priest is to be seated to the south of Agni. In his absence, a kurga or the bundle of darbhas or a flower is placed on his seat. Prokshani paatra saadhanam or the vessel to sprinkling water is filled in again and again. ‘Parishinchana’ is taken up with *Om Aditenumanyaswa/ ( to South), Anumatenu manyaswa ( to west), Saraswatenu manyaswa ( to north)* and finally to all sides: Then *Deva savitah prasava* to all sides. After ‘parishechanam’ meaning ‘May earth be pleased to bestow me the kingdom, may the wives of Devas bestow me what all I desire, may the Goddess of speech, intellect and knowledge grant me what I ask for, may Devi Saraswati fulfill all my wishes for excellent speech and knowledge and may Devi Savita impel us to fructify our sacrifices and oblations’. With these parishachanas, Agya samskaras follows as in respect of Nityagni by Brahmacharis or Grihastas as also various other Agni Karyas. Incidentally, besides the Brahmachari homas or Grihasta homas performed on daily basis, these Karyas are also preceded by various other Samskaras: These Samskara Agnis are called: Yojaka for Vivahas, sikhi for chaturthis, marutah for garbha daana, Chandra/ pavamana for pumsavana, paarthiva for naama karana, Shuchi for anna praashana, sabhya for chala samskara, Surya for godaana and Kshaya for samvarthana.

Brahmachari Dwija homa vidhana: After purifying Homa Kunda with cow dung and waters of Sacred rivers like Ganga, be seated near the Kunda as ‘purvaabhimukha’ or facing the east, sprinkle water and molten cow’s ghee for the purpose of the homa, perform tri-achamana and Anga nyasa, Ganapati Dhyana, ‘Praanaayaama’ with Pranava Mantra and Sankalpa assuming the ordain of Maha Vishnu by reciting the Shubha Muhurta of Dwiteeya Paraatha, Kali Yuga Prathama Paada, Jambu Dwipa, Bharata Varsha, Bharata Khanda, Meroh dakshina dik bhaaga, specified Pradesha, specified disha, in the august presence of the Sacred feet of Samasta devataas, Brahmanas, Gurus and others at specified Samvatsara-Maasa-Paksha-Tithi-Vaara-Nakshatra and so on and declare the Praatah/ Sayam Homa. After the Sankalpa, initiate the Homa by repeat tri-achamana: *Om Amritopastarana masi swaha* (the first)-*Om Amritaapadhaanamasi swaha* (the second)- *Om satyam yashah Shririmayi shrishrayataam swaha* (the third); this shall be followed by the sprinkling of water and touch the body parts with: *Om Gangmayaschaasyestu* ( face), *Om nasome praanestu* (both openings of the nose), *Om akshorme chakshurastu* ( both the eyes), *Om karnayorme shrotarastu* (both the ears), *Om baahyonge balamastu* (both the hands), *Om uruvomme ojostu* ( both the thighs) and *Arishtaani mekaangaani tanustanvaa me saha santu/* Thereafter perform *Agnyadhana* brought on a plate, use camphor to sustain the fire kindled with wooden figs with the following mantra: *Om bhurbhuvah swadyorivam bhumnaa Prithiveeyam vyarinmaa, Tasyaamste Prithivi Deva Yagjaani pushtegni mantradaa maatraadya dadhe/* While inflaming the following mantra is rendered: *Om udbhavam budhyasyaagne pratim jaagruhi twaamishtaa-purti swayam srujetaa mayam cha, Asmin samidhasye addhyuttaarasmin Vaishwa deva yajamaanascha seedata/* ( Yajur Veda). Agni praarthana: *Paritvaa Agne parimrujaami aayushaa cha dhanena cha, Suprajaahaa prajayaa bhuyaasagum suveero veeraihi suvarchaa varchasa suposhah poshah sugruho gruhais supatithi patyaa sumedhaaya su brahmabrahmacharibhih/* Then ‘parishachana’ or sprinkling water around the homa kunda in clock wise direction stating the Mantras: *Aditenu manyaswaa,*

*anumateny manyaswaa, Saraswatenu manyaswaa, Deva savitah prasuva/* where after ‘Samidadhana’ or offering Samidhas to Agni reciting ‘Swaha’ each time as follows twelve times after each Mantra:

1) *Agnaye samidha-maahaarshim brihatae jatavedase, yathaa twagrame samidha samidhayasa evam mamaayushaa varchasaa sanyaa medhaayaa prajayaa pashubhih brahmavarchasena annaadyena samedhaya swaahaa/* 2) *Yaedho asi yaedhisheemahi swahaa/* 3) *Samidasi samedhishhemahi swaahaa/* 4) *Tejo asitejo mayi dhehi swaaha/* 5) *Apo adyaanvachaarishghagum resena samasrukshamahi payasswaagumagna aagamam tammaa sagusruja varchasaa swaahaa/* 6) *Sam maa agnae vaarchass sruja prajayaa cha dhanaena cha swaahaa/* 7) *Vidyunae asya devaa Indro vidtat sahasrshibhih swaahaa/* 8) *Agnayae bruhatae naakaaya swaahaa/* 8) *Agnayae bruhatae naakaaya swaahaa/* 9) *Dyaa Prithivi bhyaam swaahaa/* 10) *Yeshaa te agnae samit tayaa vardhaswa cha aapyaayasvaa cha tayaa aham vardhamaano bhuyaasam aapya maanascha swaahaa/* 11) *Yo maagne bhaaginagum santamathaa bhaagam chikeerushati, Abhaagamagnaetam kuru maamasnae bhaaginam kuru swaahaa/* 12) *Samidhaamadhaayaagna sarva vrato bhuyaasagum swahaa/*

The ‘samidhaana homa’ concludes with ‘parishachana’ or circling water sprinkling around the homa kunda in clockwise direction with the Mantras: *Aditenu manyaswaa, Deva savitenu manyuswaa, Saraswatenu manyaswaa, Deva savitah praasaaveeh/* This would be followed by the mantra: *Agnerupasthaanaam karishye/* Following the ‘Upasthaana’, supplication mantra to Agni Deva to be recited in standing position as follows: *Yatte agnae tejastenaaham tejasvi bhuyaasam, yatte agnae varchastenaaham varchasvee bhuyaasam/ Yatte agnae harastenaaham haraswi bhuyaasam, Mayi medhaam mayi prajaam mayagnih tejo dadhaatu/ Mayi medhaam mayi prajaam maeendrah indriyam dadhatu, mayi medhaam mayiprajaam mayi Suryo bhraajo dadhaatu/ Agnayae namah/* Finally the Kshamaa Prarthana would be as follows: *Mantra heenam kriyaan heenam bhakti heenam hutaashana, Yaddhutam tu mayaa Deva paripurnam tadastute/ Praayaschittaani asheshaani tapah karmatmikaani vai, Yaani teshaa asheshenaam Parameshwara manusmaranam/ Maha Deva Maheshwaram/*

Grihasti Brahmana homa vidhaana: Connected with Agni Mukham detailed after the Section of Brahmachari Dwija homa above including the Sankalpa therein, the rest of the following be continued as Grihasti Brahmana homa vidhi. (This is as per Apastamba Prayoga)

**Sankalpa:** *Om poorvokta guna visheshena visishthaam asyaam shubha tithou bhagavad aagnayaa bhagavad preetaartham rupena praatar/ saayam aoupaasaa homam karishye/* This is followed by parisechanam:

**Agni Dhyaana:** *Om ram Agnaye namah/ Meshaaroodham cha vakraangam Jaataveda samanvayam, Dwi seersham sapta hastam tri paadam sapta jihvikam, Varadam shakti paani cha bibhraanaam sru sruvau tathaa/ Abheetidam charma dharm vaame-chaajya-dharam kare/* ( I contemplate Agni Deva who rides a ram whose limbs are twisted, who has two heads, and seven arms, three feet and seven tongues. He displays the gesture of munificence, bears a Shakti weapon, two ladles, shows the signal of protection and carries a vessel full of ghee). *Chatvari shringa trayosya paada dwe sirshe sapta hastaasosya, Tridhaa baddho vrishabho roraaveeti maho devo martyaagum aaviveshaa/ Eeshaa hi devaah praadishonu sarvaah purvo hi jaatassa u garbhe antaah, sa vijaayaamanassaa janishyamaanaaha prattyam mukhaa stishthati vishvato mukhaaha/ Hey Agne praan mukho Deva maamaabhimukho bhava/* (The illustrious Agni has come down to men and is attended by sacrifices; He has four Vedas as his horns, three swaraas as his feet, Brahmodana and Pravargya are his two heads and seven Vedic meters as his hands. He is

regulated by Mantra, Kalpa and Brahmana; he is the bestower of fortune. He is sung with and without music by the hymns of Rig, Yajur and Saama Vedas by the sacrificial priests such as the Hota. The Unique Paramatma realized by the Wise having been present in all quarters was born as Hiranyagarbha at the beginning of Creation. Indeed He is the same Hiranyagarbha who will be born as such in future too. He is the indweller of the hearts of all the beings, the witness to all and the inciter of action. Agni Deva of divine magnificence! Do kindly be seated in the eastern direction and be well disposed to us).

Now, akshatas and flowers are to be offered to ‘Ashta dishas’ or in eight directions as follows: East: *Om Agnaye namah*; South East: *Om jaatavedhase namah*; South: *Om sahojase namah*; South West: *Om Ajiraa -prabhava namah*; West: *Om Vaishwaanaraaya namah*; North West: *Om naryaapase namah*; North: *Om Panktiraadhase*; North West: *Om Visarpine*; Centre: *Om Yajna Purushaaya namah*/ This follows Alankaara or worship to Dishaadhipatis or Heads of Directions situated around Agni by placing flowers in the respective directions: East: *Indraaya namah*; South East: *Agnaye namah*; South: *Yamaaya namah*; South West: *Nirrutaaya namah*; West: *Varunaaya namah*; North West: *Vaayave namah*; North: *Somaaya namah*; North East: *Ishaanaaya namah*/

This would be followed by *Samidhaa daanam*: Karta stands and faces the Brahmana saying the following and tendering the bundle of Samidhas in his hands for further placing on Agni: *Asmin homa karmaani Brahman idhmam aadhaasye/ Aadhatswaa! /*

Then ‘Aaghaara’ is followed as the Karta meditates Agni Deva silently and offers Ajya/ ghee in streams from North East to South East and recites: *Om Prajaapataye swaahaa, Prajaapataye idam na mama*/ Then offers Ajya again to Indra from South West to North East reciting: *Om Indraayaa Swaahaa, Indraaya idam na mama*/

Aajya bhaagam: Karta then makes two oblations, one to Agni and another to Soma: *Om Agnaye swaahaa, Agnaye idam na mama, Om Somaaya swaahaa, Somaaya idam na mama*/ Vyahriti homa is continued: Towards South: *Om bhuvasswaahaa, Agnaye idam na mama*/ Towards North: *Om Bhuvasswaahaa, Vaayave idam na mama*/ At the center: *Om Suvaswaaaa, Suryaya idam na mama*/ Prayaschitta homa sankalpa: *Asmin---homa karmani sankalpa prabhriti etat kshana paryantam madhye sambhaavita samasta dosha prayaschithartham sarva prayaschittam hoshyami/ Om bhur bhuvasswaahaa—Prajaapaaye idam na mama*/

Pradhana homa: Now proceed with main oblations: [Refer to the next section of Aoupaasana homa]

Uttaraangam or conclusion: *Prajaapate na twad etaanyanyo vishvaa jaataani pari taababhuva, yat kaamas te juhumas tanno astu vaayagum syaama patayo rayeenaagum swaahaa/ Prajaapataya idam na mama*/ (Prajapati the Lord of Beings, you alone comprehend all these created forms and nobody else. Do grant us our heart felt desires as we invoke you; may we become the chiefs of rich possessions) *Om bhussuvaahaa Agnaye idam na mama/ Om Bhuvassvaha, Vaayave idamna mama/ Om Suvaassvaahaa, Suryaaya idam na mama/ Yad asyaa karmaano tyareericham yad vaa nyunam ihaakaram, Angishtaataat svishhtaakrad vidwaan sarvagum svistagum suhutam karotu swaahaa, Agnaye swishtakrutadam na mama*/ (Whatever that has been done that is superficial or deficient in this sacrifice be please accepted as complete, Agni swistakrita!)

Paridhi pariharam: Paridhis or boundaries of the homa kunda are offered to Agni the ghee dipped samidhas commencing from the middle one first to the rest. Samsraava homa: Sruva or the sacrificial ladles are filled up with ghee flow offering to Agni covering the ladles reciting *Swaahaa, Vasubhyo Rudrebhya aaditebhyah samsraava bhaagebhyah idam na mama/* (May there be glory to Ashtaavaus, Ekaadasha Rudras and Dwadasha Aditya Devas as these oblations are offered to them through Agni Deva); *Om bhur-bhuvas-suvas-swaahaa, Prajaapataye na mama/* (May this offering be made in the glory of Prajapati the Lord of Creation as a testimony of physical-mental-spiritual realms) Praayaschitta or atonement: *Sankalpa-Om poorvokta guna visheshena visishthaayaam asyaam shubha tithou bhagavadaajnaayaa bhagavad kainkarya rupena asmin---homa karmaani avijnaata praayaschitta aadeeni karishye/* (May I make the atonement offerings in this ---rite as to be specified- on this day of auspiciousness signified with astrological qualifications, with the approval by and in service to Almighty). *Anaagjnaatam yad agjnaasya kritaye mithu, Agne tadasya kalpayaa twagum hi vetta yathaa tathagass swaaaa/ Agnyedam na mama/* (Agni Deva! What all imperfections that have been committed by me either knowingly or unknowingly be pardoned in the course of this Sacrifice). *Purusha sammito yagjno yagjnah Purusha sammitah, Agne tadasya kalpaya twagum hi vetta yathaa tathagas swaaha/ Agnyedam na mama/* (Almighty too is coequal with this Sacrifice as with Agni Deva and may all my indiscretions and lapses in the procedure of this Sacrifice be too ignored keeping in view the best that we intended to perform with sincerity)- *Om Bhussuvaah, Agnaye idam na mama/ Om bhuvassvaaha, Vaayave idam na mama/ Om suvassvaahaa, Suryaaya idam na mama/ Om bhurbhuvassuvas swaahaa. Prajaapataye na mama/ Om Shri Vishnavey swahaa, Vishnave Paramatmane idam na mama/ Om Rudraaya Pashupataye swahaa, Rudraaya Pashupataye idam na mama/*

Purnaahuti or the Final Offering: *Sankalpa: Om Purvokta guna vishesena visishthyaam asyaam Shubha tithou bhagavad aagjnayaa bhagavad kainkaryaa rupena asmin--- homa karmanaah sampurna phala praapyartham---naamagnou purnaahutim hoshyaami/ tadantaram saangata siddhyartham vaasordharam hoshyaami/* (May this final offering called Vasordhara be concluded successfully!) *Om purnaahutim utaamaam juhotti, Sarvam vai purnaahutih, Sarvam evaapnoti, atho iyam vai purnaahutih, asyaam eva prati tishthati swaahaa/ Agnaye vausath/* (Our final oblations conclude herewith; Totality is the Final Oblation; through that everything is obtained. Hence may this final oblation and worship now be firmly established).

Vasordhaara homa: *Om sapta te agne samidhaassapata jihvaas sapta rishayah saptadhaama priyaani, Sapta hotraa sapta dha twaa yajanti saopta yonir aapranasva ghritena swaaha/* (Do protects us with this oblation of ghee Agni Deva along with these seven samidhas, your Seven Tongues, Seven Rishis, Seven Sacred Dhaamas, Seven Priests who assist our oblations, and Seven Origins from where Creation is effected). *Praanaayama and parishechana: Aditenvamgasthaah, Anumatenvamgassthaah, Sarasvatenvamgaasthaah, Deva Savitah praasaaviv/* (Aditi Devi granted us permission, Anumati Devi granted too and so has Devi Saraswati while Devi Savita impelled us to take up this Sacred Homa.

Now to farewell to Varuna Deva: *Varunaaya namah sakala araaahanai swarchitam, Yathaa sthaanam/* (Varuna Deva! My reverence to you; do return later as you are invited as required again). Then while pouring water recite the following: *Prachyaam dishi devaa ritwijo maarjyantaam/ Dakshinasya dishi maasah pitara marjyantaam/ Pratichyaam dishi griha pashavo marjyayantaam/ Udeechyaam dishyaapa oshadhayo maarjyantaam/ Urthvaayaam dishi yagjna samvatsaro yagjna patir marjyayantaam/ Om Vaishwaanaraaya vidmahe Lalitaaya dhimahi, tanno agnih prachodayaat/* ( May Devas and Brahmanas

be blessed in the Purva /Eastern Disha; may the months and Pitru Devas make us famed in the Southern side; may our homes and cattle be safeguarded in the western front; may waters, plants and trees be made illustrious on the northern side; may the Sacrifices and years be fructified from the antariksha or the higher lokas; indeed we do take cognizance of Vaishwanara or the mystic fire within the Inner Soul which enlightens all of us).

Reverence and Prayers to Agni Deva: *Agne naya supathaa raaye asman Deva vayunaani vidwan, Yuyodhasmaj-juhaaraanaam eno bhuyissthante nama uktim vidhema/ Om Agnaye namah agnim Aatmanyudvaasayaami/* (Agni Deva! You are a repository of knowledge and thus the resultant wisdom; do lead us to the richness of bliss and take us away from the easy paths of sins and evil. These are our salutations to you and pleadings to return to us whenever solicited). *Namaste Garhapatyaaya Namaste Dakshinaagnaye, Nama Aahavaniyaaya Maha Devai Namoh namah/* (Our prayers to Garhapatyaaya Agni, Dakshina Agni, Aahavaniyaaya at the high altar and our repeated obeisances!)

Aoupaasana homa: The homa prakriya commences with clean feet and palms, Achamana wearing pavitra of darbhas twisted and tied to the right ring finger followed by Sankalpa: *Om purvokta guna visheshena visishthaayaam asyaam shubha tithou bhagavadaagjnayaa bhagavad preeyataartham rupena praatah Aoupaasana homam karishye/* The Sankalpa would be followed by parisachana, Agni Dhyana, Agni Alankara, Purnah parisachana and then to the oblations. The Grihasta asks his wife *hoshyaami* as the wife replies *juhudhi/* He takes a handful rice in the left hand, sprinkles water on it with the right hand, and takes half the quantity with the following Mantras allowing the rice to trickle through the fingers; the first mantra for the morning : *Om Suryaaya swaahaa, Suryaya idam na mama/ Om Agnaye idam na mama/* The first mantra for the evening is: *Om Agnaye swaahaa, Agnaye idam na mama/* The second mantra which is common to both morning and evening is: To the South: *Om bhusswaahaa Agnaye idam na mama/* To the North: *Om bhuvasswaaha Vaayave idam na mama/* To the Centre: *Om suvaassvaahaa Suryaya idam na mama/* The final offering of rice states: *Om bhur-bhuva-suvas- swaahaa---Prajaapataye idam bna mama/* ( Note: The rice offerings should not be allowed to mix with Agni). The rice oblations would be followed by parisachanam and Purna huti comprising a samita and two blades of darbha grass while reciting: *Om Shri Vishnave swaahaa, Vishnave Paramaatmaane idam na mama/*

Now salutation to Agni with folded hands: *Agne naya supathaa raye asmaan Vishvaani Devaani vidwan, Yuyodhasmaj- juhuraanam eno bhuyissthante nama uktim vidhema/ Mantra heenam kriyaa heenam bhakti heenam Hutaashana, Yad hutam tu mayaa paripurnam tad astu te/ Praayaschitta anya sheshaani tapah karmaatmaka kaani vai, Yaani tehaam asheshenaam Krishna anusmaranam param/ Vicchinna – aoupaasana Agni sandhaanam:* After cleaning feet and hands, achamana, pavitra dharana, akshata grahana, offer akshatas and dakshina to brahmanas, and after their approval, repeat sankalpa on behalf of wife also to revive the vicchinna Agnihotra reciting: *Aavaaho auopaasanaagnim aadhaaye vicchinna sandhaanaartham/ Kritancha—Now Agni mukha/*

Pradhaana homa: *Agnih siddhyartham vyahruti homam karishye/* Pick up the main dharvi or the bowl like ghee container and offer the Vyahritis: *Om bhussuvah, Agnaye idam na mama –to the South; Om bhuvassvaaha Vaayave ida na mama —to the North; Om Suvassvaahaa, Suraya idam na mama—to the centre; Om bhur- bhuvas-suvas swaahaa—Prajaapataye idam na mama/* This would be followed by Sankalpa for opening oblations to **Agni** Deva: *Harihi om tat sat/ ...Anekakaala saayam Praatar aoupaasana akaarana praayaschittaartham sarva praayaschittam hoshyaami/* Three oblations be offered

with each of the following mantras: *Anaagjnaatam yad agjnaatam yagjnaasya kriyate mithu, Agne tadasya kalpaaya twagum hi vettha tathaagass swaahaa/ Agnayedam idam na mama/*(Agni Deva, I may have committed mistakes on this Sacrifice either knowingly or unknowingly; do kindly ignore these and keeping in view my sincerity, and consider my flaws as rectified); *Purusha sammito yagjno yagjnaah Purusha sammitah, Agney tadasya kaalpaaya twagum hi vettha yathaa tathaagass swaahaa/Agnyedam na mama/*( Indeed Almighty is as much involved in this Homa Prakriya as you are and as such do kindly amend my shortcomings and have the act of homa be got perfected). *Yat paakatra manasaa deena dakshaa na, Yagnasya manvate martaasah, Agnistaad hotaa kratu-vid vijaanan yajistho devaagum kratuso yajaati swaahaa/* (Agni Deva! We humans are indeed fallible and of immature minds not quite acquainted with the perfect procedures of Sacrifices; may the mystic fire itself which is well versed with the methodology of Sacrifices offer the ideal means of the acts and grant necessary adjustments to bless!)

Sankalpa regarding the oblations to Agni by **Aditya-Rudra-Vasu-Brahmanas**: *Upavaasa vikalpena choditaaayaascha homam karishye/ Aayaashaagne syan abhishastischa satyam iva mayaa asi, ayasaa manasaadrutoyasaa havyam uuhiseyaano dhehi bhashajagass swahaa, Agne ayase idam na mama/* (Agni Deva! You are our refuge to us and the devotees like all of us; you are the unique medium and bearer of all oblations and the sure conveyor of all remedies to humanity.) *Punastwaadityaa Rudraa Vasavaas samindhitaam, Punar Braahmano vasunita yagnaih/ Ghritena twaam tanvam vardhayasva, Satyaah santu yajamaanasya kaamaah swaahaa Agnaye vasunithaayedam/* (May Adityaas, Rudraas, Vasus, Brahmanas kindle you with their rites ad fulfill their wishes). *Mano jyotir jusataam aajyam vicchinnam yagjnaagum-samimam dadhaatu/ Yaa ishta ushaso nimruchascha taah sandadhaami havisha ghritena swaahaa/ manase jyotishe idam na mama/ Yanma aatmano mindaabhud agnih tat unar aahaar jaatavedaavicharshinih swahaa/ Agnaye jaatavedasaa idam na mama/ Punaragnih chakshuradaat punar Indro Brihaspatih, punar me Ashvinaa yuvam chakshur aadhattam akshyoh swaahaa/ Agni ndra Brihaspatyah vibhyaam idam a mama/ Tantum tanvan rajaso bhaanum anvihhi jotishmatah patho rakshadiyaa kritan/ Anulbanam vayata joguvaamapo manur bghava janayaa Daivyam janaggah swaahaa, Agnaye tantumata idam na mama/*

Kshamaapana Sankapa: *Asmin Agni sandhaana homa karmaani madhye sambhavita mantra tantra devataa viprayaaah nunaatireka swarakshara pada bhresha samasta dosha praayasthittartham sarva praayaschittam hoshyaami/*(I now seek final atonement for all shortcomings); *Om bhussvaahaa, Agnaye idam na mama, Om Bhuvaasswaahaa, Vayave idam na mama/ Om suvassvaahaa, Suryaaya idam na mama/* Dosha prayaschitta Sankalpa: *Asmin agni sandhaana homa madhyae sambhavita samasta dosha praayaschittartham sarva praayaschittam hoshyaami/* ( May I tender atonement to all the blemishes that would have occurred during the course of the homa karma) *Anagjnaatam yad ajnaatam, Yaagjnaasya kriyate mithu, Agne tadasya Kalpayaa twagum hi vettaa yattaagasah swahaa/ Agnaye idam na mama/* (Agni Deva! Do kindly pardon my shortcomings executed knowingly or unknowingly and treat my wrong doings as ratified). *Purusha sammito yagjno yagnah Purusha sammitah, Agne tadasya kalpayaa twagum hi vetta yathaa tathaagasah swaahaa/ Agneya idam na mama/* (Agni Deva! You do indeed assume great significance in the context of homas and yagnas, yet Paramatma the Supreme has the greatest role and as such may your prowess and strength be fortified by each act of yagna homas executed in the Universe and may Almighty grant you that magnificence for ever!)

*Imam me Varuna shrudhi havam adyaacha mridaya, Twaam avasyuraachake swaahaa/ Varunaayedam na mama/* (**Varuna** Deva! Do kindly receive my invocation and be gracious enough to attend out

entreaties as we seek your protection) *Tat tvaa yaami brahmanaa vandamaanas tadaa shaaste yajamano havirbhiih, Ahedamaano varuneha bodhyurushaagum sa maa na aayuh pramoshih swaahaa/ Varunaayedam na mama/* (Varuna Deva! You are extolled by Vedas always; may we too reach you by our sincere oblations as we do very sincerely offer our salutations to appease your characteristic fury and sound and reveal your inner Self of tranquility and repose to those you hold you in great esteem!) *Twanno Agne Varunasya vidwaan devasya hedo vayaasi sishtaah, yajishtho Vahni tamah shoshuchaano Vishwa dwesaagumsi pramum ugdhyasmat swaahaa, Agni-Varunaabhaama idam na mama/* (Agni Deva, do mollify the fury of Devas especially of Varuna deva. You are indeed the most worshipful and the best conveyor of all and the most resplendent too of Devas. With these oblations do be pleased with our earnest entreaties and protect us from all those evil forces who are jealous of us due to our direct approaches to you and the like minded Varuna deva too)/ *Sa twanno Agne vamo bhavoti nedishtho asya Usaaso vyustau, Avakswaano Varunagum raraano veehi mridikagum suvavo na edhi swaahaa/ Agni varunaabhyaam idam na mama/* (Agni Deva! You are indeed the foremost of Devatas; do protect us in the morning, day and night. It is so easy for all of us to approach you and hence one feels comfortable to offer our invocations to you always; do also provide shelter and daily succor along with Varuna Deva too; our sincere oblations to you both herewith). *Twam Agne ayaasya yaasan manasaa hitah, ayaasan havyam uuhishe yaano dhehi bhashajaggah swaahaa, Agni-ayase idam na mama/* (Agni Deva! You are our refuge and shelter to keep us peaceful and contented; Indeed you are the unique carrier of our oblations to any destination and concerned Devatas without hesitation and meticulousness so that the remedies sought from them are granted to us instantly. We are ever grateful for your grace Agni Deva! This is our special oblation to you Deva!)

Final oblations: *Om bhussvaahaa, Agnaye idam na mama/ Om Bhuvassvaahaa, Vaayave idam na mama/ Om suvassvaahaa, Suryaaya idam na mama/ Om Bhur-Bhuvas-Suvas-Swaahaa, Prajaapataye idam na mama/ Om Shri Vishnave-swaahaa, Vishnave Paramatmane idam na mama/Om Rudraaya Pashupataye swaahaa, Rudraaya Pashupataye idam na mama/ Praanaayaama and Parishechana: Aditenvamagasa sthaah, Anumatenvamagas sthaah, Sarasvatenvamagas sthaah, Deva Savitah praasaaviih/*

Vasordhaara homa: *Om Sapta te Agnesamidhaah Sapta jihvaah Sapta Rishayah Sapta Dhaama priyaani, Sapta Hotraa Sapta dhaa twaa yajanti yonir aapranaswaa ghritena swaahaa/ Hiranya daana: Harih om tat sat---aneka kaala saayam praatar aoupaasana akarana prayaschittraatham homa dravya daanam yat kinchit hiranya daanam cha naaaa gotrebhyo Braahmanaabhyah tebhyah sampradade, nama, na mama/*

II. Alternative Grihasta Homa : Note: The procedure is as per Maharshi Dayananda and Shatapata Brahmana:

Agni Deva Samidhana is performed with Samidhas dipped on ghee with the Mantra : *Om ayam ta idhma Atmaa Jatavedastenedhyasva vardhasya chendra vardhaya, chaasmaan prajayaa pashubhi Brahma varchasenaanyadyana samedhaya swaaha/ Idamagnaye Jatavedase-Idanna mama/* This first oblation is made with the above Mantra in the north side of the homa kunda starting from west to east. The second oblation is made with the following Mantra: *Om samidhaagnim durvasyat ghriteh bodhayutaantitham, Asmin havya juhotan swaahaa/ Idamagnaye idanna mama/* ( This ahuti is done in the South side from west to east)The third oblation's Mantra is: *Su sammidhaaya shochipem ghritam teevram juhotana, Agnaye Jaatavedase swaahaa/ Idaagnaye Jatavedase-idanna mama/* (This ahuti is performed in the

middle of the homa kunda) The fourth oblation is made with the following mantra: *Tatwaam samidhabharanghiro ghrutena vardhayaamasi, Bruhatccunchaam yathishtadya swaahaa/ Idamagnayengirasy idanna mama/* (This ahuti too is to be done in the middle of the homa kunda)

Jala prokshana/ Jala sinchana: Water is taken in an anjali or cupped palm and sprinkled in all the directions of the Havana kunda: the first sprinkle in the Purva Disha or the east direction from south to north; the second sprinkle is in the Paschima disha or the west direction commencing from south to north again; the third sprinkle is in the Uttara Disha from west to east and finally then fourth should be a complete circle from starting from South East corner of the Homa Kunda with the following mantras: 1) *Om Aditenumanyaswaa/ 2) Om Anumatenumanyaswaa/ 3) Om Saraswatenumanyaswaa/ 4) Deva savitah prasuvah/* Then the Mantra continues: *Prasuva yagjnam pra suvam Yagjnapatim/ Bhagaaya/ Divyo Gandharvah, Ketapuh Ketou nah punaatu Vaachaspativaamcha nah Vidwat/*

Now further oblations to continue: *Om Agnaye swaha, Agnaye idanna mama-* (Sprinkle gandha in the north side of the homa kunda); *Om Somaaya swaha, idam Somaya, idanna mama* (ghee now onward) – at this stage Agni to be re-kindled; *Praja pataye swaha, Prajapataye idanna mama; Om Indraaya swaha, idamindraa ya, idanna mama/* (The oblations to Prajapati and Indra to be performed at the center of the Homa kunda).

Note: So far the Homa Vidhi is common: Praatah kaala ( Morning): *Om Surye jyotirjyotih Surtyah swaha/ Om Surye varche Jyotirvarchah swahaa/ Om Jyotih Suryah Surye Suryo jyotih swahaa/ Om Sajurdevena Savitraa sajurupasendravyatya/ Jushaanah Suryo vetu swaha/* Saayamk kaala (Evening): *Om Agnirjyoti jyoti jyotiragnih swaha/ Om Agni varcho jyotiragnih swaha/ Om Agnirjyotiragnih swaha/ Om sajurdevena Savitraa sajurendratvaya/ Jashano Agnirvetu swah/*

Note: Keeping the above in view, the execution of homa is continued further: *Om Bhuragnaye Praanaya swah, idamagnaye Pranaya-idanna mama/ Om Bhuvar Vaavepaanaaya swaha/ Om swaraadityaaya vyaanaaya swaha vyanaya swahaa, idamadityaya vyanaaya-idanna mama/ Om bhurbhuvah swaragni Vayavyaadityebhyah, idanna mama/ Om aapo jyoti rasomritam Brahma Bhurbhuvah swarom swahaa/ Om yaam medhaam Devaganaah pitaraschopaasate, Tayaa maamah medhaagne medhaavina kuru swahaa/ Om Vishwaani Deva savitur duritaani paraa suva, yadbhadram tanna aa suvgam swaha/ Om bhurbhuvaswaha tat saviturvarenyam bhargo devasya dheemahi swaha/ Om Vishwaani Deva/ Upasthaanam/ Agnerupasthaanam karishye/ Purnamadah Purnamidam Purna puranamudachyate, Purnasya Purnamaadaaya Purnamevaa vashishyte/ Om Shantih Shantih Shantih/ Om tat sat Brahmaarpanamastu/* Homa Prakriya regarding Brahmachari Homa and Grihasti Homa is thus concluded.

After observing homa as above, the Shat Karma Vidhi is continued with the instruction that a Brahmana should perform daily Sandhya and Homa as prescribed, followed by Brahma Yagna: Brahma Yajna Vidhana: *Swa shaakhaadhyanam Vipra Brahma yajna iti Smrutah/* As per one's own branch of Veda, Adhyana/ reading or recitation of Ruk-Yajur-Saama Veda Stanzas is called Brahma Yajna. This Vidhana is mentioned in Taittiriya Swaadhyaya Brahmana and as clarified by Brihaspati that it can precede or follow the Tarpana karya or after Praatah homa or Vaishwa Deva. A person who executes this Yajna is expected to be seated in 'Padmaasana' facing east, preferably on the banks of a water flow, perform tri-achamana, initiate Savitri Mantra of 'Pacchordhancchraashra' along with Vyahritis, keep the Yagjnopaveeta in the normal position of Savya, and recite within the self. The method of Brahma Yajna

is detailed in Swadhyaaya Brahmana. Apart from reading the Ruk-Yajur-Saama- Adharvana Vedas, one can read excerpts of Itihasa-Purana -Kalpas as per one's own convenience. Even on the days of Anadhyaya or on those days like Amavasya etc. the restriction of Anadhyaya is not applicable for Brahma yajna, expecting that only one Ruk might be read out on such days, but otherwise the Anadhyaya restriction is nor applicable otherwise. As regards the 'phala' or the fruit of observing Brahma Yajna on each day, the resultant outcome is stated to be that of the positive account of performing that specific Kratu: *Yam yam kratumaddheyata tasya tasyaatpnuyaat phalam/ iti/ Vitta-Purna-Prithivi-Daanascha phalamashrute iti/* Vedas approvingly praise the excellent result of Brahma Yajna everyday as follows: *Uttamam Naakamadhirohati Uttamah samaanaam bhavati yaavantam ha vaangmaam vitasya purnaam dadat Swaga lokam jayati taavantam Lokam Jayati bhuyaayaamsam chaakshavya chaapapamrityum jayati Braahmanah saayujyam gacchati/* (He who practises Brahma yajna daily would eventually turn out to be superior to others, would be blessed with land property and prosperity, would certainly avoid Apamrityu or untimely death and would surely reserve abode in Swarga).

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HOMA PRAKARANA: *Tena dravyaanya sheshaani prokshyaachamya punargruhe, Tatah karmaani kurveeta satkriyaascha dvijottama/*(Pulastya Muni prescribes that a noble dwija when fetches material from outside must first sprinkle water and get ready to take up acts of virtue; he should first perform 'achamana' and then proceed to execute the deeds) *Upaasyavidhivatsandhyaam upaasthaaya Divaakaram, Saayam Praatar -upaaseeta Vivaahaagnim dvijottama/*(Having formally completed 'sandhyopaashana', the Dvija should then proceed with the rekindling of 'Vivaahaagni' both in the mornings and evenings, states Harita Muni.) Apastama Muni prescribes: *Saayam Praatarata urtvam hastenaiva aahutee tandulairyavairvaaju huyaat, Shtaalipaakavaddevatam Souri purnaahutih praatarityeke ubhayatah parishechanam yathaapurastaat// Yatrakvachanaagnimupasamaadhaasyan, Tatra praacheerudeescha tisro rekhaa likhitvaadbhiravo - kshya Agnimupasamindhyaadu titschaitamudakamuttarena purvena vaanyadupadadhyaat/* ( Both in the mornings and evenings, the 'aahutis' of offerings to Fire God need to be performed with one's hands either with rice or yavaas and as one does for 'Sthaalipaaka', the 'aahuti' or offering be made in favour of Surya Deva and then follow up with 'parishechana' or water sprinkling. After drawing three lines each in the eastern and northern sides from the place of where Agni is to be installed at the centre of the Fire Place, Agni be deposited and while standing sprinkle water towards East/North) *smaartamoupaasane kuryaat shrotam vaitaanikegrugi, Loukeke vidhuraanam tu vidhiresha puratanah/ Bahavoyatra hotarah Shantike poushtike tathaa, Loukaagnou tathaa kuryaat grihaagnouna kadaachana/ Shrotam karma nache -chaktah kartum smaartam samaacharet, Atraapya shaktascha karane sadaacharam labhed buddhah/* (Vishnu Maharshi explains that smaarta karma be executed in 'Auopaasanaagni' and 'shrotakarma' in 'yajna shalaas'. A widower normally performs in the Lokikaagni. Those who are desirous of executing homa prakriya when there is a gathering witnessing the homa, then they should do so in Shantika, Poushtika and Lokaagnis but not in the 'Gruhyaagni'. In case Sroutha Karma is not possible to perform, then Smarta Karma be executed; if even that is not possible, then 'Sadaachara' be done.) *Home mukyho yajamaanah patni putrascha Kanyakaa, Ritvik shishyo Guru bhraataa bhaagineyaassutaapatih/Etareva hutam yatthu tadhutam svayamevatu, Paryukshanamvinaa patni juhuyaat kanyakaapiva/* ( In any homa, one yajamani or master of ceremony is essential; now, his wife, son, daughter, Ritvik or Chief Priest, shishya, elder brother, sister's husband, son in law might be deputed. Wife and daughter too might perform with a proxy in their absence.) Garga Muni states: *Krita daaronam vaitishthetbksanamavyagnaa vinaa, Tishtheta*

*ched vijovraatyah tathaa chapatetito bhavet/(A person who is much married with his wife alive should never leave Agni Karya, as he might be even known as a Brahmana without Samskaras like Upanayana ) Yohitvaa vivaahaagnim grihastha iti manyate, Annantasyana bhoktavyam vridhaa paakohisasmritah/ ( Vyasa declares that in case a person feels that he is a Grihasthi or a sincere house holder then he should not leave the habit of Vivahaagni and his eating food is a mere waste.) Katyayana Maharshi prescribes atonement of non executing Aoupaasanaagni for as many years as he should have performed after his wedding, then a compensation of sixty measures of a ‘Prastha’ of rice and three prasthas of ghee be given away as charity for as so many years: Shashthi prasthamitam dhaanyam triprsthavitam ghritam, Aoupaasaasanaagnou nashthetu vatsarasya vidheeyate/ Alternatively, nonperformance of Griha Agni by a householder as prescribed attracts a penalty of Dravya Daana to a good Brahmana in the measure of the non performance: Yaavakaala mamahomeesyaat taavaddravyam tvasheshatah, taddhaanam chaiva viprebhyah yathaa homastadhaivatat/ Further, Brihaspati suggests that if a Brahmana is unable to perform Shraddha due to Sutaka or Ashuchi of any kind, no proxy is allowed to perform Agni Karya on his behalf.*

Homa Kaala and Homa Dravya: *Adhi ruksha Surye Avissuryevaa, Anastamiti Aaditye saayamagnih praadushkarana manudite praatah/ Praatarhome sangavaantah kaalasrudita hominah, Saayamastamite homa kaalastu nava naadikah/ (Shroutaagni needs to be kindled at the timings of Sun Rise and Sun Set; Agni homa kaala is at the Sun set and before Sun rise; at the Sun Rise the homa prakriya be completed before Sangava and in the evening, nine ghadis after Sunset.) Eligible samidhaas for the homa are : Palaasha khadira ashvattham shamyudumbarajaa samia, Apaamaargaarka durvaascha kusha chettyapare vidhuh/ (The homa samidhas are Palaasha, Khadira, Ashvattha, Shami, Umbataja, Apaamarga, Arka Durvaasa, and Kusha). Tulasi wood is stated to be excellent bestowing immense returns. Katyayana Maharshi further describes: Havistu trividham jneyam kritam chaiva kritaakritam, Akritam cha ktramaadeshaam lakshanam samyaguchyate/ Kritamodanasa -katvaadi tandulaadi kritaakritam, Vreehyaadi chaakeritam proktam iti havyam tridhaa budhaih/ ( The Havis or the material for the homa karya is mainly classified as Krita, Kritaakrita, Akrita; Cooked and beaten Rice is of the Krita variety; raw rice and such other material is of the kritaakrita while akrita is paddy.) Apastamba states: Payasaapashukaamasya, jaahuyaat dadhrendriya kaamasya, yavaagyaa graama kaamasya, odanena annaadyah kaamasya, tandulai rojas kaamasya balakaamasyeke/ Maamsena yashakaamasya, somena brahma varchasa kaamasya, Aajyena tejaskaamasya, payasonityasnaaina satikaamo phalavachanam/( Those who desire to attain cattle wealth would perform the homa with milk, for good physique with curd, lot of graama sampada with Yava dhanya, plenty of food with cooked rice, for achieving youth with raw rice, for great name and fame homa with meat, for Brahma teja with ghee and one desirous of wife should perform with milk always!) Vyasa Maharshi opines: Kapilaayaastu payasaayegnihotraanyupaasate, Aditya mandalam bhitvaayaanti Brahma sanaatanam/ Yena saayam juhuyaat tena praatah/ (A person who worships Agni Deva with the milk of Kapila Cow would break into Surya mandala and gets absorbed in Sanatana Brahma himself! As he performs the homa in the evenings be also done in the morning too.) ‘Smrityartha saara’ gives a detailed account of the homa vidhana: Shaalishyaamaaka neevaara vreehi godhuma yaavakaah, Teshaam tandulaa homyaah yavanaalaah priyam gavah/ Neevaaraah shaalayaishaiva godhumaavreehayoh yavaah, Svaruopenaiva homyaassyussvarupainaava vai tilaah/ Dravam sruvena hotavyam paaninaa kathinam havih/ Payodadhi yavaaguccha sarshishodana tandulaah, Somo maamsam tailamaapodashaitanyagni hotrake/ Syaadagni -hotra vadgaarhye samskaaro mantra varjitah, Yadvaatrth prokshanam teshaam maamsa moupaasanena*

*cha/ Yadyagnihotra homaardham payonasyaat kadaachana, Tadaavreehi yavou graajhyaavoshadhya - ntaramevavaa, na graahyam sarvadhya maashavara kodaarkodravam/nPrasthadhaanyam chatuh – shashtheraahutateh parikeetitam, Tilaajnaantu tadardham syaattadardham syaad ghrutasyatu/(Shaali or rice, shyaamaaka, nevaara, vreehi or red dhanya, wheat, yavaadi be offerd in the Homa. Neevara, rice, wheat, vreehi, yava, and tilas be offered as they are without being husked or cooked. Drava padardhas like ghee be offered with ‘sruva’ or ladle. The main ‘homa dravyas’ are ten viz. milk, curd, yava, mustard, cooked rice, raw rice, soma rasa, oils and water. There is an ‘Agni samskaara’ without mantras viz. offering meat after three times of prokshana or sprinkling of water. In case milk is not available, vreehi-yava and such other seeds could be used, but maasha, vara, kodaara be avoided. There must in all be sixteen ‘ahutis’ or offerings to Agni with ghee, tila of thirty two offerings, and sixty four ahutis of dhaanya, measured as a large quantity of a ‘prastha’). Bodhaayana Maharshi provides further details: Vreehaanaam vaayavaanaam vaa shatamaahutiripyate, Odanodviguno graahyo mayuraadaakritisthatha, Kukkutaandam pramaanastu pinda ityabhidheeyate, Angushta parva maatram syadava daanam tatopi cha, Jyaayah svishtakridaadyantu chaturangula sammitam// Angulyagrairnahotavyam sa kritvaanguli bhedanam, Angulyuttara paashvena hotavyamiti smritih/ Uttaanenatu hastenaanguli paanistu vaagyaho - juhuyaadvijah/ Vastrenavaatha parnavavaa paanirupavadbhidaarubhih, Vyajanenaagni madhanam na kuryaaditih smritih/ Dhamani mantare kritvaatrinam vaa kaashtamevavaa, Mukhaadagnim samintheeta mukhaadagnirajaayata/ Bahu shushkendhano chaagnou susamidde hutaanane, Vidhume lenihane cha hotavyam karmasiddhaye/(Aahutis to Agni are of vreehi, yava, and odana or cooked rice in double the quantities and some two hundred pinda pramanas or of the thumb size egg like quantities. The Ahuti karya should not be done by the finger tops but with all the fingers and thumb together towards the northern side. The ahutis be done in silence with raised right hand making a fistful quantity pressed by all the fingers. It is cautioned that Agni in the fire pit should not be quickened to flame up by fanning with cloths, dried leaves, wooden pieces or hand fans. Using small pieces of wood or dried grass, the fire be installed and using the mouth air through a metal tube enabled to flame up. The tongue be stretched out and enable dried leaves and small figs to gradually raise the fire.) Apastamba suggests that the homa karya be executed according to one’s own ‘Vamsaachaara’ and carry with him the ‘nithya mandhana’ material or fetch from the house of a co-shrotriya. He also states: Chaturatramahutognih loukikah sampadyate/ (In case Shrotriyas do not perform homa in their homes for four nights, then it becomes Lokaagni! ) Shounaka Muni states: Agnaavanughate yatra homa kaaladvayam vrajet, Ubhayorvi pravaasecha lokaagnirvidhheyate/ ( As per the timing of the morning and evening homa prakriya, a Shrotriya should plan the daily programme; in the event of Anugataagni and Dhaaraagni are missed then lokaagni be initiated and enflamed). Bodhayana Muni explains the seriatum of failures of Agni Karyas and prayaschittas: Arvaaktri raatraadayasegnaye syaattatah param Tantumateechankaaryaa, Aaa Sapta raatraan manase cha hutvaa/ Advaadashaahaat punaraadadhee ta/ Dvadasha dina paryantam Agnyanugati praayaschitta me vaktam Naagni sandhaanam atra yadhaa svagrihyaam vyavasthaa/(For three nights of discontinuing the regular daily Agni Karyas for what ever reason, there exists iron Agni; to revive the Grihagni again the process called ‘tantumati’ be followed; for a week’s absence of Agni, the person concerned should execute homa in one’s own mind and revive the Agni on the twelfth day; then thereafter a Prayaschitta programe be taken up as per the domestic custom. Bodhayana also describes three ways of Samaropana or revival: Ekaagneh trividha samaaropanam Atmasyaarayorvaa samitsuvaav/ The three ways are as follows viz. repentance in one’s own mind and heart, performing homa prakriya again in forests and with Samidhas. Maharshi Veda Vyasa cautions: Snaasyato Varunasshobhaam juhvatognih shriyam haret, Bhojane mrityumaapnoti tasmaanmounam trishu smritam/ Conversation*

while bathing is disliked Varuna Deva and in the course of Homa prakriya the God of Agni detests it just as while taking food Mrityu Deva is annoyed; hence during these three acts of snaana-homa-bhojana, silence needs to be observed strictly.) Angira Maharshi exclaims: *Yo dadyaa kanchanam Merum Prithveemvaa sa Saararaam, Tatsaayam pratathomasya tulyam bhavati vaanava!*(Could unparalleled charities of golden Meru parvata and entire Earth along with the Oceans equate the returns of Homa Karyas in the morning and evening daily!) Manu Shastra describes similarly: *Agnou praastaahutih samyak Adityamupatishthate, Adityaajjaayate vbrishthih Vrishterannam tatah prajaa, Daivekarmani yukto hi bibhartedam charaachar am, /* (The ‘ahutis’ offered to Agni as would reach Surya Deva, the latter is pleased and help bestow optimal rains on earth which in turn provides plentiful food and prosperity to one and all; thus indeed the Daiva Karmas set the cycle of blessings to humanity!)

