

Agnitīrtha and then worship her in accordance with the injunctions. He should feed a couple and give them garments along with bodice. Then he should worship the great Lord Kapardin. O goddess (Gaurī) this incident happened formerly in the Cākṣuṣa Manvantara.

35-37. This incident refers to the Vāḍava born in the family of Dadhīci. O great goddess, when this Vaivasvata Manvantara began, Aurva, the great Brāhmaṇa, was born in the family of Bhārgava. The Aurva of great refulgence was controlled (within limits) by Sarasvatī, the mother of Devas. Till the end of this Manvantara he will stay within the womb of the waters¹.

Thus, O goddess, the origin of Sarasvatī has been narrated to you. If it is listened to, it dispels the sins of men. It gives reputation and increases merits.

CHAPTER THIRTYFIVE

Greatness of Agni Tīrtha

The Devī said:

1-4. O holy Lord, an Aurva of the Bhārgava family was mentioned by you. O Lord, do narrate his nativity in this Vaivasvata Manvantara.

Īśvara said:

Brāhmaṇas had been killed by Kṣatriyas for the sake of wealth. They were entirely exterminated along with sons and children in the womb.

Among the many who were killed, there was a woman who concealed the foetus within the region of the thighs and protected it.

O beautiful lady (Gaurī), the foetuses of all other women were aborted by the base Kṣatriyas for the sake of monetary gain.

5. At a later time, the highly refulgent foetus pierced through the region of thighs (Read *urudeśam* for *kurudeśam* in the Text)

1. According to Mbh, Ādi. 179.21 it was Aurva who threw his fiery wrath in the form of Vāḍavānala in the Sea. Aurva was not drowned in the Sea.

and came out with the head propped up. He was extremely terrible and his face (mouth) blazed.

6. With the feelings of enmity cherished in his heart, he performed penance and created a terrible Aurva fire that could devour water. With this he scorched the surface of the earth.

7. O lady of excellent complexion (Gaurī), Indra flooded him with incessant heavy downpour. When he was not successful in driving him away, Indra became quiet (ceased to shower).

8. Then all the Devas and Gandharvas became excessively frightened. All of them sought refuge in Brahmā and stood with palms joined in reverence.

The Devas said:

9. O holy Sir, a highly refulgent one is born of the family of Bhārgava. In the form of fire, he has burnt the surface of the earth.

10. O most excellent one, formerly attempt was made by us to destroy him. But his (destructive) power enhances with (shower) of water. Hence we are afraid.

11. O Lord, if the terrestrial region is destroyed, *Agniṣṭoma* and other holy rites will be stopped altogether. Thereby our destruction is certain.

12. Hence, O Lord, do something urgently for the benefit of the three worlds.

13-14. Thereafter, Brahmā arrived there along with the Suras and the sages, Bhārgava and others, and said: "O Aurva, O most excellent one among Brāhmaṇas, why do you burn the earth. May this be stopped immediately for my sake."

Aurva said:

15-16. O most excellent one, O Lord, at your instance I have desisted (from burning). Let some means be found out so that the fire discharged by me reaches the vicinity of the ocean at your behest.

17. The Lotus-born Lord summoned his daughter, the goddess, and said: "O my highly refulgent daughter, take this fire and go to the great ocean. My instruction should not be disobeyed. Go quickly."

Sarasvatī said:

18a. Here, O Lord, I am setting out undoubtedly at your instance.

18b. When this was said the words "Excellent! Excellent!" were uttered by Brahmā.

19. Brahmā, the grandfather, himself deposited the fire inspired by Mantras in a gold pot and handed it over to Sarasvatī. After offering diverse kinds of benediction, he said thus again and again:

20. "Do go, dear daughter. You need not strain yourself on any account. May you traverse the path without obstacles. Let there be no antagonists."

Īśvara said:

21-23. On being told thus by Brahmā, Sarasvatī reached Himavān. From the hermitage of Pippalāda she proceeded ahead. The goddess (river) came out from beneath the (*Plakṣa*) tree.

There were Brāhmaṇas at the place near the hollow of the tree, in their numerous huts. Their chanting of the Vedas was heard and their minds were engrossed in chanting in good taste. Lord Viṣṇu, the excellent preceptor of Devas, was present there.

24¹. From that spot, the goddess (river) proceeded westwards. After vanishing (for a while) she reached Kedāra in the midst of snow.

