

54. Then Rāvaṇa who made the world cry and scream was told by Sadāśiva: 'By my favour, you will obtain everything mentally desired by you.'

55-59. It was thus, O leading Suras, that everything was obtained by Rāvaṇa from Śiva. Hence this Rāvaṇa should be subdued by you all only through great penance. This is what I think."

On hearing the words of Acyuta, the groups of Devas beginning with Brahmā became anxious, because all of them had been addicted to sensual pleasures.

Brahmā was overpowered by sexual desire and he attempted sexual act with his own daughter. Indra was an adulterer. Candra (the Moon-god) defiled the bed of his Guru (preceptor Bṛhaspati). Yama has been avaricious and stingy. Sadāgati (the Wind-god) has been fickle. Pāvaka has been indiscriminate in eating anything and everything. The others among the groups of Devas (had similar defects). Hence, all these were incapable of conquering Rāvaṇa who had become very great by means of penance.

60. Śailāda was an elderly excellent Gaṇa of great splendour. He was intelligent, an expert in adopting the right course of action, highly powerful and very valorous.

61-62. He was a favourite of Śiva and was identical with Rudra. The noble-souled one asked all of them led by Indra, "Why have you all come here in great excitement? Let the whole thing be reported in detail."

On being asked by Nandī, all of them hurriedly said then:

Devas said:

63. All of us along with the sages have been conquered by Rāvaṇa. We have come to propitiate Śiva, the lord of the lords of the worlds.

64. Lord Nandī laughed and said to Brahmā: "Where are you? Where is auspicious Śambhu? (There is a world of difference between you two.) By means of great penance, he should be seen seated in the middle of the heart. He cannot be seen today.

65. As long as the emotional attitudes are too many, the

objects of senses are plentiful and there is the feeling of mine-ness, so long Īśa is very difficult to be attained.

66. Śiva in the form of the *Liṅga* is easy of access to those noble-souled ones who have subdued the senses, are quiescent and have stabilized themselves in him. He is very difficult to be obtained by you all.”

67. Then Brahmā and other Devas as well as the learned sages bowed down to Nandī and said :

“Why do you have the face of a monkey?¹ Tell us everything about it. Tell us about the power of the penance of Rāvaṇa.”

Nandīśvara said:

68-70a. Kubera had been made by the noble-souled Śaṅkara the over-lord of wealth and assets. Rāvaṇa came here to see him, riding in his own vehicle. He was in a hurry. On seeing me, he said furiously: “Did Kubera come here? Was he seen by you here? Let this be told immediately.”

70b-72. He was asked by me: “What have you to do with Dhanada (Kubera) today?”

Then Rāvaṇa of great splendour, who made the world scream, said: “At the outset he (Kubera) had been indifferent towards me. He did not care for me. Addicted to sensual pleasures, as he is, he has been highly arrogant. He began to teach me saying, ‘O lord, it should not be done like this. Just as I am endowed with glory and splendour, just as I am rich and strong, so also you do become, O fool. Do not get into delusion and stupidity.’

73. I have been made a fool and a deluded person by the noble-souled Kubera. On being turned out by me angrily, that Guhyaka (i.e. Kubera) performed penance.

74. Did that Kubera come, O Nandī, to your abode? Let that Kubera be handed over (to me). You need not hesitate in this matter.”

75-79. On hearing the words of Rāvaṇa, I hurriedly replied: “You are a *Liṅgaka* (worshipper of *Liṅga*), an exalted one. I too

1. A story to explain why Viṣṇu incarnated in human form as Rāma and with his army of monkeys killed Rāvaṇa. This story, as in SkP, here, has no basis in *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*.

am one like that. Knowing the equality between us both you are prattling in vain, O vicious one.”

As he was told thus, he in his arrogance due to his might, asked me about my face in the same manner as I have been asked about my face by you noble-souled ones. The old story was recounted by me about the benefit of the holy rite of the worship of Śiva. “*Sārūpya* (having the same form as that of the lord) was granted by Śiva, but it was not accepted by me then. The face of a monkey was requested by me from Śambhu. It was then granted to me kindly by Śiva who is by nature compassionate.

Those who are devoid of false prestige, those who are free from arrogance and those who have no property or possessions, should be known as favourites of Śambhu. Others are excluded by Śiva.”

80-86a. Then Rāvaṇa said to me: “On the strength of my penance, I had been sensible enough to request for ten heads.”

At his derisive statement, Rāvaṇa who made the world scream, was cursed by me then:

“When an excellent man of great penance accompanied by those who have faces like this (monkey faces like mine) (comes to your city) keeping me at the head, he will undoubtedly kill you.”