#### 4) VAAYU

Vayu Purana is quoted: Inside Brahmandas, the Golden Egg, all the Lokas including Bhur- Bhuva-Swah were manifested in embryonic form. Bhumi appeared with its land, mountains, oceans and rivers. Surya- Chandra- Nakshatras as also the Planets got manifested too. Also present were Devaasuras, Humans and all other species . This was the original creation of the Universe as the Pradhama Sarga. But at the end of one of Brahma’s days, a minor destruction took place. The Universe was flooded with Water during Brahma’s night. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were not however destroyed. Each of Brahma’s days is known as a kalpa (cycle). Thus, a minor destruction takes place at the end of every Kalpa. When a new day dawns for Brahma, creation begins afresh. This periodical process of destruction or pralaya and re-creation is known as pratisarga. The present kalpa is known as Varaha Kalpa. At the end of the last Kalpa, there was a destruction and the universe was flooded with water. Vishnu slept on the water as long as Brahma’s night lasted. Since ‘ Naara’ means water and ‘Ayana’ means resting-place. Vishnu is accordingly known as Narayana. When Brahma’s day dawned, he wished to embark on the process of creation. But where would the created beings live? There was no earth for them to live on. The earth had been submerged under the water. Vishnu therefore adopted the form of a huge boar (varaha). The boar’s body was as large as a mountain and it had gigantic tusks that were exceedingly sharp. The eyes of the boar blazed like lightning and its roar thundered like the clouds. As a boar, Vishnu entered the water and began to search for the earth. He found the submerged earth and raised it up to its proper place on the tusks of the boar. The earth began to float on the water like a huge boat. Vishnu also levelled out parts of the earth. The mountains that had existed on earth in the earlier kalpa had been burnt down by the fire that raged at the time of the destruction. Vishnu created new mountains. Because they did not move (chala), the mountains came to be known as achala. And since they had layers (parva) or ranges, they came to be known as parvata. The land masses were also created. Brahma created water, fire, air, the sky, directions, heaven, oceans, rivers, mountains and trees. He also created time, night and days called Kaala maana the Time Cycle. Hence the Origin of **VAYU**. Pancha Prana Vayus are Prana-Apaana-Udaana-Vyana -Samana: In this context, *prana vayu* is not overall prana but a sub-prana or prana vayu which is located in the chest between the larynx and the diaphragm, and governs the respiratory system and functioning of the heart. Prana vayu, literally “forward moving air”, moves inwards and regulates all the ways in which we take in energy - from the inhalation of air, eating of food, and drinking of water, to the

reception of sensory impressions and mental experiences. It provides the basic energy that drives us in life. Imbalance in prana vayu is associated with heart and lung conditions. Diminished prana vayu leads to depression and lethargy. *Apana vayu* is centered in the pelvic region below the navel and experienced as a downward flowing movement on exhalation. It controls the functioning of the kidneys, bladder, colon, rectum, and reproductive organs. Literally “air that moves away”, apana vayu moves downwards and outwards, and is responsible for the elimination of feces, urination, menstruation, orgasm, birthing a baby, as well as the elimination of carbon dioxide through the breath. On a deeper level it governs the elimination of negative sensory, mental and emotional experiences. Blockage of this wind can result in constipation, sexual dysfunction, menstrual problems, hemorrhoids, as well as inability to let go and move on. *Samana vayu*, literally “balancing air”, is situated between the navel and ribcage, and acts as the stabilizer between the two opposing forces of prana and apana. It moves from the periphery to the center and rules all the metabolic activities involved in digestion. It digests and assimilates incoming energy, supplying the internal heat to "cook" the food we eat and to absorb sense impressions, emotional experiences and thoughts. Imbalance can affect the function of any digestive organs as well as mental ability of assimilation. *Udana vayu* is a manifestation of prana which pervades the head and throat. It literally means “upward moving air”, and its upward movement governs the growth of the body, the ability to stand, the nervous system, thought, speech, communication, effort and will. Udana vayu is the energy that can be used for self-transformation and spiritual growth. Imbalance can result in problems of cognition and communication. At the time of death, udana draws the individual consciousness up and out of the body. *Vyana vayu*, literally “outward moving air”, moves prana shakti from the center to the periphery. Being distributed from the core of the body out to the extremities this manifestation of prana pervades the whole body and acts as reserve energy for other prana vayus that require an extra boost. Associated with the peripheral nervous system and circulation, it induces the movement of food, water and oxygen as well as blood, lymph and nervous impulses throughout the body. Vyana governs relaxation and contraction of all muscles, the movements of the joints, as well as circulation of emotions and thoughts in the mind. Imbalance can cause poor peripheral circulation or numbness on a physical, emotional or mental level. All prana vayus are intimately linked to one another. One enjoys health and well-being only if prana vayus are balanced and work in harmony. Generally, Prana and Udana work opposite to Apana as the energy of collection and assimilation versus the force of elimination. Samana represents the energy of contraction while Vyana is expansion. Along with the five major pranases, there are five minor or *upa pranases*. *Naga* is responsible for belching and hiccupping. *Koorma* opens the eyes. *Devadatta* governs yawning. *Krikara* induces hunger and thirst. *Dhananjaya* is in charge of decomposition of the body after death. In reference to **Eleven Forms of Vayu**, Prabhaajamaana, Vyavadaatah, Vaasukivaidyuta, Rajataah, Parushaah, Shyaamaah, Kapilaa, Atilohitaah, Urdhvaah, Avapatantaah and Vaidyuta. Indeed any person who knows the names of the eleven Vayus would never be harmed by the lightning shocks and other Fire hazards.

As Brahma Srishti gained momentum, generation of Beings far exceeded the number of deaths too and thus Shiva taught the world the technique of Yoga. Yoga literally means union and is a form of meditation that teaches about the union between the Individual's Consciousness named Antaratma or the Atman and Paramatma. It is this knowledge that is strived for by those who meditate. And one who does not appreciate this union suffers from illusions. Yoga has five components. These are pranayama, dhyana, pratyahara, dharana and smarana. Pranayama signifies control over the breath of life. As the breath of life is thus regulated, an individual can use it to serve his own will. Pranayama must always be practised in a

proper posture (asana). Pratyahara signifies the withdrawal of the senses from material attachments. The next step is dharana. One chooses the image that one is contemplating and fixes it in one's mind. In the process, it is best to concentrate on the tip of one's nose or at the centre of one's brows. When the image has been thus fixed, one can begin the actual process of meditation (dhyana). Yoga must however always be practised in a proper place and at a proper time. It must not be practised in the middle of the forest, near a fire, or at a place frequented by wild animals and insects. There must not be any noise to distract the practitioner. Nor must yoga be practised when one is hungry or thirsty, or in an unhappy state of mind. If these injunctions are not adhered to, yoga can bring great harm. It can lead to illness, dumbness, deafness, blindness and old age before the appointed time. But practised properly, yoga is a cure for various illnesses.

When one is practising yoga, there are various disturbances and distractions that impede the progress towards the desired goals. These are known as upasargas. For example, one might become overly attached to relations, to becoming wealthy or to attaining heaven. Noises are heard, although there are no real noises at all. Demons, gods and gandharvas are seen. All of these are illusions and have to be conquered. When the upasargas are successfully conquered, a practitioner of yoga attains various powers. These are known as aishvarya (wealth). There are eight of these powers. The first is known as anima. This enables the individual to obtain whatever object he desires from anywhere in the universe instantly. The second is known as laghima. This enables one to travel through the sky. The third power is prapti. By means of this, any object in the three worlds can be attained. The fourth power is called prakamya. This gives the individual the power to obtain all the wealth of the universe. (The difference between anima, prapti and prakamya is not very clear). The fifth power is called mahima. Through this power, one can be connected to any place or any object in the universe. The sixth power of ishitva gives one the capability to cause happiness or unhappiness anywhere in the three worlds. The seventh power is vashitva. This grants the power to control other living beings and all objects. The final power is known as kamavasayita. By means of this, the individual can travel freely at will. A person who attains these powers knows no birth, death, old age, illness, happiness or unhappiness. The senses mean nothing to him. Nor do material objects. His mind is fixed only on the brahman. Everything else is unreal. Dreams and Omens Dreams and omens help people to predict the future. A person who cannot see the Pole Star (Dhruva) or the Milky Way (Chhayapatha) will die within the space of a year. If the sun seems to be faded to you, you will not live for more than eleven months. A person who dreams of vomiting gold or silver is not destined to live for more than ten months. If one's footmarks on dust or mud are not complete, one will die within seven months. If a vulture, a crow, or a dove, alights on your head, that is a reason for sorrow. That means that you will die within six months. A person whose reflection is distorted, or a person who is suddenly surrounded by a cloud of dust, will live for four or five months at the most. If one sees lightning although there are no clouds in the sky, or if one sees a rainbow in the water, the indicated life span is merely of two or three months. If a person sees that his reflection has a severed head, he will live for only one month. A person who reeks of the smell of dead bodies has but a fortnight to live. If you find that your feet are dry after taking a bath, that is a reason for great sorrow. That means that you will die within a space of ten days. The implications are the same if you find that smoke billows out of your head. A person whose thirst is never slaked, will die very soon. Death is also imminent for a dreamer who dreams of travelling southwards in a chariot drawn by bears or monkeys. The connotation is the same if one dreams of travelling southwards, accompanied by singing women dressed in black. Death is nigh if one dreams that one is wearing black clothes with holes in them. Ten days of life is all that is left if one dreams of

ashes, coal, hair or dried rivers. It is a bad omen if jackals follow one around at the stroke of dawn. Death will come soon, as it will if your teeth chatter after having a bath. When a lamp is extinguished, a burn smell lingers in the air. If you cannot smell this, you will not live for long. Other bad omens which signal the end of life are the following; seeing a rainbow at night; failing to see one's own reflection in the pupil of another person's eye; continuous watering from one eye; a rough and blackened tongue; deafness; and blindness. There are several other bad omens. It is not the case that these bad dreams and bad omens cannot be countered. The best way to counteract their influence is to chant the mantra (incantation) om.

Kalpas There was a sage named Savarni. He told the wind-gold Vayu, "We know that the present kalpa is called varaha kalpa. But how long is a kalpa? And what are the various other kalpas? Please tell us the answers to these questions." Vayu said the following. There are 4,320,000,000 years in a kalpa. Each kalpa is only one of Brahma's days and one thousand kalpas constitute one year for Brahma. Eight thousand such years constitute Brahma's yuga and one thousand of these yugas are called a savana. Two thousand savanas constitute a trivrita and this is the period of time for which Brahma lives. The kalpas since the original creation were as follows. (1) Bhava. (2) Bhuva. (3) Tapah. (4) Bhava. (5) Rambha. (6) Ritu. (7) Kratu. (8) Vahni. (9) Havyavahana. (10) Savitra. (11) Bhuvah. (12) Oushika. (13) Kushika. (14) Gandharva. (15) Rishabha. (16) Shadaja. (17) Marjaliya. (18) Madhyama. (19) Vairaja. The great Vairaja Manu was born in this kalpa and his son was the great sage Dadhichi. (20) Nishada. The race of nishadas (hunters) were created during this period. (21) Panchama. (22) Meghavahana. The word megha means cloud and vahana means to bear. In this kalpa, Vishnu adopted the form of a cloud and bore Shiva on his back. It is thus that the kalpa received its name. (23) Chintaka. (24) Akuti. (25) Vijnati. (26) Mana. (27) Bhava. (28) Vrihat. (29) Shvetalohita. (30) Rakta. (31) Pitavasa. (32) Sita. (33) Krishna (34) Vishvarupa.

Agni Purana is quoted about the profile of Universal Creation: Prior to Creation, Vishnu the Eternal and All Pervasive created Water and there was no day, night or time. He materialised 'Prakriti' and with its interaction with Prakriti created 'Maha Tatwa' and from the latter emerged 'Ahamkar' (the feature of the Self and Ego). Ahamkar was of three forms viz. 'Vaikarika' or Satvika, 'Thajasa' or Rajasa and 'Bhutadirupa' or Tamasika. From Tamasika Ahamkar, there was the Tanmatra of 'Shabd' or Sound which produced 'Aakaash' (Sky); from Sky was generated the Tanmatra of 'Sparsh' or the Touch which in turn created 'Vaayu' (Air). From 'Vayu' the Tanmatra of 'Rupa' or Form, enabled the emergence of Agni (Fire). From Agni, the 'Rasa' Tanmatra created 'Jal' (water). From water the 'Gandha Tanmatra' or the feature smell created Bhumi or Earth. Such is the chain reaction from Sound to Touch to Form to Rasa to Smell—all the creations of Tamasika Ahamkar. From the Rajasika/ Tejasika Ahamkar, Ten 'Indriyas' or physical parts got created while the most significant physical component is 'Manas' or Mind viz. the eleventh Indriya is the product of Satvika 'Ahamkar. Then the 'Swayambhu Shakti' or the Supreme Energy generated water. He sowed a Seed (virility) into the Water and on the Water Surface, and there floated a Golden Egg or the Brahmanda, from which emerged Lord Brahma. The Golden Egg opened in two parts, one as Heaven and the other as Earth, the connecting link being the Sky. Brahma then created Earth in Water and ten directions, besides 'kaal' (Time), 'man' (mind), 'kaam' (desire), 'vani' (speech), 'krodh' (anger) and 'rati' (passion). Then emerged Vidyut (Lighting), Thunder, Clouds, Rainbows, Words and Anger. He created from His Body the Texts of Vedas (Rig, Yajur and Sama) mainly to make sure and also enable Yagnyas and other Sacred Ceremonies. He created the four Sanaka brothers, the manifestation of anger as Rudra; and the seven sons from His Powers, viz. Marichi, Atri, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu, and Vasishta. Brahma materialised half of his body as Purusha (male) and the other half as 'Stree' (Female). The 'Srishti' from the females led to that of 'Prajas'. Human Creation was made possible by the first Manu called Swayambhu Manu and his wife Shatarupa; the couple gave birth to two sons Prayamvrata and Uttanapaada and a daughter Devahuti who married Sage Kardama. Agni Deva then described the lineage of Swayambhu Manu who included the illustrious Dhruva and Chakchusha Manu, Prachetas, Daksha Prajapati, Ashtaa Vasus (viz. Aap, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha and Prabhasa),

and Eleven Rudras (stated to be the main Rudras besides thousands and more) viz. Hara, Bahurupa, Triambaka, Aparajita, Vrishakapi, Shambhu, Kapardi, Raivata, Mrigavyaada, Sarpa and Kapali). Thus Agni Deva described Prakriti / Maha Tatwa Srishti or Brahma Sarga, the second one was known as Tanmatra Srishti called Bhuta Sarga, the Third Srishti is 'Vaikarika' or Aindra Sarga. The Fourth Srishti is called Mukhya Sarga or 'Sthavara' Srishti of 'Vriksha, Parvat adi'/ Trees, Mountains etc. The 'Tiryagyonya' Srishti of 'Pashu-Pakshis' or animals and birds is the Fifth Srishti. The sixth Srishti is of Deva Sarga (Urthva Stotra/ higher); the seventh Sarga is Manava Sarga and the eighth Sarga is Anugraha Sarga based on Satvik as well as of Tamasika-orientation. The ninth variety is Nitya Sarga or the usual Srishti.

Narada Purana is quoted about Yoga: Brahmarshi Narada gave a direct question to Sanaka Kumara as to which 'Karma' (Holy Action) would assure the attainment of Moksha and Sanaka replied that Yoga was indeed the unique way and 'Jnaan' backed by 'Bhakti' was the best form of Yoga- a mix of Karma Yoga and Jnaana Yoga, or a blend of 'Karma' (Action) with Bhakti (devotion). *Ahimsa Satyamakrodho Brahmacharyaa Parigrahou, Aneershyaa cha Daya chaiva yogayorubhayo samaah/* ( Non-Violence, Truth, absence of hatred, Brahmacharya, Aparigraha or non acceptance, destruction of jealousy, mercifulness and benevolence-these are the features in required proportions). The person who treats the way that he himself desires to be treated is qualified for Yoga. Contrarily, the person who is overcome by envy and fault-finding might be immersed with Dhyana and Tapasya, but these noble qualities are considered futile. That is why restraint, self-control and equanimity in terms of speech, thought and action are the cornerstones of 'effective' Vishnu Puja . Given these basic pre-conditions, Pujas, Stutis, Fastings, Vratas, Purana Shravanas, Tirtha Yatras, Daanaas, Yagnas and the like assume redoubled proportions of efficiency and are truly termed as implements of Karma Yoga.

The lack of distinction between Jeevaatma and Paramatma, signifying the Maha Vakyas of Vedas viz. Tatvamasi or Sohamasi constitute the basis of Vedas and forms of the Ashtanga Yoga viz. *Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Pranahaara, Pratyahaari, Dharana, Dhyana and Samaadhi*. The relevant definition is: *Yamaascha, Niyamaavaschaiva, Asanaani cha sattama, Praanaayaamah, Pratyahaaro Dharana Dhyanamevacha, Samaadhi Munusreshthah yogaangaani Yatha kramam/* While 'Yama' denotes Ahimsa, Satya, Steya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya, Aparigraha, Akrodha, Anasuya and Daya are the constituents of Yama; 'Niyama' comprises of Tapas, Swadhyaya (self-learning), Santosha (contentment), Shaucha (Cleanliness), Aradhana or worship and Sandhyapasana. 'Tapa' includes meditation, Chandrayana and other Vratas which signify fastings, Pujas, Stutis etc. 'Swadhyayana' encompasses Japas of three kinds viz. Vaachika/ Uchhaarana or Vocal, Upaamshu or slow and distinct rendering and 'Maanasa' or recitation within while considering the meaning and context of the Mantra). 'Santosha' basically refers to mental satisfaction that the life style is smooth and contented, organised, wholesome and virtuous. 'Shuchi' means 'Bayha Shuddhi' or physical as also 'Antassuddhi' without interaction with the 'Arishat vargas' viz. Six enemies from within viz. Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, and Matsara; 'Aradhana' including 'Stuti' by 'Manas', 'Vani' or vocal; 'Kriya' or Tirtha Yatras, bathings, Daanas, good deeds such as digging of water bodies/ wells, construction of Public Utilities etc. and most significantly 'Sandhyopasana'.

Aasana is the next significant 'Yoga Sadhana'; it is stated that there are thirty prominent Aasanas 'Sitting postures' viz. Padmasana, Swastikasana, Peethasana, Simhasana, Kukkutasana, Kunjarasana, Kurmasana, Vajrasana, Varaahasana, Mrigasana, Chailikasana, Krounchasana, Naalikasana, Sarvatobhadrasana, Vrishabhasana, Nagasana, Matsyasana, Vyaghrasana, Artha Chandrasana, Dandavatasana, Shailasana, Khadgasana, Mudgarasana, Makarasana, Tripathasana, Kaashtaasana, Sthanurasana, Vaikarnikasana, Bhowmasana and Veerasana. The next Yoga Sadhana is Pranaayama which could be Agarbha or Sagarbha; the Agarbha type is without Japa and Dhyana and the better kind one is while performing Japa and Dhyana. Pranayama comprises 'Rechaka' or exhaling air through left nose, 'Puraka' is inhaling through the right nose and 'Kumbha' is holding air as also 'Shunyaka' (stand-still). The right 'nadi' of the human beings is called 'Pingala' whose Deity is Surya / Pitru yoni. The left Nadi is 'Ida' / Deva yoni nadi

whose Deity is Moon. In between the Pingala and Ida nadis is a minute and hidden nadi called 'Sushumna' whose 'Adhi Devata' or Deity is Lord Brahma. Pratyahaara is the next Yoga Sadhana, by which 'Indriyas' or Limbs are controlled by being dis-associated with worldly matters. This is the preparatory step of mind-control when one could close the eyes or even keep them open but possess high degree of concentration on a blank screen or any chosen object irrespective of surrounding visions, sounds, nasal / touch reactions and mind-borne reactions except the focussed one, say an illumination through which to probe the Almighty! Having conquered the external limbs and internal feelings, a stage is set to hold or practise Dhaarana of the required vision of Paramatma even for split seconds by regulating the vision and once that is practised, the length and depth of the visualization could be prolonged as Yogis could. The vision when continued the Yogi enters a stage of Samadhi when the Yoga Purusha could neither hear, nor see nor react to any situation, except the one that is focussed! Such a situation is not death but death-like since that trance could be retrieved, as claimed by those Maharshis who experienced! They were able to realize Para Brahma Paramatma in their hearts that was ever lasting, pure, dazzling and complete through their inner vision. In the World, there are three kinds of feelings viz. 'Karma- 'Brahma'and 'Ubhayatmaka Bhavanas'. Till Karma Bhavana is not demolished or controlled, one would not visualise Brahma Bhavana. Only when differences of worldly nature and Para Brahma are completely merged, that state is called as Brahma Gyan or of the real Nirakara Vishnu.

Also, there are three kinds: 'Para', 'Apara' and Karma Shaktis. Bhagavan is the Para Shakti; 'Kshetrajna' is the Apara Shakti and 'Avidya' (ignorance) is the Karma Shakti. Indeed, Kshetrajna Shakti is dormant in all Beings; it is minimal in 'Jada' rupas like trees and mountains, some what weak among animals and birds, but human beings are fairly aware of the Shakti; while it is conspicuous among higher levels like Gandharvas, Yakshas and of course Devas. Like the Sky the Kshetrajna Shakti is all pervading in different 'Rupas'; it is the awakening of that Shakti which Yoga is all about.

5)

## AKAASHA

Maha Bhagavata Purana provides a systematic description of the Description of Planets and Sisumara Planetary System : **Bhuloka** is a Planet known as divided into Seven Parts, resembling a Lotus flower, each leaf with the names as above. Its length and breadth is one million yojanas or eight million miles. **Lokaloka** is the border beyond which are the three other Lokas, viz.**Bhurloka, Bhuvarloka, and Swarloka**. On the top of Lokaloka, there are four Gajapaties controlling the planetary system on the four directions;They are Rishabha, Pushkara Chuda, Vamana and Aparajita. The distance from Lokaloka to Bhuvarloka is as much distance as from Meru to Lokaloka. That is a billion miles further.This space is named Aloka Varsha. Lord Sun is situated in **Anthariksha** in between Bhurlok and the Bhuvarlok. It is the Sun Planet which reveals the entire Universe from various directions and is thus the centre. Sun is the potent energy who is seen and felt to normal human beings and indeed the super indicator to all parts of the Universe, including the sky, the World, the higher planets and the lower planets. The entire Universe has a diameter of fifty crore yojanas or 4 billion miles. Like the grain of wheat, the lower part of the Universe topping the Earth is sliced half way of the upper part with Antariksha or the outer space as the divider. **The Planet Of Sun** is situated in the outer space moving forward from north to south (Dakshi - nayana) and from south to north again (Uttarayana), emanating tremendous heat and light.The setting of Dakshinayana to Uttrayana is considered to be of significance as it heralds the six monthly movement influencing the trend of fortunes.As per the movement of Sun through the ecuador, or beneath it or above

and from Tropic of Capricorn (Makara) to that of Cancer (Karkataka) and back, the zodiac signs are passed through too in a systematic manner and the duration of day and night too are short, equal or different. When Sun passes through Aries (Mesha) and Libra (Tula), days and night are equal. As Sun passes through the five Signs headed by Taurus (Vrishabha), the duration of day increases till Cancer and thereafter decreases by half an hour a day each month till Capricorn (Karkataka) in Libra, when day and night are equal again. When Sun passes through the Five Signs beginning from Vriscicka, the duration of days decreases compared to nights until Capricorn and gradually increases month after month till they are equal in Aries. As a rule, till Sun travels north the nights become longer and when Sun travels south the days become longer. Sun travels around Manasottara Mountain in a circle. On the Mountain to the east of Sumeru is the Devadhani, the residence of Indra, the King of Gods; to the South is Samyami, the Abode of Yama Raja, God of Death; the West is Nimkolani of Varuna, the God of Rains/Water; and the north is Vibhavari the abode of Moon. **Thrayimaya**, named as the Chariot of Sun visits all the abodes of Indra, Yama, Varuna and Moon traverses all the Residences of these Gods covering the words 'Bhur Bhuva Swaha' at a speed of 27 million miles approx in one muhurta (30 muhurtas a day)! Interestingly, the **Chariot of Sun God is 28 million miles long and seven million miles wide!** Arunadeva, the Charioteer, controls the horses and sits in front of the Sun God, but looks backward to Sun. It is said that there might be thousands of rays of Sun, but the important ones are only seven, representing Seven Planets, Viz. Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. [But, as per 'Aditya Hridayam' Prayer: There are many more rays which are important, viz. *Esha Brahmecha Vishnuscha Sivah Skandah Prajapathih, Mahendro Dhanadah Kalo Yamah Somohyapampathihi, Pitharo Vasavassadhyah-yassvinow Maruto Manuh Vayur Vahnih Praja Prana Ritu Kartah Prabhakarah*]. **Moon** travels faster than Sun. The distance between Sun and Moon is 100,000 yojanas (800,000 miles). In two lunar fortnights, Moon passes through a period of a Samvatsara or a year. **In two and quarter days, Moon passes through a month of the Sun**, or in one day, it passes through a fortnight of the Sun. Hence, the divergence of Solar and Lunar calculations and Calendars. As the Moon is waxing, it is a day for Gods and a night for Pitru Devatas. The waxing fortnight gradually diminishes the shine till the Moon-fall day (Amavasya) and the waning Moon picks up the shine day by day till Moon-rise day (Pournami). Moon is known as 'Jeeva' (life-provider), or 'Manomaya' (mind-alterer) or 'Annamaya' (potency provider from herbs and plants), 'Amritamaya' (source of life to all) and 'Sarvamaya' (all pervading). From Moon to the **Group of Stars**, the distance is 200,000 yojanas (16,00,000 miles). Headed by Abhijit, there are twenty eight Stars revolving on their own axis. Above the Group of Stars is the **Planet of Venus (Sukra)** almost of the distance from the Moon to the Group of Stars. It is a benevolent planet, especially as a provider of good rains and prosperity and moves at the same pace as Sun God. **Mercury (Budha)**, the son of Moon is situated from Venus (16,00,000 miles) or 72,00,000 miles from Earth and this Planet too is benevolent excepting when not moving along with Sun, thus causing cyclones, excess or no rainfall and dusty storms. Equidistant from Mercury or 80,80,000 miles above Earth, is **the Planet of Mars (Mangal)**, which is generally not considered favourable, travelling along with other planets every three fortnights and creates tensions. **The Planet of Jupiter (Guru)** is away from Earth by some 10,400,000 miles-again 16,00,000 miles away from the planet of Mars- is considered generally benevolent to Brahmins and Universe, unless takes a curved path in conjunction with other planets. **Saturn**, which is 12 million miles above Earth is also considered generally unhelpful. Normally, each planet is 16,00,000 miles apart from another planet, but the distance from Saturn to the Group of '**Sapta Rishis**' or the Seven Sages is 8,800,000 miles from Saturn ie. 20,800,000 miles from Earth. Indeed, the Seven Sages are always the great well wishers of the entire Universe. The Sapta Rishis, viz. Marichi, Angirasa, Atri, Pulsastya, Pulaha, Krathu, and Vasishtha

born in Lord Brahma's thoughts to help in the act of Creation.(Reference Maha Bharatha; Shanti Parva).The Seven Sage **Constellation of the Great Bear ( Ursa Major)** is indeed the great well wisher of the entire Universe. The Sapta Rishis circumbulate around the Pole Star, or Dhruva Tara, which is as good as the Abode of Supreme Lord Himself and is prayed to by religious mortals and Gods alike.

**Sisumara Planetary System:** Some 13,00,000 yojanas ( 10,400,000 miles) above the 'Great Bear' shines high the Pole Star and the'Sisumara System' or the Great Machine, comprising the Stars and Planets, resembling a Dolphin in water. Scholars of the Science of Astronomy compare the Formation as an Illustration or an Image of The Supreme Almighty Vasudava Himself, as this 'Jyothi anekam'( Multi-Splendour par excellence) or 'Sisumara Samsthanam'(The Grand Wheel Establishment) is clearly visible on the Sky, and as the The Supreme Almighty is invisible anyway! In other words, it would never be possible to comprehend the Portrait of 'Virat Purusha', let alone by human beings but by Sages and even by Gods or Trinity too, but one could visualise the similarity of God- Head with the Sisumara and be contented with it atleast. The various planets and a multitude of Stars revolve around the Pole Star or the Dhruva Star, each moving around in their own Orbits at their own heights and are not clustered due to law of gravity.The body of Dolphin-like Sisumara Chakra is coiled with its head downward, the Pole Star (Dhruva) at its tail, on the body of its tail are the Planets of demi-Gods viz.Prajapati, Agni, Indra and Dharma; the base of the tail are the Planets of Dhata and Vidhata; at the hip position are the Sapta Rishis; the right side of the Sisumara Chakra are the Constellations of fourteen Stars beginning from Abijit to Punarvasu; on the left side of the coiled body are the Stars of Pushya to Uttarahadha, thus balancing the body with equal weight of the Stars; on the back side of the body is the Group of Stars known as Ajaviti and on the abdomen flows the Ganges that flows in the Sky (the Milky Way Galaxy), which is the home of Solar System with an estimated 400 billion Stars and planets and thousands of clusters and nebulae); on the upper chin of Sisumara is Agasti; on the lower chin Yamaraja; on its mouth Mars; Genitals Saturn; on the back of its neck Jupiter; on its chest the Sun and the core of heart Narayana Himself; within its mind the Moon; navel the Venus; breasts Aswini Kumars; within its life-air or Pranapana is Mercury; neck Rahu; all over body the comets and pores innumerable Stars. Thus Sisumara Chakra is a mini version of the Supreme Almighty Himself. [Vishnu Sahasranamam ( Slokam 47 states: *Anirvinnah Stavishtho bhur\_dharma yupo Mahamakha/ Nakshatra nemi\_nakshatri Khshama Kshamah Samihanah.* Anirvannah ( He Who Is Never Unhappy); Stavishtho: ( He Who Is Colossal); Bhuh: The Supporter Of All; Dharma Yupah :( He Who Is United With Dharma or Virtue); Maha makha: ( The Greatest Yagna or Sacrifice leading to Moksha or Salvation); Nakshatra nemi: ( He Who Makes the Stars Move or He Who Mobilises the Sisumara Chakra and along with it the Entire Universe); Nakshatri (The Driving Force of Sisumara); Kshamah:( He Who Is Most Competent); Kshamah: ( The Non- Reduceable or The Remainder Entity After The Pralay Or The Final Deluge); Samihanah: ( Regulator and Well -Wisher)] Suka Muni advised King Parikshith to recite the Sisumara Chakra Mantra as follows:etat uha eva bhagavathah vishnoh srava Devata mayam rupum ahah ahah sandhayam prayatah vagyatah niriksamana upatistheta namo jyotir-lokaya kalayanayanimisam pataye maha-purusayabhidhimahiti:etat--this; u ha--indeed; eva--certainly; bhagavatah--of the Supreme personality of Godhead; vishnoh--of Lord Visnu; sarva-devata-mayam--consisting of all the demi-gods; rupam--form; ahah-ahah--always; sandhyayam--in the morning, noon and evening; prayatah--meditating upon; vagyatah--controlling the words; niriksamanah--observing; upatistheta--one should worship; namah--respectful obeisances; jyotih-lokaya--unto the resting place of all the planetary systems; kalayanaya--in the form of supreme time; animisam--of the demigods; pataye--unto the master; maha-purushaya--unto the Supreme person; abhidhimahi--let us

meditate; iti--thus. The body of the sisumara, thus described, should be considered the external form of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Morning, noon and evening, one should silently observe the form of the Lord as the Sisumara-chakra and worship Him with the above mantra.

Brahmanda Puruana provides an outstanding exposition of Traditional Astronomy: Traditional Astronomy, Solar System and 'Kaalamana Ganana' (Time Calculations) : The area which is covered by Sun and Moon constitutes that which brightens the Sapta Dwipas, Sapta Samudras and half of Earth, the other half remaining dark. Again, *Avati trinimaan lokaan yasmaadsuryah paribhraman, Avidhaatuh prakaashaakhyo hyavanaatsa Ravih smruta/* ( The 'Dhaatu' or the root of the word 'Avi' means illumination and protection; thus Surya is called Ravi). The word 'Mahi' or 'Mahi Tatwa' means Bhumi or Earth and the sub continent of Bharat is roughly reckoned as Earth; the Solar Disc measures nine thousand yojanas (one yojana is 12 km) and its circumference is three times more. The circumference of Moon is stated to be thrice of Sun. The total size of Earth is fifty crore yojanas and Meru Mountain is situated at the half point of Earth. Considering the elevation of Meru, the radius of Earth is stated to be eleven crore thirty seven lakh or the surface of Earth. Taking into account the revolution of Earth up to the sky and stars, the distance of the Earth and Sky are stated to be equal. All the Seven Dwipas on Earth as also the Seven Upper Lokas of Bhur-Bhuvar-Swar-Janar-Mahar-Tapas-Satya etc. lokas are all included in the 'Paryasa' or 'Bhramana' (Revolution) since they are all in the Cosmic Egg as under an Umbrella. In the revolution all the Lokas are tightly tied together; while the contents of the Cosmic Egg is stabilised with solidified Oceans, each Loka is stuck to each other and thus Earth too is stuck similarly with the solidified water. The solidified water is surrounded by solidified Tejas or Illumination. The Solidified Tejas is surrounded by Solidified Air. The solidified air is further surrounded by Sky which in turn is bounded by Bhutadi which again is enclosed by 'Mahat' and finally Mahat is bordered by Pradhana or the Infinity! Thus the entire Universe is a comprehensive and cohesive Totality! [ Brahmanda Purana-in fact, Puranas in general- believe that the Brahmanda (Cosmic Egg) is protected by sheaths or coverings of Pancha Bhutas or Gross Elements of Earth-Water-Fire-Air and Sky; Earth is protected by solidified water; in the second layer by Agni; further by Air; further again by Sky; beyond which be the Concepts of Bhutadi or the Ahamkara or Ego being the Consciousness of Self as also the 'Mahat' or the High Significance, beyond is Pradhana or the Unknown. All the above Beings are stated to be a Composite Manifestation of the Supreme Unknown].

Meru Mountain was considered as the focal point of Traditional Astronomy. The East of Meru and on top of Maanasa was stated to be the Mahendrapuri where 'AshtaaVasus' whose Chief was Indra, were staying and that place was all decorated with gold. To the Southern side of Meru again on the top of Manasa was the abode of Lord Yama the son of Vaivaswata Manu and that Place was known as Samyamana Puri. To the West of Meru again atop of Manasa, Lord Varuna was the abode of a Place called Sukha Nagari. To the North of Meru on Manasa Mount was the Vibhavari Nagari of Lord Soma. On the four corners of the rear North of Manasa were situated the Four Lokapalakas to preserve Dharma and Nyaya to the mankind. In 'Dakshinayana' or the Southern Transit the course of Sun's forward direction to South would be like an arrow released as he would take various Luminary Devatas along with him: By the time Surya would reach Amaravati of Indra by mid-day, he would have reached Samyama -puri of Yama, when Vanuna's Sukha Nagari would be mid-night and Soma would be nearing dusk time. When Surya would reach Samyamana by mid-day at his peak, it would be Sun Rise at Sukha Puri of Varuna, Sun Set at Mahendri Nagar and midnight at Vibha Nagar of Chandra. If persons experience afternoon at those in South East (Agneya), or South and East, those in South West or Nirruti would experience Sun in

forenoon. To persons in North, Sun's position is experienced at later part of night where as to those in North East or Ishanya , it would be in the earlier part of night. When Amaravati experienced midnight, Yama Nagari felt that Sun was setting in the Evenings. At Soma's Vibhavari Nagar, Surya's position would be mid-day but he would have already risen up in the early morning and at Yama's Samyamana it would be midnight. Thus Surya rises and sets at different places at different timings. Surya is stated to traverse one hundred and eighty one thousand yojanas in a 'Muhurtha'. ( Fifteen Nimeshas make one Kashta; thirty Kashtas make one Kala; thirty Kalaas make one Muhurta and thirty Muhurthas make a day and night). If Surya proceeds towards South or in Dakshinayana, his speed increases and whirls around in the middle of the firmament. At Manasottara Mountain, the 'Vishu' (Equinox) is situated in the middle; the circumference of Surya is Nine crores and forty five lakh yojanas. Returning from South to North (Uttarayana), Sun is stated to remain in the Equinox and travel further to Milk-Ocean and then Surya's circumference is stated to be three crore and eight thousand yojanas. When Surya is in the constellation of Shravana and Uttaraashadha traversing the Regions upto Shaka Dwipa, the magnitude of Sun is estimated at a crore and Eighty of yojanas approx. The divisions of Planetary system are Aja Vithi (Southern) or the Naga Vithi (Northern) comprising constellations of Stars; the divisions of star-constellation of Moola-Purvashadha-Uttaraashadha are born in Aja Vidhi while the constellations of Ashvini-Bharana-Krittika are born in Naga Vidhi. During Dakshinayana, Sun covers thirteen and half constellations of Stars in twelve Muhurtas due to his speed; but in Uttarayana, he covers the same constellations in eighteen Muhurtas. It is said that the central area of a Potter's wheel goes slower and in the same way Sun traverses slower and in the navel of the wheel, it goes further slower ie thirteen Muhurtaas! During one daytime, the first part is called Usha / Sandhya, the second one is Praatahkaala, the next is Madhyaahna and the next part is of Aparaaahna and then Saaahkaala. At the times of dawn and dusk, it was stated that crores of demons are bent on devouring Surya Deva but the Vakakhilya Sages protect Surya deva ; besides, Brahmanaas perform Sandhya Vandana and Gayatri Japa to overcome the demons. On a Vishuvat day (Equinox) the day as well as night are of exactly same measure of Time but from there after Dakshinayana nights get lengthened while during Uttarayana, the daytime gets elongated. Vishuvat Time or Equinox is between Sharad and Vasanta Ritus. That would be the time when Moon is of uniform 'Kalaas'. Brahmanda Purana gives a detailed account of 'Kaala gananaas' or Time Calculations related to Soura (Surya), Sowmya (Chandra) and Naakshatra or Stars. It was at this Vishu Time, that 'daanaas' are required to be performed to please Pitru Devas. Since Vishu is considered as most auspicious to Devas too, special Danaas are required to be given to learned Brahmanas. It is good to learn of 'Kaalamaana ganana' or the calulations of Time as also certain other aspects; for instance: 'Uuna Maasa' (month of shorter count), Adhika Maasa (month with longer month); Kala, Kaashtha, Muhurtaka; Purnamaasi (Full Mon), Amavasya (New Moon); Sinivaali or Kuhu the days when Chandra rekha was not seen at all; and Raaka and Anumati (differentiated nights) unseen on Purnima (Full Moon); Amavasya mixed with 14<sup>th</sup> Tithi of the next Paksha or fortnight is Sinivali while Amavasya which merges with the first of next Paksha is Kuhu ( in both the cases worship of both Sinivali and Kuhu would bestow wealth); Purnamaasi mixed with the 14<sup>th</sup> Tithi is Anumati while that mixed with the first of next Paksha is Raakha (in these cases too, worship would bestow good progeny and fame). Another facet worth noting is that Uttarayana months are: Magha, Phalguna, Chaitra, Vaishakha, Jyeshtha and Ashadha are of Uttarayana while Shravana, Bhadrapada, Aswiyuja, Kartika, Margashira and Pushyami are of Dakshinayana.

**Mystery of ‘Jyotishmandala’, ‘Sishumara’, Dhruva, Clouds and Chariots of ‘Grahaas’** : Asked as to how the various planets and luminaries revolved on the Sky on their own without any clash or confusion and whether some divine hand was performing the act so aptly, Suta Maha Muni replied: *Bhuta sammo - hanam hyotadvadato mey nibodhata, Pratyakshamapi drushyam cha sammohayati yatprajaa/ Yoham chaturdisham pucchey Shaishumarey vyavasthitah, Utaanadada Putrosou medhibhuto Dhruvodivi/ Sa vai bhraamayatey nityam Chandraadityo grahaih sah/ Vaataaneekamayairbandhair Dhruveybandhaani taani vai, Teshaam Yogascha bhedascha Kaalaschaarastathaiva cha/ Astodayou tathotpaataa Ayaney Dakshinottarey, Vishuvadgrahavarnaashcha Dhuruvaatatsarvam pravartatey/ Varshaa gharma himam Raatrih Sandhyaachaiva dinam tathaa, Shubhaashubham prajaanaamcha Dhruvaatsarvam pravartatey/* (Indeed this is a mystery that defies imagination although humanity visions and feels it. There is a **Sishumara**-literally meaning the killing of a Child- or a Dolphin-like Formation on the Sky and at the end of the animal’s tail is situated **Dhruva**, the illustrious son of Prajapati Uttanapada [who as a boy of tender age felt hurt as to why he could not be seated on his father’s lap while his step brother could, apparently because his father liked his step mother more than his own mother; out of anguish the boy resorted to rigorous Tapasya and pleased Vishnu Deva who blessed Dhruva to make him a Pole Star on the sky]; Dhruva became the fulcrum of all the planets and Stars bound to him by the might of Vayu Deva thus controlling all the Luminaries; all the Celestial Beings like Sun- Moon-other Planets are thus controlled by Dhruva). Clasped firmly by rows of winds thus, Dhruva regulates the movements of the luminaries and their cohesion, differences, timings, schedules, risings and settings; forebodings, Dakshinaayana-Uttaraayana-Vishuvats/ Equinoxes and Solistices. Dhruva is also responsible to rainfalls, high temperature, snowfalls, days and nights, twilights, and so on. Prompted by Dhruva, Surya Deva receives water from various sources by the aid of his powerful rays, passes it on to Chandra Deva and with the interaction of the Powerful Wind God materialises clouds and thus create rains and the emergent water to one and all. Thus water is recycled and again and Again. At no stage thus there would be disturbances in the supply of water. Suta Muni states : *Na naasha Udaka -syaasti tadeva parivartatey, Sandhaaranaartham LokaanalmMaayaisha Vishwa nirmitaa/ Anayaa Maayaya Vyaptam Trailokyam cha Charaacharam, Vishvesho Lokakruddevah Sahasraakshah Prajaapatih/* (There cannot be total destruction of water resource in the Universe as it gets transformed again again to preserve all the Beings. Parmatma created Maya to protect the Three Worlds always). Indeed it was the Almighty who ensured that Surya provided radiance to one and all and likewise supply coolness from Chandra; these are the two major sources of virility or the power of procreation to humanity and other beings. Aside from the mutual coordination of Surya and Chandra, there are other sources of water like Ganges, other great Rivers and a number of Water-Bodies including Oceans. The heat generated by the sharp rays of Surya on the water on Earth gets converted as water fumes and travels up to the skies which eventually generate **Clouds**. The water content of the clouds turns into rains by the interaction of Winds for the welfare of all the ‘Charachara Jagat’ or the mobile and immobile Beings on Earth. Invariably, rains occur in scheduled Rithus or Seasons. The sounds of thunders occur due to the animations of wind likewise lightnings occur due to Agni. There are three kinds of Clouds: ‘Agneyaas’ or the fiery ones, ‘Brahmajas’ or those born of Brahma and ‘Pakshajas’ or those born of wings. Agneyas originate from heat producing vapour and occur on cold days creating images of elephants, boars and buffalos wandering on skies; they are known as ‘Jeemutaas’ devoid of lightnings with showers ranging from one to two Kilometres. Brahmajas are stated due to Brahma’s breathing and are coupled with lightnings and rumblings of thunders causing freshness in air and facilitating sproutings on Earth; these clouds are carried by Vayu ‘Pravaha’ or fierce winds capable of continuous and heavy rains of long ranges upto ten to twelve km of distance. These clouds are

called 'Pushkaravardhanas' causing heavy down pours with reverberating thunders. The third variety of clouds is 'Antyakalpas' which are the most violent and of unbearable magnitude of sound as though the Cosmic Egg was breaking. 'Parjanya' / 'Diggaja' the other variety of Meghas are conducive to the growth of vegetation and crops and shower mist in winter. 'Parivaha' is yet another type of cloud arising out of the winds from the Sacred 'Akasha Ganga' on the firmament materialised as snow drops on Himalayas benefiting herbs and crops of grains.

**Surya Ratha:** Surya Deva travels by a Golden Chariot with a single wheel, five spokes, three nabhis or naves, single rim with six phases, two pole shafts called two Ayanas or transits called Uttarayana and Dakshinayana, with a girth and extent of ten thousand yojanas driven by seven green horses called 'Sapta Chandas' or Vedic Meters viz. Gayatri, Trishtubh, Anushtubh, Jagati, Pankti, Brihati, and Ushnik. Each day of the week is considered as the nave of a single wheel; the 'Artavaas' are the five spokes and the Rithus or the rim. The wheel of the chariot is fixed to its axis and is anchored to Dhruva who propels the chariot to move in the Orbit. The Chariot is occupied by designated sets of Devas, Adityas, Maharshis, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Gramanas and Serpents during each Ritu or Season. During Madhu and Madhava Maasas or Chaitra and Vaishakha months for instance, the representative Devas situated on the Chariot are Dhata and Aryama; the Munis are Pulastya and Pulaha; Prajapati; the Serpents are Vasuki and Iravata; Rakshasas Kharsha and Bhima; Yakshas Rathakrut and Rathoujasa; Gandhavas Tumbura and Narada; Apsaras Susthala and Punjakasthala and Gramanas Heti and Praheti. Like wise, in each set of two months, the designated representatives reside on the Chariot and enhance the significance of Surya Deva by ascribing their positive traits to him; Devas provide their own characteristics to Surya; Munis render Stotras to him; Gandharvas and Apsaras sing and dance for him; Gramanas, Yakshas and Rakshasas worship the Sun rays and the Valakhilya Sages lead him proceeding ahead of him. Thus Devas accord their own strengths to Surya, Maharshis provide their Tapobala or the power of their meditation to him, and like wise all others on and around the chariot pass on their virtues, capabilities and positive characteristics to him; they would enhance rains, provide coolness, provide fertility, lessen the influence of the Evil to the Living Beings and augment auspicious to the 'Praja' (Public) all around during their respective time slots of two months of their stay on the Chariot.

**Chandra Ratha:** The chariot of Moon has three wheels driven by ten horses with the colour of white jasmine flowers and the horses are called Yajur, Chandamanasa, Vrisha, Vaaji, Nara, Haka, Gavishna, Hamsa, Vyoma and Mriga. The Chandra Ratha passes through the Star-Way towards Dhruva's grip. Chandra is accompanied by Devas and Pitru Devatas; white serpents are circled on the wheels of his chariot. Though lean and thin, his chariot's horses have unending stamina and have the speed of a person's thoughts. At the end of Krishna Paksha and at the beginning of Shukla Paksha, Surya would be in the opposite situation of Chandra and would gradually fill up Chandra with his virility. As Devatas absorb Chandra's brightness, the latter would be left with only Kala out of sixteen Kalaas / features by the fifteenth day of the fortnight. One of Surya's bright ray called Sushumna fills up with Chandra and the latter improves his splendour. Thus during the Krishna Paksha, Chandra's illumination gets reduced and in Sukla Paksha, his Kalaas get enhanced by Surya's virility. In the Krishna Paksha from Vidiya or the second day upto Chaturdasi or the Fourteenth day, Devatas absorb the water form of Chandra's Rasa (Juice) which is Amrita or Nectar-like as that is the food of Devatas. Along with Devas, **Pitru Devas** also consume the Sudha Rasa on the Purnima day. It is stated that as many as three thirty crore Devas plus absorb the Soma Rasa daily upto Amavasya and Pitru Devas surround Chandra and consume the left over Soma Rasa by the mid-day of Amavasya to their full satisfaction. The Pitru Devas are of three types viz.

Sowmyas, Barhishadas, and Agnishwaads. Kavyaas are also known as Piratas but they are ‘Samvatsarakaas’ or ‘Panchabdaas’ or those who return by the Year ends. Sowmyas are of the Form of Ritus and Barhidas are of the Form of Maasaas or months; Agnishwaads are also called Artavaas who are engaged in Pitru Deva Srishti.

**Chariots of other Grahas:** **Budha** is the illustrious son of Chandra who is known for his ‘Sowmyata’ or placidity and his chariot is like of the characteristics of water and its transparency and of wisdom. **Bhargava (Shukra)** is an Emblem of Prosperity, Brilliant like Surya, possessive of the Voice of Clouds, a ‘Pataaka’ or Flag and a ‘Dhwaja’. His chariot has ten horses generated from Bhumi and has variegated colours of brightness; the horses are smart and of the speed of winds. The Chariot of **Kuja (Bhauma)** has eight horses generated from Agni possessive of ‘Vidyut Kanti’ or of Electric Light; his horses have knack of running forward and backward or clock-wise and anti clock-wise as also straight. Angirasa Vamsodbhava **Brihaspati** the Guru of Devas and Rishis has a Golden chariot set with eight Divine horses that could run as fast as wind. **Shani Deva** has a chariot made of iron drawn by mighty horses born of firmament moving at a slow speed. **Rahu** is carried by a dark chariot drawn by eight black horses tied together only once ever. Having left Surya, Rahu reaches Chandra on Amavasyas and Purnimas; Chandra travels to Surya on Amavasyas and that is called Suryendu Sangama or the union of Surya and Chandra. **Ketu** has a chariot of eight horses that could as fast as Vayu and these have Dhumra Varna or of the colour of burnt smoke of grass; these horses have the colour of donkeys with red tinge. Now, all the Planets are fastened to Dhruva, including Sun and Moon. It is believed that any kind of sins that human and other Beings tend to commit consciously or inadvertently are vanished once Dhruva’s vision is viewed on the Sky.

Reverting back to **Simsumara** or the Dolphin-like Formation on the Sky, its limb-wise description is as under: *Aouttaanpadastasyaatha vijneyo hyutturo hanuh, Yajnaha parastu vigjneyo Dharmo Murthaanamaashritah/ Hridi Narayanah Saadhyohyaswinow purvapaadayoh, Varunaschaaryama chaiva Paschimey tasya Sakthini/ Shishnam Samvatsarastasya Mitropaanam samaashritah, Puccheegnisha Mahendrascha Maarichah Kashyapo Dhurvah/ Taarakaah Sishumaarasya naastam yaanti chatushtayam, Nakshatra Chandra Suryascha Grahaastaraaganaih sah/ Unmukhaa Vimukhaah Sarvey Vakribhutaah Shritaadivi, Dhruvenaadhishthaaschaiva Dhuvameva pradakshinam/ Pariyaanteeshwara sreshtham medibhutam Dhruvam divi, Agnindrakashyapaanaam tu Charamosou Dhrhuvah smritah/ Eka yeva bhranmatyasha Meruparvata murdhani, Jyotishaam Chakrametaddhi gadaa karshannavaan mukhah/ Merumaalokayatyasha paryantey hi pradakshinam/Aouttanapaada* as his upper jay , Yagna Deva as the lower jay and Dharma Deva as the head; Narayana as his heart; Ashwini Kumars as his forelegs; Varuna and Aryama were his inner thighs; Samvatsara is his private part and Mitra his anus; Mahendra, Maricha and **Dhruva** are in his tail. The Four Stars in the Milky Way never set; Nakshatras, Chandra, Surya, Grahas, Taraa-ganas or constellations of Stars are faced up or down or curved; they are all presided by Dhruva and go around him. Dhruva is the principal hinge in the heavens next only to Indra, Agni and Kashyapa. On top of the Meru, Dhruva pulls one and all towards him and circumambulates the Great Meru Mountain).

Brahmanda Purana also describes Surya as the Sourer, Sapta Rashmis, Abodes of Planets, Sizes of Planets, Planet Positions during the Ayanas and Planets and Nakshatras: **Surya the Sourcer** : Surya Deva is the originator of Moon, Stars and Planets. Chandra is the Chief of Nakshatras and Surya is the King of Grahas. Angaraka Graha or the Planet of Mars is stated to be Skanda the Commander-in-Chief of Devas.

Budha is stated to be of Narayana's Amsha. Yama is of Rudra's Form and is also the son of Vivaswanta or Surya Deva himself. Shani Deva is a significant Planet of slow pace but very dominant. The other two prominent Planets of Shukra and Brihaspati are the Mentors of Asuras and Devas respectively. --- *Adityamula makhilam Trailokyam naatra samshayaha/ Bhavatyasmaa Jagatkrustram Sadevaasura maanusham, Rudropendreyndrachandraanaam Viprendraastri-divoukasam/ Dyutrir -dyutimataam krutnam yattejah Sarva loukikam/ Sarvaatmaa Sarva Lokesho Maha Devah Prajaapatih/ Surya yeva triloukasya mulam Parama Daivatam, Tatah Sanjaayatey Sarvam tatra chaiva Praliyatey/ Bhaavaabhaavouhi Lokaanaamaadityaa trihsrutou puraa, Jagajjeyo Graho Vipraa Deepti - maanaasuprabho Ravih/* ( It is doubtless indeed that Aditya is the source of the entirety of Three Lokas. The whole Universe of Devas, Asuras and Manushyaas is originated from Surya; the grandeur and glory of Rudra, Vishnu, Mahendra and Chandra, Devas and Luminaries is all due to Surya. He is the Soul, the Lord, Prajapati and the highest of all who is the Creator and Destroyer of Everything. The very existence or otherwise of the Totality is due to him).