25-26. After flooding the peak of the mountain Kedāra, she stood before it. Being burnt by that fire held in the hand, Sarasvatī pierced the ground and entered beneath. Along that hidden path, she proceeded with face towards the west with the gait of an elephant.

27. After crossing the sinful region, she pierced the ground and came out. It became a well (Kūpa) by name *Gandharva* there.

1. The Vedic Sarasvatī has no continuous water flow. It disappears at some places. This intermittent course of the river as known to the Purāṇa author is given here, as that of Prācī Sarasvatī. The confusion between two Sarasvatīs is obvious.

28-29. The great river became visible beyond that well. Six *Upāsikās* (servants, tributaries) of Sarasvatī started therefrom, viz. *Mati*, *Smṛti*, *Prajñā*, *Medhā*, *Buddhi* and *Girādhārā*. Further, that river proceeded ahead from the pierced sector towards the West.

30. She (River) came to Bhūtīśvara where there was a great sage, a Siddha. There is a charming region near Bhūtīśvara.

31. It is stationed in the southern quarter. It contains a crore of Rudras. Then she reached the famous Śrīkaṇṭha Deśa (Kurujāṅgala) abounding in all herbs.

32. From that highly meritorious region Śrīkaṇṭha, the noble-minded Sarasvatī came to Kurukṣetra along with the fire.

33. Then the charming river proceeded from Kurukṣetra and vanished when nearing the city of Virāṭa¹ She further came up at the place where the mountain Gopāyana is situated.

34. It was at this place that the sons of Pāṇḍu were concealed by Keśava, while they carried on their activities. They were not noticed (found out) by anyone.

35. There the goddess (river), the destroyer of great sins, stayed in a *Kuṇḍa*. Again from Gopāyana the goddess (river) reached a highly splendid holy spot.

36-37. She (river) reached *Kharjūrīvana* where she became well-known by the name Nandā. Sarasvatī left *Kharjūrīvana* and came to Merupāda (foot of the mountain Meru) and reached Mārkaṇḍāśrama. At this place there is the Mārkaṇḍaka Tīrtha situated at Merupāda.

38. From the splendid hermitage of Mārkaṇḍeya Sarasvatī proceeded to *Arbudāranya* (Mt. Abu) and went to the charming *Vaṭavana*.

39. It was here that Vasiṣṭha performed a penance. From that meritorious *Vaṭavana* that had been resorted to by Vasiṣṭha, she came to *Udumbara Vana*. It was there that Taṇḍi performed a penance on *Merupāda*.

40. From that *Udumbara Vana*, the great holy river Sarasvatī went ahead concealed and reached another peak.

41. This *Merupāda* too is very great and it is resorted to by

1. 40 Miles north of Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Suras and Siddhas. It resembles split collyrium and it is remembered by the name Golāṅgūlam (cow's tail).

42. It is a very fascinating spot. The lady of excellent middle line (i.e. river) rose up from the *Vaṁśastamba* (Bamboo cluster), spread widely and proceeded to the South.

43. The *Vaṭa* (holy fig tree) from which it came up is well-known as *Udgamavaṭa*. Thenceforth, that goddess (the river) continues to be manifest with excellent lustre.

44. She has now abandoned the state of concealment, due to her compassion for all living beings. On her beautiful banks, there are crores of Tīrthas.

45. In all those Tīrthas, the spiritual character is derived from Sarasvatī. On this path, Rudrāvatāra is remembered as the first and the foremost.

46. The *Kāka Tīrtha* of great refulgence designated as Tara Taraṅga is a great Tīrtha. There is a Tīrtha remembered as Dhāreśvara.

47. Another Tīrtha beyond *Dhāreśvara* is remembered as *Gaṅgodbheda*. It is the place where the waters of Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā mingle together. There is another greater Tīrtha beyond it called Puṇḍarika.

48-50. The highly meritorious Mātṛtīrtha is fully destructive of all worries and fears. The Tīrtha by the name *Anaraka* is situated not very far from *Mātṛtīrtha*. It dispels the distress and fear caused by hell. Beyond that *Anaraka* Tīrtha, the other Tīrtha named *Sangameśvara* is situated. It is very well-known all over the earth. Beyond it is again another Tīrtha named *Koṭīśvara*.

51. Beyond it, O great goddess, *Śambhukuṇḍeśvara* is remembered among the Tīrthas on the banks of Sarasvatī. So also is *Siddheśvara*.