Thus, O Brahmā, Rāvaṇa who made the world scream, was cursed by me. Only the *Liṅga* was worshipped by Rāvaṇa without the noble-souled Viṣṇu stationed in the form of the pedestal, O excellent Suras. Hence, O excessively fortunate ones, Maheśvara, Mahādeva, the lord of Devas, in the form of Viṣṇu will carry out everything. May all of you pray to Viṣṇu lying within the cavity of the heart of everyone. Therefore, I shall be at the head of all Devas.

86b. On hearing the words of Nandī, all of them became joyous in their minds. They came to Vaikuṅṭha and began to eulogize Viṣṇu by means of (good) words.

Devas said:

87. Obeisance to you, the lord, O lord of Devas, O lord of the universe. This entire universe consisting of mobile and immobile beings has you for its basis and support.

88. This *Liṅga* has been held by you, O Viṣṇu, in the form of the *Piṅḍī* (globular pedestal). In the form of Mahāviṣṇu (the demons) Madhu and Kaiṭabha were killed by you.

89. Similarly, in the form of a tortoise, the Mandara mountain was held up and supported by you (at the time of churning of ocean for nectar). Assuming the form of a boar, Hiraṇyākṣa was killed by you.

90. Hiraṇyakaśipu, the Daitya, was killed by you by assuming the form of Nṛhari (Man-lion). Bali, the Daitya, was held and bound by you in the form of Vāmana (Dwarf).

91. The son of Kṛtavīrya (Sahasrārjuna) was killed by you after taking birth in the family of Bhṛguṣ. Hereafter too, O great Viṣṇu, protect us in the same manner.

92. It behoves you to protect us instantaneously from the fear of Rāvaṇa.

93. On being entreated thus by Devas, the lord Vāsudeva, the sanctifier (the creator) of all living beings, who is immanent in the universe, said to all those Suras:

94. "O Devas, let this important statement he heard. It is relevant to this occasion. With Śailādi (Nandin) as your head (leader), all of you immediately take incarnations in the form (bodies) of monkeys.

95. I shall become a human being enveloped by *Ajñāna* (Ignorance). I shall be born in Ayodhyā in the abode of Daśaratha for the attainment of your objectives. I am having *Brahma-vidyā* (the knowledge of Brahman) as my assistant.

96. *Brahmavidyā* herself will be born in the abode of Janaka.¹ In fact, Rāvaṇa is (my) devotee as he is directly engaged in the meditation on Śiva.

97. When a man endowed with great penance desires for *Brahmavidyā*, he can be easily managed and won over by means of virtue."

98-100. After saying this, lord Viṣṇu, the highly auspicious one (vanished).

1. *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* I.1. 27-30 compares Sitā to Devamāyā (*devamāyeva nirmitā*) but our text claims her as an incarnation of *Brahma-vidyā* as a suitable consort to Viṣṇu (the future Rāma). The important persons in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are incarnations of various gods.

Vāli was born of a part of Indra. Sugrīva was the son of the Sun. Jāmbavān, the leading *Rkṣa* (bear), was born of a part of Brahmā. Nandī, the son of Śilāda, who was a favourite follower of Śiva, incarnated as the great monkey Hanūmān for rendering assistance to Viṣṇu of unmeasured splendour.

101. The monkeys beginning with Mainda were all the excellent Suras. Thus, all Suras incarnated in a befitting manner.

102. Similarly, Viṣṇu was born as one who increased the delight of Kausalyā. He is called Rāma by learned men, because he pleased and gratified the entire universe.

103. Due to his devotion to Viṣṇu, Śeṣa descended on the earth by means of the power of his penance.

104. The mighty arms of Viṣṇu incarnated as the valorous (Princes) named Śatrughna and Bharata well-renowned in the three worlds.

105. She who was mentioned as *Brahmavidyā* by the expounders of the Vedas, incarnated as the daughter of the ruler of Mithilā for the fulfilment of the task of Suras. She was born from a furrow arising from the ploughing of the field with the ploughshare.¹

106. Hence, she became famous as *Sitā*. She was the Science of Metaphysics (personified). Since she was born in Mithilā, she is called *Maithilī*.

107. She was born in the family of Janaka. Hence, she is well-known as *Janakātmaajā* (*Jānaki*). This *Brahmavidyā*, the destroyer of sins, was formerly known as *Vedavati*.

108-110. She was given by Janaka himself to Viṣṇu, the Supreme Soul. Along with her, the *Vidyā* (incarnated), Viṣṇu the greatest among the auspicious ones, the lord of Devas, the lord protector of the universe, became engaged in a severe penance. As he was desirous of defeating Rāvāṇa for the sake of the fulfilment of the task of Devas, the lotus-eyed Rāma stayed in forest (for the same purpose).

1. *Sitā* means 'a furrow'. In *Rgveda* IV.57.6, *Sitā* is invoked as a presiding deity of Agriculture. In *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* XII.69-72 *Sitā* (a furrow) is personified. Here, *Sitā* is said to be 'born' of the furrow while ploughing. She is called the incarnation of *Ānvikṣikī* and *Brahmavidyā*.