The **Sapta Rashmis** or the Seven Rays of Surya are Sushumna, Hariksha, Vishwakarma, Vishwashrava, Sampadvasu, Arvavasu and Swaraat. Sushumna resuscitates the waning Moon and spreads up and sideways; Hariksha which is in the front of Surya is the originator of Nakshatras; to the South of Surya is Vishwakarma which sustains Budha or Jupiter; Vishwashrama from the western side of Sun is the originator of Shukra or Venus and promotes the cause of Panditas or the Learned Human beings; Sampadsawa Rashmi of Surya is the originator of Kuja; the sixth Rashmi Arvvasu is the birth place of Brihaspati and the seventh Rashmi Swaraat is the originator of Saturn. All the Planets and Stars exist due to the magnificence of Surya Deva. Nakshatra literally means that it has no decadence and it is called Taraka as it redeems the Punya of those persons who performed extraordinary deeds.

**Abodes of Planets:** Through out various Manvantaras, the Abodes of various Planets are fixed and permanent. They are named after each one of them like Soura Sthaana or the Abode of Surya, Sowmya Sthana (Abode of Chandra), Shukra Sthana, Brihaspati (Jaiva) Sthana, Lohita Sthana (Kuja), Shanaischara Sthana, Budha Sthana, Swarbhanu (Rahu) Sthana, and Jyotirgana or Nakshatra Sthanaas. In the current Vaivaswata Manvantara, the Planets are called 'Vaitanikas'. Aditi's son Vivaswanta is Surya; Dharma's son Twishi the Vasu is called Chandra; belonging to Shukra Vamsha, the Rakshasa Guru Shukra is famed as Yajna Yaajaka for the Daanavaas; Angiras's son Brihatteaja or Brihaspati is popular as Deva Guru; Twishi's son Budha is also reckoned as a virtuous Graha; Sanjna and Surya's son Shanaischara is in his abode too; Lohita or Kuja was born to Vikesi Devi and Agni Deva; The Stars called Rikshas are known as the daughters; and Rahu the son of Devi Simhika also called Swarbhanu is the originator of troubles. The Abode of Surya is full of Agni and white where as Twishi or Chandra is full of water and white; Budha or Mercury who is Pancha Kirana or of Five Rays too is full of water and of dark colour; Shukra Sthaana is a Lotus again with water and has sixteen Rays; Kuja also is full of water but of blood red colour; Brihaspati has a big Place and watery in green colour with twelve rays; Saturn has eight rays of black colour and Jalamaya or full of water; and Rahu Sthaana is of dark colour and is the tormentor of Praanis or Beings. All the Nakshatras are 'jalamayas' or full of water and of white colour glittering with illumination thanks to Surya Deva and these Stars were as old as Kalpa and are shiny due to the interaction of Surya. Now, the '**Sizes of Planets:** Surya's diameter is stated to be nine thousand yojanas and its circumference is three times more. Chandra's circumference three double that of Surya's. Rahu's circumferenc is equal to that of Sun and Moon. Rahu rotates underneath both Surya and Chandra. Taking after the spherical nature of Earth's shadow, Rahu's form too is spherical full of darkness. From

his abode full of darkness Rahu comes out of Sun during festive days like the New Moon and Full Moon and proceeds to Moon. During Solar Festive days, Rahu goes back to Sun from Moon. Shukra Mandala is one-sixteenth of Chandra Mandala and Brihaspati is one-fourth of that of Shuka. Kuja and Saturn occupy three fourths of Brihaspati while Budha is three fourths of Kuja or Saturn. Stars are of the size of Budha. Stars are normally associated with Chandra and the former are some five hundred yojanas or lesser distance from each other although the minimum distance from each other one and half yojana; in other words, there is no Nakshatra of less than one and half yojana. There are as many Stars on the sky as there are constellations.

**Positions of Planets in ‘Ayanas’:** Surya’s travel depends on the Ayana; in Uttarayana Chandra’s movement looks faster than that of Surya because the former happens to be on a higher position compared to that of Surya. While in Dakshinayana Sun takes to the lower elevation compared to Bhumi; It is aligned with the line of Earth or horizon during the New Moon and Full moon days though not normally visible regularly. On a New Moon day, Moon stationed in the Northern path becomes visible on the Southern path. Only on the Vishu days or Equinotical days, Sun Set and Moon Rise are at the same time but not otherwise. In the Dakshinayana, Surya is positioned under all the Planets: Moon orbits above Sun and so does the entire Galaxy of Stars; Budha orbits above the Chandra; Shukra orbits above Budha; Kuja orbits above Shukra; and Guru orbits above Kuja and Shani orbits above Guru. The Sapta Rishi Mandala or the Great Bear is above Shani and Dhruva or the Pole Star is situated above the Sapta Rishis. It is stated that the distance from the Nakshatras and the Planets is two lakh yojanas.

**Planets and Nakshatras:** The various Nakshatra Mandalis or Star Constellations responsible for the beginnings of the various Planets were narrated by Suta Maha Muni quoting Veda Vyasa as follows: Vivaswan the son of Aditi was Sun the first Planet was born in the Constellation of Vishakha. Chandra or Tvisimam the son of Dharma originated in Krittika. Shukra the son of Bhrigu Maharshi was born in Tishya or Pushya. Brihaspati, the Deva Guru and the son of Angirasa Maharshi was born in the constellation of Purva Phalguni. Kuja Deva the son of Prajapati is lit up with nine ‘Agni Jwaalas’ was born from the Star Constellation of Purvashadha. Shani Deva the son of Surya is full of seven Flames of Fire was born in Revati ‘Nakshatra Mandali’. Budha Deva the son of Chandra too has five fires of illumination and was born of Dhanishta. Rahu the enemy Surya and Chandra of Tamasic trait was born in Bharani while Ketu the son of Mrityu who was full of darkness at his abode was born to Aslesha Constellation; his characteristic is known for destruction and death. As Rahu and Ketu were born in these Stars, those humans born in these Stars do have evil effects during the specified Nakshatras and would do well to worship the respective Stars and Almighty as well to ward off the impact. In sum, Aditya is the Prime Planet; Shukra is the Prime of Taraagrahas; Ketu is the Prime of meteors; Dhruva is the Prime fulcrum of all Luminaries scattered in all directions; Shravishta (Dhanishtha) is the best of Nakshatras; Uttaraayana is the Prime Ayana; Sisira is the Prime of Rithus; Magha is the best of ‘Maasaas’ or Months; Shukla is the Prime of the Pakshas or Fortnights; Pratipat is the Prime Tithi; between Day and Night, the Day is better of the two; and the best of Muhurtas is that which is governed by Rudra Deva. Among ‘Kala Pramanaas’ or the Measurements of Time, the best indeed is ‘Nimesha’. The best Pancha Varsha or the Period of Five Years called a ‘Yuga’ is what starts from Dhanishta to Shravana. Indeed, Divakara is identified as ‘Kaala’ or the ‘Chaturvidha Bhuta Pravartaka’ or the Top Controller of Time. Indeed, this Universe is made and managed by Paramatma; and the Science of Jyotisha is unfathomable by those who could very well see and think: *Aagamaadanumaanaas –cha pratyakshaadupa pattitah, Pareekshya Nipunam Buddhayaa Shradhaatavyam vipaascitaa/ Chakshush Shastram Jalam Lekhyam Ganitam*

*Buddhivittamaah, Panchaitey hetao Vipraa Jyotirganana vivechaney/* (No human being could grasp or even guess the Form, Substance, Feature, Position and Movement of the Extra-Terrestrial Entities by mere vision. One has to perceive, guess, imagine and believe by various media like Scriptures, Interpretation, discernment and logic. The possible means are vision, water, picturisation and computation.)

Narada Purana describes in the context Astromomy and Astrology the Concept of Trikantha Jyotisha Shastra as follows: **Tri- Skandha Jyotisha Shastra:** In the Jyotisha Shastra, Skanda Muni emphasized three Skandhas viz. *Ganita (Siddhaanta), Jaataka, (Hora), and Samhita*. In Ganita there is Parikarma of Yoga, Antara, Gunana, Bhaajana, Varga, Vargamula, Ghana and Ghanamula; ways and means of finding Graha madhyama and clarity of positioning, ‘Anuyog’ or the Knowledge of Desha, Disha and Kaalamaana ie. Place, Direction and Time; Chandra Grahana, Surya Grahana, Udaya (Rise), Astama (Setting), Chhaadhikara (dusk), Chandra Shrugonnati or Dwiteeya’s Chandrodaya and Grahayuti (Graha’s Yoga). In the context of Jataka Skandha, description is given of Jaati Bheda (differences of Jaatis), Graha yoni or the details of Jaati, Rupa and Guna; Viniyonija (Janmaphala according to human beings), Garbhadaana, Janma, Arishta, Ayurdaaya or Life span, Dashaakrama or the details of Dashas, Karmaajeeva, Ashtaka Varga, Raja Yoga, Naabh sayoga, Chandra yoga, Pravrajyaa yoga, Rasi sheela, Anishta Yoga, Stree jaatakaphala, Mrityu vishay nirnaaya, Nashta-Janma-Vidhhana etc. As regards Samhityaskandha, details of Grahachara, Varsha Lakshana, Tithi, Dina, Nakshatra, Yoga, Karana, Muhurtha, UpaGraha, Surya Samkraanti, Graha gochara, Chandra bala / Taara bala, garbhadaana to Upanayana and Vivaha, Yatras, as also tatkaala vrishti gyan or of rainfall are described. Among the various aspects mentioned above, some are mentioned briefly as follows: ‘Sankhya bodhak Sanginas’ range from Eka (one), Dasha (tens), Shata (hundreds), Sahasra (thousands), Ayut (ten thousands), Laksha ( lakh), Prayuta (million), Koti (Crore), Arbud (ten crores), Abj (hundred crores or arab), Kharva (thousand crores or ten arabs), Nikharva (Kharva or one lakh crores), Maha Padma (one crore crores), Shankah (Neela / ten crore crores), Jaladhi (Ten Neela or hundred crore crores), Antya (Padma or one thousand crore crores), Paraartha (lakh crore crores) and so on. Ganitha Siddhantas were explained by Sanandana to Narada viz. Pari Karma (Yoga, Antara, Gunana, Varga, Vargamula, Ghana and Ghana Mula) ranging from addition or deletion of numericals, Gunana phala, ‘Varga Mula’ or Square Roots, ‘Ghana’ or multiplication of three numbers working out the ‘Ghana Mula’, Concepts of Hara or Bhajak (Divisor), Amsha or Bhajya (dividend) and Sesha or Remainder; finding out Varga Mula, usage of Viloma vidhi in ascertaining ‘rashi’ (Fund) etc. Referring to Kshetra Vyavahara, in a ‘Tribhuja’ or a right angle Triangle, the vertical is called ‘Koti’, ‘bhuja’ is the straight line across and ‘Karna’ is the (hypotenuse). If Koti is 4 and Bhuja is 3, the square of 4 is 16 and that of 3 is 9, then Karna is the total of the square roots of 16+9 or 25 and thus the value of Karna is 5. Again, in a Vritta Kshetra (Circle), if the Paridhi (Circumference) is 22 and the Vyas or diameter is 7 and both of these are multiplied and result is 154, its Chaturdhamsha or a quarter ie 38 1/2 is the Khetraphal. In the context of ‘Annadi Rashi’ for instance, the ‘Rashis’ are broadly reckoned as ‘Sthula’, ‘Madhyama’ and ‘Sukshma’ and their Parithis could be calculated as Shashthamsa, Navamamsha, Dasama -amsha and Ekadasas etc. on the basis of the quantity of land, the availability of water bodies with the details of length, width and depth; presence of stones and metallic content etc. Sanandana Maharshi then explained to Narada about the calculations of ‘Kaala, Desha and Disha viz. Time, Place and Directions. The total duration of Four ‘Yugas’ put together was stated to be thirty three lakh twenty thousand years, of which four times of Dashamsha was the duration of Satya Yuga viz. sixteen lakh twenty eight thousand. In the Dasamsha, one third of the duration

was of twelve lakh ninty six thousand years in Treta Yuga; Dwapara Yuga was of the duration of eight lakh sixty four thousand years, while Kali Yuga is only four lakh thirty thousand years. There are seventy one Chatur Yugas in one Manvantara. In Brahma's one day, there are fourteen Manvantaras and another fourteen Manvantaras are counted in his night additionally. In one Yuga, the Planets of Surya, Budha and Shukra (Sun, Mercury and Venus respectively) in the Eastern side, take a 'Bhagan' (Bhaga is Surya) as many as 4,320,000; Mangala, Shani and Brihaspati (Mars, Saturn and Jupiter also make such Bhaganas. Chandra (Moon) makes 577, 53,336 Bhaganas in a Yuga likewise. There are 157,79,17,828 Surya's one full day-night comencing from Sundays in a Maha Yuga measured in 'Soura mana', while the Moon day-nights from Mondays measured in 'Chandra mana' total up to 160,30,00,080 in a MahaYuga; this is to establish the difference in the Solar and Lunar Calendar day-nights viz.2,50,822 days. 'Adhika Maasa' is 15, 93,336 in a Maha Yuga, while 'Thikshaya' is 250, 82,252. Looked in terms of Solar Months, the number is 518, 40,000 where as Lunar Months are 534, 33,336- all in Maha Yuga. The methodologies of calculating were offered in respect of the current Yuga about Graha Gyana, Bhumi Paridhi Pramaana; positioning and speed of Grahas (Planets), Graha Vakreekarana or of negative influences and Kaala Gyana. '*Panchanga Sadhana*' or Tithi, Vaara, Nakshatra, Karana and Yoga determine the results of good or bad nature to a person. There are Nakshatra Dashas like Vimshottari Dasha, Ashtottari Dasha, Kala chakra Dasha, Yogini Dasha, etc. Also there are Rashi Dashas like Narayana Dasha, Ati Karaka Kendriya Dasha, Trikona Desha, as also Ayur Desha. In the context of determining *Karanams* or one half of Tithi or then time required for the angular distance between Moon and Sun; there are eleven Karanas viz four fixed ones called Kimshugna, Shakuni, Chatuspad and Naagava, besides repetitive Karanas viz. Bhaava, Kualava, Titula, Garaja, Vanaja, and Vishti. Karanam is active at the time of Sun Rise. Another important input relates to *Yoga* the angular distance along the eliptive view of any object on the sky (measured from Mesha or the start of Aries) called the longitude of an object when the longitudes of Sun and Moon are added; the result produced a value ranging from Zero degree to 360 degree and that is called Yogam, which is also active in the mornings. There are 27 Yogas like Visha Kamba, Preeti, Ayushman, Sowbhagya, Shobhana, Atiganda, Sukumara, Dhriti, Shula, Ganda, Vriddhi etc. *Ayanamsha Sadhana*: The word 'Ayana' denotes movement and 'Amsha' a component. Ananamsha bhaaga or portion is the amount of 'precession' or the orientation of the rotation axis of a rotating body. In astrology, this is a longitudinal difference between 'Sayana' (Tropical) and Nirayana (Sidereal) zodiacs. Ayanamsha is defined as the angle between the Sidereal ecliptic longitude of a celestial body and its tropical ecliptic longitude. According to Surya Siddhanta, Ananamsha rises from 0 degree to +27 degrees during 1800 years and decreases to 0 degree to -27 degree thus oscillating within a range of plus/minus 27 instead of cyclically moving in a circle. In astronomy, precession refers to several slow changes in an Astronomical body's rotational or orbital parameters especially in Earth's precession of Equinoxes. Periodical changes of Earth's orbital parameters combined with the precession of equinoxes and the inclinatin of Earth's axis on its orbit is a part of Astronomy. *Grana Sadhana*: *Chandra Grahana* (Lunar Eclipse) takes place on a Pournami and *Surya Grahana* (Solar Eclipse) on Amavasya and these are called Parvas. As 'Grahas' rotate on their own axis and perform Pradakshina (circumambulation) around Bhumi, that path is known as the 'Kasksha' or region of that Graha. Prithvi is far away from the Sun path and Chandra is nearer and is in between Surya and Prithvi. In the direction in which Surya travels, the shadow of Prithvi falls in the opposite direction of Surya's path and the length of the rotating shadow is equal to that distance. As Prithvi is round, the shadow of Chandra is also rounding, moving six 'Rashis' away from Surya. Chandra rotatating on its own axis moves along with Surya on the Southern Rekha (Line) and that time is known as Darshanta Kaala ie at the junction of the termination of Amavasya and the

beginning of Shukla Pratipada; similarly, when Surya reaches six Rashis ahead that time is Pournima. Thus Surya is shadowed by Chandra and Chandra is shadowed by the shadow of Prithvi; that is why during Surya Grahana, Surya is known as Chhadya or the shadow maker and Chandra is Chhadak; again, in Chandra Grahana, Chandra is Chhadya, Earth's shadow or Bhubha is Chhadak or Grahana Karta. The 'Vilambana' or the delay of time between the 'Chhadya' and 'Chhadak' is known as 'Chhanna' or 'graas'. Thus when Chandra is fully invisible, then the Lunar Eclipse is stated to be complete or 'Sarvagraas'. If Chandra grahana is a 'Khanda Grahana' or a partial eclipse, then Prithvi's shadow falls on Chandra to that extent. *Surya Grahana* (Solar Eclipse): When Chandra travels while in rotation between Surya and Prithvi and lies in the Southern direction under the level of Surya, that day when Sun rays fall on the top portion of Chandra, that night is called as Amavasya since Chandra's lower portion is invisible on Earth. It is on that Amavasya when Chandra comes in between Prithvi and Surya and Surya's 'bimba' disappears at a point of time, that particular Amavasya is stated to the time of Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse). As in the case of Lunar Eclipse, there might be Sarva graas or Khanda Graas of Solar Eclipse too. On Amavasya, Chandra's Chhaya falls towards Prithvi and in that Chhaya Bhubhubhagh falls and Surya bimba disappears; the extent of disappearance denotes the full or partial Solar Eclipse. Maharshi Sanandana explained to Narada Muni the methodology of calculating the exact time and duration of the Eclipses as also the general impact on various other Grahas. The belief in Puranas that Rahu was responsible for the Eclipses as he was annoyed at the successful attempts made by Surya and Chandra to dismember him, although succeeded to secure 'Amrit' and as a result accomplished the status of Grahas, was not unfounded; it is believed that Rahu was dismembered from one entity into two as Rahu and Ketu and Lord Brahma set up Rahu in the shadow of Chandra and Ketu in the shadow of Prithvi and appointed them as Grahas (Planets); while Rahu and Ketu were positioned as the shadows nearby to Surya and Chandra respectively and were thus stated to be responsible for the Eclipses. *Dik Sadhana*: If a concrete platform is made and a 'Shankha' is erected at a central point, mark a 'Vrittha' (circle) with twelve equidistant portions from the centre drawn to the periphery, keep marking twelve 'dots' after every two hours, observing Sun's direction from the Sun-Rise point and the Sun-Fall, it is not difficult to locate the Dishas/Upa Dishas (directions), indicating the twelve Rashis, [viz. Mesha (Aries), represented by Ram, Fire and Mars; Vrishabha, represented by Bull, Earth, and Venus; Mithuna (Gemini), represented by a Couple, Air and Mercury; Karkataka (Cancer), represented by Crab, Water and Moon; Simha (Leo) represented by Lion, Fire and Sun; Kanya (Virgo) represented by Virgin, Earth and Mercury; Tula (Libra) represented by a Balance, Air and Venus; Vrishchika (Scorpio) represented by Water and Mars; Dhanus (Sagittarius) represented by a Bow, Fire and Jupiter; Makara (Capricorn) represented by Alligator, Earth and Saturn; Kumbha (Aquarius) represented by Pot, Air and Saturn and Meena (Pisces) represented by Fish, Water and Jupiter]. The Dashas and Upa Dashas respectively are North East (Ishana) representing Varuna or Water full of beneficial Energy; East (Poorva) ruled by Indra indicating for Authority and Contentment; South East (Agneya) represented by Agni / Fire and Energy; Dakshina (South) ruled by Yama and standing for Dharma and Death; South West (Niruti) ruled by Nocturnal Deity known for Sleep, Fame and Income; West (Paschim) is ruled by Varuna for Water/ Rain and 'Karma' / fate; North West (Vayavya) ruled by Vayu Deva standing for intellect, business and name; North (Kubera) known for prosperity and Career; Brahma is the Centre for Power and Creativity.

Dharma Sidhu details about Grahanaas: **Grahanaas:** *Grahana Nirnaya:* As long as one could vision Chandra and Surya Grahanaas (Eclipses), one would reckon as the Punya Kaala or the auspicious time. Even if the Grahana were not visible due to the obstruction of clouds or so, even then on the basis of the information available as per the calculation of 'Shashtraas' about the 'Sparsha' (beginning) and Moksha

(end), one should observe the required ‘Snaana-Daanaas’. Surya Grahana on Sundays and Chandra Grahana on Mondays are called ‘Chudaamani’ and ‘Daanaadi Karyaas’ bestow endless Punya. One should take bath for ‘Baahyaantara Shuchi’ or external and internal cleanliness as soon as the Grahana Sparsha or the First Touch; during the course of the Grahana, one should perform Homa-Devarchana-and Shraaddha. When Grahana is receding, then Daanaas are required to be executed and at the time of Moksha, one should take bath once again; the bath at the ‘Sparsha Kaala’ and Moksha Kaala are of distinct waters; the Mukti Snaana is defined as follows: *Sheetamushnodakaat punyamapaarakyam parodakaat, Bhumishthamudhrataa punyam tata prasravanodakam/ Tatopisaara sampunyam tatah punyam Nadi jalam, Tatastirthanadi Gangaa Punyaa punyastombhudhi/* (Cold water bath is more propitious than with hot water; better bathe with one’s own water; fresh water from the depths of Bhumi is better from well water exposed and stored; water from a flowing water is better than in a waterbody; Tirtha water like Ganga is better than that of a from a river; and bathing in Samudra water is by far better than even a river like Ganges!). Grahana Snaana should be with the same clothing as during the Grahana and then only the bath would be stated as Mukti Snaana; that bath need not be by reciting Mantras. ‘Suvasini Strees’ or house wives who have their husbands alive could have neck-deep bath but those women who like to be purer to take head- bath do have the option to do so. Those women who are in the menstrual stage should keep her utensils seperated and should not squeeze her wet clothes after the bath. Fasting three days before or atleast one day before would bestow ‘Maha Phala’ but those Grihastis with sons and daughters need to take up the fast. But they should perform Deva-Pitru Tarpana. Persons of all the ‘Chatur Varnaas’ should wet the clothes after an Eclipse as they would be subject to the regulations of ‘jaataadi sutaka’ or ‘Ashuchi’ / impurity of births and deaths as they would have been deemed as having visioned the Rahu Graha: *Sarveshaametavarnaanaam sutakam Rahu Darshaney*. During the ‘Grahana Kaala’, Go-Bhu-Hiranyaadi Daanaas would accord far-reaching benefits. It is stated: *Sarvam Gangaa samam toyam, Sarvey Vyaasa samaah Dwijaah, Sarvam Bhumi samam daanam grahaney Chandra Suryayoh/* (On occasions like Lunar or Solar Eclipses, all kinds of waters are like Ganga water; all Brahmanas are like Vyasaacharya; and all kinds of charity are as good as Bhu daana). Describing the effectiveness of Daana, it is stated: *Samanu -braahmaney daanam dwigunam Braahmanbruvey, Shrotriye shata saahasram paatreya chaanantya mashnutey/*( Offering greetings / namaskaaraas to a Brahmana by birth might be misplaced but providing charity to a ‘Dwija’ or twice-born who has the qualification of Samskaaraas like Upanayana or thread marriage and Gayatri Mantra secures better Punya; a Brahmana who has the Samskaaras but devoid of Vedaadhyayana is called a Brahmanabruva but still charity to him would be worthy of hundred times more; charity to a well read Brahmana ‘Srotriya’ or he who follows the Brahmana Dharmaas in full spirit and practice would fetch Ananta Punya). Grahana Shraaddha should be done with suitable Dakshina and possibly with Ghrita yukta bhojana followed by Mantra Punascharana; the relevant Mantra states: *Chandra Suryoparaagey cha snaatwaa purvamuposhitah, Sparshaadi Moksha paryantam Japenmantram samaahitah, Japaadashaam shato homastathatha homaaccha tappanam, Homaashaktou japamkuryaatdhoma sankhya chaturgunam/* (One should discard bhojana well before the Grahana , take bath at the ‘Sparsha’ or touch of the Grahana and its ‘Moksha’ or termination and perform ‘Japa’ althrough the Grahana Kaala. Out of the ‘Japa Sankhya’ (number) so performed, one tenth of the Sankhya should be the homa sankhya and one-tenth of the homa sankhya should be the Tarpana sankhya. In case, one cannot perform Homa and Tarpana, the Japa sankhya may be quadrupled. In case tarpana is performed then they should first recite the Mula (Root) Mantra and then recite :*Amukaam Devataam tyarpayaami* and offer palms-full of water and again sprinkle water on one’s head reciting: *Amukaam devataamahabhishinchaami/* before the Tarpana at the rate of one tenth of the tarpana; this would be followed by Brahmana bhojana to the extent of one tenth of the Brahmanas engaged for the bhojana-daana-dakshinas. Thus the entire process of Japa-Homa-Tarpana- Maarjana-Vipra bhojana comprising the five components is called ‘Punascharana’ following Surya / Chandra Grahana Darshana. The Punascharana Mantra vidhana is as follows :- Before Grahana Sparsha, the Karta takes Snaana and Aasana and recites the Mantra : *Amukagotromuka Sharmaaham Raahugrasteey Divaakarey Nishaakarey vaa Amuka Devataayaa ; Amuka Mantra siddhi Kaamograasaadi mukti paryanta mamuka Mantrasya Japa Rupam purascharanam karishye/* (The Sankalpa states that I-of the

gotra-naama solemnly resolve that the entire period during the Touch and Termination of the Solar/ Lunar Eclipse period will observe Mantra-Japa- Purascharana). The Mantra after Grahana Moksha and performing Snaanaadi nitya karmaas would resolve by reciting : *Amuka Mantrasya kritaitadgrahana kaali Kaamukasankhyaaka Japa saangataa siddhyartham taddasaanga homa taddasaanga tarpana taddasaanga maarjana taddasaanga Vipra bhojanaani karishye/* After the Sankalpa, one might perform the seriatum of the Sankalpa failing which the Japa to the extent of four times of the original Japa sankhya be recited. Those who are unable to perform the Purascharana as above might at least recite Ishta Devata Prayer and Gayatri Japa.

*Do's and Dont's at the Grahana Kaala:* Sleeping during the time of Eclipse leads to illnesses. Passing urine ends up in poverty and bad luck. Easing the stomach (Stools) leads to the life of 'krimis' in the following birth. 'Maithuna' lands up as a pig in the next birth. Head bath during the Eclipse period leads a person to leprosy and Bhojana in the time paves way to naraka. Eating the remnants of bhojana cooked before or during the Grahana Kaala is prohibited as would lead to stomach and digestive problems and similarly drinking even water would tell upon the system. However, the carry forward storage of curd, milk, butter, ghee, unused oil and such other uncooked stocks might be consumed after the Grahana but should be duly covered by 'Dharbha Khandaas' as would be protected by the rays of Sun or Moon in grahana. 'Garbha Strees' women during conception ought to protect themselves from the fall of the rays as there had been several evidences of the babies born thereafter suffering from physical deformities.

*Grahana Vedhi Vichara:* In the case of Surya Grahana, there would be a Vedha or time difference of four Yaama Kaalaas (each day or night has eight yaamaas or four praharas and each yaama has seven and half ghadis) and in respect of Chandra Grahana the Vedha would be three Yaamaas. Thus, if Surya grahana is in the early morning, then nothing should be consumed for four yaamas before. If the Surya Grahana is scheduled in the second yaama of the day, then any consumption before two yaamas is prohibited. Likewise if Chandra grahana is in the first yaama of a night, then bhojana is to be avoided during the day's last two yaamaas before the eclipse. Exceptions are provided however in respect of children or the Old persons and in their case, bhojana is allowed upto one yaama or 6-8 ghadis therebefore. A capable person who eats during the Vedha kaala should atone by keeping fast for three successive nights. Grahana kaalaa bhojana attracts 'Praajaapatya Kruccha Prayaschitta'. Again, if Surya and Chandra secure redemption only after their normal setting times or at the time of their day or night terminations respectively (Sunset or Moon Set), it is stated that they are in a stage of 'grasta' or dormancy; in that case one is required to take bath and purify to vision the full 'bimba' or globe on the next day and then only take food.

*Janma raashi phalas of Grahanaas and Daana Vidhis/regulations:* The Janma Raashi impact of Grahanaas on individuals is as follows:- *Swajanma Raashestruteeya Shashthaikaadasha Dashama Raashisthitam Grahanaam Shubhapradam, Dwiteeya Saptama Navama Panchama Sthaaneshu Madhyamam, Janma Chaturthaashthama Dwaadasha Raashi Sthitamanishthapradam/* (Grahanaas coinciding with the third, sixth, tenth and eleventh Raashis bestow 'Shubhapradam' or auspiciousness. If the Janma Raashi is in the Second, Seventh, Ninth and Fifth Places then the impact is medium. But if Grahanaas fall on the fourth, eighth, and twelfth Raashis, then the effect is 'Anishtha' or bad.

[ Incidentally, the Raashi positions are as follows: Mesha (Aries), Vrishabha (Taurus), Mithuna (Gemini), Karkataka (Cancer), Simha (Leo), Kanya (Virgo), Tula (Libra), Vrishchika (Scorpio), Dhanush (Sagittarius), Makara (Capricorn), Kumbha (Aquarius) and Meena (Pisces)]. As the impact of Grahanaas on specified Janma Raashis and Janma Nakshatras is adverse then Raashi-Graha-Nakshatra 'Shanti' ( pacification) would correct the possible effects as per the Instructions of Gargaachaarya; if the perscribed Shaanti is not within one's reach, atleast 'Bimba Daana' may be performed. The procedure is to prepare Chandra Bimba (Globe-like Swarupa) or Surya Bimba in Silver as also Naaga Bimbaas in gold and place the two bimbas viz. Chandra or Surya and of Naaga representing Rahu graha in a Copper

or Kaasya Paatraas (Vessels) filled with ghee and Tilas or Sesame seeds wrapped in Vastra (Cloth) and Dakshina (fees) and invoke Chandra or Surya as the case may be and Rahu graha stating: *Mama Janma Raashi Janma Nakshatra sthitaamuka grahana suchita sarvaarishta shaanti purvakamekaadasha sthaana sthita grahana suchita Shubha phala praaptaye bimba daanam karishye/* Thus giving away the Daana with the above 'Sankalpa' to a well-read Brahmana, the following prayer be recited: *Tamomaya Maha Bhima Soma Suryo vimardana, Hema Taara pradaanena mama Shanti Prado bhava/ Vidhun tuda namastubhyam Simhikaanandanaachyuta, Daaney naanena Naagasya rakshamaam vedhajaadbhayaat/*

(Andhakaaramaya! Maha Bhayankara! Rahu Deva! You have the ability of beating up even Surya and Chandra! You provide happiness to your mother Simhika Devi; Achyuta or the Undiminishable; as I make this obeisance by offering this Naga Bimba at the time of the Grahana, do relieve me of the Grahana Vedha and provide me security and destroy my fears). This procedure is valid for those affected by those born in the twelfth, eighth and fourth Raashis. Such persons affected by the Grahana should not vision the Chandra or Surya Bimba in any case.

[Narada Purana describes as to how Chandra-Surya Grahanaas take place; the Essence of the relevant Chapter on Grahanaas in brief is as follows: Chandra Grahana (Lunar Eclipse) takes place on a Pournami and Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse) on Amavasya and these are called Parvas. As 'Grahas' rotate on their own axis and perform Pradakshina (circumambulation) around Bhumi, that path is known as the 'Kasksha' or region of that Graha. Prithvi is far away from the Sun path and Chandra is nearer and is in between Surya and Prithvi. In the direction in which Surya travels, the shadow of Prithvi falls in the opposite direction of Surya's path and the length of the rotating shadow is equal to that distance. As Prithvi is round, the shadow of Chandra is also rounding, moving six 'Rashis' away from Surya. Chandra rotating on its own axis moves along with Surya on the Southern Rekha (Line) and that time is known as Darshanta Kaala ie at the junction of the termination of Amavasya and the beginning of Shukla Pratipada; similarly, when Surya reaches six Rashis ahead that time is Pournima. Thus Surya is shadowed by Chandra and Chandra is shadowed by the shadow of Prithvi; that is why during Surya Grahana, Surya is known as Chhadya or the shadow maker and Chandra is Chhadak; again, in Chandra Grahana, Chandra is Chhadya, Earth's shadow or Bhubha is Chhadak or Grahana Karta. The 'Vilambana' or the delay of time between the 'Chhadya' and 'Chhadak' is known as 'Chhanna' or 'graas'. Thus when Chandra is fully invisible, then the Lunar Eclipse is stated to be complete or 'Sarvagraas'. If Chandra grahana is a 'Khanda Grahana' or a partial eclipse, then Prithvi's shadow falls on Chandra to that extent.

Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse): When Chandra travels while in rotation between Surya and Prithvi and lies in the Southern direction under the level of Surya, that day when Sun rays fall on the top portion of Chandra, that night is called as Amavasya since Chandra's lower portion is invisible on Earth. It is on that Amavasya when Chandra comes in between Prithvi and Surya and Surya's 'bimba' disappears at a point of time, that particular Amavasya is stated to be the time of Surya Grahana (Solar Eclipse). As in the case of Lunar Eclipse, there might be Sarva graas or Khanda Graas of Solar Eclipse too. On Amavasya, Chandra's Chhaya falls towards Prithvi and in that Chhaya Bhubhubhagh falls and Surya bimba disappears; the extent of disappearance denotes the full or partial Solar Eclipse. Maharshi Sanandana explained to Narada Muni the methodology of calculating the exact time and duration of the Eclipses as also the general impact on various other Grahas. The belief in Puranas that Rahu was responsible for the Eclipses as he was annoyed at the successful attempts made by Surya and Chandra to dismember him, although succeeded to secure 'Amrit' and as a result accomplished the status of Grahas, was not unfounded; it is believed that Rahu was dismembered from one entity into two as Rahu and Ketu and Lord Brahma set up Rahu in the shadow of Chandra and Ketu in the shadow of Prithvi and appointed them as Grahas (Planets); while Rahu and Ketu were positioned as the shadows nearby to Surya and Chandra respectively and were thus stated to be responsible for the Eclipses. ]

## UPANISHADS

Note: The extracts from Upanishads refer not only to Prithvi but all the Pancha Bhutas.

### Brihadaranyaka:

I.i.1) *Om/ Ushaa vaa ashwasya medhyasya shirah, Suruyaschakshuh Vaatah Praanah Vyaattaragnir-vaishwaanarah Samvatsara Atmaashwasya medhasya/ Dyauh prishtham Antarikshamudaram Prithivi paajasyam Dishah paarshve Avaantardishah parshwah Rutavongaani Maasaashrthamaasascha parvaani ahoraatraani pratishthaah nakshatraanyasthaanaani Nabho maamsaani/ Uvadhyaam sikataah sindhavo gudaah yakruccha klomaanascha parvataah Aoushadhyascha vanaspatayascha lomaani udyan purvaarthah, oshadhayascha vanaspatayascha lomaani, udyan purvaardhah nimlochan jaghanaardhah, yad vijrumbhate tad vidyotate, yad vidhunute tat stanayati yanmehati tad vasshati; vag evasyavaak/*

(Om, while comparing an Ashwamedha or Horse Sacrifice to Nature, then Ushahkaala or the early dawn is comparable to its head, its breathing or life-force as Air, its eyes like Surya, its open mouth as Agni/ Fire or Vaishwanara and the body of the 'Ashwa' as comparable to a Year or better still the 'Kaalamaana' or the Time Cycle; its back as 'Swarga'; its belly like sky; its hoof like **Earth**; its sides like one fourths of a year; its limbs like the Seasons of a Year; its body bone joints like months and fortnights; its hooves like days and nights; its bones like Nakshatras or Stars; and its flesh like clouds. The Sacrificial horse's food in the stomach is like sand, its blood vessels are rivers, liver and spleen are comparable to mountains and the hairs like herbs and tree. The rising Surya is the horse's forepart while the hind part like the Sun set. The horse's yawns are comparable to lightings and its body shakes and shrieks are like thunders; its urination is like downpour rainfall and neighing is like sound waves!)

Hiranyagabha's own body as the Sacrifice and the resultant Creation of Universe: I.ii.1) *Naiveha kimchanaagra aseet, Mrityunaivedaamaavritamaaseet, Ashanaayaya, Ashanaayaaya hi mrityu;, tanmano -kuruta, Atmanvi syaamiti, Sorchannacharat, tasyaarchata aapojaayanata archate vai me kam abhud iti; tad evaarkasya arkatwam; kam ha vaa asmaibhavati, ya evam etaad arkasya arkatwam veda/* (Since nothing at all existed at the very start, except Mrityu or Death renamed as hunger, Bhagavan Hiranyagarbha materialised Consciousness or Mind and in the thought process of concentration there emerged water and its synonym viz. happiness and eventually 'Arka' or Fire) (I.ii.2) *Apo vaa Arkah tadyad apaam shara aseet, tat samahyanta, sa prithivi abhavat, tasyaam ashraamyat, tasya shraantasya taptasya tejo raso nirvartataagniih/* (While Arka is water, its froth got solidified as **Bhumi** / Earth, on which Bhagavan rested and warmed up by further cogitation and the concentration became bright and thus Agni or Fire got materialised).

Universe is Earth in a way!: II.v.1) *Iyam Prithivi sarveshaam bhutaanaam madhu, asyai prithivyai sarvaani bhutaani madhu; yash-chayamamasyaam prithivyaayaam tejomayomritamayah purushah, yashchaayamadhyamam sharirah tejomayomritamayah Purushah ayameva sa yoyamatmatmam sharirastejomayomritamayah Purushah ayameva sa yoyamatmaa; idamamritam, idam Brahma, idam sarvam/* (Any discussion on the means of Immortality inevitably pre-supposes knowledge of the Self while renunciation of everything being a part of it. Once That is realised then the Universe is realised. Now, this **Earth** is like 'madhu' or honey which indeed is the essence of all the beings from

Hiranyagarbha down to a blade of grass. The Self of any being comprises full of four entities viz. Prithivi maya, amrita maya, tejomaya and Purusha; or earth, honey, corporeal being in a mortal body and knowledge or intelligence and again the Self indicates Amritamaya or Brahmamaya; this indeed in Brahman all about; stated differently, existence is by itself is a sweet experience, notwithstanding its travails! Hence Universe is Earth in a way)

Bhumi follows the other Root Elements : II.v.1) *Iyam Prithivi sarveshaam bhutaanaam madhu, asyai prithivyai sarvaani bhutaani madhu; yash-chayamamasyaam prithivyaayaam tejomayomritamayah purushah, yashchaayamadhyaamtam sharirah tejomayomritamayah Purushah ayameva sa yoyamatmatmam sharirastejomayomritamayah Purushah ayameva sa yoyamatmaa; idamamritam, idam Brahma, idam sarvam/* (Any discussion on the means of Immortality inevitably pre-supposes knowledge of the Self while renunciation of everything being a part of it. Once That is realised then the Universe is realised. Now, this **Earth** is like ‘madhu’ or honey which indeed is the essence of all the beings from Hiranyagarbha down to a blade of grass. The Self of any being comprises full of four entities viz. Prithivi maya, amrita maya, tejomaya and Purusha; or earth, honey, corporeal being in a mortal body and knowledge or intelligence and again the Self indicates Amritamaya or Brahmamaya; this indeed in Brahman all about; stated differently, existence is by itself is a sweet experience, notwithstanding its travails! Hence Universe is Earth in a way) II.v.2) *Imaa aapah sarveshaanaam bhutaanaam madhu aasaamapaah sarvaani bhutaani madhu; yashchaayamaaswapsu tejomayomritamayah Purushah; yashchaayamadhyaatmam raitasah tejomayomritamayah purushah yashchaayamadhyaatmam raitastejomayomritamayah Purushah, ayameva sa yoyamatmaa; idamamritam, idam Brahma, idam satyam/* ( Having defined Universe and Existence of Hiranyagarbha downward to each and every being in the Creation on Earth, the next concomitant of Existence is **water** which too is as sweet as ‘Madhu’ or honey; ‘Aapaas’ too as essential for existence of one and all as much as that of Prithvi, being an essential seed in a body! In the waters is situated the ‘tejomaya and amritamaya Purusha’ or the ever shining and immortal Entity who is also known as ‘Antaratma’ or the Inner Self; indeed that is Immortal, is Supreme Brahma and ‘Sarvam’ or the Totality! In fact water is absorbed in the Body as the ‘Retas’ or the seminal fluid!) II.v.3) *Ayamagnih sarveshaam bhutaanaam madhu, asyaagneh sarvaani bhutaani madhu, yaschaayamagnou tejomayomritamayah Purushah, yashchaaya madhyaatmam yoyamatmaa; idamamritam, idam Brahma idam sarvam/* ‘Prithivya-apas-tejas’ or among the Pancha Bhutas, without **Earth**, no being at all has any ‘locus standi’ or life or very survival; without water there is no subsistence; now without Agni there would be neither survival nor food nor even endurance, quite apart from neither homas nor Agni Karyas and the best part of human existence on account of food which indeed is ‘the Madhu again’. It is therefore the radiance and heat so crucial more so **Agni** is identified with Speech, tongue and mouth for existence! And that is how the imperative four factors of existence viz. the Self, the Knowledge, immortality and Brahman!) II.v.4) *Ayam Vaayuh sarveshaam bhutaanaam madhuh asya Vaayoh sarvaani bhutaani madhu; yascha -ayamasmin Vaayo-amritamayah Purushah ayameva sa yoyamatmaa; idam-amritam, idam Brahma idam sarvam/* ( This **Vayu** or Air too is like honey as in the case of Earth and Water and is predictably so for even in terms of minutes and seconds; Air is the pulsative, ever beaming and immortal Vital Force for breathing and is like an ever-ticking machine essentiality of one’s very life line! Indeed the inevitability of the Top Significant four factors of knowledge, immortality, Self and Brahman are the required fundamentals for existence!) II.v.5) *Ayamadityah sarveshaa bhutaanaam madhvasyaadityasya sarvaani bhutaani madhu yashchaayasminnaaditye tejomayomritamayah Purusho yaschaayamadhyaatmam chakshuh*

*tejomayomritamayah Purushoyameva sa yoyamaataah idamritam idam Brahma, idam sarvam/ (This **Surya** Deva is the sweet honey of all the beings in creation; he is the most lustrous and shimmering fund of radiance as also the divine embodiment of nectar that ensures ‘amaratwa’ or deathlessness. He is identified with the sharp vision of the eyes and is the four sided entity of the Self, personification of comprehension, everlasting existence and the Supreme Omnipresence!) II.v.6) Imaa dishah sarveshaam bhutanam madhu, aasaam dishaam sarvaani bhutaani madhu; yashchayamaasu dikshu tejomayomrita - mayah Purushah, yashchaayamadhyaatmam maanatejomayomritamayah Purushah, ayameva sa yoyamatmaa; idamamritam, idam Brahma, idam sarvam/ (The ‘**Dishas**’ or Directions are like honey too to all the Beings in all the parts of Creation where again the Tejomaya-Amritamaya Purusha who is Eternal and Blissful is omnipresent all over the Universe. These Directions constitute the ears of a body. Indeed that four sided Soul or the Self is based on Vigjñana, sweetness of madhu and radiance and has the under lying unity with Paramatma the Supreme! II.v.7) Ayam Chandrah Sarveshaam bhutaanaam madhu, asya chandrasya sarvaani bhutaani madhu; yashchaayamasmimshchandre tejomayomritamayah purusghah, yashchaya madhyaatmam maanasastejomayomritamayah Purusha, ayameva sa yoyamatmaa; idamamritam, idam Brahma idam sarvam/ (Now **Chandra** the Moon is of extreme sweetness of honey and so are all the Beings in Srishti. This unique Chandra Deva is not only the incarnation of pleasant coolness and brightness but is also immortal akin to mind of various Beings in the Globe; this is also identified with the personification of luminosity, eternity, knowledge and the Antaratma or the Interior Self that is directly aligned to and a close reflection of Paramatma the Ultimate!) II.v.8) Iyam Vidyut sarveshaam bhutaanaam madhu, asyai vidyutah sarvaani bhutaani madhu; yashchaayamasyaam vidyuti tejomayomritamaah Purushah, yashchaaya madhyaatmam tayjastejomayomritamayah Purushah, ayameva sa yoyamatmaa; idamamritam, idam Brahma, idam sarvam/ (This **Vidyut** or Lightning is like sweet honey to the Beings of the Universe and vice versa. The Vidyut is at once a flash of piercing vision yet is a permanent phenomenon on the Skies. Identified with the sensation of touch and skin on a body of the Beings, this is an active segment of the Self comprising the body, its awareness or appropriately named as knowledge, the light within the body in the form of the touch and its sweet existence- all these four are ideally unified with Paramatma.) II.v.9) Ayam stanayitnuh sarveshaambhutaanaam madhu, asya stanayitnoh sarvaani bhuytaani madhu; yaschaayamasyaam vidyuti tejomayomritamayah Purushah yaschaayamadhyaatmam taijhasastejoayomritamayah Purushah, ayameva sayoyamatmaa, idamamritam idam Brahma, idam sarvam/ (**Clouds** are nice and sweet like honey to all Beings as these are the abodes of the ‘Tejomaya and Amritamaya Purusha’ who is identified with sound and voice in the body of each and every being in Srishti representing the Self, knowledge, inherent radiance and perpetuity inter-connected to Brahman the Superior Most) II.v.10) Ayamaakaashah sarveshaam bhutaanaam madhu asyaakaashasya sarvaani bhutaani madhu yaschaayam asminnaakaasho tejomayomritamayah Purushah yashchaayam adhyaatmam hridyaakaashah tejomayah amritamayah Purushah, ayam eva sayoyam aatmaa, idam amritam, idam Brahma, idam sarvam/ (This **Akasha** is like honey to all the Beings in the Space identified with the heart in their physiques. This ether is where Purusha rests being replete with radiance and ecstasy, known otherwise as Antaratma or the Inner Self based on realisation, inbuilt brightness, and everlasting nature interconnected with the Supreme). II.v.11) Ayam Dharmah sarveshaam bhutaanaam madhu, asya dharmasya sarvaani bhutaani madhu; yaschaayam asmin dharme tejomayo amritamayah Purushah, yaschaayam adhyaatmam dharmah tejomayomritaamayah Purushah, yaschaaya- madhyaatmam dhaarmastejomayomritamayah Purushah, ayameva sa yoyaatmaa; idamamritam, idam Brahma, idam sarvam/ (**Dharma** or righteousness is the code of conduct as per the Scriptures enunciated in Shrutis and Smritis; indeed this dharma is like honey to the various Beings; yet this code is neither seen*

nor readily felt like Earth, Sun, Moon, Water, Fire, Sky, Lightning, Directions, clouds and so on; yet Dharmaacharana or Following the Established Principles of Morality is indeed divinely sweet like honey, bright like flood of radiance and gratifying and fulfilling like ‘Tejomaya-Amritamaya- Antaratma’ or Inner Conscience which again is eternal, radiant and Supreme viz. ‘Paramatma’ or Brahman; indeed the Self is but a reflection of the Utmost Abstraction!)

Pursuit beyond the warp and woof of the cloth of Creation, Nature and Universe/ From Pancha Bhutas to Brahma! III.vi.1) Atha hainam Gaargii vaachaknavi papraccha, Yagnyavalkya, iti hovaacha, yad idam sarvam apasvotam cha protam cha kasminnu khalvaapa otascha protaascheti; Vaayau Gargi iti; kasminnu khalu Vaayurotascha protashcheti; antariksha lokeshu Gaargi iti; kasminnu khalvantariksha lokaa otaascha protashcheti; Gandharva lokeshu Gaargi iti; kasminnu khalva Gandharvalokaa otascha protascheti; Aditya-lokeshu Gargi iti, kasminnukhalvaaditya lokaa otascha protaascheti; Chandralokeshu Gargi iti; kasminnu khalu chandara loka etascha protascheti/ Nakshatra lokeshu Gargi iti; kasminnu khalu nakshatra lokaa otascha protascheti/ Deva lokeshu Gargi iti; kasminnu Deva lokaa otascha protascheti/ Indra lokeshu Gargi, iti, kasminnu khalva Indraloka otascha prtaascheti/ Prajapati lokeshu, Gargi, iti; kasminnu khalu Prajapati lokaa otaascha protaascheti/ Brahmaloakeshu Gargi iti. Kasminnu khalu Brahmaloakeshu otaascha protaascheti/ Sa hovaacha Gargi maatipraaksheeh, maa te murdhaa vyapattaat, anati prashnyaam vai devataamatipruchaashi Gargi, maatpaakshireer iti, tato ha Gaargi vaachaknavi uparaaraama/ Iti shashtham Brahmanam/ (With a view to describe the nature of Brahman- who indeed is the Self within all the beings- the **Elements of Nature from Earth to Sky** arranged within one another are being discussed. Gargi, the daughter of Vachaknu asked Maharshi Yagnyavalkya as to how the *Elements of Nature from Earth as the starting point are skillfully arranged like the warp and woof of a cloth!* Then Yagnyavalkya explained that earth is permeated with water, water is pervaded by Vayu/ Air, Air by the Sky; and Sky is infused with Gandharvas or the celestial minstrels and Gandharvas by Surya, and Surya by Chandra, Chandra by the Stars, Stars are overshadowed by Devas, Devalokas are overlooked by Indra, Indra loka is protected by the world of Viraja and the Viraja Loka finally by the world of Hiranyagarbha; the Maharshi then hastened to tell Gargi not to go beyond the Hiranyagarbha Loka as her head might even fall off if even by mistake or design the process of enquiry must not stop at that stage of Hiranyagarbha itself! Indeed the Supreme Self is Hiranyagarbha and one need to suffice and peg upto that level itself, as that indeed is the Truth of the Truth! The Individual Self would indeed be beyond the barriers of Putreshana, Vitteshana, Lokeshana as also Khshudha, Pipaasa, Shoka, Moha, Jara and Mrityu ! Fully satisfied with the Maharshi’s explanation, Gargi the daughter of Vaachanu kept quiet and dumbfounded!)