52. From Siddheśvara, the river (Sarasvatī) flows westwards in order to reach the Western ocean. There she remembered her companion and wept for her.

53. The goddess (river) stood facing the east and lamented, "Alas! Gaṅgā, I am lonely without you! Unlucky and bereft of kinsmen, how shall I go?"

54. Becoming aware that she was rendered lean due to grief and was lamenting, Gaṅgā hastened from heaven along with a crore of Tīrthas.

55. Thereupon, Prācī (Eastern) Sarasvatī gave up grieving.

She stationed herself there accompanied by all the groups of Devas.

56. There, in front of *Vaṭeśvara* is the Tīrtha of Pitāmaha named *Siddhavaṭa*. It destroys all sins.

57. Thrice every day, Rudra arrives there and stays. It is the holy spot of that great Soul and is called *Mahālaya*.

58. There is an excellent ancient Tīrtha named *Piṇḍatāraka* situated on the mountain Kumbhakukṣigiri. It accords great Siddhi in rites connected with the Manes.

59. It is well-settled in front of Lord *Prācīneśvara*. What other thing need be sought after in a place where Prācī Sarasvatī is present!

60. When the Mahābhārata war was concluded Kiriṭin (Arjuna) performed expiatory rites in that Tīrtha on being directed by Viṣṇu earlier.

61. By that rite he became rid of that sin incurred earlier. Therefore, it is well-known as *Naratīrtha*. It dispels all fears of sins.

62. O my beloved, there is another Tīrtha remembered as *Puṇḍarīka* different from *Naratīrtha*. Hari came there along with Arjuna and took his holy bath.

63. Beyond *Prācīneśa* there is a great Tīrtha (named) *Vālakhilyeśvara*. Beyond that great Tīrtha there is another Tīrtha of great efficacy.

64-65. There is another Tīrtha of great efficacy named *Gaṅgāsaṅgama*. On seeing the goddess (river) with a gloomy face and dejected in mind, Brahmā created for her a companion of wide eyes named Kapilā. Hari hastily created Hariṇī and the Lord of Devas (Indra) Vajriṇī. Hari gave Nyāṅku to Sarasvatī in order to humour her.

66. Thereupon, the goddess (river) Prācīna Sarasvatī became happy. At the behest of the Lord, she, the destroyer of sins, proceeded to go.

Īśvara said:

67. At the outset, the river flowed towards south and then turned westwards. Sarasvatī, the great goddess continued to hold the *Vaḍavānala*. On her northern bank is the Tīrtha remembered as *Ekadvāra*.

68. It is so called because the army went to Svarga through *Ekadvāra* (single door) from that forest. There is another Tīrtha beyond, where the deity is *Guheśvara*.

69. Formerly it was installed by Guha, at the place where Lord Maheśvara is present. Not far from *Guheśvara* is the Tīrtha named *Vaṭeśvara*.

70-71. It is a divine Tīrtha on the banks of Sarasvatī. Formerly it was propitiated by Vyāsa. The great Tīrtha where the river Āmardakī unites with Sarasvatī, accords benefit to all embodied beings. No one without merit can know the confluence of Āmardakī. A Liṅga named *Sangameśvara* has been installed there.

72-73. It became famous over the earth by the name *Muṇḍīśvara*. In the vicinity of *Muṇḍīśvara* there is an east-facing Tīrtha on Sarasvatī. It is situated on the banks of Sarasvatī. It is named *Mahodaya*. The Lord installed there is known by the name *Māṇḍavyeśvara*.

74. There is another Tīrtha named *Pīlukarṇika* on the banks of Sarasvatī. It is a great Tīrtha resorted to by sages.

75. There is another Tīrtha on the banks of the river. It is remembered as *Dvāravatī*. O goddess (Gaurī), it is the foremost of all Tīrthas and Hari is present there.

76. Further, situated nearby is the Tīrtha called *Govatsa*. It was here that the Consort of Āmbikā (i.e. Śiva) descended in the form of a calf.

77. The storehouse of refulgence stayed there in the form of *Bhūliṅga*. On the south-west of *Govatsa* is seen a *Lohayaṣṭikā* (Iron Post).

78-80. Rudra himself is stationed there in the form of *Bhūliṅga*.

By performing a single Śrāddha there men obtain the benefit that is usually derived by devoutly offering rice-balls twenty-one times in Gaṅgā.