#### Taittiriyaopanishad:

The purport of the Celestial Symbols of ‘Bhurbhuvatsvah mahah’:I.v.1-2) Bhurbhuvah suvareeti vaa etaas tisro vyaahrutayah, taasaamu ha smaitaam chaturteertham mahaachamasyah pravedayate maha hati, tad Brahmaa sa Atmaa angaanyanyaa Devataah, Bhuriti vaa ayam lokah, Bhuva ityantariksham, Suvariti asou lokah/ Maha iti aadityam, Adityenavaa va sarve lokaa maheeyante/ Mahaityaadityah Adityena vaava sarve lokaa maheeyante, Bhurati vaa Agnih Bhuva iti Vaayuh, Suvarityaadityah, Maha iti Chandramah Chandramasaa vaava sarvaani jyotimshi maheeyante/ (As the ‘Vyahritis’ or qualifying features of ‘Maha’ or Brahma are: ‘Bhu’ or the Earth, ‘Bhuva’ or the Intermediate Space, and ‘Svaha’ is the extra terrestrial world yonder or the higher worlds. Now, if Bhu is Agni, Bhuva is Vayu, Svaha is Surya then Maha is Chandra and the last is what the luminaries sparkle and glorify! Indeed if Vyahriti is

called the trunk of the body of Hiranyagarbha Brahman, then the limbs are : bhu or the legs, bhuvah or the hands and svaha is the head!) I.v.3-5) *Bhuriti vaa Ruchah Bhuva iti Samaani Suvariti yajumsi, Maha iti Brahma, Braahmana vaava sarve vedaa ma maheeyante/ Bhurita vai Pranah, Bhuva ityapaanah suvariti vyaanah maha ityannam annena vaava sarve praanaa maheeyante/ Taa vaa etatas chaturdhaah chaturasro vyahritayah, taa yo veda saeda Brahma, Saveshmai Deva balim aavahanti/* (The word 'Bhu' connotes Rig Veda, 'Bhuvah' Saama Veda, and 'Svaha' for Yajur Veda while Maha is 'Om' or Brahman. Also 'Bhu' is the 'Praana', 'Bhuvah' is 'Apaana', 'Suvah' is 'Vyana', and 'Mahah' is 'Anna' or food. Thus the 'vyahritis' of Brahman are expressed in four significant viz. Brahman as Tri Lokas of 'Bhurbhavassvah'; as three Devas of Agni, Surya and Chandra; three Vedas of Rik-Saama-Yaju and three Pranas viz. Apana-Vyana-Savana. Indeed he who absorbs these details attains supremacy of Brahman to himself as Devas offer a variety of gifts to him.)

The paramountcy of Food as this is the be all and end all of Creation via Praana/Life

II.ii.1) *Annaadvai prajaah prajaayantte, yaah kaascha prithvim shrutaah , atho annenaiva jeevanti, athainadapi yantantatah, annam hi bhutaanaam jyeshthamn, tasmaat saroushadhamuchyate, sarvam vai tennamaatpanuvanti, yennam brahmopaasate, Annaad bhutaani jayante, jaataannyannena vardhante, adyatetti cha bhutaani, tasmaad annam tad uchyata iti/ Tasmaadvaa yetasmaadanna rasamayaat, anyontara aatmaa praanamayah,tenaisha purnah, sa vaa esha purushavidha eva, tasya purusha vidhataam, anvayam purushavidhah, tasya praana eva shirah, vyaano dakshina pakshah, apaana uttarah pakshah, aakaasha aatmaa, prithivi puccham pratishthaa, tadapyesha shloko bhavati/* ( Food is the base that all the Beings on earth are born from, sustained by and at the end merged into. Since food is preceded by, born before, worshipped always, and eaten by all the Beings, it is precisely called Praana or the Life Force for all. As the Inner Self is made of this Life Energy which is the essence of food, the latter is an off shoot of Vayu the Air of the Pancha Bhutas or the Five Elements of 'Prithivi-aapas-tejas-vaayu - akaashas'. Of this Vayu, the head of a Being is Praana, its right side is Vyana, left side is Apaana; Akasha or the Space is the Self of a Being, Earth is the tail that stabilizes. Thus 'Annaat' or food transforms into 'Prajaa' resting on earth; since 'annam hi bhutaanaam jyeshthaanaam' or as food is the first born, all the living beings originate from 'annam', sustain from it and finally merge into it; hence Annam Brahma!

Chhandogya Upanishad:

Comparative analysis of Rig-Saama Vedas as Earth, Fire, Sky, Air, Sun, Heaven: I.vi.1) *Iyameva Rik, Agnih Saama, tadetad etasyaam Richi adhyudam Saama, tasmaad Richi adhyudham Saama geeyate, antarikshameva saa Vaayur amastat saama/* (While Earth is like Rig Veda, Fire is like Saama Veda, yet Saama is instituted by Rik as Agni is located or unearthed on Earth after all! At the same time however, Prithvi and Agni are distinct entities although they are of identical of purpose and purport. Now, Saama Veda is chanted as established on Rig Veda; indeed the very first word of Saama is 'saa' or Earth and 'ama' is Fire and the synthesis of both the expressions is meant for enjoining meditation is on 'Sa' and 'ama'!) I.vi.2) *Antarikshameva Rig, Vaayuh Saama, tadetad etasyaam Richi adhyudam Saama, tasmad Richi adhyudham Saama geeyate; antarikshameva saa, vaayur amastat Saama/* (Space or Atmosphere is the Rig Veda and Vayu or Air is Saama Veda; Saaman is such as rests on Rik and hence Saama is sung as launched by the Rik. Therefore, Antariksha or Space which is the Rik, while Vayu as 'ama' is sung as Saama.) I.vi.3) *Dyaaur eva Rig Adityah Saama, tadetad etasyaam Richi adhyudham Saama, tasmaad Richiv adhyudham saama geeyate, dyaaur eva saadityomahastat Saama/* ( Just as Antariksha is akin to Rig

Veda and Vaayu is like Saama, Swarga and Surya are comparable to Rig Veda and Saama Veda respectively; indeed Saama is established on Rik and also chanted as based on the Rik. *Sa* and *ama* are thus represented by Swarga and Surya!)

The multi splendoured eminence of **Gayatri is the heart and Soul of Earth and of the Beings** vis-a vis the Unknown! III. xii.1) *Gayatri vaa idam sarvam bhutam yad idam kim cha, Vaag vai gaayatri, Vaag vaa idam sarvam bhutam Gaayati cha traayate cha/* (Gayatri is the manifestation of all the Beings in Creation. Speech is Gayatri. It is that Vaak Devi who sings for and provides protection for one all! In the days of yore there were three principal media to secure Soma juice viz. Gayatri, Trishtup and Jagati; but only Gayatri could reach the kingdom of Soma as the other two got fatigued and retreated. Besides excellence in singing viz. ‘gaana’, Gayatri does ‘traana’ or protection of the ‘Praanis’ too)III.xii.2) *Yaa vai saa Gaayatriyam vaava saa yeyam prithivyasyaam heedam sarvam bhutam pratishthitametaameva naatisheeyati/* (This Gayatri is surely what **Earth** and Beings are all about and its totality is nothing beyond it- be it by way of commendation or fortification viz. shield) III.xii.3) *Yaa vaisaa prithivyaam vaava saa yad idam asmin purushe shareeram, asmin heeme praanaah pratishthjhaah, etadeva naattishiyante/* (Gayatri as identified with **Earth is also the totality of elements and organs alike; it is a body which is an earthly being. The body is equated with Gayatri since vital forces or Praanas are firmly established on earth and nothing beyond )**

Treasure hunt in the Universe as Dishas provide protection and the new borns seek asylum from ‘Bhurbhuvassuvah’! III.xv.1) *Antarikshodarah kosho bhumi budhno na jeeryati, Disho hi asya sraktayo dyaur asyottaram bilam, Sa esha kosho Vasu dhanah tasmin Vishvam idam shritam/* ( Reserve Assets referred to as a ‘Kosha’ or Treasury-of the Supreme Empire of Paramatma is truly full of Riches and Fortunes! This treasury possesses, *inter alia*, the Antariksha or the Space as its inside, Bhumi as its bottomline, Dishas or Directions as the corners of Swarga, and Sky as the upper lid ceiling; thus the wealth of the Lord’s creation is securely contained there within.

The three folded Development explained further as Agni-Aapas-Prithvi and of three basic colours of red-white and black all emerging from and submerging into Oneness!VI.iv.1-4) *Yad Agne rohitam rupam tejasah tad rupam, yaccha shuklam tad aapaam yatkrishnam tad annasya aapagaad agner agnitwam, vaachaarambhanam vikaro naamadheyam, treeni rupaaneeti eva satyam// Yad Adityasya rohitam rupam tejasah tad rupam, yad shuklam tad aapam, yat krishnam tad annasya aapagaad adityaad aadityatwam, vaachaarambhanam vikaronaama dheyam, treenirupaaneeti eva satyam//Yad Chandramaso rohitam rupam tejasah tad rupam, yaccha shuklam tad aapam yad krishnam tad annasya aapagaad Chandrat - cchandratvam, vaachaarambhanam vikaro naamedheyam, treeni rupaaneeti eva satyam//Yad Vidyuto rohitam rupam tejasah tad rupam, yaccha shuklam tad aapam, yad krishnam tadannasya aapagaad Vidyuto vidyutwam vaachaarambhanam vikaro naamadheyam treeni rupaaneetyeva satyam/* (The gross Fire and of the subtle Fire both possess the same red complexion, where as the white colour of the gross Fire is like the white colour of subtle water and the black colour of the **gross Fire is like the black colour of the subtle Earth**. Therefore the distinction of Fire is clear and to say that fire has only red colour is misleading since Fire possesses all the three colours! The modifications are only names arising from the way that Vaak or speech varies. This is how the distinction made among Gods too is on the way that one speaks about since Agni, Aapas and Bhumi are of three ramifications of Brahman only! Hence the distinction of colours and the discrimination of Gods is merely for the understanding of human brain, the knowledge and of the speech! The process of making three Gods three fold is thus illustrative. Now the

detailing of the Sun, Moon, and Lightning is as follows: Whatever is the red colour of Surya is also of the colour of Agni; that of its white colour is of water and that which that is of black colour is of Earth; the Sunhood, the Moonhood and the Earthhood are only as per variations of speech and thought, but indeed those which are true are the three colours only! Now there could be an objection that among the **Pancha Bhutas** the other two viz. Vayu and Akasha have been omitted; the explanation would be that Air and Space have the corresponding Panchendriyas of touch and sound and these are already covered by Agni and hence the ramification of Brahman remains three fold only) VI.iv.5-7) *Etaddha sma vai tad vidvamsa aahuh purve mahashalaa mahaashrotriyaah na nodya kaschana ashrutam, amatam, avigjnaatam, Uddhaaharishyatiti hi ebhoy vidaam ckakruh// ad u rohitam ivaabhud iti tejasah tad rupamiti tad vidvam chakruh, yad u shuklam ivaabhud iti aapam rupam iti tad vidvam chakruh, yad u krishnam ivaabhuditi annasya rupam iti tad vidvam chakruh// Yad avigjnaat ivaabhud iti etaasaam eva Devataanaam samaasah, iti tad vidaamchakruh, yathaa nu khalu, Saumya, imaastisro Devataah purusham praapya trivrit trivrid ekaika bhavati, tan me vijaaniheeti//* In the ancient times, the great householders of Knowledge and of Vedas asserted that excepting these three entities of ‘Agni-Aapas-Prithvi’ nothing else was ever thought of, heard of and realised of . Also they thought of **Agni as red, water as white and earth as black**. They also felt through generations that there were three Gods alone and after coming into contact with a person of three more body organs of head heart and hands!)

Balam or Strength is the derivative of Food from **Bhumi** and indeed Annam is stated as Paramatma! VII.ix. 1-2) *Annam vaava balaad bhuyah, tasmaad yadi api dasa raatrir nashneeeyaat, yadi u ha jeevet, atha vaa adrishtaashrotaa manta boddhaa kartaa vijnataabhavatk; athannasyaaye drashtaa bhavati, shrotaa bhavati mantaa bhavati, boddhaa bhavati, kartaa bhavati, vijnataa bhavati; annam upaassveti// Sa yonnam brahmeti upaaste annavato vai sa lokaan paanavatobhisiddhyati; yaavad annasya gam, tatraasya yathaa kaamacharo bhavati yonnam brahmeti upaaste; asti, bhagavah, annaad bhuya iti; annaad vaava bhuyostiti; tan me, bhagavaan, bravitva iti/* ( Now how is strength derived as quite obviously, **Food** is not only the source but is certainly far superior to strength! In case a person abstains from food for ten nights and still survives, it would be a wonder that he is able to see, hear, think, understand and perform. Once the food barrier is crossed, he could see, hear, think, understand, and perform! That is precisely why food is to be worshipped and deeply meditated to! Indeed Brahman sustains life from humans downward lest very existence is at stake otherwise. He who meditates on food as Brahman himself attains the worlds which is full of food and also its associate and even superior to it viz. water!)

Water has comparative significance over food since it is truly the life line of Beings in the Universe! VII.x.i-2) *Apo vaa annaa bhuyasyah, tasmaad yadaa suvrishthir na bhavati, vyaadhiyante praanaah, annam kaaniyo bhavishyatiti, atha yadaa suvrishthir bhavati, aanandinaah praanaa bhavanti, annam bahu bhavishyatiti, aapa evema murtaah yetam prithivi, yad antariksham, yad dyauh, yat parvatah, yad deva-manushyaah, yat prasaavaascha vaayaamsi cha trina vanaspatayah, shvapadaani aakeeta patanga pipilikaam, aapa evema murtaah: apa upassveti// Sa yopo brahmeti upaaste, aapnoti sarvam kaamaan triptimaan bhavati; yaavad apaam gam, tatrasya yathaa kaamacharo bhavati; yo po brahmate upaaste; asti, bhagavah, adbhyo bhuya iti; adbhyo vaa va bhuyostiti; tan me, bhagavaan, bravitviti//* (On a comparative analysis, water is superior for two reasons: a person can survive with water for a more days than without food; also when there is lack of plentiful rainfall, then persons state in anguish that food would be scarce now. When there is good rain fall, public would feel happy that food would be plentiful. In extreme cases then there is too much of rain and floods spoil standing crops, public would get alarmed

too, due to bad prospects of food. Indeed water is far more crucial than food. Water as truly meditation worthy as it takes all forms on earth, intermediate space, in heaven, on mountains, where gods or humans, animals and birds, grass, trees, fish, worms, and even ants exist and survive on! Indeed, existence of all Beings depends squarely on water , since there is water there is joy, contentment and all round fulfillment for one and all in the Creation of Brahman!)

Heat energy is the essence of water and the much needed rains originate from the Element of Fire which is but the radiance of Brahman VII.xi.1-2) *Tejo vaava adbhyo bhuyah, tasmaad vaa etad vaayum aagrhyaakaasham abhitapati, tad aahu, nishochati, nitapati, varshisyti vaa iti, teja eva tat purvam darshayitvaathaapaah srujate; tad etad urthwaabhischa tirashchibhishcha vidyubhihi ahraadaash charanti;tasmaad aahuh: vidyotate, stanayati, varshishyati vaa iti, teja eva tat purvam drshayatvaathaapah srujate:teja upassveti// Sa yas tejo Brahmeti upaaste,tejasvee vai sa tejasvat lokaan bhaasvatopahata-tamaskaan abhisidhyati, yaavat tejaso gatam, tatrasya yathaa kaamacharo bhavati, yastejo Brahmeti upaaste; asti, bhagavah, tejaso bhuya ii;tejaso vaa va bhuyosteeti; tan me, Bhagavaan,bravitva iti// (Tejas or heat caused by Fire is far more noteworthy than water in the universe also heating up the Antariksha or the intermediate space supported by Vayu /Air. When it is said that the atmosphere is heating up then the indication is that it is going to rain and that is how heat and radiation would lead to water. Fire taking to the form of thunders travels with flashes of lightnings and together they lead to rains. Thus one needs to basically meditate to Tejas or Fire when it is said that the worlds too get brilliant and bright destroying darkness and dullness and that is what the basic Reality is and Brahman is!)*

Supremacy of Akaasha is such that Brahman himself might describe it while Beings in the worlds are too insignificant and ill equipped to do so VII.xii.1-2) *Akaasho vaa va tejaso bhuyaan: Aakaashe vai Surya Chandramasaav ubhauh vidyun nakshatraani Agnih, Aakaashenaahvayati, Akaashenashrunoti, Aakaashena pratishrnoti, Aakaashe ramate, Aakaashe na ramate, Aakaashe jaayate, Aakaasham abhijaayate: Aakaasham upaassveti/ Sa ya Aakaasham Brahmate upaaste, akaashavato vai sa lokaan prakaashavato sambaaddhaan urugaaya -vatobhisidhyati yaavad Aakaashasya gatam, tatraasya yathaa kaamacharo bhavati, ya Aakaasham Brahmeti upaaste; asti, Bhatgavaah, Aakaashaad bhuya iti; Aakaashaad va va bhuyosteeti; tan me, Bhagavaan bravitv iti/ (Indeed among the Pancha Bhutas or Five Elements, viz. Prithivi, Aapas, Tejas, Vaayu and Aakaashas or Earth-Water-Agni-Air and the **Sky**, the last but not the least is the Sky undoubtedly as it holds the Surya, Chandra, Nakshatraas, Vidyut or Lightnings, and Agni in poition. All the activities in the Universe including the Sapta Lokas of Bhuvah-Swar-Mahar-Janar-Tapas and Brahma Lokas are performed, seen, heard, enjoyed by the medium of Akasha; Dasa Dishas or Ten directions witness the activities by Akasha; Astha Loka Palakas of Indra-Agni-Yama-Nirruiti-Varuna- Vaayu-Kebera and Ishana are active only by the courtesy of Aakash; births and deaths of Souls are facilitated by Aakash; growth and decadence are effected and visioned by Akasha; indeed Aakash is the unique witness of activities of shrotra, chakshu, vaak, twak, and reproduction! Indeed there is no existence possible without the Sky! One needs therefore to meditate Akasha as Brahman himself!)*

**Daharaakaasha:** VIII.i.2-3) *Tam ched brhuyuh, yad idam asmin Brahma Puredaharam punadikam veshma, daharosminn atharaakaashah kim tad atra vidyate yad anveshtavyam yad vaa va vijijna asitavyamiti sa bruyaat // Sa bruyaat: yaavaan vaa ayam akaashah, taavan eshontarhridaya aakaasha; ubhe asmin dyaavaa prithvi antar eva saaahite, ubhavagnischa vaayuscha Surya Chandramasaav ubhau,*

*vidyun nakshatraani yacchaasyehaasti yaccha naasti sarvam tad asmin saahitam iti/* (As one enquires that since at the abode of Brahman there was a lotus space then what would be that small space that would have to be realised! The reply has to be as follows: That specific space within the heart is as huge and cosmic as space outside within which are enveloped the heaven and earth, Fire and Air, Surya and Chandra, lightnings and Stardom, and so on! Whatever one perceives in the Universe is but a part of the unknown!)

#### AITEREYA UPANISHAD

The Worlds that Paramatma created were Ambhas, Marichi, Mara and Aapa or Heaven, Sky, Earth and Water: I.i.2) *Sah Imaam Lokaanasraja/ Ambho mareechirmaraapombhaha parena Divam Dyouh pratishthaantari- ksham Marichayah Prithivi Maro ya adhastat taa aapah/* (That Supreme Self crafted these ‘Lokaas’ viz. Heaven, Sky to support the Heaven, the Earth and the Water beneath the Earth. Indeed Higher Lokas apparently constitute Bhuvar Loka, Swar Loka, Mahar Loka Janar Loka, Tapo Loka and Satya Loka, besides Bhu loka and the Sapta Patalas under Water are Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Rasaatala, Patalas.

Paramatma felt that he should materialise ‘Loka palakas’ or the Chief Administrators of each of the Worlds so generated; he also created a Virat Swarupa being the prototype of Human Beings. I. i.3) *Sa ikshateme nu Lokaa Lokapaalannu srija iti, Sodabhaya eva Purusham samuddhirtya mur -chayat/* (Paramatma then felt that having materialised the various Lokas felt the need for Loka Palakas to administer and safeguard these assets thus created; the ‘Ashta Palakas’ or the Eight Governors were Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruti, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Ishana. He also generated from the Waters , the concept of a prototype human form -Virat Swarupa-as a Purusha or a Being and gave a shape to him endowed with limbs and sensory organs )

Paramatma designed body organs and their resultant functions of the Virat Purusha I.i.4) *Taam abhyatapat, Tasyaabhitaptasya mukham nirabhidyataptasya mukham nirabhidyayata yathaandam: mukhaad vaah, Vaachognir naashike nirabhidyetaam naasikaabhyaam praanah, pranaad vaayuh, akshini nirabhidyetaam, akshibhyaam chakshuhu, chakshusa aadityah, karnou nirabhidyetaam, karnaabhyaam shrotram, shrotaad dishaa, twan nirabhidyata, tvaacho lomaani lomaabhya oushadhi-vanaspatayah, hridayam nirabhidyata, hridayaan manah, manasa chandramaah, naabhir nirabhidyata, naabhyaapaanah, apaanaan mrityuh, shishnaam nirabhidyata, shishnaad retah, retasaa aapah/* ( The Supreme Self designed the process of creation as follows: from his ‘Mukha’ (face), the mouth surfaced ‘vaak’ the vocal chord from which emerged sound and speech; from the faculty of speech materialised Fire; as the Supreme Self’s nostrils parted, the sense of smell and the resultant Vayu or Air got generated. Similarly His ‘Akshini’ or two eyes turned up vision and eye sight; from the latter emerged Surya or the Sun; from the ears generated sound and the faculty of hearing and the sense of Dishas or directions. From the skin came the sense of touch, herbs and trees. From the heart the mind and Chandra or the Moon. The navel of the Supreme’s physique the organ of outbreath and resultant death to the Beings; The Lord’s seat of generative organ came procreation and semen which materialised water). This was how the cycle of Panchendriyas of the Supreme Self caused Pancha Karmendriyas, Pancha Jnanendriyas and Pancha Bhutas viz. the Body Parts of Deed, Sense and Elements in their respective Places!

Various Devas entered respective stations like Agni in mouth’s Speech; Vyayu as nose’s Praana; Surya in Vision and Eyes; Dishas as ears and hearing; Vanaspati in skins and touch; Chandra in heart; Mrityu in

Out Breath and Jala Deva as excretions and progeny! I.ii.4) *Agnir vaak bhutwaa mukham praavishad, Vaayuh praano bhutwaa naashike pravishad, Adityah chakshur bhutwaakshini pravishad, Dishah shrotram bhutwaa karnou praavishann, Aoushadhi vanaspatayo lomaani bhutwaa twascham praavishaamsh Chandramaa Mano bhutwaaa hridayam praavishan, Mriyur apaano bhutwaa naabhim praavishad, aapo reto bhutwaa shishnam praavishan/* (Agni Deva entered the mouth of the Beings in the form of Voice or Speech; Vayu Deva made his entry into the nostrils and not only as Praana or Life but also as the capacity to smell; Surya Deva entered the eyes and afforded vision or the sense of sight; Dasha Disha Deva or the Lord of Directions entered the ears and bestowed the sense of hearing; Vanaspati Deva or the Lord of herbs, plants and trees entered the pores of skin and hairs and granted the sense of ‘sparasha jnana’ or that of touch and absorbing power; Chandra Deva firmly entered into the heart and mind to control the psyche and of reactive mode of behaviour; Mrityu Deva the God of Death entered the navel in the form of Apaana or the compressed air which indeed is the control of Life Force and of out-breath. And finally Jala Deva or the God of Water, as also of the urge of urination of the generative organ and passion that results in the discharge of semen through it.)

Brahma in Celestial Forms as Surya, Lightning, Thunder, Wind, Space, Fire, Water IV.6.10 *Sa hovaacha Baalaakih, ya evais ‘Vaayau’ purushastam evaaham upaasa iti, tam hovaacha Ajaatashatruh, maa maitasmin samvaadayishthah, Indro Vaikuntho paraajita seneti vaa aham etam upaasa iti, sa yohaitam evam upaaste Jishnur ha vaa Aparajaishnur anyatasstatyajaayi bhavati//sahovaacha Baalaakih, ya evaisha ‘Aaakaashe’ purushastam evaaham upaasa iti, tamhovaach Ajaatashatru, maa maitasmin asamvaadayishthaah, purnam apravtitti brahmeti vaa aham etam upaasa iti sa yo aitam evam upaaste puryate prajayaa pashubhir yashasaa brahmavar -chasena svargena lokena sarvam aayureti// Sa ho vaachaa Baalaaki yah easha ‘Agnau’ prusushatam evaaham upaasitam hovaacha Ajaatashatruh, maa maitasmin samvaadayishthah, ‘visha sharir’ iti vaa aham hetam evam upaasha iti sa ho haitam evam upaaste visha sharir ha vaa anyeshu bhavati// Sa hovaacha Baalakih, ya evaishopsu purshas tam evaaham upaasa iti, tam hovacha Ajaatashastru maa maitasmin samvaada yishthaah ‘Tejasaa’ Atmeti vaa aham etam upaasa iti, sa ho haitam evam upaaste’ tejasaa’ aatmaabhavati,ti adhidaitam athaadhyaatman//*

(Gargya Baalaaki then explains to King Ajaatashatru a systematic delineation of Deities in whom Brahma is reflected as his ‘amshas’ or formulations as all these facets of His magnificence are replete with His multi-powered splendours, each of which is highly worthy of meditation and individual worship. Baalaaki then commends **Vayu** the Deity of Wind another outstanding form of Brahma and specifically of Praana the ‘alter ego’ or modification of Indra Vaikuntha himself the invincible Single Army of Valour and Skills who destroyed personifications of Evil that challenged the forces of Dharma and Nyaaya or virtue and justice and threatened the entire Universe to end up; such evil forces like Vritrasura and Pauloma Kaalankajas were extinguished with pluck and bravery by Indra the Lord of Vayu the Praana of very existence the Lord’s creation! The Pancha Praanas comprising Praana-Vyana-Apaana-Udaana-Samanas controlling vision, hearing, speech, touch and mind are the identity of the sensory organs indeed. Intense meditation and worship of Praana the Vayu Deva redesignated Indra Deva would bestow physical triumph and never dying spirit of intrepidity and success. Then Baalaaki suggests that **Aakasha** representing the endlessness and eternity of Brahma Devas typical creation of enigma and mystery in His scheme of ‘Srishti’ that even Devas and Sanakaadi Maharshis have ever digested nor solved let alone by human beings! The inscrutability and vagueness of the Supreme is shrouded by the very concept of comprehension and equally so is the ‘Daharaakaasha’ or the Antariksha of the ‘Antaraatma’ the typical

reflection of the 'Paramatma'. There is no other way of praying and worshipping except looking upward to the Sky and Space beyond and submerge one's thoughts inward within with marvel and dread! The highly Learned Baalaki recommends to King Ajaatashtu that intense meditation to the Space as the non active Brahma bestows the material wealth of offspring, cattle, fame and the invaluable radiance of Brahma and the ultimate fulfillment of human life! The next very prominent Deva among the Brahma Swarupa is of **Agnihotra** assuming the Panchagni Swarupas or of Five Flames viz. Garhapatya, Aahavaneeya, Dakshinaagni, Sabhya and Avasatya representing Heaven, Cloud, Earth, Man and Woman as explained vide Katha Upanishad-I.iii.1.. The next stanza explains that of the sacred quarter of Brahma , Earth is one part, the Intermediate Space is one part, Swarga is one part and Samudras or Oceans the fourth. Brahma is surely the all pervasive one in all the parts! Gargya Baalaki then describes the essentiality of **Aapsu Purusha** or of Water for the very existence and sustenance of all the Beings. Several of Maha Puranas made distinct references to the manifestations of 'Naara' or water and 'Aayana' or the Abode combined to denote 'Naarayana' or Bhagavan Vishnu as the 'Paramatma' who caused even the creation of Pancha Bhutas or the Five Elements which too get destroyed at the Maha Pralaya or the Great Dissolution at the termination of the Universe after each Kalpa. Brahma Purana for instance highlights that Maharshi Markandeya survived even after all the 'Sthaavara Jangamas' or the Moving and Immovable Beings were destroyed and so did the Elements but the 'Chiraayu Markandeya' survived the Kalpa although struggled and reached atop the extraordinary Vata Vriksha and found a Unique Baala Mukunda in tiny baby form sucking his thumb playfully and that was Narayana Himself! Such was the repute of Basic Water beyond the comprehension even of normal 'Pancha Bhutas' themselves! It is to that Apsu Purusha that what the premordial 'Naara' is for ever that one needs to worship for as to that Luminosity of the Self which is everlasting! That is '*Tejasaa bhavati, iti Adhidaivatam, athaadhyaatmaam*' or that is the embodiment of Supreme Brightness, the Self Illumination and The Greatest Illumination That! )

**MUNDAKOPNISHAD:** On life's termination Panchendriyas merge into Pancha Bhutas joining Infinity:

III.ii.7) *Gataah kaalaah pancha dasa pratishthaa Devaascha Sarve pratidevataasu, Karmaani vijnaanamayasha Atmaa parevyaye sarva ekeebhavanti*/(At the Time of achieving 'Mukti' or Deliverance, the fifteen body constituents headed by Praana are merged into the respective divinities, and the karmas and the resultant fruits as expected of the body constituents to perform get unified into the Supreme! The unification process involves absorption of the Pancha-Panchendriyas viz. the five each of the jnaanendriyas and karmendriyas or Jneya-Karma sensory organs are all ruled over the Praana and as Prashnopanishad vide VI. iv explains the divine causes and effects: *sa praanamasruja praanaashrajata shraddhaam Kham Vaayurjyotiraapah Prithiveendrayah manah, annamannat viryam tapo mantraah karma lokaa lokeshu cha naam cha/* He transformed himself to create praana the vital Energy; from praana the faith, the Pancha bhutas or the five Basic Elements of Nature viz. Prithivi-Aapas-Tejo-Vaayu-Akashsa ; the resultant organs, mind, food, from food the vigour, tapas or Self Restraint, mantras, karma or sacrificial deeds, worlds and the names of the respective worlds. Hence the process of unification of the Self with the Supreme. The state of Nirvana is that of a closed account of what one loosely call is that of Fate and the submerger of the Inner consciousness and the Reality. This denotes the situation of 'Sarve ekeebhavanti' or every thing becomes indistinguishable; and that is 'pare avyaye' or the Infinite, Undecaying, Unknown yet Right Within!)

**PRASHNOPANISHAD:** Without dreams as a person sleeps in actuality gets united with the Self and then the Supreme IV.6-9) *Sa yadaa tejasabhibhuto bhavati atraisha devah svapnaan na pashyati atha tadetasmin sharire etatsukham bhavati// Sa yathaa, Saumya, vayaasmi vasho vrisham sampratishthante,*

*evam ha vai tat sarvam para aatmaani sampratishthante// Prithivicha prithivi maatraacha tejascha tejomaatraacha vayuscha vaayu matraacha akaashaschaakaasha maatraacha, chakshuscha drashtavyam cha, shrotram cha shrotravyam cha ghraanamcha ghraatavyam cha, rasascha rasayitavyam cha, tvak cha sprashayi-tavyam cha, vaak cha vaktavyam cha, hastau chaadaatavyam cha, upastaschaanandayi - tavyayam cha, paayuscha visarjayitavyam cha paadau cha gantavyam cha, manaschamantavyam cha, buddhischa boddhavyam cha, ahamkaaraschaahakartavyam cha, chittam cha chetayitavyam cha, tejascha vidyotayitavyam cha, praanascha vidhaarayitavyam cha// Esha hi drashtaa spashtaa shrotaa ghraataa rasayuta mantaaboudhaa kartaa vijnaanaatma Purusha, sa pareshwara aatmaani sampratishthate/ ( Existence of a human being during sleep but without dreams is what obtains when mind gets united with Solar rays as consciousness named Brahman itself paving the way to happiness and fulfillment. It is in this context that the Inner Self remains neutral when mind and senses are rested too. Then in such a situation, the senses proceed towards the mind just as birds proceed towards a tree. The Elemental Pancha Bhutas or the Five Basic Five Elements of Nature as the offshoots in one's body viz. the organs of vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, speech, hands, sex, excretion, feet and the mind along with thought-egoism, and awareness and the basic Praana the life force as the Hiranyagabha himself are bundled together in that semi-state of Life. The Purusha encompassing the body and the organs being used to the nature of the senses and action and reaction syndrome becomes established in the Supreme Self!)*

VI.4) *Sa praanam asrajata , praanaaccraaddhaam kham vaayur jyotir aapah prithiveendriyam manah annam annaad veeryam, tapo mantraah karma lokaah, lokeshu cha naama cha/ Purusha, the Hiranyagarbha, as the Chief Creator manifested Praana the Life Force; from Praana He created Shraddha or Faith and Conviction, 'kham' or space, 'Vaayurjyotiraapah' or Air, Fire, and Water, besides 'Prithvi Nidrayah Manah' or Earth, Organs and Mind; 'Annaat Veeryam Tapah' or Food, Vigour and Self Control; 'Mantraah karma lokaa lokeshu cha naamacha' or the Veda Mantras, Rites, worlds, names and nomenclatures of of Beings and Forms)*

MAITRI UPANISHAD : II. 6) Omni Presence of Prajapati in the entire 'Charaachara Jagat': *Prajaapatir vaa ekogre tishthat, sa naaram ataikah, sotmaanam abhidhaatvaa bahveeh prajaa ashrajata, taa ashvamevaaprabuddhhaah apraanaah sthaanur iva tisha maanaa apasyaat, sa naaramata, somanyataitaasaam pratibodhanaayaabhyantaram vivishaami, sa vaayur ivaatmaanam kritvaabhya ntaram praavishat/ Sa eko naashakat: sa panchadhaatmaanam vibhajyotjate, yah praanopaanah samaana udaano vyaana iti/ Athaayam ya urthvam uktraamati esha vaa va sa praanotha yoyam avaan samkraamati esha vaa va sapaanotha yena vaa etaa anugraheetaa iti esha vaa vasa vyaanothaa yoyam sthavishtho dhaatur annasyaapaane praapayati anishto vaangenge samaana yati esha vaa vaa sa samaanaa samgjnaa uttaram vyaanesa rupam chaiteshaam antaraa prasutir evodaanasyaatha yoyam peetaashitam udgirati nigirateeti vaishaa vaa saa sa udaanah, atho paamshur antaryaamam abhidavaty antaryaama upaamshunaachaita yor antaraa devoushnyam praasuvat/ Yad aoushnyam sa purushotha yah purusha sognir vaishvaanarah/ Anyatraapi yuktam ayam agnir vaishvaa -naro yoyam antah purushe yenedam annam pachyate yad idam adyate, tasyaisha ghosho bhavati/ Yametat karnaav apidhaaya shronisha da yado utkramishyan bhavati nainam ghosham shrinoti, sa vaa esha panchadhaatmaanam vibhajya nihito guhaayaam, mano mayah praana shareero Bhaa rupah satya sankalpa aakaashameti. Sa vaa eshosmaad hridantaraad akrataartho manyaataartham ashnaaneeti/ Athah khaaneemani yaanimaani etaani asya rashmayah karmendriyaani bhivotitah panchaabhee rashmibhir vishayam atti, iti budheendriyaani yaanimaani etaani asya rashmayah karmendriyaani asya hayaa, ratham shariram mano niyantaa, prakritee mayosya pratodaneena khalviritah paribhyraramatidam shareeram chakram iva*

*mrityavenedam shareeram chetnavat pratishthaapitam rachoyavitaa vaishyopyasyeti/* \_Prajapati felt loneliness and having got bored without any activity or diversion, created stone-like and lifeless objects as a pastime. He was then tempted to make them tick with life. That was possible only if he himself could enter into them partially. He then pondered deep and divided himself into five parts considering the essence of life as ‘praana’- the basic component of existence of any Being as the inhalation by way of an intake of air as also the outlet for the praana as ‘apaana’ at an exit point of a body. Then apparently he had to create three support airs as ‘vyaana’ to balance the inhalation and exhalation. He then realised there would have to be ‘panchendriyas’ five organs of each physique of creation viz. Pancha Karmendriyas Five organs of mobility and Pancha Jnanedriyas Five Organs of Cognition viz. Ghrana-Rasana-Chakshu-Twak-Shrotra or Nose, Tongue, Eyes, Skin and Ears. Accordingly He manifested ‘samaana’ to mobilise food and liquids among the body parts as also ‘udaana’ to distribute the intakes appropriately. In this context, Pancha Karmendriyas or Five organs of mobility and Pancha Jnanedriyas Five Organs of Cognition viz. Ghrana-Rasana-Chakshu-Twak-Shrotra or Nose, Tongue, Eyes, Skin and Ears have an important role to play. Having created the various Beings thus, superimposing the Self into the Beings, then between the two was created, Prajapati manifested Himself as ‘Vaishvaanara Agni’ the Universal Fire, a facet of the latter being utilised for digestion of food and water consumed by the Beings. Vishwanara Agni Brahman declares his splendour clearly distinguishing Truth/Untruth: *Ayamagnir Vaishvaanaro yoyamantah purushe, yenedam annam pachyate yadidam adyate; tasyaisha ghosho bhavati yam etat karnaavapidhaaya shrunoti sa yadoskramishyan bhavati nainam ghosham shrunoti/* (After identifying with the radiance of mind, then Vidyut or Lightning, and Speech signifying a cow and its means of meditation, now another medium of mediation is Agni and the personification within it as a Being viz. Vishvaanara, since Shruti states ‘Ayamagni Vaishvaanara’; indeed this Agni is well outside the Purusha or a Human and far before the human body! It digests food consumed by the person and the heat of his stomach. As the fire digests the food, it emits sound stopped by the ears with one’s fingers. Thus one should meditate upon the Agni as Vaishwanara or Viraja. Indeed however, when a Being leaves the body, he or she no further hears the sound since the ‘bhokta’ or the Consumer in the body loses his sense of hearing.) vide Brihadaranyaka Upanishad vide. V.ix.1]\_This ‘Jatharaagni’ or the digestive fire does create mild sound which is dormant as one might feel by one’s own eyes; when a human being departs, that inner heat leaves the body even while the ‘Pancha Praanas’ too do so. Thus, the inner breath, the heat and the senses as also the mind and memory power are the bodily assets are closely inter linked to the Inner Soul the ‘daharaakasha’ or the ‘Antaratma’ and as the life concludes It gets dissolved into the Outer ‘Parama Akasha’ and the Pancha Bhutas or the Prithivi- Aapas-Tejas-Vayu-Akasha. These very Five Elements comprising Earth-Water-Fire-Air-and Sky are also reflected as the Panchendriyas of a body or the Sensory Organs and their respective functions. Thus: *eshapancha dhaatmaanaam vibhajya nihito guhaayaam, mano mayah praana shareero bha rupah satya sankalpa aakaashameti/* These five outlets are the organs of perception and action comparable as five horses of a chariot or the body viz. existence or life, the charioteer being the ‘buddhi’ or mind; the whip being one’s own conduct; the reins the organs of perception, and the Karmendriyas being the organ of action. Above all the Conscience or the Self is the ‘watch dog’ as it were which is the silent witness as titled as ‘Antaratma’ the true mirror-reflection of the Almighty Himself! III. 3. *Athaanyatraapi uktam, yah kartaa soyam vai bhutaatmaa karanaih kaarayitaantah purushah/ Atha yathaagninaayaspindo vaabhibhutah kartrubhir hanyamaano naanaatvam upaiti evam vaa va khalvasau bhutaatmaantah purushenaabhibhuto gunair hanyamaano naanaatvam upaiti/ Chatur jaalam chatur dasaavidham chatur aseetidhaa parinatam bhuta ganam etadvai naanaatvasya rupam/ Taani ha vaa etaani gunaani purusheneritaani chakram iva mrityaveneti/*

*Atha yathaayaspinde hanyamaane naagnir abhibhuyati evam naabhibhuyati asau purushobhi bhuyati evam naabhibhuyati asau purushobhibhuyati ayam bhutaatmopasamshlitatvaad iti/* It is stated that indeed the Elemental Self is the Doer Himself as he motivates action as driven by the Panchendriyas which in turn act by the Inner Self! The simile is that when an iron ball if ignited and gets melted it could be beaten to different forms. Likewise, the elemental self could be converted to eighty four different patterns of the iron by a potter at the wheel say like ‘chatur jaalam’ four nets or sheaths viz. matter-life-consciousness-and intelligence; or ‘chaturdashaa vidham’ or fourteen bhuvanaas viz. Sapta Lokas (Bhuloka, Bhuvanloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janarloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka), and Sapta Patalaas ( Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala) and a speculated ‘chatur aseetidhaaparinatam bhutaganam’ or eighty four fold Beings in srishti or say countless living species. Thus the Elemental Self is replete with the Live Beings!

IV. 1. Unity of the Elemental Self and the Supreme : *Te khalu vaavorthva retasoti vismitaa abhisametyochuh, Bhagavaan namestetva anishaadhi, twam asmaakam gatir anyaa na vidyata iti; asyako vidhir bhutaatmaano yenedam hitvaatmaaneva saayujyam upaiti taan hovaacheti/* Vaalikhilya sages who were of extreme chastity and ‘baahyaanatara shuchi’ or of external and internal cleanliness then approached Bhagavan Prajapati in awe and veneration stating that there could be no other excepting Him to clarify as to what could be the methodology that once a Being on earth on the termination of life, the Inner Self would merge into the Elemental Self to whom the **Pancha Bhutas or the Five basic Elements** of Earth-Water-Fire-Air- and the Sky are anchored to!\_2. *Athayatraapi uktam, Mahaanadeeshuryamaya ivaanivartakam asya yat puraakritam, samudravelava durnivaaryam asya mriyoraagamanam, sadasad phalamayaih paashaih paangur iva baddham,bandhana - stasya ivaassvaatantrayam, yam avishayastasya iva bahu bhayaavastam, madirommatta iva moha madi- rottam, paapmaanaa griheeta iva bhraamyamaanam, mahoraga dashtaa iva vishayadastam, mahaandha - kaaram iva raagaandham, indrajaalam iva maayaamayam, svapna iva mithyaadarshanam, kadalee - garbha ivaasharam, nataiva kshanavesham, chitra bhitiriva mithyaamanoharamiti athoktam/ Shabda sparshaadayo hyaartha martyenartha ivaasthitaah, yeshaam saktastu bhutaatmaa na smareta param padam/* Neither the flows of rivers nor the tides of oceans are irreversible and more certainly the call of death. All the Beings in Creation are prisoners of one’s own doings, far worse than a lame person disabled to walk straight, or like one in the stronghold of death. Such persons are always exposed to dangers like an intoxicant with the liquor of ‘maya’ the make belief or delusion; he or she is like one smitten by a cobra with poison of passions and obsessions , like a person in dreams and delusions, like an actor changing his dresses, like false appearances devoid of reality, like objects of sound and vision totally misleading. But the Infinite Elemental Self is neither with earthly senses of the Beings as experienced by them nor the thick cover of Maya the Make Believe that the mortal Beings are subjected to since that Self is even far superior than even the **Pancha Bhutas** that had been Its own manifestations and offshoots. The mortals however are subjected to ‘marana dharma’!

VI. 6. Bhur-Bhuvah-Swah the Tri Lokas and worship of Gayatri - Bhaskara-and Savitri: *Athaavyaahritam vaa idam aaseet, sa Satyam Prajapatistapas taptvaanuvyaaharad Bhur-Bhuvah -Swar iti; eshaivaasya Prajaapateh sthavishthaa tanuryaa lokavateeti,swar iti; Swar iti asyaah shiro naabhir Bhuvo Bhuh paadaa Adityaaschakshuh, chakshur aayattaa hi Purushasya mahatee maatraa, chakshushaa hi ayam maatraascharati, Satyam vai chakshu, aksheene avasthito hi Purushah sarvaartheshu charati, etasmaad bhur bhuvah swar iti, upaaseetaanena hi prajapatir vishvaatmaa vishvachakshur ivopaasito bhavateeti, evam hi aahaishaa vai Prajaapati vishvaabhrit tanuur etasyaam*

*idam sarvam antarhitam, asmi cha sarvasminn eshaa antarhriteti, tasmaad eshopaseetaa/* At the very beginning truly indeed only Prajapati was self manifested and by observing severe concentration uttered three words Bhur-Bhuvah-Swar and scured magnificent and huge His gross and universal form which comprised Aakaasha as the head, navel as the atmosphere, feet as the bhumi and the vision as the Pratyakta Bhaskara. Hence the manfestation of Prajapati; hence *prajaapatir vishvaatmaa vishva chakshur/or* Prajapati Himself is the Body Form as also His vision. Indeed the entire Universe is hdden in the Antratma Himself as the true reflection of Prajapati.

VI. 34: Gaarhapatya Agni performed by Prajapati caused the creation of Bhumi, Dakshinaagni manifested Antariksha the atmosphere and aakaasha the sky was the result of Aahavaneeyaani: *Prithiveegarhapatyontariksham dakshinaagnir dyaaur aahavaneeyah, tada eva pavamaanaa paapaavaka shuchaya aavishkritam etenaasya yajnam, yathah pavamaana paavaka shuchi samghaato hi jaatharah, tasmaad agnir yashtavyah chetavyah stotavyobhidhyaayatavyah;yajamano havirgriheetvaa devataabhidhyaanam icchati: hiranya varnah shakuno hridyaaditye pratitishthah madgur hamsas tejo vrishah sosminn agnau yajjamahe iti chaapi mantraartham vichinoti; tat savitur varenyam bhargosyaabhidhyeyam yo buddhyantastho dhyaaayeeh manah shanti padam anusaraty aatmanyeva dhaatreteme shloka bhavanti:*

*1.Yathaanirnindhano vahnih svayonaav upashaamyate tathavritti kshaach chittam svayonaav upaasyaamyate/ 2. Svayonaav upashaantasya manasah satya kaamatah, indriyaartha vimuudhasyaantarta karmavashaanugah/ 3.Etittam eva hi samsaaram , tad prayatnena shodhatet, yatchittas tanmayo bhavati guhyam etat sanaatanam/ 4. Chittasyahi prasaadena hanti karma shubha - ashubham prasannaatmaani sthitvaa sukham avyayamashnute:/ 5. Samaasaktam yathaa chittam jantore vishaya gochare, yadi evam brahmani, yadi syaat tat ko na muchyate bandhanaat/6.Manohi dvididham proktam shuddham cha ashuddam eva ha, ashuddham kaama samparkaat shuddham kaama vivarjitam/ 7.Laya vikshepa rahitm manah kritvaa sunischalam, yadaa yaati amaneebhavam tadaa tat paramam padam/ 8. Taavan mano niruddhavyam hridi yaavat kshayam gatam, etaj jnaanam cha moksham cha sheshaanye sheshaanye grandha vistaraah/ 9. Samaadhi nirdhauta malasya chetaso niveshitasyaatmai yadsukham bhava, na shaktye varnayitum giraa tadaa, svayam tad antahkaranena grihyate/ 10. Apaam aapognir agnau vaa vyomni vyoma na lakshayet, evam antargatam yasya manah sa parimuchyate/ 11. Mana eva manushyaanaam kaaram bandha mokshayoh, bandhaaya vishayaasangim moksho nirvishayam smritam, bandhaaya vishyaasangim moksho nirvishayaangim moksho nirvishayam smritam/ Atonagnihotryanagnichid ajnaanabhidyaayinaam brahmanah padaa vyomaanu smaranam viruddham, tasmaad agnir yashtavyah chetavyah stotavyohibhidyaatavyayah/ ( While Gaarhapatya Agni performed by Prajapati caused the creation of Bhumi, Dakshinaagni manifested Antariksha the atmosphere and aakaasha the sky was the result of Aahavaneeyaagni. As such these Agnis are Sacred and Pure and the digestive fire too is divine as a combine of the agnis and hence all kinds are pure-radiant- and worshipworthy. All the fires submeging in the heart and Pratyaksha Bhaskra as the Golden Swan undoubtedly as Saviri be worshipped not to entangled in the material attractions by the pulls and pressures of misleading thoughts of mind . Indeed whatever one thinks pure that he repeats and the course of thoughts gets diverted from falsity to reality in the course of passage of time. Indeed *Shareeram swarga narakou bandha mokshobhyam tathaa kalpanaamaatram evaitat kim me kaaryam chidaatmanah/* In other words, it is the mind and emerging thought -waves in the ocean of ‘Samsaara’ as engaged in one’s lifetime that takes the course and direction towards the destination. The course is narrow, difficult and testing. Indeed, the body, heaven or hell are all directed by the mind the boat’s driver who would invariably lead the course the smooth , attractive and long direction. But to opt for a short cut, -albeit difficult-require inputs of Indriya Nigrah or self control, patience ,and tremendous confidence, conviction and sacrifice. Of what avail indeed is intelligence and knowledge merely without application!Then only one could acquire the distinguishing capability of appropriate direction. Mind and thought take the course of purity or impurity; one turns to desire or non- desire. Once the barrier is crossed of both of them viz.*

then only the light of pure consciousness dawns and gradually the glow gets multiplied till Absolute Illumination and Radiance. Gradually too 'bandha vimochana' or the the knots bondage. In fact, the distinction of Pancha Bhutas or the Five Elements viz. Earth-Water-Fire-Air and Sky or the awareness of Me-Mine -Thou art Thou- gets dissolved. In essence it is the Mind which is the prime mover, that unlocks the thoughts. To ignite the Self the unique way of performing the agnihotra sacrifice is stated as essential: *Atonagnihotryanagnichid ajnaanabhidyayinaam brahmanah padaa vyomaanu smaranam viruddham, tasmaad agnir yashtavyah chetavyah stotavyohibhidyaatavyayah/*

35. *Namognaye prithivee kshite loka smrite lokam asmai yajamaandya dhehi, namo vaayaventariksha kshite loka smrite lokam asmai yajamaanya dhehi, nama aadityaya divi kshite loka smrite lokam asmai yajamaanasya dhehi, namo brahmane sarvakshite sarvasmrite sarvam asmai yajamaanaaya dhehi, hiranmayene paatrena satyasyaapihitam mukham, tat tvam puushann apaavranu satya dharmasya vishnave/ Yosaa aaditye purushah sosaa aham, esha ha vai satya dharmo yad aadityasya aadityatvam tacchukklam, purusham, alingam, nabhasontargatasya tejasomshamaatram etad yad aadityasya madhya ivety akshinyagnou chatad brahmaitad amritam etad bhargah etad satyadharmo nabhatontasya tejasomsha maatram, etad yad aadityasya madhye yajur deepyati aum apo jyotirasomritam brahma bhur bhuvah swar aum, ashtapaadam shuchim hamsam tri sutram anum avyayam, dvi dharmondham tejasendham sarvam pashyan pashyati, nabhasontargatasya tejsomsha maatram etad yad aadityasya madhye uditvaa mayukhe bhavata etad praana etad aapaa etacchandramaa etatechuram, etad amritam, etad brahma vishayam, etad bhaanur arnavas tasminn eva yajamaanaah saindhva iva vleeeyanta esha vai brahmaikataatra hi sarve kaamah samhita ita atrodaaharanti: amshudhaaraya ivaanuvaateritah samsphurati asaav antargatah suraanaam, yo haivamvit sa savit,sa dvitavit, saikadhaam etah syaat tad aatmakascha: ye vindava ivaabhyuccharanti ajasram, vidyud iva bhraarchisha parame vyoman, terchisho vai yashasa aashrayah vaashaaj jataabhirupaaiva krisna varimaanah/ ( May the one who prostrates with veneration to Agni on Earth, Vayu in the atmosphere, Aditya in the heaven, Brahma all over the Universe and permeates the totality of Srishti. May Pushan unveil Paramatma the Unknown, Abstract, and Eternal. What Pushan unveils the Glorious Brahman is but a portion of the nectar in the midst of Bhaskara, which is also shared and enjoyed by Chandra, as also the charaachara jagat on earth too as the offshoots. The remainder comprises *inter alia* the Yajur Veda, Pranava Shabda, Water, Fire, and Brahman in the Form of Bhur-Bhuvas-Svarm AUM. The Supreme is eight footed - attainable by the ashtanga yoga, hamsa-swan like white purity, three stringed viz bhur-bhuvar-swar, minute or like a bindu, free from Trigunas and 'dvidharmordharmondham' or blind and passive of 'dharma - adharma', ignited by extraordinary radiance, yet 'sarvam pashyan pashyati' or the Omniscient or the all visible and knowledgeable. Only a portion of the Solar Orbid is visible even to Maha Yogis. Among the several Surya Kiranas, only two very significant rays are very subtle and immortal called Yajus the ocean of luminosity which generates agni-vayu- praana-water /chandra. Indeed that is the unknown 'bindu' the point of Reality of Brahman the ocean of Illumination. It is where Maharshis, Maha Yogis and the illustrious followers of Brahmata get dissolved like a lump of salt.*

#### MAHA NARAYANOPANISHAD:

Maha Narayanopanishad in the opening stanzas itself describes Pajapati the immortal as follows: Section I. Stanza 1: Prajapati's retas and foetus generated Bhur-Bhuva-Svaha and Kaalamana: *Ambhasya paare bhuvanasya madhye naakasya pushthe mahato maheeyaan, shukrena jyotirishi samanu pravishthah Prajaapatisharati garbhe anantah/* Prajapati in the form of endless waters generated Bhur-Bhuvah-Svaha or Bhumi-Aakasha-Swarga and above all a seed in the form of a foetus which multiplies into countless species as the latter are born-preserved for a while and degenerated. *Sukra* or Prajapati himself

enters *Pranis* or Beings and after sustenance and destruction then *Jyotirishi* or transmigrates the *Antaratma* or the Inner Conscience. Thus the Paramatma replicates into Antaratma and the *Jeeva* or the Embodied Being rolls on in the eternal cycle of births and deaths merely carrying the load of *Karma* or the sum total of *Paapa Punyas* in the cycle of Time or the *Kaala maana*.

Stanza 2: *Yasmin tridasamcha vichaiti sarvayasmin Devaa adhi vishve nishaduh, tadeva bhutam tadu bhavyamaa idam tadakshare parame vyoman/* Prajapati the *Karta* having created the *Bhokta* or the recipient declared that He is the cause of existence of every creature as embodied besides the entirety of of all the causes too including preservation-dissolution-repeated transmigration of Souls too. As the imperishable Antaratma the Inner Conscience, Paramatma is the ‘raison d’tre’ as manifested *Vyoman* or *Aakaasha* which is but a constituent element of the Universe and in turn was the cause of the four elements of Prithivi-Aapas-Tejas-and Vayu or the Earth-Water-Fire -and Air.

Stanzas 4-5: *Yatah prasuto toyena jeevaan vyachasarja bhumyaam yadoshamdheebhih purushaan pashumscha vivesham bhutaani charaacharaani/ Atahparam naanyadaneeyasam hi paraatparam yanmahanto mahaantam, tadekamavkyatarupam vishvam puranam tamasah parastaat/* The Universe got manifested by Prakriti - the *alter ego* of Paramatma- including the Pancha Bhutas or the Four Elements besides *bhumyaam- charaacharani bhutaan-oushadheebhi-Purushaan- pashun* or the great earth-moving and immovables-herbs / food- human beings-and all kinds of species;

Stanzas 7: is quoted: *Tadevaagnih tadvaayuh tat Suryastadindu chandramaah, tadeva Shukramamritam tad Brahma tadaapah sa Prajapatih/* The Maha Prakriti who generated included the ‘Jagadupakaaraka Agni’ or the Fire that which is the benefactor to the Universe; then the Vayu Deva the sustainer; then the radiant and ever illuminator Surya; Moon the Lord of herbs; the Stardom and the Sukramamritam or the nectar the parental seed to perpetuate the human and all other species; Water and the other Pancha Bhutas or the Basic Elements; the Unique Brahma Deva and Prajapati the Creators of ‘charaachara jagat’ - the ‘Pranis’.

Section I -Chapter II : Originally Parameshwara and Prakriti manifested Parabrahma and the latter created Srishti viz. Pancha Bhutas, Tri Murtis and ther Consorts, Surya and Indraadi Celestials

*Adbhyah sambhutih Prithiviyai rasaaccha Vishwakarmanah samavartataadhi,tasya Twashtha vividha drupayeti tatpurushasya Vishvamaajaanamagre/ Vedahametam Purusham mahantam aaditya varnam tamasah parastaat, tamevam vidwaanabhrita iha bhavati naanyah panthaavidyateyanaaya/ Prajaapatisharati gabherantah ajaayamaano bahuthaa vijaayate, tasya dheeraah parijaananti yonim, Mareechinaam padamicchanti vedhasah/ Yo devebhya aatapati, yo Devaanaam purohitah, Purveyo devebhyo jaatah namo Ruchaaya baahyave/Rucham Brahmaam janayantah, Devaa agretadbruvan, yassatvaivam Braahmano vidyaat, tasya Deva asan vasho/ Hreescha te Lakshmeeshva patnanou, ahoraatre paarshveh nakshani rupayam, ashvinau vyaakttam, ishtam manishaana, amum manishana, sarvam manushani/* This Universe was created by Para Brahman by virtue of Five Elements of Earth-Water-Air-Agni-and Akaasha. He-of course- is indeed far superior to Aditya, Indra and other Celestial Celebrities. Surya Deva called as Tvashta rises in the mornings embodying His radiance. Into this mortal world which at one stage was engulfed in total darkness and gloom, the celestial illumination from the singular source of Bhaskara brought amazing transformation with brightness and activity. Indeed but for this, there is no other path of success and immortality! This alternate form of Parameshwara viz. Prajapati shines for the benefit of all the Devas; He is invoked as their beneficiary as also their Chief.

Devadhi Deva! Hree and Lakshmi are your consorts; you are the personification of Tri Murtis of Brahma-Vishnu-Maheswara. Days and Nights are your two sides. Ashvini Kumars are your mouth. You are the Lord of all the Beings moving about in the Inter Space of Heaven and Earth causing days and nights. Indeed you are the ‘Ajam’ or the Unborn being the Inner Consciousness of one and all in the Universe. You are also the Hiranyagarbha who along with the power of Maya is the singular support to heaven and earth; You are the Supreme controller of bipeds and quadrupeds of the earth; you too are the ‘shttvara jangamas’ in the Creation. Your glory is evident from mountains like Himalayas as also from oceans and rivers.

Section I -Chapter III - The Magnificence of Hiranya garbha -Stanzas 1-3 on Hiranyagarbha: *Hiranyagarbhah samavartataagre bhutasya jaatah patireka aaseet, sa daadhaara prithiveem dyaamutemaam kasmai Devaaaya havishaa vidhema/ Yah praanato nimishato mahitwaika idraajaa jagato babhuva, ya Isha asya dwipadaaschatushpadah kasmai Devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Ya aatmadaa balamdaa, ya aatmadaa balamdaa yasya upaasate prashimsha yasya devaah, yasya chhaayaamritam yasya mrityuh kasmai Devaa ya havisham vidhema/* By the might of Paramatma and the supreme power of Maya Prakriti, Prajapati was generated. The same Paramatma the unique also commissioned Hiranyagarbha the Creator to prop up Trilokas viz. Bhumi-Antariksha- and Swarga. Devas are contented by the ‘yajna phalas’ as performed by the virtuous sections of the Society as prompted by Sages and dwijas and their worship, sacrifices and dharmic karyas sustain ‘dharma’ and ‘nyaya’ or virtue and justice. Thus Hiranyagarbha is the Sovereign controller of all the Beings in ‘srishti’ ie. humanity and all the Beings plus as all the bipeds, quadruples and so on and is latent as their internal nucleus. He is the reality within them all bestowing strength and sustenance like a shadow till such time destiny takes them in the whirlwind of deaths and births yet grants them immortality jumping from body to another.

Stanzas 4-8: *Yasyame himavanto mahitwaa yasya samudra rasayaa sahaahuh, yasyemaah pradisho yasya baahu kasmai Devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Yah krandasi avasaa tastabhaane asyaikshetaam manasaa rojamaane, yatraadhisura uditau vyeti kasmai Devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Yena dyourugraa prithivi cha dridhe yena suvah stabhitam yena naakah, yo antarikshe rajaso vimaanah kasmai Devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Aapoha yanmahatirvishwamaayam daksham dadhaanaa janantiragnima, tato Devaanaam nira- vartataasurekah kasmai Devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Yaschidaapo mahinaa paryapashyaddaksham dadhaanaa janayanteeragnima, yo Deveshvadhi Deva eka aaseet kasmai Devaaya havishaa vidhema/* It is the brilliance and splendour of Hiranyagarbha Brahma that the the high peaks of Himalayas or the magnitude and energy of Oceans and massive rivers are declared and His hands are deeply involved in dispensing justice in eight directions to all the Beings as they deserve. It is His extraordinary capability that Earth and Space are held in their respective positions and Bhaskara Deva moves eternally by His Rise and Disppearance day in and day out! It is He who firmed up the terrestrial , the sky and the heavenly regions and created ‘Rajasa’ feature in the antariksha! It is due to His glory that ‘aapas’ or water got materialised and eventually Agni or the Fire and thereafter the form of ‘vayu’ or deity of Wind and Praana the life force. It is thus Hiranyagarbha who set the chain of the Basic Elements of Nature which made the ‘charaacharajagat’ exist and sustain. The origin of waters and fire had admirably made vedic tasks of potent worship. Thus all the respective Devas are in place to kick-start the momentum of the Universe thus standing out as the Leader of Devas and as the Supreme Creator.

II.13-15) Angushtha maatrah purushontaraatmaa sadaa janaanaam hridaye sannivishthah, hridaa manveesho manasaabhi klipto yadaa etad vidur amritaaste bhananti// Sahasra sheershaa purushah sahasraahshah sahasra paat,sabhumin vishvato vritwaa ati atisthad dashaangulam// Purusha evedamsarvam yad bhutam yaccha bhavyam utaamritatavasyeshaano yad annenaatirohati// (The Inner Self is hardly of thumb size always resident of his heart the hub of distributing evergy arising from Praana

the breathing; mind is the charioteer of the organs and senses. Those who realise the significance of the Self knows it all. The Virat Purusha or the Cosmic Person is stated to have endless number of heads, eyes, and feet of far reaching command and the numerical thousand each of these body parts is by way of suggestive magnitude. The Maha Purusha Ishvara encompasses and envelopes Bhumi on all the sides, but again this is an understatement of ‘dashangulam’ or of ten inches seeking to express in brief as that expression briefly covers Sapta Lokas, Sapta Paataalas, Sapta Dvipas, Sapta Samudras, Sapta Parvatas, and so on apart from the ‘Kaalamaana’ the Eternal Time Schedule! *Purusha eve vedam sarvam/* or the Maha Purusha Parameshwara is indeed the totality of the Cosmos, of whatever has been, is and will certainly be too! He is the Over Lord of the Universe and of Immortality quite irrespective of the considerations of the Past-Present and Future and what ever grows ‘annatarena’ or based on the basis of food and the resultant vital energy ! Incidentally, the Inner Self is no doubt well within the Body and its actions but clearly unaffected by its acts and their consequences) . Yet, He controls ‘dharma and adharma’ or virtue and vice by shapes every Being’s act with the latter’s hands and legs or the actions.

33-34: Glory of Bhu Devi: *Ashvakraante ratha kraante Vishnukraante vasundharaa, shirasaam dharayahyaami rakshaswa maam pade pade/* May this Sacrificial Earth be such that Lord Vishnu Himself by horses and chariot traverses severally, while my head is bent in prostration thrice for His blessing protection at every step of His chariot. By way the purification of the self, this stanza be repeated thrice. Figuratively, the three prostrations of the devotee represent three steps of Trivikrama Vamana Deva who occupied the Universe in three steps the earth-akaasha and the ‘atholokas’.

*Bhumirdhenurdharani loka dhaarini, udyataasi Varahena Krishnena shata baahunaa/* In Varaha avataara, Lord Vishnu lifted up Bhu Devi as in the form of a milch cow while she was sinking into deep seas as dragged to ‘atho loka waters’ by the demon Hiranyaaksha. Such is the sacred nature of Earth and even a rub of the ‘mrittika’ on one’s forehead after sacred bath would signify ‘bhudevata’ as a physical purification.

35-36: *Mrittike hana paapam yanmayaa dushkritam kritam, Mrittike Brahma dattaasi Kaashyapenaabhi mantrinaa, Mrittike dehi me pushtim twayi sarva pratishthitam/ Mrittike pratishthite sarve tanme nirnuda Mrittike, twayaam hatena paapena gacchaami paramaam gatim/* Maha Bhumi Devata! Indeed you are the eternal sustainer of Life of all Beings. You are the singular source of food, energy and contentment and we worship you to destroy our sins and misdoings done wilfully or inadvertently. It was Kashyapa Maharshi who performed ‘abhimantra’ of ‘mrittika’ or water mixed pieces of earth to purify human beings of virtue and apply on their head, face, forehead, heart and limbs to evaporate their blemishes. Bhu maataa! Application of Mrittikaa would not only ward off the present but the erstwhile sins too and purify one’s body, heart and Inner Conscience of all! Indeed, Earth is a personification of patience, hard work and sacrifice and Bhu Devi is a real representation of a Mother, Guide, Provider and of attachment to her progeny to repay one’s indebtedness. Mrittikaa snaana is significant while reciting the stanzas.

#### Jala Deva Varuna the Wonder Sustainer of the Universe

Stanzas 53-54: *Sumittraa na aapa oshadhayah santu, drumatraastasmai bhuyaasuryosmaan dveshti yam cha vayam dvishmah/ Aapo hi shthaa mayobhuvastaa na urje dadhaatana, maheranaaya chakshase, yo vah shivatamo rasatasya bhaajayateha nah, ushiteerava maatarah, tasmaa aram gamaaya vo yasya khshayaaya jinvatha, aapo janayathaa cha nah/* Indeed we as the users of waters and herbs are ever grateful to Paramatma and to those who worship water especially holding it on palms and performing sacred baths in running flows by reciting the mantras like *drupadaadivenmumunchaan swinnah snaatvee malaadiva, putam pavitrenevaajyam, aapah shundhantu mainasah* meaning ‘ may I be cleansed and purified washing off my blemishes and sins by these waters as a sinner is purified as also a perspiring has

a cool bath and like butter is strained by a filter! This mantra I reproduced from Taittireeya Samhita vide I.4.45.

Jala Devata! You do always confer happiness as food provides satisfaction. You provide fantastic insight and essence of purification, knowledge and insight as any mother would be happy about and proud of a progeny. Thus you are the personification of ‘bahyaantassuchi’ or external cleanliness and internal purity and auspiciousness. You are indeed the provider of fulfillment of human life on Earth, besides being the gateway to Spiritual Life and Bliss. This Mantra is reproduced from Taittiriya Samhita IV. i.5. This mantra is invariably recited for ‘Prokshana’ or sprinkling water with ‘kusha grass’ and ‘akshatas’.

Stanzas 55-61: *Hiranyashringam Varunam prapadye teertham me dehi yaachitah, yanmayaam bhuktama- saadhunaam paapebhyascha pratigrihah/ Yanme manasaa vaachaa karmanaa vaa dushkritam kritam, tatra Indro Varuno Brihaspatih Savitaacha punantu punah punah/ Namu agnayepsumate nama Indraaya namo Varunaaya namo Vaarunyenamodbhavah/ Yadapaam kruram yadamedhyam yat ashantam tadapagacchhaat/ Atyaashananaadaneepaanaad yancha ugraat pratigrahaat, tanme Varuno Rajaa paaninaahyavamarshatu/ Atyaashananaadaneepaanaad yancha ugraat pratigrahaat, tanme Varuno Rajaa paaninaahyavamarshatu/ Sohamapaapo virajo nirmukto muktikilbishah, naakasya prishthaaruhma salokataam/ Yaschaapsu Varunah sa punaatwaghamarshanah/* We entreat shield and shelter from Varuna Deva who is lustrous with his ‘swarna shringa’ or the golden diadem. We seek solace and sanctuary from us the sinners and their offerings as also our sinful activities. There is a declaration by King Ashwapati Kekaya in Chhandogya Upanishad vide V.11.5 that he offered gifts of acceptance to a few Brahmanas since his kingdom was free from blemishes since that was free from thieves, drinkers of intoxicants, cuckolds, unchaste women and uneducated!

May we be right earnest in our conscience by *manasaa-vaachaa-karmana* and thought-speech-acts in my prayers and worship of Indra-Varuna-Brihaspati- Savitur / Bhaskara repeatedly for total purification. Our salutations to Jala Deva as the fiery heat in running water flows, to Indra Deva, Varuna and Varuni the related Jala Devataas. May through the power of this mantra, the ‘himsatmika’ or injurious, ‘ashuddha’ or impurities like excretionaries, ‘yadaamedhyam’ or diseases and ‘ashantam’ or mentally disturbed and troubled, be all washed off and purified. May whatever food or drink which is indecent, unprescribed and unlawful is consumed be a human being of virtue be pardoned by Varuna Raja and so does acceptance of gifts from undeserving persons be excused too. As a mortal is truly of the qualities of being ‘apaapi’-viraja-‘nirmukta’- ‘mukta kilbishah’ or sinless, blemishless, with neither strings attached nor bonded with wordly attachments, then indeed he is well qualified to accomplish the status of Brahman! May Varuna Deva who is personified in various sources of water like rivers, sarovaras, and even Wells be pleased to purify me. Brihadaranyakopanishad III.ix.16 is quoted: *Aapa yeva yasyaayaa tanam, hridayam lokah, manojyotih, yovai tam purusham vidyaat sarvasyatmanah paraayanam sa vai veditaa syad Yajnyavalkya/ Veda vaa aha tam purusham sarvasyaatmanah paraayanam yam aatha; ya evaayamapsu purushah sa eshah, vadaaiva Skaakalyah; tasya kaa Devateti; Varuna iti hovaacha/(He who knows that entity whose living is water ie rivers, reservoirs, wells and such other water bodies, whose medium of vision is the Intellect, whose source of vision is knowledge, whose cause of brightness is mind and thought and who is the ultimate option of the body and organs. Indeed it is the very being on the water viz. the Jala Purusha and the Adhi devata or the concerned deity is Varuna Deva or the God of Rains)*

Stanzas 62: *Imam me Gange Yamune Saraswati Shutudri, stomam sachataa Parushpyaa, Asikniyaa, Marudvadhe Vitasta Aajrikeye shrunushyaa Sushomayaa/* May all the following Sacred Rivers be invoked to purify our bathings viz. Ganga, Yamuna, Shutadri or Sutlej, Parushni or Raavi, Asikni or Chenab, Marudvridha or Chenab again westward; Vitasta or Jheelam, Aajrikiya or Vyasa, and Sushoma or Sohan. This is a repeat of Rig Veda 10. 75.5 [ A popular alternative version is: *Gangecha Yamunechaiva Sindhu Kaveri Sarasvati Krishnaa Godaavarichaiva jalesmin sanniddhim kuru/*] [ The above Mantra are uttered while performing a Sacred Bath]

Stanzas 63-65: *Ritam cha satyam cha aabheedvaat tapasah urdhva ajaayata, tato raatrirajaayata tatah Samudro arnavah/ Samudraarnavaadadhi samvatsaro ajaayata, ahoraatraani vidadhat vishasya mishito vashee/ Suryachandramasou Dhaataa yadhaa purvaka kalpayat Divam cha Prithivimcha antarikshayo suvah/* Ritam denotes creation of humans with thinking power-satyam or the Inner Self-‘abheedhvaat tapasah’ or of intense tapas- raatri stands for Prakriti in the nights-and Samudra generated by innumerable waters; besides ‘Mahad- Aarnava’ or the Srishti in general. From ‘Aarnava Samudra’, the ‘Kaala Chakra’ or the Time Cycle got manifested and Days and Nights were created. Vidhata then created Surya Chandras, Aakaasha and Prithvi, Antariksha and Swarloka too as the last mentioned was ‘Atma Tatwa’ or Inner Consciousness Itself! [The above three stanzas from Rig Veda X. 190. 1-3 are significant ‘aghamaharshana’ or ‘praayaschitta’ or demolition of sins].

Stanza 66: *Yatprithivyaam rajah swamaantarikshe virodasi, imaamstadaapo Varunah punatvaadh aghamarshanah/ Punantu Vasavah punantu Varunah punatwaat aghamarshanah, eva bhutasya madhye bhuvanasya goptaa/ Esha punyakritaam lokaanesha mritohiranmayam, dyaavaaprithivyo hiranmayam sam shritam Suvah, sa nah Suvah samshishaadhi/* (May all the Beings on the Earth be purified by waters physically and psychologically by the grace of Varuna Deva who also destroys the sins collected by them. May those human beings of virtue seeking to usher in spiritual solace and peace to themselves and to all on Earth by worshipping Devas on antariksha and Swarga by their performance of religious works be pardoned of blemishes if any too be granted by Varuna by the use of waters. Indeed such acts of Spirituality by the learned mortals are often hindered by the world of death called Hiranmaya who tends to place obstacles in the acts of virtue addressed to the ruling Devas in trilokas).

Stanzas 67-70: *Aardram jwalatijjotirahamasmi, Jyotirjvalati Brahmamasmi, yohasmi Brahmaahamasmi, Ahamasmi Brahmaahamasmi, ahamevaaham maam juhomi swaahaa/ Akaayarakari avakeerna steno bhrunahaa gurutalpagah, Varunopaamaghamarshanastasmaat paapaat pramuchyate/ Rajo bhumistva maam rodayasva pravadanti dheeraah/ Aakraantsamudrah prathame vidharmanjanyanprajaa bhuvana - sya Rajaa, vrishaa pavitre adhi saano aveye Somo vaavidhe suvan Indu /*The Supreme Effulgence projects Itself as the water soaked seed that sprouts; the Eternal Light shines as the sub-stratum of the liquid element. It is that Brahman who reflects in all His Creations as the Reality while individual Beings including Pancha Bhutas down to Charaachara Jagat truly claim as that spark called ‘aham’ or the Inner Conscience. It is out of grades of ‘tamas’ or ignorance that all the creations from Devas to human beings down to pieces of grass invariably confuse that ‘spark reflection’ viz. ‘aham’ as ‘ahamkaara’! As the ‘spark’ reveals itself the layers of ignorance and that is what the process of enlightenment all about! *Jyotirjvalati Brahmaamasmi, yohasmi Brahmamasmi, Ahamasmi Brahmamasmi,* so emphasizing the oblation to Agni Deva is performed as ‘swaah’! Manu Smriti vide XII.119 is quoted: *Atmaiva devataah sarvaah sarvamaatmanyavasthitam, Atmaa hi janatyateshaam karmayogam shareerinaam/* or Atma constitutes sarva Devata as the totality of Gods as Jeevatma as per karma yoga totals up the body of all the Beings in

Creation. It is the Antaratma or the Pure Inner Conscience which is but a reflection of the Avyayam-Shaswatam-Vishnum- Anantam-Ajam-Avyayam the Paramaatma.

Varuna Deva is indeed tolerant to uproot even the worst possible and most heinous crimes and wash off the sins; even to those whoever is the disobeyer of Scriptural Conduct besides being a thief, or an embriyo killer, or spoiler of the modesty of Guru Bharya. Varuna claims that his magnificene is vindicated by pardoning those who are the worst sinners as only such lot who are innumerable among the Beings need and seek solace having regretted sincerely. He further claims that he is indeed the ground of sins as His Supreme Curer as He makes them cry by washing off all kinds of human lapses.Indeed, Paramatma represents an ocean overflowing what ever is under the purview of Creation by Maha -Maya represented by Devi Uma. Among the acts of Creation are the Beings and the latter is strictly on their 'karma' or actions whose fortune or otherwise is decided on. He also decides on the scope of tolerance. In the process of Creation, Paramatma manifested as Indra and Chandra as well.

Special Prayers to Agni Deva:

Stanza 1: *Jaatavedase sunavaama somamaraateeyato nidahaati Vedah, sa nah parshadati durgaani vishvaa naaveva sindhuh duritaatyagnih/*

Stanza 2: *Taamagni varnaam tapasaa jvalanteem vairochaneem karma phaleshu jushtaam, Durgaam deeveengum sharanamaham prapadye su tarasi tarase namah/*

Stanza 3: *Agne twam paarayaa navyo asmaan swastibhir-ati durgaani Vishvaa, Puushcha prithivi bahulaa na urvee bhavaa tokaaya tanayaaya shamyoh/*

Stanza 4: *Vishvaani no Durgah jaataveda:sindhum na naavaa duritaatiparshi, Agne aritwan manasaa grunaanasmaakam bodhyavitaam tanuunaam/*

Stanza 5: *Prutanaa ajitangum sahamaanamugram agnihuvema paramaat sadhastthaat, sa nah prassad-ati Durgaani vishvaa kshaamad devo ati duritaatyagnih/*

Stanza 6: *Pratnoshi kameedyo adhvareshu sunaaccha Hotaa navyascha satsi, swaam chaagne tanuvam piprayasva asmabhyam cha saubhagam aayajaswa/*

Stanza 7: *Gobhirjushtamayujo nishiktam tavendra Vishnoranusancharema, naakasya prishthamabhi samvasaano Vaishnaveem loka iha maadayantaam/*

Stanza 8: *Kaatyaayanaaya vidmahe Kanyakumari dheemahi, tanno Durgih prachodasyaat/ Om Shanti Shanti Shantih/*

May all those Vidwaans offer oblations of Soma Rasa to Jaatavedas to destroy whatever is inimical to us. May this Agni Deva leads us all and cover a shield of protection against all kinds of evils and head a boat to cross the ocean of Samsara and save us from sins and tribulations. This Stanza is originally from Rig Veda I.99.1.

May we offer our oblations in favour of Devi Durga by this medium of blazing Agni Deva of his characteristic colour and nature due to intense 'tapas' and entreat Her to fructify our actions and resolve all kinds of obstacles ; indeed we seek Her positive response by accepting our sincere prayers and offer

shelter and protection. Durga Devi, our earnest prostrations to you to navigate us through our deep distresses.

Agni Deva! The more we extol to our highest level falls far short of our inner feelings and such is your limitless magnificence. It is by your grace, do mercifully lead us on clear, auspicious and smooth paths of virtue instead of lanes and bylanes of vices . May our residences at our homes and lands be replete with contentment with swings of happiness and with ‘tokaaya tanayaaya shamyo’ or with joyous children and grandchildren! This stanza originates from Rig Veda I.8.2.

Jaatavedas, you are indeed the merciful destroyer of all our misdoings, troubles and tribulations so as to navigate us through the insurmountable tides of distress all through our existence; we have accumulated frighening heaps of sins all through. Just as Atri Maharshi extolled you to let every one be contented and let compassion prevail, the heaps of sins be burnt out! This stanza is a repeat of Rig Veda V.4.9.

In the ‘Parataat sadasyaat’ or in the paramount assembly of the vanquishers of evils and enemies, indeed Agni Deva stands out and to Him, we invoke and surrender with trust before that burns off insurmount - able yet perishable difficulties and ‘duritaas’ or lapses for assured protection and safety.

In sincerely addressing in admiration and reverence to Agni Deva as :*Agne! Twam yajeshu sarvatmakam sukham pratanoshi/* ‘ You are the exceptional medium of sacrifices of any description and the inevitable mediator between learned human beings on Earth and Devas in antariksha and swarga and the Supreme Powers elsewhere too. This medium is everlasting as long as human existence lasts on Earth. Agni Deva! may you be pleased to bless us the mortals happy and fortunate in all respects. This stanza is taken from Rig Veda VIII.11.10.

Agni Deva as Indra Himself! You are totally devoid of sin and sorrow and all the activities connected therewith. You are indeed associated with all auspicious functions where servants, cattle, and relatives are associated with and Devas in the highest regions get dynamic and dierctly with Lord Vishnu Himself to bestow fortunes to us on earth!

#### **Section Four of Maha Narayanopanishad continued**

IV. xvii.1) Swaha -Swadha Mantras invoking the Celestials: *Bhurannamagnaye Ptithivai swaaha, Bhuvennam Vaayaventarikshaaya swaaha, Suvarannam aadityaaya Dive swaaha, Bhurbhuvassuvaranna Chandramase Digbhyah swaaha, swadhaa Pitrubhyo Bhurbhuvah Suvarannamom/* May Bhu Devi grant me food. Towards that desire, may oblation be directed to Agni and Bhu Devi. May antariksha grant me food for which I make oblation to Vayu and antariksha. May swarga loka grant me food; in its fulfillment may I make oblation to Surya Deva and Swarga Loka. May the Devas of Bhu-bhuvar-swarga lokas grant me food.; towards this objective, may the oblation be made in favour of Chandra and Dasha Dishas grant me food. Thus may Devas be contented by the oblations. Further, may Pitru Devas be contented with my ‘Svadha’ reverences. Thus the Deities of Bhumi- Atmonphere-and Swarga lokas be contented along with ‘Pranava’- OM- and grant me food. In this context, it is explained that the syllables of *bhu-bhuvah-suvah* are known as Maha Vyahritis of Pranava Om, addressed to terrestrial-atmospheric-and heavenly regions .  
IV.xvii.2) *Sa etah tisro Devataa abhyatapat, taasam tapyamaanaanaam rasaan pravrihat Agner Richah, Vayor Yajumsi, Saamaani Adityaat/* (Then Prajapati brooded over three other Deities and extracted their essences too such as Rik Mantras from Agni, Yajur Mantras from Vayu and Saama Mantras from Surya

Deva) IV.xvii.3) *Sa etaam trayeem vidyaam abhyatapat tasyaah tapyamaanaaya rasaan praavrihat, Bhur iti Rikbhyaah, Bhuvan ity Yajurbhyaah, Svar ity Saamaabhyah/* (Prajapati then concentrated on the knowledge of the three Vedas and realised the juices of Bhuh from the Rik Veda Mantras, Bhuvan from the Yajur Mantras and Svaha from the Saama Mantras).

[Significance of three 'Svarupas' or Formats of Svaha, Svadha and Dakshina: About Svaha Devi, Devas complained that they were not properly receiving the Ghee oblations in the Fire pit of various Sacrifices and Brahma prayed to Devi Prakriti. The solution was that a part of Prakriti would beget a child from the burning power of Fire by name Svaha Devi and that she would deliver three sons viz. Dakshinagni, Garhyapatagni and Avahayagni. Whenever Sages, Brahmanas or Kshatriyas recite Mantras, the terminal component of the Mantra ought to be 'Svaha' or otherwise the entire act of the Fire Sacrifice of pouring Ghee as also the potency of the concerned Mantra would be futile like a serpent without poisonous fangs. Even during 'Dhyana' or meditation the last word has to be Svaha. As regards Svadha Devi, Brahma Deva created Seven Pitris viz. 'Kavyahonala Soma Yamaschairyama thatha Agnivastha Barhisadah Somapah Pitri Devatah' or Kavya, Anala, Soma, Yama, Agnivastha, Barhisada and Somapa. The daily duties of Brahmanas are bathing, Trisandhya, Sraddha upto the stage of Tarpanam with 'Savya Dharana of Yagnopaveeta' or normal wearing of the Holy Thread as against 'Pracheenaveeti' or the way worn while praying to immediate Pitris of three generations of father, grand father and great grand father. Salutations to Svadha Devi are thus a must while performing daily rites like Tarpanams and most certainly on Shraddha Days. Like in the case of Svaha Devi and Svadha Devi, Dakshina Devi too is of Maha Lakshmi's partial extension. Without rendering prayers to Her to absolve the shortcomings by the Master of any Yajna, Shraddha, Vrath, formal worship or any such other activities in which Sages or Brahmanas are involved, the fruits of the prayers are quite incomplete. Shashti Devi (Devasena) is one of the Shodasa (Sixteen) Matrikas, the Manasa Putri or mind-born daughter of Brahma, the better half of Skanda, the Sixth Formation of Devi Prakriti, a Siddha Yogini and the boon-giver of sons who have no sons, wives who have no wives and wealth to the needy. Basically, She is the Goddess of children. Source: Devi Bhagavata Purana]

*Bhuragnaye prithivai swaha, bhuvan vayaventarikshaaya swaha, suvaraadutyaya divo swaha, bhurbhuvanusvaschandramase digbhyah swaha, namo devebhyah swadhaa putrubhyo bhurbhuvanusvar - aghna om/* May oblations to Brahman as expressed by the first vyahriti, in favour of Agni Deva and to Bhumi dependent on Agni; by the second vyahriti in favour of Vayu and the dependent Antariksha; by the third vyahriti to Surya and the dependent Swarga; and the next oblation with the vyahritis bhur-bhuvan-suvah to Chandra and the Dasha Dishas. Yet another oblation to Brahman is in favour of Pitru Devas as 'Swadha'. Om is expressed in the oblation to Brahman as the Unity of Devas along Bhur-Bhuvan-Suvah and finally to Agni Deva in conclusion.

Section Five: *Bhuragnaye cha prithivyai cha mahate cha swaha, Bhuvan Vaayavechantarikshaaya cha swaha, Suvah adityaya cha dive cha mahate swaha, Bhurbhuvanuschandramase cha nakshatrebhyascha digbhyascha mahate cha swaha, namo Devebhyah swadhaa pitrubhyo bhurbhuvan suvarharom/* My oblations to Brahman as manifested in all his forms as 'Bhuh'-Agni and Bhumi; as Bhuvan-Vayu and Antariksha; as Suvah-Surya and Swarga; Bhur-Bhuvan-Suva as Chandra- and Disha Devas; to Pitru Devas as Swadha; thus the final oblation to the Unified Brahman. Repetition of the oblations into Agni is to emphasize significance of the oblations as Brahma assuming varied forms and individual glories of Devas.

Section Six: *Paahi no Agna yenase swaaha, paahino Vishvavedase swaaha, yagjnam paahi Vibhaavaso swaaha, sarvam paahi Shatkrato swaaha/* Agni Deva, spare us from sin; endow us with knowledge and higher learning; the ever radiant and resplendent Deva! you indeed are the preserver and promoter acts of sacrifice aptly popular as ‘Shatakratu’ as shata is a merely symbolic while Vishwaveda denotes that you are a personification of knowledge essential for seeking liberation.

Section Seven: *Paahi no Agna ekayaa paahadyuta dwitiiyayaa, paahyuja triteeyayaa, paahi geerbhischatusrubhivaso swaah/* May Agni of the origin of divinity as commended by the Hymns of Rig Veda be sympathetic to us. May Agni Deva as praised by the hymns of Yajur Veda be compassionate to us on Earth. May Sama Veda by its hymns sings a lot about your magnificence be gracious to protect our food and its essence for our sake. May the hymns of all the four Vedas replete with admiration for you for pavitrata or sanctity and purity be benevolent to us mortals on Earth for all our blemishes and lapses and safeguard us.

Section Twelve: III. *Atah Samudraa girayascha sarvesmaatyaayanandite sindhvah sarvarupaah, antascha vishvaa oshadhayo rasascha yenaisha bhutaatishthayantaraatmaa/* Parama Purusha created Sapta Samudras named Lavana or of salt, Ikshurasa or sugarcane juice, Sura or wine, Ghrita or of ghee, Dahi or curd, Ksheera or milk, and Susvaada or sweet water; Sapta Giris viz. Sumeru, Kaikaasa, Malaya, Himalaya, Udyachala, Agastyachala, Suvela and Gandhamaadana; besides the Sapta Saptas included: Sapta Lokas of Bhu-Bhuvar-Swar-Mahar-Janar-Tapo-and Satya; Sapta Patalas of Atala-Vitala-Sutala-Talaatala, Mahatata, Rasaatata and Paataata; Sapta Dvipas viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Salmaali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkala. From Him also flow out rivers, grains, juices and so on and it is on the support of the food that the Internal Self is nourished and sustained.)

#### Mantra Pushpa:

[*Yopam pushpam veda, Puspavan prajavan pasuvan bhavati, Chandramava Apam pushpam Pushpavan, Prajavan pashuman bhavati, Ya Evam Veda, Yopa mayatanam Veda Ayatanam bhavati.* (He who understands the flowers of water, He becomes the possessor of flowers, progeny and cattle. Moon is the flower of the water, He who knows it to be so, He becomes the possessor of flowers, progeny and cattle. He who knows the source of water, Becomes established in his Self.

*Ag nirva Apamayatanam, Ayatanavan Bhavati, Yo agnerayatanam Veda, Ayatanavan bhavati Apovagner ayatanam, Ayatanavan bhavati, Ya Evam Veda, Yopa mayatanam Veda, Ayatanavan bhavati.* (Fire is the source of water, He who knows the source of Fire, Becomes established in his Self, Water is the source of fire, He who knows it to be so, Becomes established in his Self. He who knows the source of water, Becomes established in his Self.

*Vayurva Apamaya tanam, Ayatanavan bhavati, Yova Yorayatanam Veda, Ayatanavan bhavati/ Apovai va yorayatanam, Ayatanavan bhavati. Ya Evam veda, Yopamayatanam Veda Ayatanavan Bhavati.* (Air is the source of water, He who knows the source of Air, Becomes established in his Self, Water is the source of air, He who knows this, Becomes established in his Self. He who knows the source of water, Becomes established in his Self.

*Asouvai tapanna pamayatanam, Ayatanavan bhavati, Yo musya tapata Ayatanam Veda Ayatanavan bhavati, Apova Amusyatatata Ayatanam, Ayatanavan bhavati, Ya Evam Veda, Yopa*

*mayatanam Veda,Ayatanavan bhavati* (Scorching sun is the source of water,He who knows the source of the Scorching Sun, Becomes established in his Self,Water is the source of scorching sun, He who knows this,Becomes established in his Self.He who knows the source of water,,Becomes established in his Self.

*Chandrama Vama pamayatnam,Ayatanavan bhavati.Yascandra masa Ayatanam Veda Ayatanavan bhavati,Apovai Candra masa Ayatanam,Ayatanavan bhavati,Ya Evam Veda Yo pamayatanam veda,Ayatanavan bhavati.*(Moon is the source of water,He who knows the source of Moon,Becomes established in his Self,Water is the source of moon,He who knows this,Becomes established in his Self.He who knows the source of water,Becomes established in his Self).

*Nakshtrani va Apamayatanam,Ayatanavan bhavati,Yo Nakshtrana mayatanam Veda Ayatanavan bhavati,Apovai Nakshtrana mayatanam, Ayatanavan bhavati, Ye evam Veda,Yopamaya tanam Veda,Ayatanavan bhavati.*(Stars are the source of water,He who knows the source of the Stars,Becomes established in his Self, Water is the source of stars,He who knows this,Becomes established in his Self. He who knows the source of water,Becomes established in himself.

*Parjanyaova apamayatanam,Ayatanavan bhavati,Yah parjanyasya syayatinam Veda Ayatanavan bhavati,Apovai parjanya Syayatanam, Ayatanavan bhavati,Ye Evam veda,Yopa maya tanam Veda,Ayatanavan bhavati.*Clouds are the source of water,He who knows the source of the Clouds,Becomes established in his Self,Water is the source of clouds,He who knows this,Becomes established in his Self.He who knows the source of water,Becomes established in his Self.

*Samvastaro Va Apamayatanam,Ayatavan bhavati,Yassavatsa rasyaya tanam Veda Ayatavan bhavati.Apovai samvasara ayatanam, Ayatanavan bhavati.Ya Evam veda,Yopsu Navam pratistitam veda, Pratyeva tishthati.* Rainy season is the source of water,He who knows the source of Rainy Season,Becomes established in his Self,Water is the source of rainy season,He who knows this,Becomes established in his Self. He who knows that there is a raft is available,Becomes established in that raft.]

*Om tad Brahma - Om it is Brahma,. Om Tad Vayu - Om it is air, Om Tad Athma-Om it is the soul, Om Tad Sathyam- Om it is the truth,Om Tat Sarvam - Om it is everything-Om Tat puror nama- Om salutations to that Purusha Anthascharathi bhootheshu Guhyam Viswa Murthishu, That which is inside all beings secretly is that Universal God,Tvam Yajna- You are the fire sacrifice (Yajna),Twam vashatkara- You are the the personification of Vedic sacrifice,Tvam Indra -You are the Indratvam vayu - You are the air Tvam Rudra - You are Rudra, Vishnus tvam- You are the Vishnu Brahmasthvam- You are the Brahma, Tvam prajaipathi -You are the Lord and saviour of all beings (prajapati) Om Tadhapa apo jyothi raso amrutham brahma bhur bhuvastvam Om water is light, the essence is the nectar and the concept of Brahma is in all the seven worlds. Rajadhi rajaya Prasahya Sahine/Namo Vayam Vai Sravanaya Kurmahe Samekaman Kama Kaamaya mahyam, Kamesvaro Vai Shrivano dadatu, Kuberaya Vai Shrivanaya,Maha rajaya Namah. King of kings, we praise thee,Who is the giver of all victories,Who is the fulfiller of all desires, Please bless me with wealth,To fulfill all our desires,Oh, Kubera, we praise thee, Salutations to the king of kings. Ishaanah sarva vidyaanaan Ishvarah sarva bhutaanaam Brahmaadhipatih, rahmanodhipatih Brahmaa Shivome astu Sadaa Shivom; Ishana Deva! you are the symbol of Knowledge; Ishwara! You indeed are within all the Brings as the ‘antaratma’; you are the Master of Brahma; you are Sadashiva the personification of auspiciousness! ]*

Section Twenty Seven: Agni Deva the Singular Medium of Lokas [Seven flames viz. The Sapta- Jihvaas or the Seven Tongues of Fire Flames are Kaali (black), Karaali the ferocious), Manojava ( Speed of Mind), Sulohita (extremely red hot), Sudhumra varna ( coloured like thick smoke), Sphulingini ( emitting cracky sparks) and Vishvaruchi ( blazing all around)]

*Krinushva paaja iti pancha:* Following are the Mantras from Rigveda IV. Suktas 4. Stanzas 1-5:

*Krinishva paajah prasitim na prithveem yaahi raajevaamavaah ibhena, trishveemanu prasitam druunaanostaasi vidhya rakshasatapishthaih/* Agnideva, you certainly possess the capability to keep off my enemies and evil energies; just as a valiant King attacks and destroys enemies and as hunters are ruthless to cage birds and torture them, we beseech you to retaliate the evil and cruel Spirits and the unscrupulous elements and smash them to death. *Tava bhramaasa aashuyaa patantyana sprusha dhrushataa shoshuchaanah, tapumshyagne juhvaa patangaansandito vi srija vishvagulkaah/* With the association of Vayu's fierce blows of winds, may your scorching flames burn down Asuras to heaps of ash in such a manner even Nakshatras break down from their routes of speed and lend their splendour to destroy them for ever. *Prati spasho visruja tuunitamo bhavaa paayurvisho asya adabdhah, yo no duure aghasham so yo atyantagne maakishtee vyathiraa dadharshot/* Agnideva the ruthless! Our enemies and malevolent 'shaktis' from whether far or near, we pray to you earnestly to despatch your army of flames atonce to ensure the safety of your faithful devotees and let not they be harassed any way! *Udagne tishtha pratyaa tanushva nyamitraam oshataattigmahete, yo no araatim samidhaana chakre neechaa tam dhakshyatasam na shushkam/* Agnideva, we beseech you to spread your vigorous flames to sweep far and wide and turn all our enemies in the form of total destruction into ashes totally. Whosoever of the wicked and antagonistic shaktis be ruthlessly burn down as a dried up and huge tree into cinders. *Urthvom bhava prati vidhyaadhyasmad aavishkurshkrunushva daivaanyagne, ava sthiraa tanuhi yaatu-junaam jaamimamajaamim pra mrineeh shatrun/* Agni Deva! by the speed and violent blazes of yours, we beg you to extinguish our enemies of malevolence and safeguard us as your dedicated followers by spending our days in your service by performing homa karyas as our passion and strong conviction.

Section Twenty Nine : *Aapovaa idah sarve Vishvaa bhutaanyaapah praanaa vaa aapah pashava aaponnamaapomritamaapah samraadaapo viraadaapah svaraadaapashcchandaah syaapo jyoteehshyaapo yajushyaapah satyam -aapah Devataa aapo bhurbhuvasuvaraapa Om/* Indeed, Jala Deva or the deity of water is the source of all creatures, Praana the very vital energy causing existence, pashus or animals, crops and food, 'amrita' the nectar, Kings, Virat Swarupa, svaras, Chhandas, all the luminaries, Vedic formulas, Truth, Devaganaas, trilokas of Bhū-Bhuvā-Svāh and the Supreme and Singular syllable OM!

Sections 30-31-32-33-34-35-36: Sandhya Vandana Mantras :

*Apah punantu Prithivim Prithivi puta punatumaam, Punatu Brahmanaspatih Brahma puta punatu maam/ Yaduchhistam abhojyam yadva duscharitam mama, Sarvam punantu maamaaposatam chapratigrahagg swaha* ( Let the Deity of Water clean up the Earth, me and my Guru who is a depository of Vedas and let Vedas sanctify me. May the wrong food that I consumed, the questionable deeds that I did or the dubious presents that I received from doubtful characters be all mollified, as I propose myself to get purified by the flames of the Swaha or Paramatma.) *Agnischa ma manyuscha manyupatayascha manyu kritebhyah Paapebhyo rakshantaam yadanha paapamakaarsham, Manasa vaachaa hastaabhyam Padbyaam udarena sishnaa Ahastadalumpatu, yat kincha duritam mayi idamaham maamamritayonau satye jyothishi*

*juhomi swaha/* ( Let all the Deities of Fire, fury and ferocity safeguard me from their attack on me due to the unpardonable sins perpetrated by me by the day by my mind, stomach, sex organ; may I be purified me of despicable deeds and qualify me to proceed on the path of Moksha.)*Suryascha ma manyuscha manyupatayascha manukriteebhyah/ Paapebhyo rakshantaam/ Yadraatriya paapamakaarsham/ manasaa vaachaa hastaabhyaam/ Padhbyamudarena shishna/ Raatristadava -lumpatu/ yat kimcha duritam mayi idamaham mamaamritayanau/ Surye Jyotishi Juhomi swaha* (Protect me from sins committed due to rage and temper as also by the Sun and the Deity of Fury apart from the wrongdoings by my mind, conversation, limbs, stomach and sex; once such sins are excused, may the Great Radiance of Sun God make me worthy of Salvation).*Omityekaaksaram Brahma, Agnirdevata Bhrahma ityaarsham Gayatreem Chhandam Paramaatmam Swarupam, Sayujyam viniyogam/*(The unique word AUM is of Parabrahma form, Agni is Main Devata, Brahma is related to Rishi, Gayatri is related to Chhanda, Paramaatma is all-pervasive and the terminal point of Moksha). *Aayaatu varada Devi Aksharam Brahmasammitam, Gayarimchhandasaam Maatedam Brahma jushaswa me* (May I humbly request Gayatri the mother of Chhandas and the boon showering Devi to guide me about the imperishable Brahman) *Yadahnaatkurutey paapam tadhanaat pratimuchyatey, Yadraatrikurutey paapam tadraatriyat pratimuchyate, Sarva varney Mahadevi Sandhya vidyey Sarasvati* ( Sandyha-Vidya Controller Devi Sarasvati! Let my sins committed during the day be destroyed in the day itself; let the sins done during the night be destroyed on the same night. Sarva Varna Swarupa! Sandhya Vidya! Devi Sarasvati the personification of Knowledge and Vidya) *Ojosi Sahosi Balamasi Bhraajosi Devaanaam Dhaamanaamasi Vishvamasi Vishvaayuhu sarvamasi Sarvaaurabhibhurom ,Gayatriimaavaayahayaami Savitreemaavaahayami Saraswateem aavaahayayami,Shriya maavaahayaami, Balamaavaayaha yaami/ Gayatryah Gayatree Chhandah Vishwamitra Rishih, Savitaa Devataa, Agnirmukham, Brahma Shiro,Vishnur hridayam, Rudrah Sikhaah, Prithivi Yonih, Praanaa paana vyaanodaana samaanaa sa praanaa swetavarnaa saamkhyayana sa gotra Gayatree Chaturvimsatyaksharaa Tripadaa Shatkuksih, Panchaseershopanayaney viniyogah/* ( Sarva Varna! Sandhya Vidya! Sarasvati! Maha Gayatri! You are the embodiment of Radiance, the Grip Holder and of the Strength; the Shakti of Devatas, the Life of the World, the Veritable Universe and the Totality! May I invoke You Omkara Swarupa Savitri! May I invoke Chhandasas, Lakshmi and Shakti!) I invoke Gayatri, whose Chhanda is Gayatri, Rishi is Vishwamitra, Agni is Face, Brahma is head,Vishnu is heart, Rudra is the tuft, Prithi is the generator as also Gayatri with Five Praanaas viz. Praana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samaana; white coloured; with the Gotra of Rishi Samkhyayana; with twenty four Alphabet Letters; Three feet; six bellied; five heads and the main deity of ‘Upanayana’).*Om bhuh,Om bhuvah, Ogum Suvah, Om mahah, Om janah, Om tapah, Ogum Satyam, Om tatsavitur varenyam bhargo Devasya dheemahi, dhiyoyonah prachodataat, Omaapo jyotee rasomrita Brhama bhubhuvah suvarom/ Om: Paramatma! Om Bhumi, Om Aakasha, Om Swarga, Om Mahar loka, Om Janar loka, Om Tapoloka, Om Satya Loka; [Bhur Bhumi or the Embodiment of Vital Energy, Bhuvah or the destroyer of Evil and Suffering, Svaha ( Symbol of Happiness)] Tat ( that Almighty) may we meditate that Savitur the principal cause of luminosity the Godhead transcendent to the Lokas but sustaining them to exist ; Savitur ( Bright like Sun); Varenyam (The Supreme); Bhargo (demolisher of Sins); Devasya ( the Divine Force); Dhimahi ( May receive); Yo ( Who); Na ( Our), Prachodayat ( Let inspire in right direction). In other words : Oh Almighty, You are the Creator of Life, Slayer of Sorrow, Bestower of Happiness and Creator of the Univerese. May we receive Your Supreme Energy to raze our sins and guide us in our intellect in the right direction. *Uttamey Shikhare Devi Bhumyaam parvata murdhani, Brahmanebhoy hyanujnaanam gahha devi yathhaa sukham/* ( Devi Gayatri, may you remain on the highest peak on Earth like the Meru Mountain as esteemed by*

Brahmanas as the form of Paramount Sanctity and Bliss); *Stuta maya varadaa Vedamataa prachodayanti paavaney dwijaataa, Ayuh Prithiviyam dravinam Brahma varchasam mahyam datvaa prayaatum Brahmaloam* ( As extolled by us Devi Gayatri! You are the bestower of our desires and the epitome of Purity, Veda Rupa and of two forms of Brahma Loka and Inside the orbit of Surya Deva; kindly bless me on Earth to provide me long life, prosperity, Brahma Teja!