Then from that great Tīrtha, the river proceeds ahead along with her friends like a child with its toys. Sometimes she flows southwards, sometimes northwards. Thus she flows backwards and forwards.

81-82. After reaching Rulla, the goddess (river) becomes charming once again. It was here that the city Rulla was created by Lord Śaṁbhu. He played for a period of a thousand

years with Pārvatī and the Devas jetting out water from the *Dhārāyantra* (a pump like instrument from which water is jetted out against other players).

83. Rulla is a whirlpool of great efficacy in Sarasvatī. Mahādeva is directly present there by the name of Ānandeśvara.

84. To the west of the temple of Śaṁbhu, on the southern foot-hill of Meru, there is a nail-like mark. It is highly glorified.

85. Men who view this perfectly, become rid of sins. They certainly attain the benefit of a thousand horse-sacrifices.

86. Beyond it is the great hermitage of Sage Kūṣmāṇḍa. The Tīrtha called Kūṣmāṇḍeśvara is famous all over the three worlds.

87. It is there that the goddess Kollā is stationed. She dispels all sins and fears. The great river reached the vicinity of Kollā, by proceeding under ground (in a concealed manner).

88. Again she became hidden (went underground) and reached a very charming tableland called Madana. It is a holy spot resorted to by Siddhas.

89. Going under cover once again, she (the river) reached a snow-clad mountain named Khādirāmoda. This place remarkably shines with the flowers of all the seasons.

90. Mounting it she espied the highly fascinating *Kṣāroda* (Sea) lofty like a clustre of clouds in the western quarter.

91. On seeing this in this manner, the highly refulgent (river) became five-faced (five currents, mouths of the river) in her delight. She then got ready to accomplish the task of Devas.

92. The five channels are Hariṇī, Vajriṇī, Nyāṅku, Kapilā and Sarasvatī. On being told by the sage, Sarasvatī stood there with the five channels.

93. The places where she stood dispelling the fatigue of sages, are each called after the name of the sage concerned (the Tīrtha of that sage). O lady of excellent countenance (Gaurī), these Tīrthas dispels all the sins of the men desirous of (undertaking pilgrimage) to them.

94. Reaching Khādirāmoda and tarrying there she looked at the ocean. Then, O beautiful goddess, she took the fire and began to proceed ahead.

95. After burning Kṛtasmarā, the goddess (river) took up the Vāḍava once again and stood in the vicinity of the ocean. In her delight, her hairs stood on ends.

96. Then goddess entered deep into the salt sea. She took the Vāḍava fire and cast (Vāḍava) off into the middle of the waters.

97. Then *Hutāśana* (Fire-god) himself became pleased with her. On seeing that difficult task accomplished, he spoke these words:

98. “O fair lady, I am pleased with you. O lady of excellent holy rites, choose your boon. That I shall gladly grant you even if it be very difficult to get.”

Īśvara said:

99. She took off a bangle from her forearm and spoke these words: “O *Vahni*, this bangle of mine should always be worn round your mouth.

100. Draw only that much water which can be drawn through this. *Samudra*, the Lord of rivers, should not be dried away by you.”

101. After saying “So it shall be”, he entered the storehouse of waters. It is thus, O great goddess, that Sarasvatī came to Prabhāsa taking the Vāḍava for the sake of the pleasure of noble-minded ones.

102. O beautiful lady, that great river halted and rested at Kurukṣetra, Bhadrāvarta and Śrīsthala.

103. In this Manvantara, O goddess, formerly in the first Tretāyuga she merged within the salty ocean in the form of Devamātā (Mother of the Devas).

104. This is what took place in the case of Sarasvatī and Vāḍava fire. When this Manvantara passes off another Vāḍava will be born.

105. It will be born of the fury of Rudra under the name *Jvālāmukha*. Then the name of Sarasvatī will become well-known as Brāhmī.

106. Now in the world, the name current is Sarasvatī. Her name in the past was Kamaṇḍalubhavā (‘born of the water-pot’). It is true that another earlier name of *Samudra* (ocean) was *Ratnākara* (‘storehouse of jewels’).

107. O goddess, in this Manvantara it is glorified as *Sāgara*. It has been proclaimed, O goddess, that the future name is *Kṣāroda*.

108. Whoever knows it thus attains the benefit of the Tīrtha.