*Aapovaa idah sarve Vishvaa bhutaanyaapah praanaa vaa aapah pashava aaponnamaapomritamaapah samraadaapo viraadaapah svaraadaapashchandaah syaapo jyoteehshyaapo yajushyaapah satyam - aapah Devataa apo bhurbhuvasuvaraapa Om/* Indeed, Jala Deva or the deity of water is the source of all creatures, Praana the very vital energy causing existence, pashus or animals, crops and food, ‘amrita’ the nectar, Kings, Virat Swarupa, svaras, Chhandas, all the luminaries, Vedic formulas, Truth, Devaganaas, trilokas of Bhu-Bhuva-Suvah and the Supreme and Singular syllable OM!

Section Fifty Nine: *Devakritasyainasova yaganaasi swaaha, Manushyakritasyainasova yajanamasi swaaha, Pitrukritasyaina -sova swaha, Atmakritasyainasova yajanamasi swaah, Anyakritasyaina -sovayajanamasi swaah, Asmai kritasyainasovayajanamasi swaah, Yaddhivaacha naktamchainascha -krima tasyaavayajanamasi swaah, yad savapantascha jagrataischakrima tasyaava yajanamasi swaah, yadsushuptanscha krima tasyaava yajanamasi swaah, yadvidvaamsachaavidwaamsaakruma tasyaava yajanamasiswaah, yenasayensova yajanamasi swaah/ **Agni Deva**, you are the singular One who could purge my sins and blemishes committed against Devas, human beings, departed Pitrus, or the sins committed by ourselves, family members, relatives, or those sins perpetrated during days or nights, dreams or in consciousness, deep sleeps, consciously or unconsciously, or those offences committed by contact with sinners like antisocial elements. May Agni Deva help us to purge our sins committed any time at any place and whatever circumstances!*

Section Sixty Three: Significance of Tilas / Sesamum seeds in Oblations in Agnihotra

*Tilaanjuhomi sarasaan sapishtaan gandhaara mama chitte ramantu swaah/ Gaavo hiranyam dhanam annapaanah sarveshaangum shriyai swaah/ Shriyamcha Lakshimcha pushtimcha keertimcha anrunyataam Brahmanyam bahuputrataam shraddhaamedhe prajaah sadataantu swaah/*

Paramatma! Our oblations to you with ‘tilas’ mixed with flour into the consecrated **Agni-Swaah**. May our hearts be enthused and contented in praising your attributes-Swaah. Parameshwara! Our reverential oblations to you with ‘tilas’; do mercifully bless us with prosperity, gold, excellent health, cattle, plentiful food and drink, and fulfillment of all our desires; Swaah. Devaadhi Deva! Our respectful oblations with ‘tilas’ again ; bless us with fame, repayment of our indebtedness to Deva ganas, Pitru Devatas, Maharshis, Sad Brahmanas-Swaah. May we be blessed further to cherish the joy of model progeny of virtue and knowledge, besides fame and honour in our lives.

Section Sixty Four: *Tilaah krishnaastilaah swetastilaah Soumyaa vashaanugaah, tilaah punantu me paapam yatkinchid duritam mayi swaah/Chorasyaannam navashraaddham Brahmahaa Gurutalapagah, Gosteyaah suraapananam brunahatyaa tilaah shantih shamayantuh swaah/ Shreescha Laksmeescha pushtischa keertih chaanrunyataam Brahmanyam, bahuputrataam shraddhaa medhe prajaatu Jaatavedah sandadaatu swaah/ Paramadeva! With your compassion, we offer black tilas, white tilas, healthy tilas, and our own tilas cleansed with water removing blemishes and whatever sins that might have been connected with me as our devoted oblations, swaah! May these tilas being offered in our*

oblations destroy our sins such as unthoughtful or thoughtful stealings, eating wrong foods, or resorting to Pancha Patakas like ‘Brahmana hatya’-outraging Guru Patni’s modesty-cattle lifting, ‘madya paana’, or ‘bhruna hathya’, swaah! May our oblations to Agni Deva bestow us Prosperity the personification of Goddess Lakshmi, bodily strength, health, reputation, longevity, plentiful qualities of virtue and sacrifice as of ideal Brahmanatwa, ‘bahu putra laabham’, devotion and dedication to Paramatma!

Section 65- Invocations to Pancha Bhutas and Pancha Jnaanendriyas:

[Relevant portions of Manu Smriti- Aacharya Khanda are prefaced: *Udbarha aatmanaschivamanah sadasadaatmakam, manasaschaapya ahamkaaram abhimantaaram Ishvaram/ Mahaantameva chaatmaanam sarvaani trigunaanicha, vishaanaam graheetruni shanaih panchendriyaanicha/ Teshaam twavayavaan sukshmaan shannaam apyamita oujasaam, shanniveshyataat atmanaanaasu sarva bhutaani nirmame/ yanmrityu avayaah sukshmaastaye maanyaashrayayantishat, tasmaat shaairamyityaahustasya murtim maneeshanah/ Tadaa vishanti bhutaani mahaanti saha karmabhih, manaschaavayaih sukshmaih sarva bhutakrudavyayam/teshaamidam tu saptaanaam purushaanaammahoujasaam, sukshmaanyo murtimaatraanyah sambhavat avayavaadyupam/ Aadyayaadyasya gunam tweshaamavaaneti parah parah, yo yo yaavatithascheshaam sa sa taadgunah smrutah/ Sarveshaam tu sanaamaani karmaani cha pruthak pruthak., Vedashabdebhyah yevaadou pruthaksa samsthaascha nirmame/ (14-21)* (Swayambhuta Shakti or the auto manifested energy viz. the Prakriti as per the express desire and decision of Parabrahma generated the ‘Maha Tatwa’ or ‘Maha Atma’ the Great Consciousness and the Super Soul as also the Tri Gunas or the Natural Characteristics or Instincts of Satvika- Rajasika-Tamasika ‘swabhavas’ or vibrations built into one’s own Self. Thre along the Pancha ‘Tanmatras’ or Five Jananendriyas and Five Karmendriyas or the senses and the sensory organs were created to readily respond and react; such as the eyes to receive the signals of the Self for vision; ears for the signals of sound; skin to react to touch; noses to react to smells as also breath, and the reproductive organs to intake and offtake. The entire process of directing the organs is the ‘manas’ or the impulses of mind known also as brain the unique center of the action-reaction cycle. The shabda-sparsha-rupa-rasa-gandha or sound-touch- vision-taste-smell functons are thus organised by the mind and the Subtle Self Consciousness which is Paramatma is the mute spectator. Thus indeed that Unique Energy called Paramatma manifested as Maha Naarayana, the Primary or Elemental Pancha Bhutas, the Golden Egg, Brahma the Supreme Architect, who created the Maha Prakriti, Ahamkara or the Supreme Consciousness, Maha Tatwa, Praana, the Secondary Five Elements, and further Srishti. From the Pancha Maha Bhutas again Brahma coordinated the following: from the Akaasha the Shabda Guna which paved the way via Vayu, from the interaction of Vayu and sparsha resulted in Agni, Agni’s formation is from Jal /water, the characteristic and form led to Prithvi, from Prithvi and Shabda led to ‘rasa’; indeed, Parabrahma at the very beginning of Srishti had eventually led ‘Shabda’ to ‘Karma and Vyavastha’ or Deed and Existence or Universal Set -Up / Establishment.Thus the coordination of the Seven Entities viz.Maha Tatwa, Ahamkara, Pancha Bhutas in subtle form led to Pancha Tanmatras. Thus the process of Srishti of Sthaavara-Jangamas or the Moveable and Immobiles was initiated by Brahma. Also the evolution of Vedas of Ruk-Yajur-Saamas as originated by Agni, Vaayu and Surya respectively .]

1-10. *Prithivyaaptejoayaayuraakaashaa me shudyantaam,jyotiraham Virajaam vipaapmaa bhuyaasah swaah/Shabdasapasha rupa rasa gandhaa me shuddhyantaam, jyotiraham Virajaa vipaatmaa bhuyaasah swaah/ Manovaakkaaya karmaani me shuddyanaam, jyotiraham Virajaam vipaatma bhuyaasah swaah/ Avyaktabhaavairahankaraaih jyotiraham Virajaa vipatmaa bhuyaasah swaah/Aatmaa me shuddhyan -*

*taam jyotiraham Virajaa vipaatmaa bhuyaasah swaah/Antaratmaame shudhyantaam jyotirah Virajaam vipaatmaa bhuyaasah swaah/ Paramatma me shuddhaantaam jyotiraham Virajm bhuyaasah swaah/ Kshudhe swaah kshustpipaasaaya swaah vividdhugdhai swaah, Rigvidhaanaaya swaah kashotkaaya swwah, om swaah/ Kshutpipaasaamalam Jyeshthaamalakshmirnaashaayaamyaham, abhutimasamriddhim cha sarvaannirnuda me paapmaanah swaah/ Annamaya praanamaya manomaya vigjnaanamayam aanandamayaatmaa me shuddhyantaam jyotiraham virajaa vipaatmaa bhuyaasah swaah/*

By this 'Aajyahoma', may the origins of my Panchendriyas viz. the Pancha Bhutas of Earth-Water-Fire-Air and Sky be purified as also the 'Arishadvargas' or Six Enemies of Kama-Krodha-Moha-Lobha-Mada-Matsaras viz. Passion-Anger-Infatuation-Avarice-Arrogance-Jealousy.

May this oblation serve the essential purpose of purifying Pancha Tanmatras -as the ancillaries of Pancha Bhutas- viz. shabda-sparsha-rupa-rasa-gandha or sound-touch-vision-taste-and smell. My prostrations to Paramatma to uproot my sins and ego seeking to incite my mind by burning the latter to ashes.

Let my 'ajya homa' purify my thoughts in mind, voices from my tongue, and actions of my body; may the Almighty lead my path of sinlessness, sacrifice and virtue.

May Almighty suppress my 'Ahamhaara' or the Individual Ego, either openly or ventillating feelings of Self-Praise especially by way of inferiority complex. This oblation is being offered unto Agni Deva for this purpose precisely.

This oblation is directed to the Supreme to purify my physical self and prevent further lapses of my conduct and their roots and offshoots.

This 'ajya homa' being offered to Agni Deva be directed to my Antaratma to watch and warn my panchendriyas and mind so that henceforth the latter be controlled against the 'arishadvargas'.

This sacred 'ajya homa' implores Paramatma the Blissful Ananta Maha Deva to pardon my Ignorance to assess His features of being the Ayakta-Ananta-Shashwata-Sarva Vyapi and bestow me 'ahamkaara mukti'!

With this Swaaha Mantra, may I offer to the Supreme Unknown that as a human being of virtue abiding by justice and sacrifice, may I be freed from the pangs of hunger and thirst by blessing me and family with abundance of food and water. This oblation in Rigveda Mantras pioneered by 'Pranava Naada'OM' may hail the Essence of Paramatma, The Eternal Bliss! The utmost significance of Rik Mantras is justified vide Brihadaranyaka Upanishad vide II.iv.10) *Sa yadhaara edhaagner abhyaahitaat prathaag dhumaa vimshcha ranti, evam vaa aresya mahato bhutasya nishvasitam etad Rigvedo Yajurvedah Saamavedotharvaangarisa itihaasah puraanam vidyaa upanishadaa shloka sutraani anuvyaakhyaanaani vyaakhyaa naani asyaivaitaani nihshvasitaani/* ( At the time of Srishti and Vidya or knowledge had not originated yet and only Pure Intelligence prevailed, then only Agni in its basic form was recognised but not the sparks, embers, flames and smoke was not; similarly this Universe was not differentiated in varied forms and nomenclatures or names. Like wise oh Maitreyi! Knowledge did not get diversified like Vedas viz. Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, Atharvaangarisa, Shad Vedangas, Itihasa-Purana-Upanishads, Vidyas of different nature like geography, history, mythology, Art Forms, Shlokas, vyakhyanas, explanations and so on. Indeed, they are all like Praana, or the Breathing of the Self, the Basic Reality and the Paramatma or the Supreme Self!)

Paramatma! My oblation is to seek the imputities of hunger and thirst, hard luck and hardship, scarcity and shortages and over all ‘Alakshmi’ that preceded the personification of misfortune and negativity before the arrival of Lakshmi representing the opposite at the time of ‘Samudra Madhana’ or Churning of the Great Ocean.

May this ‘aajyahoma’ clean up and purify the Pancha Koshas or Body Sheaths of Annamaya- Praanamaya- Manomaya-Vigjnaanamaya-and Anandamaya! [ Annamaya: Physical energy emanating from the food intake, bouncing up and down in the body in three kinds of Trigunas of Satvika-Rajasika- and Tamasika forms; Praanamaya: the cosmic Life Force travelling in blood vessels through out the body as the live electricity serving the Pancha Karmendriyas in five parts viz. Praana-Apaana- Udaana-Samana-Vyana; Manomaya: Consciousness, perception, cognition and understanding of mind with offshoots of time, distance and causality / subtlety; Vigjnaanamaya or the Psyche comprising knowledge- awareness-inner perception-sub consciousness-time-distance-and causality/ acute subtlety; Anandamaya or contentment-fulfillment- or sheer bliss!]

Section Sixty Seven : Oblations by way of Vaishvadeva - Svishta Rites, besides Svishtakrit to Gaarhapatyaagni: 1) *Agnaye swaah, Vishyebhoy Devebhya swaah, Dhruvaaya Bhumaaya swaah, Dhuvakhitaye swaah, Achyutakshitaye swaah, Agnaye swishtakrite swaah, Dharmaaya swaah, Adhramaaya swaah, Adbhudyah swaah, Aoshadhivanaspatibhya swaah, RakshoDevajanmeya swaah, Grihyaabhyah swaah, Avasaanebhya swaah, Avasaanapatibhya swaah, Sarvabhutebhya swaah, Kaamaaya swaah, Antarikshaaya swaah, Yadejati Jagati yaccha cheshtati naamnobhaagoyam naamne swaah, Prithiviyai swaah, Antarikshaaya swaah, Dive swaah, Suryaaya swaah, Chandramase swaah, Nakshatrebhya swaah, Indraaya swaah, Brihaspataye swaah, Prajaapataye swaah, Brahmane swaah, Swadhaa pitrubhya swaah, Namu Rudraaya Pashpataye swaah, Devebhya swaah, Pitrubhya swadhaastu, Bhutebhyo namah, Manushyebhyo hantaa, Prajaapataye swaah, Parameshthine swaah/* The following thirty six oblations are addressed to Agni, the totality of Devas, Dhruva, Dhruva Kshetra, Achyuta Kshita or the Eternal Abode, Agni sacrifice as rightly offered, Dharma, Adharma, Jala Devata, Aoushadhi Vanaspati, Raksho-devajanaas, Gruhya or household deities , Avasaana or Deities in the outskirts of one’s house, Avasaanapati or the Chief of outskirt Devatas, Sarva Bhutas, Kaama or the Lord of Desire, Antariksha , Dive or Swarga, Surya, Chandra, Nakshatra, Indra, Brihaspati, Prajapati, Brahma, Pitru Devatas, Rudra-Pashupati, Devas, Pitrugana or the Departed Souls, Bhutas or a wide range of Devataa samaana Swarupas, Manushyas, Prajapati, Parameshthi or Brahma the Chaturmukha.

Section Seventy Eight: Vedas prescribe Agni Karyas besides daily Agni performances twice for Salvation 9-11) *Agnayo vai trayee vidyaa Devayaanah pandhaa garhapatya Rik Prithivi rthantaram aavaahaarya pachanah Yajurantariksham Vaamadevyam aahavaneeyah Saamam Suvaro loko brihat tasmaad agneen paramam vadanti/Agnihotrah saayam pratigrihaanaam nishkritih svishthah suhrutam yajna kratunaam praayanah suvargasya lokasya jyotih tasmaat agnihotram paramam pavitram/ Yajna iti yajnohi Devaanaam yajneva hi Deva Divam gataa yajnena asuraan apaanudanta yajnena dwishanto mitraa bhavanti yajne sarva pratishthitam tasmaad yajnam paramam vadanti/* The Sacred Agni Karyas surely pave the path of Liberation. Rig Veda commends Garhapatyaagni, Yajur Veda the Anvaahaaraya -pachana in the midregion of Agni; and Saama Veda addresses Bhuvu Devi with Rathantara Saama, and with Ahavaneeya to Bhuvan-Suvar Lokas. Brihat Saama too is addressed to all celestial lokas. Indeed these Sacred Agnis lay the high paths to Salvation.

Agnihotra performances twice at dawn and dusk is stated as a daily duty to offset the blemishes and sins of every householder, besides frequent homa karyas , yajnas and kratus to forward radiant signals to

celestial bodies. Yagas offer appropriate food substances to Devatas as ‘nishkaama karmas’ or without strings meant for ‘Loka Shanti’ or public welfare. Homa karyas or oblations with food substances into the Sacred Flames. Yagjnas involve seven sacrifices with offereings called agnaadheya, agnihotra, darshapurnamaasa, aagrayana, chaaturmaasya, nirudhapshubandha, and soutraamani. Kratu denotes somayaaga in which a *yupa* or sacrificial post is installed. Kratus are seven ‘somasamsthaas’ viz. Agnishtoma, Atyagnishtoma, Ukttha, Shodashi, Vaajapeya, Atiraatra, and Aptoryami.

It is being stressed that among the means of attaining Salvation, Vedas provide pride of place to Agni Karyas as that is ever commended by Devas as they are readily gladdened. Besides frightening and driving away the evil energies, even certain unfriendly quarters of Devas get pacified and initiate their blessings. Indeed Sacred Agni karyas always tend to win over the ‘homa kartas’.

## TAITTIREEYA ARANYAKA

Anuvaaka I: 1.i-vi: *Aapam aapam aapah sarvaah, asmaad asmaad itomritah, Agnir Vaayuh cha Suryascha saha sanchaskaara ruddhiyaa/ Vaayaasvyaa rashmipatayah Mareecyaatmaano adruhadh, Deveeh bhuvanasuuvareeh putravatsyaaya me suta/ Mahanaamneeh Maha maanaah Mahaso mahasah svah, Deveeh parjanyaasuvareeh putra vatsvaaya me suta/Apaashnushmim apaa rakshah apaasyushmin apaa ragham apaaghraam apacha avartim apa deveeh ito hita/ Vajra deveeh*

May various ‘Jala swarupas’ and their energies be bestowed on me repeatedly from skies, heavens and other energy sources irrespective of time and place! May these water energies of dynamism coupled with the radiance and splendour of Surya and Agni awaken my inner consciousness and life energy to o to me and posterity too!. (Rig Veda 10.12.4- 10.10.8). Waters are renowned for their names, thoughts, standards and enormity just as Surya Deva shows the Universe and accords its magnificence. Indeed it is Parjanya and Bhaskara who are ‘pratyaksha devatas’ which propel creation and existence. (Rig Veda 1.39.1 and 1.100.14). Waters wash off dirt both external and internal forms; they possess the power to enjoy- burn off harmful energies - destroy diseases- poverty and so on. Waters of celestial origin save the Beings from the devils above the earth, even as Aditya Deva and Aditi Devi save and sustain the creatures below on earth.. May the divine waters safeguard the plants and vegetation too to enable the Beings on the Earth to enjoy contentment and auspiciousness always.

Anuvaka 1.8.23: *Agne naya supathaa raayhe, asmaan vishvaani Devavayunaani vidvaan, yuyodhi asmat juhuraayanam yenah, bhuyishthaam te namayuktim vidhema iti/ Agni Deva! Lead us to the path of virtue while realising that the mortal attractions are ephemeral and crooked.*( Rig Veda 1.189.1 and also Ishopanishad 18): Agni! You are the deity to perish the lower tendencies and evil energies of Beings at the time of death to purify and prepare for rebirth. This is a verse recited during fuleral rites. Ishopanishad 18 explained: Either Vidya or Avidya viz. Knowledge leading to Salvation and Ignorance resulting in Cycle of Existence have to finally end up with Agni on death any way! *Agne naya supathaa raaye asmaan Vishvaani Deva vayunaani Vidvaan, Yuyodhyasmaj juhuraanameno bhuyishthaam te naama uktim vidhema/*( Agni Deva! You are indeed fully aware of my deeds of virtues. The Pitru Yaana Southern Path of the Self after death has been disgusting by way of going and coming to existence and hence my supplication to shun and steer clear my acts of evil. Save us from crooked and deceitful ways of existence and let all the ways of sins that might have been committed be burnt off as a reformed path be opened afresh! As in Katha Upanishad (I.ii.1-3) Lord Yama explained to Nachiketa that there were two kinds of human aspirations viz. ‘Shreya’ and ‘Preya’ or Vidya and Avidya as the Paths of Sacrifice and

Pleasure; while the easy method of Preya is invariably opted for as of Pleasure and Passivity of worldly pulls, the Path of Shreya is difficult and defined ways of virtue. Indeed while existing in the midst of ignorance and darkness, the majority of human beings assume that they are intelligent, worldly-wise and move fast round and round following twisted and curved means of existence, just like blind leading the blind! Recalling the Stanza II above, ‘Avidyayaa mrityum teevrataa Vidyayamritamashnute’ indicates that Avidya or ‘Karma phalabhoga’ or the path of whatever deeds that have been done which indeed leads to the vortex of deaths and rebirths while Vidya denotes ; in respect of ‘Satkarmas’ or Acts of Virtue however, there are divine dispensations as per whatever becomes due say by way of better placements in the ensuing births. On the other and ‘Devataajnaana’ or the awareness of Celestial know-how leads to Immortality.)

Anuvaka 9. 1-5: *Agnischa Jaatavedaascha Sahojaa Ajiraaprabhu vaishvaanara naryaapa pangkiraadhaa saptamah visarpavaashta agneenaam/ Etishtau Vasavah khsitaa iti, yadvarthe vaagner vichitraarvarne visheshaah neelaarschischa peetakaarchischeti/ Atha vaayorekaadasha purushasyaikaadashastreekasya prabhaajamaana vyavadaataah vaasukeevaidyutaah rajataah parushaah shyaamaah kapilkaa atilohitaah urdhvaa avapatantaah vaidyuta ityekaadashah/ Nainam Vaidyutohinasti ya emam vedaa/*

The **Seven Agni Swarupas** are named Jataveda, Sahoja, Ajira, Prabhu, Vaishvaanara, Naryaapa and Pangkiraadha and Visarpa. These are also called as Ashtaavasus as they provide dwellings for all Beings. The special colours of the flames of Agni is ‘neela’ or dark blue where as in ‘peela’ or yellow depending on the seasons of others.

[ Kathopanishad states : Details of Five Fires and deeds of virtue, need for control of body organs and senses and Identity of Inner- Consciousness and the Supreme I.iii.1) *Ritam pibantau sukrutasya lokeguhaam pravishtau parame paraardhye, Chaayaa tapau brahmavido vadanti panchaagnayo 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. Garhatpatya, 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!) I.iii.2) *Yah seturi jaanaa- maksharam Brahmayat paramam abhayam titeershataam paaram Naachiketam shakemashi/* ( This setu or the bridge is between the Naachiketa Fires and Sacrificers on one hand and those who wish to cross it beyond ‘samsaara’ to ‘abhayam-aksharam-Brahma!)]

In reference to **Eleven Forms of Vayu**, the next stanza provides the list: Prabhaajamaana, Vyavadaatah, Vaasukivaidyuta, Rajataah, Parushaah, Shyaamaah, Kapilaa, Atilohitaah, Urdhvaah, Avapatantaah and Vaidyuta. Indeed any person who knows the names of the eleven Vayus would never be harmed by the lightning shocks and other Fire hazards.

Anuvaaka 26-1-5 : Worship of various Agnis; benefits and regulations:

*Agnim praneeryopasamaardhaaya tamabhita etaa aveeshtakaa upadadhaati, Agnihotre darshapurnaa maasayoh pashu bandhe chaturmaasyeshu, athohu aahuh sarveshu yajna kratushveetim/ Atha ha smaahaarunah Svaayambhuvah Saavitrah sarvyognirityam nanushangamanyaamahe, naanaavaa eteshaam veeryani/ Kamagnim chinute satriyamagnim chinvaanah, kamagnim chinute Saavitramagnim chinvaanah, kimagnim chinute Naachiketamagnim chinvaanah, kamagnim chinute chaatujrhotriyam agnim chinvaanah, kamagnim chinute Vaishvasrujamagnim chinvaanah, kamagnim chinute upa - anuvaakyamaashumagnim chinvaanah, kamagnim chinute Imamaarunaketukamagnim chinvaana iti/ Vrishaavaa Agnih vrishaanyou sangsphalayet hanyetaasya yajnah tasmaatraanushajyah sottaravedushu kratushu chinveet, utara vedyangahyaagni scheeyate/ Agni Deva is to be respected by properly installed by an 'agni kunda' or altar and that is the place for invoking the various 'Ishta Devatas'. This procedure is to be followed in reference to yajnas like Agnihotra-Darshana purnaa maasa, Pashubandha, chaturmasya and so on. The 'Ishtikas' or bricks symbolise cosmic energies. Swayambhu's son Aruna is quoted that this special Agni is termed as 'Saavitra', but others opine that the powers of Agni are innumerable. Thus the obvious question would be whether worship to Agni be done as in the form of Satriya or Savitra or Naachiketa or Chaturhotriya or Vaishvasraja, Upanuvaakyamashu, or Aarunakrtuka Agni; or which form of Agni be worshipped? Be it in any form; but the Power of Agni is certain and there is no need to strain one's own testicles and waste energy on that trivial count! But Agni is to be worshipped in the Uttraravedi.*

*6-11: Prajaakaamashchinveeta, Prajaapatyo vaa eshognih Prajaapatyaah prajaah prajaavaanbhavati ya evam vedaa/ Pashukaamaschinveeta samgjnaanam vaa etatpashuunaam yadaapah pashunaameva samgjnaana, Agnim chinute pashuumaan bhavari, ya evam Veda/ Vrishtikaamaschanveeta aapovaa vrishtih, Parjanya varshukobhavati, ya evam vedaa/Aamayaavee chinveeta, aapo vai bshajam bshamevaasmai karoti sarvamaayuriti/ Abhicharanaschanveeta vajro vaa aapah, vajrameva bhraatruvyebhyah prahariti strunuta enam/ Tejaskaamo yashaskaamah svargakaamaschanveet, etaa vadvaa vaasti yaavadetat amritam vaa aapah/ Amritasyaanantarityai naapsu mutra pureesha kuryaat, na nishtivet na vikvasvanah strayaat, guhyovaa eshom agnih, etasyaagneh anati daahaaya/ Na pushkara parnaani hiranyam vaaditishthet, etasyaagn ena modakaani bhavanti/*

The benefits are many: Agni belongs to Prajapati and as such begetting excellent children, ray cows, environment, 'vrishti' or rains neither of anaavrishiti or ati vrishti type. Indeed waters or great healers as the complete healing is done by rituals and waters. *Aapovai sarvamaayuriti/* or water indeed is the very life energy! Water is Vajra the thunderbolt which destroys the energies of enemies, especially the 'abhichaaric prayogas' or experimental powers of evil and low type. Water also bestows benefits of 'tejas' and 'yashas' or physical brightness and fame too.

But there are certain rules and regulations prescribed to those desirous of performing the Yajnas or Agni Karyas : since water is celestial one should not get drenched in rains wantonly; should not urinate, throw dirt, spit, take bath naked in riveres and water bodies; should not resort to preventing agni by artificial means, walk on lotus flowers and leaves, eat tortoise, and creatures living in waters and torment persons worshipping Aruna Ketuka Agni.

## **PART TWO OF TAITTIREEYA ARANKAKA UPANISHAD**

Anuvaka 5: Contains 17 Stanzas in favour of Agni Deva granting long life span on the power of Mantras: Agni karyas ensure that even from the clutches of untimely death, praana of a person comes back revived,

by destroying diseases. Agni Deva! You are pleased with ‘ havi’ or offering of ghee; you are the ‘ghrita prateeka’ or luminous front; ‘ghrita yoni’ or born of radiance; ‘gavyam’ or after drinking ghee you bestow to us outstanding knowledge. May on consuming ghee, protect all of us as a father does! Grant us splendid and ever long life; Varuna Deva! please strengthen the hands of Agni Deva to make Agni fiery and strong; Devi Aditi! being the mother figure of Devas, make Agni all powerful so as to help us secure longevity; Vishva devas or the various Gods of the Universe! Please strengthen Agni’s hands to grant longevity and make old age and diseases totally free from us. *Agne pavasva svapaa, Asme varchah suveeryam dadhadriyam mayi posham*/Agni Deva! let us be purified to enable us to execute more and more of auspicious deeds, to give us spiritual brilliance, valor and prosperity. We solicit the Fire God to let the abodes of five renowned ‘pancha janas’ viz. Pancha Koshas viz. 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). Jaataveda Agni Deva! do instantly destroy our enemies and their next generations too as of future. Bless us in three stages of Three Stages of Consciousness viz. Jaagrat-Svapna- Sushuptis. Deva! destroy our enemies born from the very concept of strength and if already born, declare us as being far superior; our foes dressed as wolves be decimated even without our awareness. Agni Deva! You are like Indra to Vritrasura and usher instant prosperity to us! [Pursuant to the killing of Viswarupa by Indra, his father Viswakarma being keen on revenge performed relentless ‘Tapasya’ to Brahma who granted the boon of begetting a mighty son who could defeat Indra and Devas. A boy of huge body dimensions and invincibility named Vritrasura was born and he grew not only in strength but extraordinary mental and spiritual capability. As Indra was in panic and distress, he approached Brahma who advised to request Sage Dadhichi to sacrifice his backbone and head which could destroy Vritrasura and no other force. Keeping in view the Divine Task involved, the Sage made the biggest sacrifice of his life and allowed the ‘Asthidaan’ or the charity of his bones. Indra commissioned Surabhi to create a ‘Vajra’ from the Sage’s backbone and an ‘Astra’- mantrik arrow- from Dadhichi’s head, known as ‘Brahma Sira’. Surabhi materialised various other ‘Astra-Sastras’ for the use of other Devas from the powerful and mantra-purvak bones of the Maha Muni. That is the origin of the invincibility of Indra] Agni Deva! some opposing forces seek to enslave us even including small strengths; may we use them as petty sticks offering you in our flames along with ghee! Some foes make casual abuses and remarks for fun with or without reason; may such mouthful words and insinuations be collected day in and day out- ushah kaala and sandhyaa kaala- and be offered them all to feed your ‘jvaalaas’. Agni Deva! the haters out of jealousy or anguish be collected and used as twigs to your fierce flames in a manner that these are converted as mere ash powders. There are four kinds of foes: at war or hatred, or wanton abuse or harm physically or torture mentally; may Agni Deva pack them all and convert them as ash. Bless me Agni! May the power of mantras be sharp, strong and victorious. *Punarmanah punaraayurma aagaatpunah chakshuh punah shrotram ma aagaatpunah praanah, punaraakutam ma aagaat punaschittam punaraadheetam ma aagaat, Vaishvaanaro medabdhastanuupaa avabaadhataam duritaani vishvaa/* As and when death encounters me as a result of my past deeds, may my mind and knowledge of veda mantras be kindly transferred to me and may Vaishvaanara stand me witness of what ever virtue that I might have perhaps return along with my eligibility by way of the powers of eyes, ears, mind and the life force!

Anuvaka 10: Pancha Maha Yagjna: Deva Yagjna-Pitru Yagjna-Bhuta Yagjna-Manushya Yagjna-Brahma Yagjna: 1. *Panchavaa eto Maha Yagnyah satati prataayante sati santishthante/ Deva yagnah Pitru*

*yagjno Bhuta yagjno Manushya yagjno Brahma yagjno iti/* The aforementioned five Maha Yagjnas need to be performed every day.

2-3. *Yadagnou juhodyapi samidham taddeva yagjnah santishthute, yaa pitrubhyah svadhaa karotyapya-pasthitpitru yagjnah santishthate/ Yatpitrubhyah svadhaa karotpyapasthit pitru yagjna h santushthute/* Pitru Yagjna in favour of fore fathers is the offering of rice balls or water, uttering the word ‘Svadhā’; the Pitru Devatas comprise Angeerasa Seers, and *pitaro manushya* or human ancestors; the second type are stated to have obtained divine vision- *nrichaksha-* by which they could recognize their physical and mental consciousness named ‘rodasi’ vis a vis the Absolute Truth.

4-5. *Yadbhutebhyoh balinharatgi tadbhuta yagjnah santushthute, yadbraahmanbedbhyonnam dadaati tanmanusha yagjnah santishthute/* Bhuta Yagjna in favour of living beings and non humans is the offering to crows or creatures like cows from outside the house. Brahmana Yagjna is the self study of the branch of Veda studied by the Brahmana concerned plus additionally a few stanzas from other vedas too.

6-7. *Yadsarvaadhyayamadheeyat ekaamprucham yajuh saamam vaatadbrahma yagjnah santishthate/ Yad Ruchodheete payasah kuulyaa asya pirtuntsvadhaa abhivahanti yadyajuungshi ghritya kuulyaa yatsaamaani somam ebhyah pavate, yadyadharvaangiraso madhoh kuulayaa/* ‘Brahma Yagjna is by way of rendering Veda Mantras. Besides rendering the Stanzas of the particular specialisation of Vedas, it is commended that other Veda Mantras be too rendered as a part of Brahma Yagjna. Rivers of Milk of knowledge tend to flow by the recitation of Rik Mantras; such flows are facilitated by the pronunciation of SVADHA while addressing the Pitru Devas. Flows of ghrīta nadis or rivers of ghee get activated by the renditions of Yajur mantras while Soma Rasa river flows upsurge with the singing of Saama Veda Mantra and Adhrava Veda pathana spontaneously move fast ‘madhu nadis’ or flows of honey. Such is the impact of Brahma Yagjna with the renderings of the Chatur Veda Mantras of the Rik- Yajur-Saama-Adharvana branches resulting in the river flows of ksheera- ghrīta-soma-madhus. The do’s and don’t’s of the Performance of Brahma Yagjna are elaborated in seven verses explained as follows: East or North or North East of one’s residence is ideal to be seated as padmaasana on a darbha grass leaves, unseen by onlookers outside after Sun Rise- perform three ‘achamanas’ touching head-lips-towards the heart . Initiate with Gayatri and then the renderings of Vedas, Itihasa- Puranadi passages and terminate with Gayatri again.

Taittireeya Aaranyaka Prashna 2- Anuvaka 5: Agni grants long Life Span: 17 verses explain as follows: ‘ May the ever radiant Agni Deva! grant me the complete life span; even if untimely death attack me, may you make praana return to me instantly and may any type of diseases be destroyed: *Aayushte vishvato dadhadayamagnirvarenyah, punaste Praana aayaati paraa yakshmaing suvaamime/* You have ‘ghrita prateeka’ or you are the radiant front of ghee as radiance is your ‘ grīta yoni’ or the born of ghee. *Aayudraa agne havisho jushaano, ghrīta prateeko ghrītayoniredhi, Ghrītam peetvaa madhu chaaru gavyam piteva putramabhirakshataadimam/* As hopefully you are pleased with the offerings, grant me the illumination of knowledge and protection as expected of father! Grant me longevity and the supportive body strength too. You are the Mother Figure and as such bestow to me peace and happiness always! *Agna aayushigumshi pavasa, aa suva urjamisham cha nah aare vaardhavaducchunaam/* Grant me peace and contentment just like a mother; grant me too healthy longevity. Drive away the evil forces. Agni Deva! grant us purification of all our deeds as also auspiciousness; spriritual brilliance and physical might. We seek protection from five entities viz. 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) or alternatively Matter-Life Energy-Mind-Super Mind or Vigjnana and Anand or Bliss. Jaataveda! Keep me composed in Three States of Consciousness viz. Jaagrat-Svapna- Sushupti or Awakeness- Dream Stage-Deep Sleep; Agni Deva! destroy foes in the form of wolves- who desire to subdue enslave us- those who abuse for no substantial reason- and such flimsy grounds.

Prashna Three of Taittireeya Aaranyaka commends Purusha Sukta: [Purusha Sukta with brief meanings: 1) *Sahasra Sirsha Purshah Sahasraakshah Sahasra paat, Sa Bhubim Vishvato Vrutwaa Atyatishthaddashaagulam/* (Bhagawan/ Maha Purusha who has countless heads,eyes and feet is omnipresent but looks compressed as a ten-inch measured Entity!)2) *Purusha ye Vedagum sarvam yadbhutam yaccha bhavyam, Utaamritatwa--syeshaanah yadanney naa ti rohati/*( He is and was always present submerging the past and the future and is indestrucible and far beyond the ephemeral Universe) 3) *Yetaavaa nasya Mahimaa Atojyaaya -gumscha Puurushah, Paadosya Vishwa Bhutaani Tripaadasya -amritam Divi/* ( What ever is visualised in the Creation is indeed a minute fraction of His magnificence and what ever is compehensible is but a quarter of the Eternal Unknown) 4)*Tripaadurdhwa Udait Purushaha Paadosyehaa bhavaatpunah, Tato Vishvan -gyakraamat saashanaa nashaney abhi/* (Three-fourths of the Unknown apart, one fourth emerged as the Universe and the Maha Purusha is manifested across the Totality of the Beings including the animate and inanimate worlds) 5) *Tasmaadwiraadajaayata ViraajoAdhi Puurushah, Sa jaato Atyarichyata paschaadbhumimatho purah/* (From out of that Adi Purusha, the Brahmanda came into Existence and Brahma spread himself all over and became Omni Present.Then He created Earth and Life to Praanis.) 6)*Yatpurushena havishaa Deva Yagna matanvata,,Vasanto Asyaaseedaajyam Greeshma Idhmassharaddhavih/* ( The Yagna Karyas done by Devas with Maha Purusha as the Aahuti converted Vasanta Kaala as Ghee, Greeshma Kaala as Indhana or the wooden pieces, and Sarat Kaala as Havi or Naivedya); 7)*Saptaasyaasanparidhayah Trissapta Samidhah Kritaah, Devaad Yagnam tanvaanaah Abadhnan Purusham Pashum/* (To this Yagna, Pancha Bhutaas of ‘Prithi-vyaapas-tejo- vaayura akaashaas’ and the Day and Night as the ‘Parithis’ or the boundaries of the Yagna Kunda; twenty one Tatwaas viz. Pancha Karmendriyas, Pancha Jnaanendriyas, Pancha Bhutas, Three Ahamkaaras, Three Tanmatras of Sprasha-Rupa-Rasa; and Mahatawa as Samidhaas; Devas as Ritwiks and Brahma as Yanga Pashu) 8)*Tam Yagnam barhishi proukshan Purusham jaatama -gratah, Tena Devaa Ayajanta Saadhyaa Rishayascha ye/* (All the Participants of the Yahna viz. Devas, Sadhyaas, Rishis and such others perform the ‘Prokshana’ or sprinkled the Sacred Water on the Yagna Purusha and accomplished the Yagna);9) *Tasmaad yagnaat Sarvahutah Sambhrutam prushadaajyam, Pashugstaagschakrey vaavyaayan Aranyaangraamaschaye/* ( In this Universal Yagna emerged ‘Dadhighrita’ or Curd-Ghee Mix, Birds, Ferocious and normal animals, and such others were crerated); 10) *Tasmaadyagnaatsarva hutah Ruchassaamaani jajnirey, Chaandaagumsi jajnirey tasmaat Yajustasmaa dajaayata/* (In this Prapancha Yagna were created Rig Veda Mantras, Sama Veda Mantras, Gayatri and other Chaandasas out of which Yajur Vedas too emerged). 11) *Tasmaadaad ashwaa Ajaayanta yekeycho bhayaadatah, Gaavo hajagnirey tasmaat tasmaa jyaataa Ajaavayah/* (From this Yagna were created horses, two lined teeth Mrigas, Pashus of four legs like cattle, sheep and buffalos). 12) *Yat Purusham vyadadhuh katidhaavyakalpayan, Mukham kimasya kou baahoo kaavuroo paadaavuchyetye/* ( As Devas made the Sacrifice of Brahma, of what all Forms were manifested; of which type was His Face; of what kind were His hands and of form were His thighs and Feet?) 13) *Brahmanosya Mukhamaaseet Baahoo Raajanyah krutah, Vooroo tadasya yadvyshyahi Padbhyaagum Shudro Aajaayata/* (From the Lord’s face emerged Brahmanas, His hands came Kshatriyas, His thighs the Vaishyas and His feet the Shudras); 14) *Chandramaa Manaso jaatah Chaksho Suryo Ajaayatam, Mukhaadindraaschaagnischa Praanaadvaayurajaayata/* (From His Mind was manifested Chandra Deva, His eyes Surya Deva, His face Indra and Agni and from His Prana the Vayu Deva);15) *Naabhyaa aaseedantariksham Seershno Dhyoh Samavartata, Padbhyaam Bhumir-dishaha Shrotraat tataa Lokaagum Akalpayan/* (From the Lord’s navel came out the ‘Antariksha’, His Head the Swarga, His Feet

the Earth, Dishas or Directions from His Ears; and likewise the various Lokaas); 16) *Vedaahametam Purusham Mahaantam, Aditya Varnam Tamasastupaarey, Sarvaani Rupaani Vichitya Dheerah Naamaani krutwaabhivadan yadaastey/* ( Thus I have realised that Paramatma manifested Himself in innumerable Forms and nomenclatures and that He is a Kaarya- shila or of Practicalities, Mahimanvita or of Undefined Grandeur, the Ever Lustrous Sun-Like Appearance or of Inner Consciousness far away from Darkness or Agjnaana); 17) *Dhaataa purastaa –dyamuhaa jahaara Shakrah pravidwaanpa - dishaschataasrha, Tamevam Vidwaanamrita iha bhavati Naanyah pandhaa Ayanaaya Vidyatey/* ( It is that illustrious and knowledgeable person possessive of the Supreme Awareness realising Paramatma and recognises and visualises Indra and other Dishaa -dhipaas that is qualified to attain Mukti; indeed there is no other route to Moksha!) 18) *Yagnena Yagnamayajanta Devaah Taani Dharmaaani Prathamaanyaasan, tey ha naakam Mahi Maanah sachantey yatra purvey Saadhyaah santi Devaah/* (Devataas came to worship Paramatma by means of this Yagna and assumed the Primary Forms of Manifestations of Dharma; The initial and arduous procedures of Dharma that were assiduously practised by Devatas and Sadhyaas came to the Guidelines and whosoever followed the Regulations like performing Yagnas are competent to achieve higher Lokas.) 19) *Adbhyah sambhutaha Prithivyairasaascha Vishva karmanah samavartataatdhi tasya, Twashtaa Vidadhadrupameti tatpurushasya Vishva -ajanamagrey/* ( As the Universe got manifested from water and the Essence of Bhumi, Paramatma created Brahma and the latter created the Universe. That Brahma filled in the Fourteen Lokas and thus the whole Creation is the handiwork of Brahma!) 20) *Vedaaha meham Purusham Mahaantam Aditya Varnam tamasah parastaat , Tamevam Vidwanamrita iha bhavati naanyah pandhaa Vidyateya -naaya/* ( If any person could realise that Supreme Soul who is too magnificent to vision like Surya much less to visualise then he is as good as Paramatma Himself; that is the way to attainment and the the path of Glory and Moksha.) 21) *Prajaapati -scharati garbhey Antah Ajaaya-maano bahudhaavija -atey tasya, Dheeraah pariijaa -nanti yonim Mareecheenaam padamicchanti vedhasah/* ( Paramatma is reputed as a highly action-oriented Splendrous and Supreme Being who has neither beginning or termination. Mahaatmas and Maharshis like Marichi are indeed aware of His Accurate Form and crave and toil to Attain Him) 22) *Yo Devebhya Aatapati yo Devaa -naam Purohitah, Purvoyo Devebhoy Jaatah Namu Ruchaa Braahmaye/* ( May I prostrate before the hallow of that Paramatma who illuminates Devas, whom Devas earnestly consider in the highest esteem as they are but His own reflections and who is the Eternal and Singular Truth). 23) *Rucham Braahmam janayantah Devaa Agrey tadabruvan, Yasthyai -vam Braahmano idvaat tasya Asan vashey.* ( As Devas made great endeavours to understand an inkling of what Paramatma was all about as they could never get even some clues initially, then Devas realised that whosoever among the Devotees similarly made enormous efforts to execute genuine quests about Him should automatically obtain their control mechanism too.) 24) *Hreesha tey Lakshmischa Patnou Aho raatrey paarsvey Nakshatraani Rupam Ashvinou vyaattham/* (Hey Vishnu Bhagavan! Your ‘Ardhaanganis’ or ‘Better Halves’ are Hree Devi the Symbol of Modesty and Lakshmi Devi the Emblem of Prosperity are your side manifestations of ‘Ahoratraas’ or day and night. The Nakshatraas constitute your Celestial Formation. And Ashvini Devatas are the full visage of yours as flower blooms!) 25) *Ishtam Nanishaana Amum Manishaana Sarvam manishaana, Om taccham yoraavrinee Mahey/* (Bhagavaan! We beseech your kindness and grace a to grant us the bestowing of successful and worthwhile fulfillment of our *Iham* and *Param* ; Bhagavan!)

Taittiriya Aaranyaka reveals several concepts as bestowed to Modern Astronomy by the ancient Sages- Bhumi rotates on its own axis, Chandra revolves around Bhumi, but Surya revolves around Bhumi. All these movements give the units of Kaala Maana or the Time Cycle. [The Time Calculation refers to Triti-hundred tritis oneVedha- three Vedhas one Lava-Three Lavas on Nimesha- Three Nimeshas one Kshana- five nimeshas one kashta or eight seconds- fifteen kashtas one laghu or two minutes- fifteen laghus one danda- six to seven dandas one fourth of a day or night-four praharas or yamas one day or night- two pakshas a month-two months a Ritu or Season- Six months one Ayana-365 combinations of a day / night

one year- one year a Deva year-1200 Yugas comprising Satya of 4800 Deva Years, Treta Yuga of 3600, Dwapara of 2400 and Kaki yuga of 1200 Deva Years make one a Maha Yuga-100 Maha Yugas one Kalpa and Two Maha Kalpas are one life time of Brahma; Brahma is now passing through his fifty first year and his life span is 100 such years; we are now in the 28<sup>th</sup> Kali yuga of the first day of the first year of the third Sweta Varaha kalpa, second paraartha in the reign of the Seventh Manu named Vivaswanta. Kali Yuga is calculated to have commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> February 3102 BC of Julion Calendar.]

Further, the axis of Earth is inclined at an angle of 23 and half degrees with respect to the perpendicular of Earth's orbit around the Solar Orbit. As a result of Earth's inclination while its revolution around the Sun, there is an obvious variation of the length of the day time in the year resulting in Seasons. [a) Vasanta / Spring season coincides with Chaitra - Vaishakha, say, Feb 18- April 20 - 20-30 C- ; b) Greeshma/ Summer during Jyeshtha- Ashadha, April 21-June 21; 30-50; c)Varsha - Monsoon - Shravana-Bhadrapada June 22-Aug 23 hot-humid- rains Sharat Autumn , Ashvijuja-Kartika -Aug 24- Oct 23. d) mild Hemanta -Pre-winter -Margashira-Pushya Oct 24- Dec 21 ,pleasant- e) cold Shishira -winter Maagha-Phalgun -Dec 22-Feb 17 Moderate Cold;10C+/-]

Now about the two Equinoxes, the Spring and Autumnal equinoxes when the days and nights are of equal duration and the Summer and Winter solcitics have the duration of day time is the longest and the shortest respectively. An **equinox** is the moment in which the plane of Earth's equator passes through the center of the Sun's disc and that normally occurs twice each year, around 20 March and 23 September ie Vernal Equinox (March) and Autumnal Equinox (September), thus marking March and September respectively.On an equinox, day and night are of approximately equal duration all over the planet; the word is from Latin- 'equi' and 'nox' or equal night..

About **Nakshatras**, the Aakash Section above gives considerable insight, especially Brahmanda Purana. Taittireeya Aaranyaka describes as follows: As Chandra Deva appears to gain momentum revolving around Bhumi among the Nakshatras, he is inclined at an angle of 5 degrees to the Epliptic or the Orbit of Bhumi. Chandra is stated to complete the Orbit in 27.3 days on an average, thus Chandra travels @ 13.33 degrees per day. It is estimated that Chandra spends a day of each Nakshatra. The presiding Devas of each Nakshatra are explained as follows: Agni- Krittika ; Prajapati-Rohini; Soma- Mrigashira; Rudra-Ardra; Aditi- Punarvasu; Brihaspati-Pushya; Sarpa-Aslesha;Pitur- Makha; Aryama-Purva Phalgun; Bhaga-Uttara Phalguni; Savita- Hasta; Indra-Chitra; Vayu- Svaati; Indrani- Mitra- Anuradha; Indra-Jyeshtha; Pitru- Moola; Aapah-Purvashadha;Vishva Devata-Uttaraashaadha; Vishnu-Shravana-; Vasu-Dhanishtha; Indra-Shatabhisha; Ajeyakapati-Purvabhada; Pusha- Revati; Ashvin- Ashvini; and Yama-Bharani.

Referring to **Nakshatra Phalas** , Narada Purana details as follows: *Nakshatra Phala* (Star-wise birth results): Readings as per Nakshatra (Star)-wise birth of various human beings were narrated by Sanandana Maharshi to Narada Muni as follows: Those born in *Ashwini* are handsome and fond of wearing ornaments. *Bharani*-born are capable to perform and speak truthfully. *Krittika*-born tends to eatless, steady-minded, and conversational but have soft corner for other women. *Rohini* born are wealthy, *Mrigashitaites* are luxurious; *Ardra*-born violent, stubborn and criminal-minded; *Punarvasu* born are even-minded, and well behaved but suffer bad health; Persons born in *Pushya* Nakshatra are imaginative like Poets and are happy-go-lucky. Those persons who are born in *Aslesha* are rude, obstinate, ungrateful, low-minded and uncouth. *Magha* born are rich, devoted and happy. If born in *Purva Phalguni*, the persons are charitable, adjustable, sociable and conversationalists. Born of *Uttara Phalguni*

are wealthy and comfortable. *Hasta* born are shameless, mean-minded and crooks. Persons born in *Chitra* are well dressed, beautiful and charming. *Swati* born are virtuous, moralistic, kind hearted and charitable. *Vishakhaites* are greedy, deceptive, cunning and harsh. Born of *Anuradha*, the persons are fond of travel and non-resident. *Jyeshtha* born are principled and contented. Persons born in *Mula Nakshatra* are wealthy, happy and helpful. If born of *Purvashadha and Uttarahadha*, the persons concerned are happy-go-lucky and hearty /disciplined and virtuous respectively. *Shravanites* are rich, happy and famous; while born of *Dhanishta*, the persons concerned are donors, wealthy and courageous. A person born of *Shatabhisha*, the persons win over opponents but are susceptible of bad practices. Born of *Purvabhadra*, the persons concerned are heavily prone to feminine influence and rich; while *Uttrabhadraites* are independent, assertive, speech-makers, attractive and joyful. Finally, those born in *Revati* are energetic, enterprising, rich and pure-hearted. *Meshaadi Chandra Raashi Janma Phala*: Those born in *Mesha Raashi* are passionate, enterprising and grateful; *Vrisha Raasi*: Charming, charity-minded and tolerant; *Mithun Raashai*: Comfort-loving and diplomatic; *Karka Raashi*: Controlled by opposite sex and short statured; *Simha Raashi*: Egoistic, enterprising, stable-minded and comfort-oriented; *Kanya Raashi*: Soft-natured, virtuous and well-meaning; *Tula Raashi*: Learned, broad-minded and wealthy; *Vrischika Raashi*: Loka Puja, unhealthy and injury-prone; *Dhanu Raashi*: Poets, Architects, Artistic and wealthy; *Makara Raashi*: Unenthusiastic to perform, wasteful, vagabond but attractive; *Kumbha Raashi*: Desirous of possessing ‘Para Stree’ and ‘Para Dhan’; and *Meena Raashi*: Artistic, dreamy and easy-loving.

## VEDAS

### RIG VEDA:

**Hiranyagarbha Srishti:** 10. 121.1-10- : *Hiranyagarbhah samavartadaagne bhutasya jaatah patireka aaseet, sa dadhaara Pridhiveem dyaamutemaam kasmai Devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Ya aatmadaa baladaa yasya upaasate pravisham yasya Devaah, yasya cchhaayaamritam yasya mryyuh kasmaih Devaaya havisha vidhema/ Yah praanato nimishato mahitvaik a Indrajaa jagato babhuva, ya Isho asya dvipad chatushtadah kasmai Devaya havishaa vidhema/ Yasyeme Himavanto mahitvaa yasya samudram rasayaa sahaahuh, yasyemaah pradisho yasya bahuu kasmai Devaaya havishaa vidhema/*

5) *Yena dyorugraa Prithivee cha drulhaa yena svah stabhitam yena naakah, yo antariksho rajaso vimaanah kasmai Devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Yam krandasee avasaa tasta bhane abhyaikshetaam manasaa rejamaane, yatraadhi suru udito vibhaati, kasmai devaayahavishaa vidhema/ Aapoha yad brihateer vishvamaayan garbham dadhaanaa janayanteeragnim, tatoDevaanaam samavartataa surekah, kasmai Devaaya havishaa v idhema/ Yaschidaapo mahinaa paryapashyaddhaksham dadhaanaa janayanteer- yagjnam, yo Deveshvadhi Deva eka aaseetkasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Maano himseejvalanita/ Yah pridhivya yo vaadivam satyadharmaa jajaana, yaschaaaschandraa brihateerjajaana kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Prajapate na tvadevaananyatovishvaa jaataani paritaa vabhuva, yad kaamaste juhumaastanno astu vayam syaama patayo rayaanaam/* At the very beginning, Hiranyagarbha was of composite form and was full of the productive energy. He was of the creative profile and then manifested Bhumi and Antariksha. Why these indeed but the reply was that these were able to perform ‘archana’ by way of havish to Paramatma.

Then Hiranyagarbha got motivated to manifest the species of Superior Humans like Maharshis and ‘Deva Samuha’ as He felt that they could perform ‘upaasana’ or formal worship by offering ‘havish’ to Amrita Svarupini as also to Mrityu Svarupini, since births and deaths should constitute the ‘kaala maana’ and a

mix of Sukha Duhkhas; hereagain the motivation is of another layer of energies of lesser gradation too to observe upasana to Paramatma.

Then Hiranyagarbha resorted to the subsequent creation of Dwipada- Chatushpada series of Srishti such as humans and quadrupeds like cows - cruel animals with varying instincts with the fond hope of performing archana and worship physically or just by being good and doing good atleast in the name of Parameshvara! Then followed the immovable mountains , hills etc besides waterbodies ranging from oceans to water wells, rain water collections and underground water bodies on one side and aakaasha-dasha dishas, and the Dikpalakas ; indeed they could most certainly perform archanaas in their respective capacities and proclivities to the Almighty.

Stanza 5 onward: May we admire and worship that Almighty, who had skilfully yet firmly placed the Bhumi and an imaginably distant yet visible antariksha; who had set up swargaloka permanently and centered Surya on the antariksha, or rajasika based pindaika entities! To such unique Paramatma, we do sincere 'upaasana'! Dyuloka and Bhuloka are replete with sounds- [ According to Astro-Physicists and Astronomers, a Sound is produced due to the fast movement of Earth, Planets, and Galaxy or the Milky Way, called Akshya Ganga, with some 100,000 million Stars. The Galaxy, the Moon and the Earth-all revolving around the Sun-each moving on their own axis at a mind boggling velocity of 20,000 miles per second, produce the Sound and the Sages named the Super Sound as OM. The Sum of the Gayatri Mantra states: The Earth (\*Bhur), the Planets (\*Bhuvaha), and the Galaxy (\* Swaha) are rotating on their own axis at a great velocity as the Sound OM, which is the Formless Entity. The total Kinetic Energy generated by these movements balance the over-all energy consumption of Cosmos and this is named the 'Pranava' or the Body Energy ie Mass of Galaxies multiplied by two: Mass x Velocity x 2. That Supreme Entity (God) who manifests in the Form of Utmost Radiance (The San or Savitur) is indeed worthy of surrender (Varenyam). One should meditate (Dheemahi) upon the Light (Bhargo) of that Entity (Devasya) and perform the chanting of OM. May He(Yo) guide in the right Direction (Prachodayat) our (nah) Intellect (dhiyo)!] Despite such sounds, Surya Deva is firmly anchored to Antariksha and is ever constant with outstanding luminosity! What a glory is of the Creator- in- Chief whom we have to worship and be awed with!

Even while launching the 'Parama Srishti', there was a manifestation of 'Aapah' the Moola Kriyaasheela Tatwa, which inundated the totality of the Universe; this basic Tatva created from its womb the 'Maha Bhutas' of Agni and Aakaasha. May the Supreme Creator of the Universe be worshipped by us all with dread and approbation!

That Parameshvara who manifested Water as the fundamental 'kriyaa shakti' then having successfully generated 'Maha Pancha Bhutas' then got busy with the organisation of 'Virat Yajna' along with series of Deva Swarupas who indeed are worshipped too, besides of course, the Great Grand Hiranyagarbha Himself!

May we the tiny particle like Beings in the Gigantic Universe, annoy much less hurt, this Great Creator who is Srishti Rachayita or the Unique Scriptor of Creation; Satya Dharma Paalaka or the Unique Administrator of Truth and Virtue; Jagat Dhaarana Karta or the True Holder of the Universal Balance! We can at the best admire and remain astonished before the Creator in Chief by totally dedicating ourselves in prostration and total surrender!

Prajapati Deva! Excepting you there could be none else as could create-sustain-destroy-create again and thus so admirably cycle and recycle the Kaala Chakra from the past-present and future till eternity. May we -at the very best- offer 'havishanna' to all the Celestial Elements by our repeated and possibly regular dharmika karyas besides upholding the eternal banners of Dharma and Nyaaya, and keep astonished the

brilliant methodology of manifestation of Pancha Bhutas and the Heels within Heels in the Lord's Super Creation Skills!

**PRITHVI:** In the Vaidika Grandhas, Prithvi is established as the MOTHER Figure and Aakaasha the FATHER Figure. Mother Earth is vast-heavy with mountains and waters- the singular provider of rains, food and life; and finally takes all the Beings on Her lap en route the next rebirth!

1.22.13&15:*Mahi-dyouth Prithivi chana imam yagjnam mimikshataam, pitrutaam no bhareemabhih/ Tayoridghritavatpayo vipraa rihanti dheetibhih Gandharvasya Dhruve pade/ Syona Prithivi bhavaanruksharaa niveshani, yacchaanah sharma supratah/* May the huge earth and antarikshas by their own selves complete the yajna karmas and may the sukha saadhanas in the sacred tasks be contented by them. Mother Prithivi! You are the Unique Symbol of bestowing happiness, removing discontentment, and comfortable living abode. Do kindly upgrade our lives by several levels.

1.159 1-5: *Pra dyaavaa yagnaih Prithivi rutaavidhaa maheestushe vidayeshu prachetasaa, Devebhirye Devaputre dudamsasethaa dhiyaa vaaryaani prabhushatah/ Uta manye pituradruho mano maaturmahis svatavastadvameemabhih, suretasaa pitaraa bhuma chakrataruru prajayaa amritam vareemabhih/ Te soonavah svapasah sudamsaso mahee jajurmaataraa purvachittaye, sthaatuscha satyam jagadascha dharmani putrasya paathah padamadvayaavinah/ Te maayuno mamire suprachetaso jaamee sayonee mithunaa samokasaa, navyatrayam tantumaa tanvate dvi samudre antah kavayah sudeetayah/ Tadraadho adya savitur varenyam vayam devasya prasaved manaamahe, asmabhyam dyaavaa prithivee suchetunaa rayim dhattam vasumantam shatagvinam/* Celestial daughters viz. anariksha- prithivi-and such other Shaktis are together fulfill the desires and ambitions of the Universal Beings. Inspired and executed by yajna karyas, prithivi and dyuloka are pleased and thus the resultant prosperities and auspiciousness.

Prithivi and Aakaasha as in the form of mother and father figures are pleased by the commendations and prayers. The holy union of Prakriti Rupi Prithvi and Srashta Rupi Aakasha together create Prajas and endow them with safety and progress . Indeed this act of Universal Creation augurs gloriously for the generations after generations. This is not only relevant for humanity but in the context of 'Sthaavara Jangamas' or the Ever Stationary and Ever Active objects viz. the mobile and immobile species of Creation too. Such indeed is the active profile and activity of the Bhu- Dyou couple all through the time cycle! In between the dyuloka svarupa aakaasa and prithivi is the manifestation of Surya Deva the eternal bestower of radiance and the ever fresh weavings of the Surya kiranas. Besides the two Sacred Entities of Earth and Sky was also the generation of aakaasha ganga too. May indeed among these acts of glory the jukshta position of Prithivi and Dyuloka and Surya Deva usher in magnificent vibrations in the Universe and eventually generate manava pashu dhana and 'nivasa' as the combined blessings of the entities concerned!

1.160.1-5: *Te hi dyaavaa prithivivishva shambhuva rutaavaree rajaso dhaarayatkavee, sujanmanee dhishane antareeyate Devo Devee dharmanaa Suryah shuchih/ Uroovyachasaa mahini asaschataa pitaa maataa cha bhuvanaani rakshatah, sudhrushtame vapushyena rodasee pitaa yatseemabhi rupaira vaasayat/ Sa vahnih purtah pitroh pavitravaan punaati dheero bhuvanaani maayayaa, dhenumcha prushimna vrishabham suretasam vishv aahaa shukram payo asya dukshat/ Ayam devaanaamapasaa- ma pastamo yo janaana rodasee vishvashambhuva, vi yo mame rajasee sukratuuyayaajarebhih skambha- nebhih samaanruche/ Teno gunaane mahinee mahi shravah kshatram dyaavaa prithivee dhaasato brihat, yenaabhi krishteestatanaama vishvahaana panaayamojo asme samanvitam/* Anariksha and Prithivi are

the hinges of happiness. These are the ‘samrakshakas’ or the saviours of persons of brain and brawn alike besides of jnaanis. Among these types, Surya Deva has the inbuilt capability to move about nonchalantly and with neither prejudices nor preconceptions. Similarly the mother-father representations of all the species in creation are applicable moreso to bhumi and aakaasha! In fact, their dealings to their progeny are deft, impartial and just. Just as Surya Deva due to his might and splendour is all encompassing and all knowing, the mother-father entities of Prithvi and Aakasha too treat the children of Beings with neither partiality nor prejudice but strictly as per their ‘karma’. At the same time , Prithivi like a cow and Sky like a vrishabha perform their parental duty of strengthening their children in Srishti equally . Indeed Paramatma the Supreme manifested Prithivi and Antariksha to ensure stability-continuity and sustenance of Srishti and its Beings.

5.84.1-3: *Balitthaa parvataanaam svidram vibharshi prithivi, prayaa Bhumim pravatvati mahnaa jinoshi mahini/ Stomaasastvaa vicharini prati shthobhantyuktibhih, pra yaavaajam na heshantam perumasya - syarjuni/Drulhaa chidyaa vanaspateenkshmayaa dadharshyorjasaa, yatte abhrasya vidyuto Divo varshanti vrishabhah/ Prithivi Devi!!* You are the singular mother of outstanding patience as you enable the entirety of Beings with strength, besides carrying an indescribable load and volume of mountains! Mother! You are the most auspicious icon of critical qualities in the Parama Srishti, especially in harnessing the uncontrollable horses like clouds, lightnings and thunders far away on the Skies, even as the Beings on earthly physique of yours stare in awe and acclamations! Bhū Maata! As the skies open up and release torrential rains with lightnings and reverberating sounds, you bare the brunt from below and enable to create vegetation by way of food and fodder to the numberless Beings on earth and down under!

10. 18.10-13: *Upa sarpa maataram bhumimetaamaruvyachasam prithiveem sushevaam, uurnamradaa yuvatirdakshinaavat eshaatvaa paatu nirrute rupasyat/ Ucchavankchasva prithivi maa ni badhathaah suupaayanaasmai bhava suupavanchanaa, maataa putram yathaa sichaabhyenam bhuma uurnuhi/ Ucchvaanchamaanaa prithiveesu tishthat sahasram mit upahi shrayantaam, te grihaaso ghritashchuto bhavantu vishvaahaasmai sharanaah svatantra/ Uitte stabhnaami prithiveem tvatpareemam logam nida dyhanmo aham risham, etaam shuunaam piraro dhaarayanu tetraa yamah saadanaate minotu/* Oh dead body! Rest yourself on the lap of Maatru swarupi-Mahimaa mayi, Sarva vyaapini, sukha daayani Dharti Maata! Her lap is warm, soft, comfortable like wool as of man-woman’s intimate touch, and above all freed from the mortal life to mukti, having ridden of sins and further misdeeds! Mother Earth! To help the dead body, lift it up and just a a mother does, cover the body with a sheet and let the body be wrapped up to save the dust and wind and make it worryless for good! May the dead body with left over bones and body parts be not disturbed for the final journey and join pitru devatas, as Yama Deva is making arrange - ments for a temporary abode!

**AAPO DEVATA:** The features of Jala Devata and magnificence in overcoming physical and mental coolness and cleanliness of the Beings in Srishti!

1.23.18-23:*Apsume Somo abraveedantarvishvaani bshhajaa, agnimcha vishvashambhuvamaapascha vishvabheshajeeh/ Aapah pruneeta bshhajam varuutham tanvemama, jyokcha Suryam drisho/ Idamaapah pra vahat yatkincha duritam mayi yadvaaha- mabhidudroha yadvaa shepa utaanrutam/ Aapo adyaanvachaarisham rasena samagasmahi, payasvaanagna aa gahi tam maa sam sruja varchasaa/* Waters possess ‘amritopama guna’ or the life providing characteristics; waters possess medicinal features.

Devataas! Get enthusiastic in complementing such energetic waters at once! Somadeva is stated to have complemented that waters by their very inherent nature possess groups of herbal powers, besides the vigor and drive of ‘Agni Tatva’ or the characteristics of Fire! Indeed all kinds of medicines are rooted to waters! Hey groups of waters! May we be ever healthy so that we live happily to vision the splendour of Sun Rises and of Falls for very long! Jala Deva! during the various yagna karyas, what ever misdoings are perpetrated by us either knowingly or otherwise or even in various contexts if we harm co-beings physically or mentally, do very kindly pardon us and relieve us from the blemishes! Jala Bhgagavan! Now we have cleansed up our bodies and minds with ‘avabhrita snaanaas’; may Agni Deva too usher in ‘Varchas’ and ‘Tejas’ as complementary to our ‘bahyaantara shuddhi’.

7.47.1-4: *Aapoyam vayam vah prathamam Devayatna Indrapaanamuurmima krinvatelah, tam vo vayam shuchimari prapadya ghritaprusham madhumantam vanema/ Tamuurmimaapo madhumattamam vopaam napaadavatvaashuhemaa, yasdminnindro vasubhirmaadayate tamashyaama devayanto vo adya/ Shatpavitraah svadhayaa mandateer devee devaanapi yanti paathah, taa Indrasya na minanti v rataani sindubhyo havyam ghritavajjuhota/ Yaah Suryo rashmibhiraantataan yaabhya Indro aradad gaatu muurmim, te sindavo varivo dhaatnaa no yuyam paath swastibhih sadaa nah/* Jala Devata! Keeping in view his high celestial status, Indra Deva had mixed up sugarcane juice and the clean waters of earth and converted the mix as Soma Rasa on earth. Let us all drink and enjoy this sweet and juicy Soma Rasa, as so addressed the Devas by Indra. Jala Devata! Your sweet streams are thus designated as clean and blemishless water flows on earth. May Agni the Purifier retain the quality of earth’s water flows in a manner that Indra too along with ‘Ashtaavasus’ could drink and enjoy while simultaneously enjoying the divinity too. Thus Jala Devata is self satisfied besides the celestials and earthly beings too, especially in the context of Agni karyas firmly establishing firm links mutually. While Surya Deva with His radiant rays along with the close affinity with Jala Devata may maximise ‘dhana dhanya vrishti’ forever!

7.49.1-4: *Samudra jyashthaah salilasya madhyaatpunaanaa yatyanivishamaanaah, Indro yaa Vajree vrishabho raraada taa aapo deveeriah maamavatu/ Yaa aapo divyaa uta vaa sravanti khanitrimaa uta vaa yaah svayanjnaah, Samudraarthaah yaah shuchayah Paavakaastaa aapo deveerih maamvantu/ Yaasaam raajaa Varunoyaati madhyed satyaanrute avapashyanjanaanaam, madhschutah shuchayo yaah paavakaastaa aapo deveerih maamav atu/ Yaasu raajaa Varuno yaasu Somo Vishve devaa yaasuurjam madantik,ishvaanaro yaasvagnih pravishthastaa aapo deveerih maamavantu/* The ocean waters are signified not so much due to the merger of rivers but due to rains from the skies. As the Lord Indra whose blessings are forwarded by way of rains, may the Jala Devata bestow security to the Beings on earth. May the rain water which flows in the ever vibrant Jeeva Nadis, other water bodies and ground water in the Wells and so on be blessed as these keep the lives of Beings ticking for ever. Varuna Deva is the ready reckoner of Truth and fiction all over the Universe; may He keep the Jala Devis in good psyche and happiness so that the Beings in Srishti are kept in good humor and thus have them ticked on always. Indeed the auspicious place where both Varuna and Soma are together that indeed is the place of celestial waters, where all the Deva ganas are contented too with food and the role of Agni as the divine carrier is unique in the transit!

10.9.1-9: *Apo hi shtaa mayo bhuvastaa na urje dadhaatana, Maheranaya chakshase/ Yo vah Shivatamo rasastasya bhaajayatehanah, ushiteeriva maatarah/ Tasmaa aranga maama vo yasya kshayaaya jinvatha, aapo janayathaa cha nah/ Sham no Deveerabhishtaya aapo bhavantu peetaye, sham*

*yorabhisravant nah/ Ishaanaa vaaryaanaam kshyantisharshaneenaam, Aapo yaachaami beshajam/ Apsume Somo abraveedantirvishvaani bshhajaa, Agnim cha vishva Shambhuvam/ Aapah pruneeta bshhajam varuutham tanve mama, jokcha Suryam drisho/ Idamaapah pra vahat yatkincha dujritam mayi yadvaahamabhidudroha yadvaa shepa utaanrutam/ Aapo adyaanvachaarisham rasena samagasmahi, payasvaanagna aa gahi tam maa sam sruja varchasaa/*

Jala Deva! You are the cause of happiness; may you bestow to us excellent food and sustenance as needed to execute brave acts of virtue and justice; you should provide such highly attentive nourishment as loving mothers do to their children. Deva! we keenly await with eagerness and anxiety to seek such life juices as should enable us to usher propitious and glorious acts for Loka kalyaan or auspicious deeds and then born in rebirth with pure knowledge and enlightenment! Jala Deva! endow such Life Juices to us as would be worthy of bliss! Grant us such waters which readily provide us peace and prosperity and keep diseases away far from us. In these water flows, we seek such properties aplenty as the Jala Tatva and Agni Tatva are forged together and health properties are maximised. Our sincere request to you Jala Deva to award such healthy and long life as would facilitate Surya Darshan to us. May there not be in us any illwill or hatred among the co-beings, untruthfulness, and such feelings but keep us purified in body and mind as 'bahyaantara shuchi' for ever as long as we exist!

**TEJAS- AGNI:** 1. 1. 1-9: *Om Agnimeele purohitam yagjnasya Devamritvijam hotaaram ratnadhaatamam/ Agnih purvobhir rishibhireedyo nutanairuta, sa devaah eh vakshat/ Agninaa rayimashvant poshameva dive dive, yashaasam veeravattamam/ Agneyam yagjnamadhvaram vishvatgah paribhurasi, sa idyeveshu gacchati/ Agnirhotaa kavikratuh satyashchitrashravastamah, Devodevebhiraa gamat/ Yadanga daashushe tvamagne bhadram karishyasi, tavettat satyamangirah/ Upa tvaagne dive dive doshaavastaardhiyaa vayam namo bharanta yemasi/ Raajantamadhvaraanaam gopaamritasya dodivim, vardha maanam sve dame/ Sa nah piteva suunavegne suupaayano bhava sachasvaa nah svastaye/* Let us pray and commend to Agni Deva, whom the Paramardhika Yajna Karma is essentially based with, the most effective medium to reach Devas with, the Ritvija could conveniently perform, the Hota could invoke Devatas, and the Yaajakas who are adorned with the fruits as readily reaped by! May we invoke Agni Deva whom ancient Maharshis worshipped unfailingly and the contemporary vidvans are never tired out to pray and commend! Agni is the unique Deity whom once invoked formally assumes ever larger volume and radiance and endows with prosperity, progeny and prolonged existence! Agni Deva! You are the one who has the will and power to save or smither instantly and what is more you could carry the offerings to Deva -Devis and bring back their blessings too, besides your own too. You indeed are the havi pradaata- jnaana/ satkarma preraka, and satya rupa as the purifier and the unique and instant usherer of Deva ganas to Yajnas! To those who perform or facilitate Yajna Karmas are bestowed wealth, long life, residential benefits, progeny and contentment as also futuristic vision. Deva! we are the sincere and ever long 'upaasakas' and practitioners always commending and closely facing 'pavitraagnis'. We the householders are yajna rakshakas, satya vratas, and nitya agni performers. Garhapatya Agni Deva! just as fathers seek to make the 'santana' comfortable and happy, do facilitate every act of ours to be successful and reputation worthy!

1.12. 1-12: *Agnim dutam vrineemahe hotaaram vishvavedasa, asya yagjnasya sukritam/ Agniagnim haveemabhih sadaa havanta vishputim, havya vaaham purupriyam/ Agne Devaah ihaa vaha jagjnaano vrittabarhishe, asi hotaa na eedyah/ Taam ushato vi bodhaya yadagned yaasi dyutam, Devairaa satsi barhishi/ Ghitaahavana deedivah prati shma rishato daha, Agnetvam rakshasvinah/ Agninaagnih*

*samidhyate Kavirgrihapatiryuvaa, havya vaang juhvaasyah/ Kavimaagnimupa stuhi satyadharmaanamadhvare, Devamameevachaatanam/ Yastvaamagne havishpatirdutam Deva saparyati, tasya sma praavitaa bhava/ Yo Agnim dedvaveetaye havishmaan aavivaasati, tasmai Paavaka muulya/ Sa nah Paavaka deedivogne Devaah ihaa vaha, upa yagjnam havischa nah/ Sa nah stavaan aa bhara gaayatrena naveeyasaa, rayim veeravateemisham/ Agne shukrena shochishaa vishvaabhir deva huutibhih, imam stomam jushasanah/* The omniscient Agni Deva! You are indeed the ‘Vidhata’ and the Regulator of Yagjnas everready to satisfy all the Devas; in fact you are renowned as the singular ‘Deva Doota’ carrying ‘havis’ to one all from Prajapati to Indraadi Devas from Maharshis to moderate yajna saadhakas. The very first agent of the yajna kartas to the end receiver your ‘sandhaana kartrutva’ or celestial mediation is amazing. Highly commendable Agni Deva! You are manifested as a result of ‘aarani mandhan’ or by the rubbing of wooden sticks; seated comfortably on the spread out ‘kushaagras’ or on the top of kusha grass sticks, you are ever pleased to oblige and invoke various celestial deva-devis and bestow the havis to them as the concerned celebrities are made to be seated along with you and be honoured to accept the offerings. Agni Deva who is ever radiant with the ‘ghrita aahutis’ or ghee mixed flames, you bring down to ashes the evil energies and bring about universal balance of virtue and vice! Deva! you are the ‘Yagna Sthala Rakshak’, ‘Doora darshi’ or of distant visionary of what ever happens next; approachable of all the Gods by your mere invocation and call by their respective names; the medium of invocation being ‘aahutis’ into the flames of aahavaneeya Yajnaagni as created by ‘aarani manthana’ as afore explained. Ritvijas! Do perform high commendations to the ‘Jnaanavaan Agni Deva’ for His extraordinary role in Loka Kalyan of destroying diseases both physical and psychological all over the charaachara jagat! At the same time, Agni Deva, the key act of divinity being executed sincerely by the Ritviks is commendable too as the preparatory arrangements are theirs to perform the Deva Karya successfully. Agni Deva, may Paramatma bless you for this supreme act of mediation for universal contentment. Deva! may you be commended by Gayatri Chanda Sukta and bestow Putraadi Ishvarya and ample food that readily generates physical strength and mental energy!

[(Vaishwaanara Gayatri) : *Vaishvaanaraaya vidmahe leelaalaaya dheemahi, tanno Agnih prachodayaat/* May Agni Deva the ready means of worship and cooking as the singular source of radiance and ‘homa karyaas’ by which all the devas are invoked and contented with ‘mantra yukta ajyaas’ by way of oblations through the singular means of ghee and food. Manduka Upanishad describes Vaishvaanara as ‘Lolaayamaana’]

Agni Deva! May your splendour and fame accept our prostrations and prayers in your outstanding role of multi-directional Loka Kalyan, especially in bringing Deva Devis to humanity close only by your mediatory powers!

1.14.1-12. *Ebhiragne duvo giro vishvebhih somapeetaye, Devobhryaahi yakshicha/ Aaa tvaa Kanvaa ahushat grunanti vipra te dhiyah Devebhiragna aa gahi/ Indra Vaayu Brihaspatim Mitraagnim Pushanam Bhagam, Aadityaan Maarutam ganam/ Pa vo bhriyanta indavo matsaraamaadiyashnavah drapsaa madhvaschamushadah/ Eelate tvaamavasyavah kanvaaso vitta barhishadah, havishmano arangakritah/ Ghritaprishthaa manoyujo ye tvaa vahanti vahnyahyah, aa devaantsomapeetaye/ Taan yajatraam rutaavidhogne patneevataskrudhi, madhvah su jihva paayaya/ Yajatraa ya eengyaaste te pibantu jihvayaa madhoragne vashatkriti/ Aakeem Suryasy rochanaad vishvaan devaam usharbudhah, viprohoteh vakshati/ Vishvabhih Somyam madhvagna Indrena Vaayunaa, pibaa Mitrasya dhaamabhih/ Tvam hotaa manurhitogne yajeshusedasi, Somam no adhvaram yaja/ Yukshvaahyaarushee radhe harito Deva rohitah taabhirdevaam ihaa vah/* Agni Deva! You have arrived at the yajna along with all the Devas to

enjoy Soma Rasa and may we pay our earnest welcome and services formally and make your visit satisfactory. In this ‘Yagjna shaala’ celestial stalwarts have arrived viz. Indra, Vayu, Brihaspati, Mitra, Agni, Pusha, Bhaga, Adityagana, Marudgana and so on. Sweet Soma Rasa is already ready in vessels for service to Agni and other celestial guests. Kanva Rishi and his family relatives are ready seated with their ‘shubhaakaankshas’ to be conveyed to the Sacred Guests of honour; in fact they have spread out the kusha mats awaiting the celestial guests and arranged ‘havishaanna’ or the cooked rice for the offerings along with ghee as the offerings to Agni. Agni Deva! by your mere ‘sankalpa’, Devas are ready to run their chariots to arrive with the fond hope of enjoying ‘Soma paana’ the drink of soma juice. Even Indra gets readied to arrive at the Yagjna along with his wife. Vishvadevas from their beds after comfortable night long sleep woken up by the Ushakaala Sunrays get readied to reach the yagjna sthala only to receive the havishaanna and the soma rasa! Agni Deva! let all the Devas viz. Indra, Vaayu, Mitra and such others line up with their respective glories in the gala party and drink up soma juice to our heart’s content. ‘Maanava hita’ Agni Deva! kindly assume the form of a ‘Hota’ and set up fast the Yagjna svarupa without ‘jeeva himsa’ of any kind. You have the capacity and wish to ride the chariot named Rohit with horses of speed and strength and bring in Devas of eminence to the Yagna atonce!

1.147.1-4. *Kathaa te Agne shuchayanta aayordadaashurvajobhiraashushaanaah,ubhe yattoke tanaye dadhaanaa rutasya saamanranayanta Devaah/Bodhaame asya vachaso yavishtha mahishthasya prabhru-tasya svadhaav ah, peeyati tvo anutvo grunaati vandaaruste tvam vanded Agne/ Ye Paayavo maamate -yam te Agne pasyanto andham duritaadarakshan, rarakjsha taantsukruto Vishvavedaa dipsant idripavo naah debhuh/ Yo no Agne ararivaam aghaayuraraateevaa marchayati dvayena, mantra guruh punarastu so asmaa anu mriksheeshta tvam duruktaih/ Uta vaa yahah sahasya pravidvaan marto martam marchayati dvayena, atah paahi stavamaana stuvamagne maakirno duritaaya dhaayeeh/ ( Agni Deva! how indeed your flames bestow food and Jeevan Tatva or Life’s orientation to humanity even as you facilitate yagjna karyas and move about vayu mandala freely! Possesive of the magnificence of noble youthfulness, Agni Deva! some persons nodoubt blame you for your ferocity and speed of your flames but yet they have to admire and greet your basic form to cook and nourish food which is the basic input of life indeed! Your power of radiance is the basic input to dispell darkness, figuratively or otherwise ; may the very many acts of your kindness be not discounted and your periodical acts of severity exaggerated! Keeping the bodies warm and ticking life is a reality of the basics of Agni while the hazards in the ability to balance the ‘praana’ with the essentiality of the very existence is blame! May the genuine persons who evaluate the deeds of the sinful ones be saved and the habitual practioners of evil acts be eliminated from time to time!*

2.1-1-16: *Tvamagne dyubhistvamaashushu kshanitsavamad abhyastvmashnaspari, tvam vanedbhyastvam nrinaam nrupate jaayase shuchih/ Manushya swaami Agnideva! You have appeared on dyuloka and soon enough attained ‘pavitrata’. You are manifested in waters as Agni, or by the friction of stones, in the forests as daavaagni, and in auoshadhis as the ‘jvara’ or temperature among humans. Tavaagne hotram tava poutramritviyam tava neshtam tvamagnidruta -ayatah, tava prashastram tvamadhvareeyasi Brahmaa chaasi griha patischa no dame/ Agni Deva!among the or ‘Ritviks’ or the conductors of Yagjna karyas, you are the Hota aavaahana karta or the Invoker-the Pota or the Ensurer of Pavitrata or purity of body and mind- the neshta or the Somaadi distributor- agneedha or expert of yagjna karmas- the prashasta or one who accords ‘prerana’ or provoker of the yagjna; adharvyu or the karma kaanda sanchaalak or the conductor cum supervisor and finally Brahma the over all in charge. *Tvamagna**

*Indro vrishabhah sataamasi tvam vishnumrurugaayo namasyah, tvam Brahmaa rayividbrahmanaspate tvam vidhartah sachase purandyaa/ Agni Deva! you are like Indra the Head of Devas is the Master for Ceremonies and a true leader; like Vishnu who is omni present; like Brahma the ‘parama medhavi’ the cynosure of jnaana! Tvamagne Raajaa Varuno dhritavratavastvam Mitro bhavasi dasma eedyah, tvamaryamaa rarishhe suveertham saptatiryasya sambhujam tvamamsho vidathe Deva bhaajayuh/ Tvamagne Rudro asuro maho divastvam shardho maarutam priksha eeshishe, tvam vaatairarunairyasi shadanga tatvam Pushaa vidhatah paasi nu tamnaa/ Tvamagned dravinodaa arangakrite tvam devah Savitaa ratnadhaa asi, tvam Bhago nripate vasva eeshishe tvam yastevidhat/ Tvamagne Rudro asuro maho divastvam shardho maarutam priksha eeshishe, tvam vaatairarunairyasi shadanga tatvam Pushaa vidhatah paasi nu tamnaa/ You are like Varuna Deva is the ‘sarva vrata dhaarana karta’ or the major Guide and Conductor of Vratas or systematic pujas and of worship; you are like Mitra Deva is the destroyer of evil forces and worthy of endless praises; you are like Aryama the prime benefactor Leader of Propitiousness; Agni Deva! you are like Tvashta the one praiseworthy deity who readily equips us with courage and intrepidity as of our own clan and category! Agni Deva! you are like Maha Rudra who is indeed the ‘praana daata’ of dyuloka. You are like the powerful Vayu Deva full of speed and vigour. As the Annaadhipati Marut Devas, you ever generous and magnanimous and like Pusha Deva you provide ‘raksha’ or physical safety.*

*Tvamagned dravinodaa arangakrite tvam devah Savitaa ratnadhaa asi, tvam Bhago nripate vasva eeshishe tvam yastevidhat/ Tvaamagne dama aa vishpanti vishastvaam raajanam suvidatra -mrunjate, tvam vishvaani svaneeka patyase tvam sahasraani shataa dasha prati/ Tvaamagne pitaramishtibhirnarastvaam bhraatraaya shyayyaa tanuurucham, tvam putro bhavasi yastevidhatvam sakhaa surevah paasyaadhrishah/ Tvaamagna rubhuraake namastyatsvam vaajasya khumato raaya Eshishe, tvam vi bhasyanu dakshi daavane tvam vishikshurasi yagnamaatanih/ Tvamagne Aditirdeva daashushe tvam hotraa bharatee vardhase giraa, tvamilaa shata himaasi Dakshase tvam vritrahaa Vasupate Sarasvati/ Tvamagne subhruta uttamam vayastva syaarhe varna aa sandushi shriyah, tvam vaajah pratarino brihataasi tvam rayirbahulo vishvataapruthuh/ Tvaamagna Adityasa aasyam tvaam jihvaam shuchayhaschakrire kave, tvaam raatishaacho adhvareshu saschire tve devaa haviradantyaahutam/ Tve Agne Vishve amritaaso adruha aasaa Devaa haviradantyaahutam, tvayaa mnartaasah svadant aasutim tvam garbho veerudhaam jajisho shuchih/ Agni Deva! You who are of intense flames, also provide ample money and happiness; you are like Savita Deva the ‘ratna dharanakarta’ and Dhanadhipati Bhaga Deva. As Praja Paalaka in individual homes, you are in our households, taking full care of us day in and day out. As the God of the Universe, you have the willingness and capacity to safeguard and save us ever. Agni Deva! you are the father of human beings, the latter perform yagnas in their households and thus the sons reap fruits of the Sacrifices; as you are our friend-philosopher and guide, you inspire us to practise charities to the well deserved and thus a cycling effect takes place in the society of householders. Agni Deva! you are like Aditi Devi the mother of Devatas in the matters of dana dharmas. As you are praised extensively, you are named as ‘hota’ and ‘bharati’. As you are in the custom of extending the life span of your devotees, you are like Ila Devi; you are like Kubera the Dhanaadhipati. You are also like Indra the ‘Vrittaasura hantra’ and like Pruthu who is famed as ‘Anna Daata’. Dooradarshi Agni Deva! you are the Face of Dwadasha Adityas and the ‘jihva’ or the tongue of Deva Gnaas as they surround you for ‘aahuti grahana’.[ Dwadasha Adityas are noted as follows: Indra, Dhata, Parjanya, Pusha, Tvashta, 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; Twashtha 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] Agni Deva!Deva ganas always accept ‘havishyaanna’ from their faces / mouths; ‘manushyas’ receive it with their hands; whereas vriksha- vanaspatis provide in the ‘urja rupa’ or energy form; indeed this is named as the Nitrogen Cycle.

2.6.1-9: *Agnim tam maye yo vasurastam yam yanti dhenavah, astamarvanta aashaavostam nityaaso vaajina isham stotrubhya aa bhara/ So agniro vasurgune sam yamaayanti dhenavah, samarvanto raghudruvah sam srujaataasah suuraya isham stotrubhya aa bhara/ Agnirhi vaajinam vishodadaati vishva charshanih, Agnee raaye svaabhuvam sa preeto yaati vaayurvamisham stotrubhya aa bhara/ Aaa te agna idheemahi drumantam Devaajaram, yadvasyaate paneeyas samiddeeyati dyuveesham stotrubhya aa bhara/ Aa te Agna ruchaa havih shukrasya shoshochishpate, shuschandra dasma vishpate havya vaat tubhyam huyat isham stotrubhya aa bhara / Protye agnayognishu vishyam pushyant vaaryam, te hinvire ta eenvire ta ishanyanta Ishanyanantyaanushagisham stotrubhya aa bhara/ Tava tye agne archayo mahi vraadhanta vaajinah, ye patvabhih shaphaanam vrajaa bhuranta gonaamisham stotrubhya aa bhara/ Navaa no agna aa bhara stotrubhyah sukshiteerishah, te syaama ya aanruchustvaadyutaaso damedama eesham stotrubhya aa bhara/ Ubhe suschandra sarpisho darvee shreeneesha aasani, uto na utpupuryaa ukteshu shvasaspat eesham stotrubhya aa bhara/ Evaam agnimajuryamugreer bharyagjnabhiraanushak, dadhadasme suveeryamuta tvadaashvashvamisham stotrubhya aa bhara/* We are all familiar with the Yagjnasthala, where we pray and worship Agni Deva. This indeed is the place where cows and horses too move about and return to their respective places for rest thereafter. Agni Deva, may the ‘yaajakas’ be all happy and contented! May all the horsemen and cowherds too who visit this sacred place where Vidvans worship always be happy and contented. May the ‘Kartas’ responsible for freely spending without reservations the yagjna kaaryas be full of happiness and vamsha vriddhi. The ever active and youthful ‘stotas’ participating in the yagjna karyas and connecting with Dyuloka be blessed so that they all as also their family members and dependents be ever above the want of food, material and desires. AgniDeva! You are the Vishva poshak, shatru naashak, Deva Tripti kaarak by the supply of ‘havish’ and ‘sva prakaa -shak’. You ought to sustain the Ritviks whose rendering of ‘Ruchas’ by perfect ‘uccharana’ by way of ‘baahyaantara shuchi’ and ‘Sarasvati kataaksha’ as these qualifications are very rare and limited; may that clan of ritviks be ever contented and kept above the material needs. Deva! your magnifecent rays are such that they respond steadily by the purity and perfection of renditions of mantras and the modulation of sounds, above all the purity of the heart and soul of the ‘saadhakas’; indeed, such perfect balancing of the several ‘variables’ need to be converted as ‘constants’ to build bridges between man and divinity and the singular bridge is Agni Deva alone! May the participants of this Unique Yajna be the end result of all round fulfillment while the Singular Actor-Director-Producer is Agni and Agni alone!

10.7.1-7: *Swasti no divo agne prathivyaa vishvaayurdhehi yajathaaya Deva, sachemahi tava dasma praketairuushyaa na uruubhirdeva shamsaih/ Imaa Agne matayastubhyam jaataa gobhiraschairabhi*

*grunanti raadhah, yadaa te marto anu bhogamaangvaso dahaano matibhih sujaata/ Agnim manye pitara-  
magni maapirmaagnim bhraataram sadamitsakhaayam, agneraneekam brihatah saparyam divi shukram  
yajatam Suryasya/ Siddhaa agne dhiyo asme sanutreeyam traayasedama aa nitya hotaa, rutaavaasa  
rohidashvah purukshurdyubhirasmaa ahibhiryaamamastu/ Dyubhirhitam Mitramiva prayogam  
patnamritvija madhvarasya jaaram, baahubhyaamagnimaayavojanant vikshu horaaram nyasaadayant/  
Svayam yajasva divi deva devaankim te paakah krinavadaprachetaah, yathaayaja ritubhirdeva  
devaanevaa yajasva tvam sujaat/ Bhavaa no agnevitota gopaa bhavaa vayaskrudit no vayodhaah,  
raasvaa cha nah sumaho havyadaatim traasvet nastanvo aprayucchan/*

Divyaagni Deva! Grant excellent food to both Earth and Divya Lokas, pursuant to the sacred yajna karyas on the earth, even as you bestow to us the required resilience and self reliance besides security and wisdom. The more we commend the less sounds our deservedness, as already you have granted us wealth, cows and horses; indeed this is all your benevolence. We however pray further to bestow ideal virtue and self control from you. Agni Deva, we have always considered you as our father who brings us up, as a close relative who helps us in need and as a close associate who advises suitably. We always guard and keep holy this ‘yajna sthala’ as if the revered Surya Mandala residents come down and meditate! May our psyche and prayers be readily fructified to safeguard us and always let our lives be upgraded to live a typically yajna- maya existence, with you as hota in the agni karyas. May we ever deserve the sacred task of distributing ‘havishaana’ and the fall out advantages of doing so too. Deva! you are ‘tejomaya, mitra tulya, ritvija swarupa, puraataana, himsaarahita, yajna sampanna kartaa’ as materialised from the hands of yaajikaas. Tejo Murti Agni Deva! You serve deva ganaas directly but we in ‘martya loka’ we are not able to do like wise being ‘manda buddhis’ or of below par capacity and hence undeserved. Mah Jnani Agni Deva! Keep us secured from direct and indirect interferences and hurdles. We seek you to don the role of producer and supplier of food and thus assure us to sustain and strengthen our physical energies and mental abilities.

**VAYU:** The quickest forwarder of ‘havishaana’ and ‘Soma Rasa’ from Yaajikas to Devas-

1.2.1-7: *Vaayavaa yaahi darshateme somaa aramkritaah, tshaam paahi shrudhee havam/ Vaaya uktho-  
bhirjarante tvaamacchaa jaritaarah, Suta Somaa aharvidah/ Vaayo tava prapanchatee dhenaa jigaati  
daashushe , Uruuchee Soma peetaye/ Indra Vaayu ime sutaa upa prayobhiraa gatam, Indavo  
vaamushaantih/ Vaayavindrascha chetatha sutaanaam vaajinee vasuu, tavaa yaatamupa dravat/ Vaaya-  
vindrascha sunvit aa dhaatamupa nishkrutam , makshvitthaa dhiyaa naraa/ ( Priya Darshi Vayu Deva!  
Kindly enter our Yajna sthala; there is Soma Rasa awaiting your enjoyment. Vayu Deva! Those who are  
all engaged in the production of Soma Juice [among the or ‘Ritviks’ or the conductors of Yajna karyas,  
you viz the Hota aavaahana karta or the Invoker-the Pota or the Ensurer of Pavitrata or purity of body and  
mind- the neshta or the Somaadi distributor- agneedha or expert of yajna karmas- the prashasta or one  
who accords ‘prerana’ or provoker of the yajna; adharvyu or the karma kaanda sanchaalak or the  
conductor cum supervisor and finally Brahma the over all in charge] , as also those who are fully  
conversant of the features, taste, and impact of the drink are all assembled at the yajna sthala keenly  
awaiting your kind glorious arrival ! Vayu Deva! the commanding entry of your voice- the Voice of  
Wind- is awaited anxiously at the Yagna shaala by all the constituent partners of Soma Rasa, to be able to  
convey its features of renown, its impact, interest and so on. In fact, Indra Deva and Vayu Deva, we  
welcome both of you and as you descend the Yajna Shaala along with sweet eats too to go well with the  
supply of Soma Rasa! Both of you are of supreme capability and glory in your own ways of specialisation  
and are heartily requested to join the Oragniser to honour us at the Soma Rasa party!*

1.134.1-7: *Aa tvaa juvo raarhaanaa abhi prayo Vaayo vahintvah purvapeeyate Somasya purvapeetaye, urdhvaa te anu sunruta manastishthantu jaanatee, niyuktataa rathena yaahi daavano makhasya daavane/ Madantu tvaa mandino vaaya vikndavosmatkaaranaasah sukritaa abhidyavo gobhih kraanaa abhidyavaha, yadva kraanaa eeradhyai daksham sachant uutayah, saghreecheenaa niyuko daavane dhiya upa bruvat eem dhiyah/ Vaayuryungto rohita vaayuruunaa vaayu rathe ajiraa dhuri volhave vihishthaa dhuri volahave, pra bodhayaa purandhim jaara sa sateemiva,pra chakshaya rodasee vaaya yoshasah shravase Vaayayoshasah/ Tubhyamushasah shuchayah paraavati bhadraa vastraa tanvate dasum rashimashu, tubhyam dhenuh sabardudhaa vishvaa vasuuni dohate, ajanayo maruto vakshanaa - bhyo diva aa vakshanaabhyah/ Tubhyam shukraasah shuchayasturanyavo madeshugraa ishananta bhurvanyapaamishanta bhurvani, tvaam tsaaree dasamaano bhagameette takvaveeye, tvam vishvasmaad-druvanaatpaasi dharmanaa Suryaatpaasi dharmanaa/ Tvam no vaayaveshaama puurvyah somaanaam porathamam peetirmarhasi sutaanaam preetirmarhasi, uto vihutmateenaam vishaam vivarjusheenaam, vishvaa itte dhenavo duhnat aashiram/ Vaayu Deva!Your vibrant and speedy horses have already reached to the Soma Yaaga to accept the ‘havishaanna’; you are already familiar with our voices which have been commending your virtuous features and now do kindly oblige us in accepting our ‘aahutis’ at the yajna. We have already got prepared the tasty and nutritious Soma Rasa duly tempered with cow milk for your special consumption. We the humans of virtue aim at the fulfillment of ‘chaturvidha purushardhas’ of ‘Dharmaartha kaama mokshas’ and with this very objective, have spared no effort in organising the Yajna and the climactic preparation of Soma Rasa; now do oblige us in accepting the offering of Havishaanna and the drink of Soma Rasa.Vayu Deva! for carrying you all the way to this yajna shaala, red horses of extraordinary vigour and speed are in position. Just as a proverbial husband wakes up and lifts up too his lover from sleep, you must wake up ‘dhyavaa- prithivi’ or the Space and Earth be awoken by the Ushakaala Surya motivated by Vaayu and activate the former to vibrant activity and alertness. Vayu Deva! Pavitra Usha has already materialised distant, ever fresh and bright dresses to clothe you with care and selection to readily impart auspiciousness. Besides excellent dresses, cows yield fresh milk for you. It is indeed that such Sacred Winds ever active on the surfaces of Rivers and Oceans fly up and up and materialise rains of sufficient force, which in turn bestow crops of food to the entirety of Beings on Earth! Thus the brilliant cycle of Pancha Bhutas of Prithivi-Aapas-Tejas-Vayu and Akaasha interacting for the sustenance of Life! Vayu Deva! You have the unique role of instantly carrying Soma Rasa to various destinations. Jala sthaapana from one Element to another is indeed possible with your excellent collaboration among the Elements. This precisely why the helpless Manushyas- or for that matter all the Beings in the Universal Creation, praise in a singular voice that without you there would no existence, as indeed the ‘praana vayu’ is literally hinged to life. [ Kathopanishad II.ii.3-5 : II.ii.3) *Urthvam praanam unnayhati apaanam pratyagasyati, Madhte vaamanmaaseenam Vishve Devaa upaasate/* (The Self is the driving force of Praana as the upward breathing and Apana as the downward breathing; indeed, Praana or the Vital Power energises the body parts and senses like speech, breathing, vision, hearing and thinking by mind. The Self is seated in the middle part of the body and is worshipped by all the Devas; in the Universal context, the Self moves about like the Swan compared to Sun as swan symbolising all pervasive consciousness)II.ii.4) *Asya visramsamaanaya sharirasthasya dehinah,Dehaad vimuchyamaanasya kimatra parishishyate: etadvai tat/*(The interrogation is that when the dweller of the body viz. the embodied Self is detached from the body, then the latter gets released and what else remains in the body!)II.ii.5) *Na pranena naapaanejna martyo jeevati kaschana, Itarena tu jeevanti yasminnetaav upaashritau/*(Then as the Self- consciousness leaves the body, then no mortal could live by praana or*

apaana and then these winds ought to find asylum elsewhere; in other words, the entity of the self is not dependent on the Praana-Apaana but is the other way round!)]

10.168.1-4: *Vaatasya nu mahimaanam rathasya rujanneti stanayatrasya ghoshah, divisprugyaatya runeenaani krinvannute yeti prithivyaa revumasyan/* The sweep and speed of Vaayu is remarkable and unique. Assuming a wide variety of sound waves ranging from happy coolness to ferocious earthquakes the range of sounds is astounding. From forcibly pulling down huge forest trees to tiny plants the variety of speeds is amazing. Once engulfing the sky by its thick black clouds, the currents of winds literally bring earth and sky together.

*Samprerate anu vaatasya vishthaayenam gacchhanti samanam na yoshaah, taabhih sayuskaratham Deva eeryatesya vishvasya bhuvanasya raajaa/*The lightning speed of wind power could even break huge mountain ranges into smithereens. Like the speedy horses approaching the battle fronts, the gushes of alarming and noisy winds uproot huge trees creating a scene of horror. As though riding on the chariot of huge uprooted trees, the King of Wind looks like the Overlord of the Universe at that time!

*Antarikshe pathibhireeyamaano na ni vishte katamacchanaah, Apaam sakhaa prathamnaja rutaavaa kva svijaatah krita aa babhuva/* Vayu Deva moving fast all across the ‘antariksha’ by royal routes as also lanes and bye - lanes; He is never stationary nor restful. The illusive interrogation now would be as to where Vayu was originated and how as the Unique Lord of Life had originally got manifested!

*Atmaana Devaanaam bhuvanasya garbho yathaavasham charati Deva eshah, ghoshaa idasya shrunvare na rupam tasmai vaataaya havishaa vidhema/* Vayu Deva is the ‘Atma’ and Garbha or the Soul and Seed of Bhuvanas, moving unfettered and independent. His ‘sounds’ are countless, complex and varied being unseen too. His form is never seen but felt and ever worthy of worship. The best time and context when Vayu Deva is felt is when his archana is performed , dedicated and get rewarded!

10.187.1-3: *Vaata aa vaatu bshhajem Shambhu mayobhu no hride, prana aayuumshi taarishat/ Uta vaata pitaasi na vuta bhraatota nah sakhaa, sa no jeevaatave krudhi/ Yadado vaata te grihemritasya nidhirhitah, tato no dehi jeevase/* Vaayu Deva! very kindly bring near to us oushadhis which endow with us excellent health , well being and longevity. You are the father figure who had given us birth and upbringing, the ‘bandhu rupa’ or the dear relative, and friend who is an adviser and well wisher; do kindly strengthen the supply line of medicines. You possess Praana Rupa Jeevana Tatva and the ‘nidhi’ or the never diminishing stock of life providing energies; grant us a never failing life line to me and associates for ever!

**ANTARIKSHA:** 1.22.13-14. *Mahee dyouh prithivee cha na imam yagnam mimikshataam piprutaam no bhareemabhih/ Tayoridghritavatpayo vipraa rihanti dheetibhih, gandharvasya Dhruve pade/* May both Prithvi and dyuloka, complete our respective duties in the context of yajna kaaryas and fulfil all the respective duties and obligations successfully as also organise the step wise tasks involved by way of making available ‘bharana- poshana’ saamagri or the yaaginic tools and the knowhow of utilising them. Gandharva Loka and ‘Dhruvastaana’- in between bhuloka and dyuloka, have to fulfill their own obligations while, successful execution of the requirements of men-material are the basic inputs which

need to be perfected. Indeed only the experienced persons-duties-procedural inputs need to be meticulously worked out for the ultimate success of the Yajna.

1.159-1-3: *Pra dyhaavaa yagnaih prithivee rutaavrudhaa maheestushe vidayeshu prachetasaa, Devobhri-ryo Deva putre sundasathya dhiyaa vaaryaani prabhushitah/ Uta manye pituradruho mano maaturmahih svatavastadraveemabhih, suretasaa pitaraa bhuma chakrataruruu prajaayaa amritam vareemabhih/ Te soonavah svapsah sudam saso mahee jajurmaataraa purvachittaye, sthaatuscha satyam jajatascha dharmani putrasya paathah padamadvayaavinah/* Celestial daughters viz. Dyaavaa, Prithivi, and other Shaktis collectively are inspired to execute excellent tasks and are adorned to perform likewise. This is essentially due to reciprocate and respond to ‘Yagneeya bhaavanas’ and ‘Yagneeya karyaacharanas’ in the form of ‘mantras’ in favour of prithvi and dyulokaas. We the human beings always consider Prithivi and Antariksha most genuinely as our mother and father and extol them accordingly. Parakrama sheela and Prikriti Swarupi Prithivi and Srashtaa Swarupa Purusha Antariksha are indeed , by virtue of their combined might have indeed been successfully generating the Beings in the Universe especially the humanity; this outstanding creation is indeed ‘par excellence’. Prakrti in a way is to be considered as ‘Manas’ or Mental Energy; humanity possess the mighty pull of ‘Manas’. It is the Supreme Coordination of the Parental Might that could harness Human Thoughts and Psyche. The basic pull of human thought - as well as of all other ‘sthaavara jangamas’[species like Andajas or born out of eggs - udbhujas or created by sprouting-svedajas or created by sweat, besides immovable mountains-oceans] is conditioned by the parents who are essentially kind, forgiving and of mature patience. Even as the children often outstep far beyond the frontiers of ‘dharma and nyaaya’, the affectionate and ever merciful parents readily pardon them and provide them succor merely out of their magnificence.

1.160.1-5: *Te hi dyaavaa prithivee vishva shambhuva ritaavaree rajaso dhaarayatkavee, sujanmanee dhishano antareeyate devo devee dharmanaa Suryahshuchih/ Uruvyachasaa mahinee asashchataa pitaa maataa chabhuvanaani rakshatah, sudhrushtame vapushye na rodasee pitaa yatseemabhih rupairavaasayat/ Savahnih putrah pitroh pavitramaapunaati dheero bhuvanaani maayayaa, dhenumcha prushimna vrishabham suretasam vishvaaha shukram payo asya dukshat/ Ayam Devaanaamapasaama - pastamo yo jajaan rodasee vishvashambhuva, vi yo mame rajasee sukratuuyayaajerebhih skambha - nebhih samaanruche/ Te no grunaane mahinee mahi shravah kshatram dyaava prithivee dhaasatho brihat, yenaabhi krishteestatanaam vishvaaha panaayyamojo asme saminvatam/* Dyau- Prithivi, Bhumi and Antariksha- are together the hinges of the Universe and also the Yajna swarupas. The Sarva Tejasvi and Sarva Medhavi Entities of Earth and Sky are also the Sarva Ramrakshak -Sarva Utpaadak or the Universal Creators and Sustainers. It is among these that Surya Deva moves all over as the supreme mediator and as the ever active agent to organise the Universal Activities. Between Earth and Sky there has to be a powerful coordinator of the stature of Surya just as a cow and bull or Bhumi and Anrariksha. Surya Deva is like the able Son to truthfully assume the responsibility. May the offspring of Bhumi and Sky on Earth with the active assistance of Surya be ever active with their own activities of Dharma and Karma on one hand and the pulls and pressures of materialism and spiritualism on the other.

5.36.5: *Vrishhatvaa vrishanam vadhatu dyourvrishaa vrishabhyaam vahase haribhyaam, sa shipra vrishakrato vrishaa vajrinbhare dhaah/* Mighty Indra Deva! May dyuloka be fortified with supreme energy by your illustrious chariots while you ride with your horses as the symbols of speed and strength, even as

you wear the outstanding kireeta or the headgear and armed with 'vajraayudha'. May there not be even negligible traces of evil powers be wiped out and cleaned up without traces.

7.53.1-3: *Pra dyaavaa yagnaih prithivee namobhieh sabaadha eele brihatee yajanne, te chiddhi purve kavayo grunantah puro mahee dadhire Deva putre/ Pra purvaje pitaraa navyaseebhirgorbhih krunudhvam sadane rutasya, aa no dyaavaa prithivee daivena janena yaant mahi vaam varuutham/ Vutohi vaam ratnadheyaani santi puruuni dyaavaa prithivee sudaase, asme dhattam yadasadskrudhoyu yuuyam paat svastibhih sadaa nah/* From times immemorial, ancients Rishis had always lavished praises and prayers to bhū devi and antariksha deva as the glorious parents of the Universe and even now through the medium of Yajña karyaas too the continuity is sustained and hence the availability of food and sustenance. Yajñako! Even as the number of participants of the Sacrifices has dwindled, the faith and fame of earth and sky is maintained as our eternal parents; may they pardon our increasing lapses as the true father and mother entities, despite our evil doings and ingratitude for them. Beloved parents, you are not only equipped with love and kindness to us but plenitude of fortunes and never ending materialistic pleasures to endow us with!

7.104.23: *Maa no raksho abhi nadyaatumaavataamapocchitu mithunaa yaa, prithiveenah paarthivaat paatvamhasontariksham divyaatpaatvasmaan/* May not 'raakshasaas' or the worst possible evil powers turn against us while both Deva-Devi Shaktis be alert at every step to safeguard us. Indeed, may Devi Prithvi eradicate all types of sinful activities all across the Earth and similarly the antariksha too be completely cleansed up with any kind of sinful doings and let auspiciousness prevail universally.

**YAJURVEDA - KRISHNA / TAITTIREEYA SAMHITA:** 1.1.9: The Fire-altar or Vedi: *Aa dadam Indrasya baahurasi dakshinah, sahasra bhrishtih shatatejaa vaayurasi tigma tejah/ Prithvi deva yajani oshadhyaste, moolam maa himsisham apahato araruh prithvai/* You Vedi on Earth! ! You are Indras's right arm with thousands of spikes of radiance, with Vayu of sharp strength, bhūmi where deva yajñas are performed with oshadhis, 'vraja' as energised by vedic knowledge.

1.1.10: Purification of Agni: *Pratyushtham rakshah pratyushtaa araatayo, agnervas tejishtthena tejasaa-nishtapaami, goshtam maa nirmriksham, vaajinam tvaa sapatnasaaham sam maarjmi/ Vaacham praanam chakshuh shrotram prajaam yonim maa nirmriksham, vaajaneem tvaa sapatnasaahem sam maarjmi, aashaasanaam soumanasam prajaam soubhagyam tanuum, agner anuvrataa bhootvaa sam nahye sukritaaya kam/ Suprajasastvaa vayam supatneerupa sedima agne, sapatna dambhanam adaabhyam/ Innam vi shyaami varunasya paasham yamabadhneeta savitaa suketah, dhaatushcha yonou sukritasya loke syonam me saha patyaakaromi/Samaayushaa sam porajayaa samagned varchasaa punah, sapatnee patyaaham gacchhe samaatmaa tanuvaa mama/ Maheenaam payo asyoshadheenaam rasah, tasyate aksheeya maanasya nirvapaami/Maheenaam payosyoshadheenaam rasah, adabdheena tvaa chakshushaa avekshe suprajaastvaaya/ Tejosi tejenu prehi agniste tejomaa vi nat agner jihvaa asi subhuur devaanaam, dhaamedhaamne devebhyo yajushe yajushe bhava/ Shukramasi Tejorasi Tejosi Devaa vah savitotpunaatvaacchidrena pavitrena Vasoh Suryasya rashmibhih/Shukram tvaa shukraayaam dhaamne dhaamne Devebhyo yajusheyajushe grihyaami/ Jyotistvaa jyotishi archistvaarchishi/ Dhaamne dhaamne devebhyo yajusheyajushe grihyaami/* With Agni's pure flames, raakshasaas and all evil energies are burnt up and purified. Yet, the sources of knowledge are kept intact and retained. The fury of flames does not interfere with the natural powers of breath either, since one's speech, breath, hearing impulses, vision and the other inherent bodily or mental capabilities are disturbed. Agni Deva! while requesting for

a contented mind and prosperity, I now prepare by physical frame with panchendriyas or five fundamental faculties for essentially dharmic actions. Similarly, I approach you with my spouses and successors as you indeed are invincible and undeceivable; you are however the singular destroyer of the external enemies and more significantly the enemies within viz. the basic ‘arishadvargas’ of kaama-krodha-lobha-mohamada-matsaraas. Agni Deva! may I loosen the strong fetters of Varuna- proverbially called Varuna Paasha which the Creator Savitur tied at the time of birth- on three distinct planes viz. matter-life and mind.Indeed, in the early stages of life, every human being has to develop one’s life at three levels viz. physical-mental-emotional. [ At the younger stage of life or the flowering stage, one’s faculties of beauty, reactions to affection and care and individual intelligence and grasp are prominent; as a person grows, maturity descends and the bonds of Varuna get gradually loosened.] It is at that stage of maturity, affinity with Agni and Agni Karyas grows. Then arrives the ‘samanvayata’ or equation with family life, life’s partner, and offspring arrives! Then is the realisation that Agni is the gateway to auspiciousness, nearness to Daivatva, and the awareness of *shukram tvaa shukraayaam/* or ‘ I grasp and absorb that which is bright among the bright! *Dhaamne dhaamne devebhyo yajushe gruhnaami/* I then perceive Devas in every plane and every yajna! *Jyotistvaa jyotishi archistvaarchishi/* I then recognise the self as the brilliance!

1.4.2&3. Praana the Life Energy: *Vaachaspataye pavasvavaagin, vrishaa vrishano amshubhyaam gabhasi puuto/ Devo Devaanaam pavitramasi, yeshaam bhaagosi tebhyastvaa svaamkrutosi madhumateernba ishaskrudhi/ Vishvebhyastvendriyebhyo divyebhyahh paarthivebhyo, manastvaa ashtu uru antariksha manvihi/ Svaahaa tvaa subhavaah surayaya, devebhyastvaa mareechipebhyam, esha te yonih praanaaya tvaa/* You the Master of speech the outstanding, do purify me as indeed you are the purifier of all the Devas too. To those Devas, you are accepted in all the primary aspects, besides quite a part of celestial senses of heaven and earth. As regards the midworld lokas too, may our human minds of sharpness make it possible to penetrate as after all the cosmic life is none too different excepting in certain layers.The praana based energy as far as mental faculties are concerned is auspicious and that life energy tends to purify the aspect of speech too. The sound of ‘svaaha’ to the celestials is purified any way as the supreme praana, the life energy anyway!

Praana’s internal journey called ‘Antaryaama’: *Upayaamagriheetosi, antaryaccha Maghavan, paahi somamurushya raayah samisho yajasvaantah/ Te dadhaami dyaavaa prithivee antar uru antariksham, sajoshaa devair avaraih paraishcha,antaryaame Maghavan maadayasva/* Praana! You are restrained by way of your intake [ Upayaama is the supportive restraint]. May Soma protect, guard the internal properties by gathering impulsion in the process of Internal Yajna. May I place the Self and its features within the heaven-and earth as also the mid world; or the unison with bhur- bhuvar-swaha!

6.1.1: *Bahih praano vai manushyastasyaashanam praanomshnaati sapraana eve deekshita aashito bhavati yaavaanevaasya praanastena saha medhamupaiti bahih praano vai manushyah tasya ashanam praano ashnaati sa praana eva deekshata aashito bhavati yaavaan evaasya poraanah tena saha medham upaiti/* Everybody lives with praana the life energy; he eats, gets satiated and indeed is sanctified by praana.

6.2.2: *Aapataye tvaa gruhneemeetyaah praano vaa aapatih praanameva preenaati paripataya ityaaha mano vai paripatirgamana eva preenaati tanuunaptra ityaah tanuvo hi te taah samavaadyanta shaakvaraaya ityaah shaktaih te tat aatmanah samavaadyanta anaadhrishtam asi anaadhrishyam ityaah anaadhrishtam hi etat anaadhrishtam/* Let there be access to Praana the Life’s very energy. He who

rushes in for Praana is certainly delighted; that praana gives resdy access to the mind and indeed delights the mind. For the mighty there is strength and that person is unchallengeable!

6.4.5. *Praano vaa esha yat upaamshur yat upaamshuagra grahaa grihyante praanam eva anu prayanti aruno ha sma aaha aupoaveshih praatah savana eva yagjnam sam aham sthaapayaasmi tena tah samsthitena charaami iti ashtou kritvo agre abhishunoti ashta aksharaa gaayatri gaayatram praatah savanam pratah savanameva tena aapnoti ekaadashaa kritvo dviteeyam ekaadashaakshara trishtup traishtbham maadhyandinam savanam/* Uaamshu is praana: [ Upamshu is the practice of silently repeating a mantra and seek to secure deeper consciousness and remove mental impurities.] Aruna Aupaveshi is stated to have advided that whatever sacrifice is established be proceeded with; he first initiates with eight syllables of Gayatri, and then eleven times as Trishtubh of Chhandas.

*Maadhyandinam eva savanam tenaa aapnoti dvaadasha krutvah triteeyam dvaadashaaksharaa jagatee jaagatam triteeya savanam triteeyaa savanam eva tenaa aapnoti etaam ha vaava sa yagnasya samsthitam uvaacha askandaaya askannam hi tat yajnaasya samsthitasya skandaati atho kalu aahur gaayaree vaavaa praatah savane na ativaada iti anati vaaduka enam bhraatravyo bhavati ya evam veda tasmaat ashtau ashtau kritvo abhishutyam/* By noon time, the performer does the Japa twelve times as Jagati Chhandas has twelve letters and so would be at the evening. This is what the regulation of the Establishment so that there is loss in the prescribed practice.

7.5.13. To whom Praana of a Jeeva is yoked to like a cross wooden piece! *Kastvaa yunakti sa tvaa yunaktu, Vishnustvaa yunaktvasya yagnasyarddhyah/ Mahyam samnatyaa amushmai kaamaaya, Aayushe tvaa praanaayatvaapanaaya tvaa vyaanaayatvaa/ Apaanaayatvaa vyaanaayatvaa, vyushthai tvaa rayyai tvaa/ Raadhase tvaa ghoshaaya tvaa, poshaaya tvaa aaraa- dhoshaaya tvaa prachyutyai tvaa/* Who indeed yokes you since some significant power be yoked to! May Lord Vishnu be yoked to since He is the ‘dharta and bharta’ or the singular preserver and the clasper of Creation anyway besides the endower of peaceful and existence of all the Beings. This arrangement is let me bestow calmness and pleasure. May Lord Vishnu save Life, the Prana, the vital energy; may He protect Apaana the outbreath as also the vyana.[ Prana the inward moving energy pulsating the heart, the breathing and circulatory system, Apaana the outward moving energy eliminating wastes of body and lungs through the excretory systems, Vyana the circulation of energy enabling the expansion and contraction of the muscular system , Udaana the energy of the head and throat- the vocal apparatus for laughing or shouting or crying , and Samana the energy for digestion and assimilation, besides regulating the body cells and in-body heat regulation.]

**SHUKLA YAJURVEDA: Bhu Devata- Dyuloka: 13: *Iyam te yagjniyaa tanuurapo munchvaami na prajaam, agum homuchah svaahaakritaah prithiveemaavishat prithivyaa sambhava/* Mother Prithvi! Your body is most sacred and befitting for Sacrifices; this is the hallowed place where we seek to discard impure waters and seek to promote juices of tasteful divinities. May each of our acts get immune from blemishes and sinful deeds and get dissolved by waters of transparency and cleanliness.**

13.4-8: *Hiranyagarbhah samavartataagre bhutasya jaatah patireka aaseet, sa dadhaara prithiveem dyaamutemaam kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema/ Drapschaskanda prithiveemanu dyaamimam cha yonimanu yaschapurvah, samaanam yonimanu sancharantam drapsam juhonmanu sapta hotraah/ Namostu sarpebhyo ye ke cha prithiveemanu, ye antarikshe ye divi tebhyah sarpabhyonamah/ Yaa ishavo yaatudhaanaanaam ye vaa vanaspateengruranu, ye vaavateshu sherate tebhyah sarpobhyo namah/ Ye vaamee rochane divo ye vaa suryasya rashmishu, yashaamapsu sadaskrutam tebyah sarpebhyo namah/*

Well at the time of Universal creation, there emerged Brahma Shakti and occupied the totality of the Universe. That Prajapati made the initial sacrifice to the Unknown to facilitate the process of creation and foremost of all, manifested Swarga-Antariksha-and Prithivi in the form of a serpentine coil. As the Sacrifice made headway, Prajapati thought of creating Praana- Parjanya and the sustaining food by way of ‘drasa’ to satisfy the celestial devaas as also the dyuloka or the antariksha as also ‘vanapatis’ or vegetation to satisfy the residents on Earth. Besides, the superior class of Beings on Earth viz. human beings built up Yagna sthala or Sacrificial Pit as a means of communication between Bhumi and Anrariksha. Then got manifested Surya Deva as a vibrant and radiant link to connect Bhur-Bhuvar-Svar Lokas. We greet now as follows: *Namostu sarpebhyo ye ke cha prithiveemanu, ye antarikshe ye divi tebhyah sarpabhyonamah/* May we in admiration amply pray and worship that celestial link in the form of a colossal serpent connectin three lokas. It is that unique Serpent which is like the rain of arrows destroying all kinds of evil energies like Rakshasaas; indeed it is like that ever dynamic serpent which creates ‘vanspatis’ as food to sustain the Beings on Earth. It is to that Sarpa Santati / or the Holy strings of Serpents which on their own splendour further enhanced by the radiance of Surya Deva and cooled down by the attendant Jala Devatas that we the most insignifiant humans prostrate to and worship to the brim of our hearts.

13.18: *Bhurasi bhimirasyaditirasi vishvadhaayaa vishvasya b huvanasya Dhartee, prithiveem yaccha prithiveem drunguha pridhiveem maa hingaseeh/* Maatru gane, you too are like Bhu Devi who assures happiness to the entirety of charaachara srishti. Devi Aditi the unique mother of all the Devas! You are universally popular as the Universal Mother of all types of divinities. Such exemplary mother! May you too shine like the illustrious Bhu Devi renowned for her fortitude, patience and capab ility!

Agni:1. 5: Agne vratapate vratam charishyaami tacchakeyam tanme raadhyataam, idamahamanrutaat satyamupaimi/ Agni Deva! you are the extraordinary administrator and facilitator of all types of ‘Vratas’ by the Humanity in totality. May we all be blessed to sincerely organise the outstanding Vrata of following the singular path of Satya and Nyaaya or Truthfulness and Justice.

2.7- 9: *Agne vaajajidvaajam tvaa sarishyantam vaajajiting samaarjim, namo devebyah svadhaa pitrubhyah suyamo me bhuyaastam/ Askannamadya Devebhya aajyanga sambhriyaasamanghrinaa vishno maa tvaavakramisham vasumateemagne te chhaayaamupastesham Vishnoh sthaanamaseeta Indro veeryakakrunoddhudhvodharaastaat/ Agne vehotram veduuryatyamavataam twaam dyaavaa prithivee avatvam dyaavaa prithivee svishtakruddevebhya Indra yaajjena havishaa bhutsvaaha sam jyotishaa jyotih/* Agni Deva! you are the provider of food and it is only by the cause of food that the ‘purushardhaas’ or human aspirations viz. dharma-artha-kaama-mokshas are possibly fulfilled. Yagjnaagne! We resolve hereby that we should not trample the ‘pavitra yajna sthala’ and convert it as impure. We have now fetched pure ghee to be offered to Devas. Lord Indra with his bravery and battle skills had long ago purified ‘yajna sthalas’. May this sacred place continue to be sanctified as the essential source of ‘Anna’! Further, ‘anna’ or food is the singular means of satisfying the needs of Devas and Pitru Devas by the means of Sacrifices be fulfilled. May the cycle of Yaginas on earth and the resultant rains and fertility on earth be secured and strenghened!

4.15-18: *Punarmanah punaraayuraagaman punah praanah punaratmaa maaagan punahschakshuh punah shrotrammaagaan/ Vaishvaanaro adabdhastanuupaa agnirnah paatu duritaadavadvaat/ Tvamagne vratapaa asi deva aa marteshvaa tvam yagjnesveedyah, raasveyatsomaa bhuyyo bhara devo*

*nah Savitaa vasordaataa vasvadaat/ Eshaate shukra tanuuretaad varchastayaa sambhava bhraajam gaccha, juurasi ghritaa manasaa jushtaa vishnave/ Tasyaaste satyasavasah prasave tatvo yantramasheeya svaaha, shukramasi chandramasyamritamasi vaishvadevamasi/* (May the mindful thoughts of deep sleep of the yajna kartaa regain full consciousness as if his praana the vital energy gets rejuvenated. Accordingly, his praana, inner soul, eye sight, hearing capacity and all other sensory organs and their respective features get revived. Agni Deva! may all the sensory organs and their respective features be relivened again and revitalised afresh. May you save us from our erstwhile sins and blemishes and the offshoots of our stored misdoings. The ever radiant Agni Deva! you are the ensurer of the safety and security to all of your true followers; revive our faith and dedication to you and as in several previous occasions, bestow to us ever greater prosperity and fame ; may our faith thus get kindled in larger volume and value! Satya Svarupa! May your grace and kindness be enhanced and showered on us and may our supreme faith assume much stronger and broadened dimensions !

13.9-14:*Krunushva paajah prasimti na prithiveem yaahi raajevaamavaam ibhena, trishveemanu prasimti drumaanostaasi vidhya rakshasatapishtaih/ Tava bhramaasa aashuyaa patanyanuspurusha ghritashaa shoshuchaanah, tapuugumshyaagne juhvaa patangaansandito vi sruja vishvagulkaah/ Prati spasho vi sruja tuurnitamo bhavaa paayurvisho asyaa adabdhah, yo no duure aghashaangaso yo antyagne maa kishte vyathiraada daharsheet/ Udagne tishtha pratyaa tanushva nyamitraang oshataathimahete, yo no araatiing samidhaana chakre neechaatam dhakshyatasam na shushkam/Urthve bhava prati vidyaadhyas- maadaavishkrunushva Daivyaanagne, avasthira tanuhi yaatujuunaam jaamimajaamim pra mruneeh shatruun, agneshtvaa tejasaa saadyaami/ Agnirmuurdhvaa divah kakutpatih pruthivyaa ayam, apaagum retaagum si jinvati, Indrasya tvaijasaa saadyaami/ Agni Deva! You are wholly ready and equipped to destroy the evil energies. Just as a King of glory rides an unbridled and energetic king of elephants has a free ride to demolish devils and raakshasas helter skelter, you too may resort to attacks and smashings. In the same way that a bird catcher deftly brings down huge number of high flying birds, Agni Deva we request you to enlarge your volume and reach of fury to totally shatter the evil. One fortified with the speed and thrust of Vayu Deva, the ‘aahutis’ lead to no limits of proximity or far distances and bring down the evil forces to smithereens. Agni Deva! Your energy is so intense and severe even to reach the heights of Dyuloka and at the same time to administer the dharmic activities and collaborate with the Beings on Earth in their daily activities ; indeed once the collaboration of Vayu Deva, your abilities are literally sky high bringing pride and glory to Indra Deva too.*

Aapas:2.34: *Urjam vahanteeramritam ghritam payah keelaalam paristrutam, svadhaa stha tarpayat me pitruun/ Pavitra Jala samuhaas!* You are the singular form of essence among food, ghee, milk and the juices of innumerable fruits and flowers; it is that source of strength that all the Beings on earth especially the human beings are able to tick and kick with energy and knowledge; this indeed is the cause of contentment among our forefathers too.

4.12: *Shvaannaah peetaa bhavata yuyamaapo asmaakmantarudare sushevaah, taa asmabhyamaya kshamaa anameevaa anaagasah svadantu deveeramritaa rutaavridhah/* Jala Deva! do kindly get converted fast as water flows from your original profile of milk and help us to readily become drink worthy; once our intake as water takes place, our thirst gets subsided instantly and the bellies get contented. May water born diseases be rooted out, get helpful in the context of Yajna kaaryas, and always retain the quality of sweet taste ready for digestion and thirst.

13.53. *Apaam tvemantasyaamyapaam tvodyantsaadayaamyapaam tvaa bhasman saadayaamyapaam tvaa jyotishi saadayaamyapaam tvaayane saadayaamyarnave tvaa sadane saadayaami samudre tvaa sadane saadayaami sarire tvaa sadane saadayaamyapaam tvaa kshaye saadayaamyapaam tvaa sadhishi saadayaamyapaam tvaa sadane saadayaamyapaam sadhasthe saadayaamyapaam tvaa yonou saadayaamyapaam tvaa pureeshed saadamyapaam tvaa paathasi saadayaami/ Gaayatrenatvaa cchandasa saadayaami traishthubena tvaa cchandasa saadayaami jaagatena tgvaa cchandasa saadayaanushthubhena tvaa cchanbdasa saadayaami pangtena tvaa cchandasa saadayaami/ Dear Ishta Devatas! You are established firmly in the form of Waters, aoushadhis, vidyud jyoti, vaani or voice sounds, vision by chakshu or of both the eyes, hearing faculty of shrotras / ears, in the profile as anbtariksha, as in the swarupa of oceans, and as ‘annam paramatma’ and as in the forms of prosody viz. Gayatri Chhanda-Trishtup chhanda, Jagati Chhanda, Anushtup chhanda and Pankti chhanda!*

Vaayu: 7.7: *Aa Vaayo bhusha shuchipaaupa nah, sahasram te niyuto vishvavaar, upo ter andho madyamayaami yasya Deva dadhishe poorvapeyam vaayave tvaa/ Vaayu Deva! you are the singular form of purity and its expansion world wide; you are indeed of the profile extensive reach and of innumerable ways and means of sanitization. Deva! your strength as also the sensitivity is of Soma Juice by the hallowed medium of yajna karyas. May we offer the attraction of the Juice to refresh yourself. 13. 27 : Madhu vaataa rutaayate madhu ksharan ti sindhavah, maadhveerna santvoshadhee/ May to those blessed participants of Yajna karyas, Vaayu the essential life’s energy flows surge forward fast, especially saturated with sweetness . 14.12. Vishvakarma tvaa saadyantarikshasya prushthe vyachasteem prathasvateemantariksham yacchhaantariksham drungaantariksham maa higum seeh/ Vishvasmai praanaayapaanaaya vyaanaa- yodanaaya pratishthaayai charitraaya/ Vaayu drushtvaabhi paatu mahyaa svastyaa cchadrishaa shantmena tayaa devatayaangirasvad dhruvaa seed/ The desirable ones! Prajapati the Designer of the Universe had appropriately placed Vayu Deva pride of place viz. the antariksha; that is why the Five Segments of Vaayu are deposited viz. Praana- apaana-vyaana-udaanaadi praanas or the Life Energies. May therefore the antariksha be fortified and sanctified!*

**SAAMA VEDA:** Dyaava- Prithivi: 378-379: *Ghritavatee bhuvanaa naamabhishriyora Prithivee madhu dudhe supeshasa, dyaavaa prithivee varunasya dharmanaa vishkabhite ajare bhuri retasaa/ Ubhe yadindra rodasee aapa praadoshaa iva, mahaantam tvaa maheenaam samraajam charshaneenaam, Devi janitrajejandbhudraa janitryajejanat/ Indra Deva! Dyuloka and Bhulokaas are the ever radiant aadhaara lokas which are uniquely widespread signages of Parameshwara where happy winds and sweet waters are aplenty controlled by you. Even as Devi Aditi who gave you birth, you are the Supreme Head and Controller of Devas and Manavadi samasta pranis in three lokas of Bhur- Bhuvah- Svargas. Indeed, Bhumi and antariksha are the universal parents.*

Virat Purusha and Srishti: 617-22: *Sahasra Sirsha Purshah Sahasraakshah Sahasra paat, Sa Bhumim Vishvato Vritvaa Atyatishthad -dashaagulam/ (Bhagawan/ Maha Purusha who has countless heads, eyes and feet is omnipresent but looks compressed as a ten-inch measured Entity!) Tripaadurdhwa udait Purushaha paadosyehaa bhavaatpunah, tato Vishvan gvyakraamat saashanaa nashaney abhi/ (Of three-fourths of the Unknown apart, one fourth emerged as the Universe and the Maha Purusha is manifested across the Totality of the Beings including the animate and inanimate worlds) Purusha ye Vedagum sarvam yadbhutam yaccha bhavyam, Utaamritatwa--syeshaanah yadanney naa ti rohati/ (He is and was always present submerging the past and the future and is indestrucible and far beyond the ephemeral Universe) Yetaavaa nasya mahimaa atojjyaaya gumscha Puurushah, paadosya Vishwa Bhutaani*

*Tripaadasya amritam Divi/* What- ever is visualised in the Creation is indeed a minute fraction of His magnificence and what ever is comprehensible is but a quarter of the Eternal Unknown) *Tato viraadajaayata viraaajo adhi puurushgah, sajaato atyarichyat paschad bhumimatho purah/* It was that Virat Purusha who manifested Brahmanda and Jeeva Samudaya; He having assumed the first ever ‘deha dhari swarupa’ or physical form created prithvi and its Beings. *Manye vaam dhyaavaa prithivee subhojasau ye apratethaamamitamabhi yojanam, dyaavaa prithivee bhavatam syone te no munchitam hasah/* Simultaneously He assumed the form of Antariksha too. Both Bhuloka and Dyulokas! Let there be universal balance-stability-auspiciousness and sinlessness.

Agni: 1:41- 46: *Tvam nascchinna uutyaa vaso raadhaamsi chodaya, asya raayastvamagne rathgeerasi vidaa gaadham tuche tu nah/ Tvamitsaprathaa asyagne traatarutah kavih, tvaam vipraasah samidhaana deediva aa vivaasanti vedhasah/ Aa no agne vayovridhah rayim paavaka shamsyam, raasvaa cha upamate puruspruham suneetee suyashastaram/ Yo vishvaa dayate vasu hotaa mandro janaanaam, madhorna paatraa prathamaanyasmai pra stomaa yatyanyagne/ Enaavo agnim namasorjo napaatamaa huve, priyam chetishthamaranti svadhvaram Vishvasya dotamamritam/ Sheshe vaneshu maatrusha sam tvaa martaasa indhate, atandro havyam vahasi havishkrita aadiddeveshu raajasi/* Readily approachable and shakti swarupa Agni Deva! Your energy and strength are unparalleled! Your capability and dynamism are beyond commendation. May your magnificence reach us with the gift of fertility and ‘santaana prapti’! It is that glorious Fire which ensures debility due to inadequacy and non availability of proper food intake; it is that Fire which ensures liveliness and activity of a body; it is that Fire which is readily worshipworthy as the proven medium of inviting Celestials for the attraction of food and juice. You are ever present and active in forests, maatru garbhas, and all over the earth as invisible but readily manifested. Yajna kartas possess the knack of ready visibility - by mere friction of wood and stones- and through your medium build up ladders from earth to upper lokaas! When ‘dharma maarga jnaata’ or the path of dharma is opened up with visibility, then that medium opens up vistas of divine vision; you are indeed the path finder from darkness to illumination. .

50-62: *Shrudhi shrutkarna vagnibhirdevairagne sayaavabhih, aa seeta bahirshi mitro aaryamaa praataryaavabhiradhvare/ Pra daivodaso agnrideva Indro na majmanaa, anu maataram prithiveemvi vaavrute tasthou naakasya sharmani/ Adha jmo adha vaa divo brihato rochanaadadhi, ayaa vardhasva tatvaa giraa mamaa jaataa sakrato pruna/ Kaayamaano vanaa tvam tanmaatru rajagannapah, na tatte agne pramrishe nivartanam yad duuree savitraa bhuvah/ Ni tvaamagne manurdadhe jyorirjanaaya shashvate, deedetha kanva ritajaata ukshito yam namasyanti krushtyah/ Devevo dravinodaah purnaam vivishtha vaachicham, udvaa sinchidhvamupa vaa prunadhvamaadidvo deva yohate/ Paitu brahmanas- patih pra devyetu sunrutaa, acchaa veeram naryam pangtiraathasam devaa yagjnam nayantu nah/ Urthvavoo shuna uutaye tishthaa devo na savitaa, urthvom vaajasya sanitaayadanjibhirvaadadabhir vahniyaamahe/ Pra yo raaye nineeshati martom yaste vaso daashat, sa veeram dhatte agna ukthasham- sinam tmanaa sahasraposhinam/ Pra vo yahnam puruunaam vishaam Devayateenaam, Agnimsuktobhir- vachobhir vrineemahe yam samidanya indhate/ Ayamagnih suveeryasyeshe hi soubhaagyasya, raaya eesho svapatnasya gomata Isho vritraha thaanaam/ Tvamagne grihapatistvam hotaa no adhvaare, tvam potaa vishvavaara prachetaa yakshi yaasi cha vaaryam/ Sakhaayastvaa vavrumahe devam martaasa uutaye, apaam napaatam subhagam sudamsasam supratuur taminehasam/ Agni Deva! As we keep extolling to you, so you are pleased and as such we seek you to accept our sincere prostrations. You are of the glory of Indra Deva Himself; may we seek you to accompany Mitra, Aryama and other celestial dignitaries too on this occasion. In this context of our performance of yajna now, we consider you as Indra Himself and as such assume the high seat as the Chief of the Yajna now. May you thus extend*

your radiance across the earth and antariksha simultaneously and grant succor to us specially. Agni Deva! Your expertise in unifying the best of each and every material, especially in the context of yajna kaaryas. Now, just as Prakriti the Very Original Mother gave birth to Pancha Bhutas, may you grant the ‘essential best’ of all the Elements of Nature and excel yourself so that the quintessence is bestowed through this medium of yajna from Bhumi to Antariksha! Agni Deva! from the times immemorial you have been granting light and heat to all of us on earth; indeed your glory has enabled through centuries the appearance of Maharshis and Mahatmas and enabled the practice of Sacrifices as the strong hold of Dharma. We therefore worship you most sincerely and humbly in the continued sustenance of the values of our existence! Yajna Deva! you are the bestower of wealth and health; Hotas! as you activate your ‘sruva’ or the wooden ladle with ghee and make offerings in quick momentum, ‘Deva ganas’ are pleased and open up vistas of jnaana and material contentment. Devi Vaani the empress of Mental Calibre and of Speech would then unlock the doors of fame and guide the activists of the Sacrifices to further levels of glory. This is why our earnest request to Agni Deva to be comfortably seated, even with the splendour of Surya Deva added, do enjoy our eulogies and in return provide warmth of materialistic comfort and spiritual awakening too. Agni Deva! your ‘saadhakas’ not only grant food and contentment to thousands of dependents but more significantly provide the resilience to propagate illustrious sons and grandsons too. Your praises are performed by means of ‘suktas’ handed down the ages by Maharshis as their utterances are of depth of meaning surfeit with their own mental purity. Agni Deva! you are the Lord of wealth, victory, and ‘Purushardhaas’ of Dharma- Ardha-Kaama- Mokshas; go-pashu sampatti, dhana- dhanya-sat-santaanaas! Indeed, you are also the ‘adhipati’ or the chief of evil energies which always keep us under duress; may you bless us the helpless to destroy our chains to freedom. Agni Deva! in this yajna kaarya, you assume all the roles: of the Grihapati-Hota-and so on; indeed you are the Singer-the Song-the Actor and the Act! You are also the beneficiary- benefactor-and the benefit itself!

Vaayu: Stanza 600: *Niyutvaan vaayavaa gahyaam shukro ayaamite, gantaasi sunvato griham/* Vaayu Deva! have you been appointed to ride the glorious chariot to reach the Yajna Sthala! The famed Soma Juice is now ready and hence is our invocation to very kindly manifest here at once!

[Devatas as per Vedas are considered in three divisions: Paarthiva- Vaayaveeya-Aakaasheeya. Now there also in three categories in bhoutika swarupas of physical properties: dust- varshaakaara-varsha yukta jhanjhaakara. But basically, Vaayu is soft; in the early usha kaalaas, breathing awakens from the bed! Lovers crave for the softness of wind! Indra and Vaayu are stated to be Yugala Devatas as they set the pace, momentum and force too. But Yogis use Vaayu as ‘Jeeva saadhanas’ or instruments of Life in three major stages: Jaagrat- Svapna- Sushupti or Awaken ness-Dream stage-Deep Sleep]

**ADHARVANA VEDA:** 4.39.1-4: Prithivi-Agni-Vaayu- Antariksha: *Prithivyaagnaye samanamantsa aadhnot, yathaa prithivyaamagnaye samanamannevaa mahyaam samnamah sam namastu/ Prithivee dhenustasyaa agnir vatsah saa meginaa vatseneshamurjam kaamam duhaama/ Antarikshe vaayave samanamantsa aadhnot,yathanantarikshe vaayave samanamannevaa mahyam samnamah sam namnastu/ Antarikshamn dhenustasyaa vaayurvatsah, saa med vaayunaa vatseneshamurjam kaamam duhaam, aayuh prathamam prajaam posham rayim svaaha/* On the Earth, all the Beings express their greetings.Pancha Bhutas too respectfully greet Agni Deva and are ready to acknowledge the latter’s glory. Prithivi is likened to a holy cow and Agni is like the calf. On the antariksha,Vaayu Deva claims superiority but here again Anrariksha is the Mother yet Vaayu is the calf! May the food, physical strength, longevity, progeny and all round fitness be bestowed to Agni Deva as the latter is the supreme connector of Bhumi to Antariksha anyway![ Interdependence of Pancha Bhutas is vindicated thus!]

Prithvi: 6.17.1.4. Yatheyam Prithivee mahee bhutaanaam garbhamaadadhe, yevaa te dhriyataam garbho anu suutam savitave/ Yatheyam Prithivee mahee dadhaaremaan vanaspateen, yevaa tedhriyataam garbho anusuutam savitave/ Yatheyam Prithivee mahee daadhaara parvataan gireen, yevaate dhriyataam garbho anu suutam savitave/ Yatheyam Prithiveem mahee vishthitam jagat, yevaate dhgriyataamn garbho anu suutam savitave/ Respected Devi! Just as this Vishaala Prithvi retains ‘beeja rupa garbha’ or seed like conception for the required full ten months, you too should retain the conception. Just as this vishaala prithvi holds the conception rather strongly and patiently for the required ten months of mountains and the attendant trees and vegetation, you too bear the conception likewise. Just as this vishaal prithvi mainains the garbha for the stated duration of ten months, Devi! you too retain in your womb the entirety of ‘charaachara srishti’ or the movable or immovable Beings with patience and fortitude till the delivery time and date. Why all this! Devi! what all these ‘jeeva rasis’ or praanis with life need to be assiduously reained safely till the breaking news of safe and facile delivery.

Prithivi- Antariksha- 6.120.1-3: Yadantariksham prithiveemuta dyaam yan maataram pitaram vaa jihimsima, ayam tasmaad gaarhapatyo no agni rudinnayaati sukrutasya lokam/ Bhumir maataaditirno janitram bhraataantarishabhyaa nah, dyaurnah pitaa pirtyaaccham bhavaatgi jaamimritvaa maava patsi lokaat/ Yatraa suhaardah sukrito madanti vihaaya rogam tanvah svaayaah, ashlonaa angairahutaah svarga tatra pashyema pitarou cha putraan/ May whatsoever sinful activities committed by the Pranis across the Trilokas viz. Dyuloka, Aakaasha and Prithivi, especially causing difficulties to their parents be destroyed by the sincere ‘garhapatya agni homa’ and be qualified to attain access to heaven. Indeed, Prithvi is our ‘ maatru svarupa’ who provided birth to us; She is as great as Aditi Devi the Mother of Mothers! Antariksha is of the ‘bhraatru svarupa’ and Dyuloka is the ‘pitru svarupa’. May we the progeny be blessed to save ourselves from all of our sins and shover auspiciousness and happiness; may we not become ‘loka bhrashtaas’ on account of the ‘sanchita paapa karmas’. May all the noble hearted, yagjnaadi punya karma kartas be totally get rid of bodily disorders and infirmities and after happy ‘ jeevana yaana’ let the ‘svarga yaana’ and pitru yaana’ be bestowed to us.!

Agni Deva- Shatru Naashaka Sukta: 8.3.1-4: Rakshohanam vaajimamaa jigharmi mitram prathishtha - mupa yaami sharma, shishaano agnih kjr tubhah samiddhvah sa no divaa sa rishah paatu naktam/ Agni Deva! you are the raakshasa vidhvamsaka, balavaan, and yagjna mitra! Wake up into high flames with pourings of ghee, and bestow to us happy feelings day in day out by keeping far away demonic shaktis. Ayo damshtro archishaa yaatudhaanaam upasprusha jaatavedah samiddhih, aa jihvayaa muuradevaan rabhasva kravyaado vrishtvaapi dhatsvaasan/ Jnaana swarupa Agni Deva! you are Ati-Tejasvi and Loha Danta or of Steel Teeth with high energy bites and as such have the capability of burning off to ashes a series of ‘raakshasha shaktis’ as their thick blood and chunky flesh gets burnt off by assuming the visage of Jvalaamukhi! Ubho bhayaavistrupa dhehi damshtrou himstrah shishaanolvaram param cha, utaantarikshe pari yaahyaagne jambhahih samdhehyaabhi yaatudhaanaan/ Agni Deva! do kindly sharpen your teeth in the form of ‘maha jvaalaas’ or high flames and ensure that none of ‘asuras’ might run off the peripheries of the agni kunda, as there could be always a risk of their flee; there are also ample possibilities of ‘asuras on antariksha’ and the far reach of your flames might not run away! Agne tvamcha yaatudhaanasya bhindhi himstraashanirharasaa hantvenam, pra parvaani jaatavedah shruneeh kravyaat kravishurvi chinotvenam/ Sarvagjna Agni Deva! you are requested to skin down and burn them off; their body parts be brought down to ashes, and the remnants of flesh be thrown off to jackals and crows!

## CONCLUSION:

Is this indeed necessary that Purana-Smriti-Upanishad-Vedas to emphasise and reemphasize *ad nauseam* - or to the point of being tedious or even ridiculous- that Pancha Bhutas provide us life- our very existence-food-energy-water-warmth-and sustenance. We also witness days and nights; seasons-years from childhood- to youth-to old age- joys of living, the pains of ill health and there is life till one faces death! So what!

Indeed all these are well known facts! But how is that human beings are made pawns in the game of chess! How again that we are knowingly ignorant of the realities and skirt over the basics! There is the treasure hunt that one always seeks and craves for. This is Maya the make belief! The Reality or the Truth is Clear but unpalatable as a bitter pill which is avoidable and ignorable even!

Hence the persistence of messages from the Puranas-Smritis-Shastras-Upanishads-and Vedas from the yore. Knowingly enough of these exhortations and innumerable wake up calls are disregarded and simply call them as boredoms, kill-joys, futilities and a simple waste of our times! Yet, 'Truth' is what one has to be earned; it demands sacrifices. Those without following the essence of existence, assume boastful arrogance, 'kaamakrodhas', 'raaga dveshaads' etc continue to display devilish nature devoid of real purity! Indeed while existing in the midst of ignorance and darkness, the majority of persons assumes that they are the intelligent and enlightened and thus move fast round and round in circles, following curved and twisted means of existence, just like a *blind leading the blind!* Not realising the means of attaining the long term perspective, destinations with no discrimination, one blunders into pitfalls by being fooled by the lure of the lucre and confusing the woods for a huge forest! Persisting in the midst of Avidya or ignorance, the yet immature and unenlightened show off their self praise and even genuinely get self - betrayed that they have hit the target of Life!

It is from Pancha Bhutas that we are born, the Pacha Bhutas that we grow with and again the Pancha Bhutas that we terminate our existence. And we reappear again with the inevitable Pancha Bhutas ever again. The only way to conquer Pancha Bhutas is to submerge the self into the Truth in Essence! The unification process involves absorption of the Pancha-Panchendriyas viz. the five each of the jnaanendriyas and karmendriyas or Jneya-Karma sensory organs are all ruled over the Praana. The person gets transformed to create praana the vital Energy; from praana the faith, the Pancha bhutas or the five Basic Elements of Nature viz. Prithivi-Aaapas-Tejo-Vaayu- Akasha ; the resultant organs, mind, food, from food the vigour, tapas or Self Restraint, mantras, karma or sacrificial deeds, worlds and the names of the respective worlds. Hence the process of unification of the Self with the Supreme.

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*Bhuh paadouyasya naabhirviyasuranilash Chandra Suryau cha netre karnaavashaah shiro dyarmukhamapi dahano yasya vaasteyaamabhiih antastam yasya vishvam sura nara khagagobhogi gandharva daityahchitramramramyate tam tribhuvana vapusham Vishnumeesham namaami/* May I salute Vishnudeva whose physique occupies Trilokas as Bhumi is His feet, Aakasha as His navel, Vayu as His breath, Surya Chandras as His eyes, Ashta Diks as His ears, Swarga as His Head, Agni as His face and oceans as His abdomen. Thus the Universe in entirety comprises countless Beings ranging from Deva- Devis, humans, birds and beasts, Gandharvas and Asuras.