

54. Thus Śakra entered into an agreement with Bali in order to further his selfish ends. That great lord stayed with Bali solely devoting himself to the (precepts in the) science of political economy.

55. Thus Indra passed many years living in Sutala. Remembering the words of Viṣṇu and pondering over them again and again, he thought of a plan.

56. Once the king of Devas himself was sitting in the middle of the assembly (of Bali). Conversant with the right policy, he spoke laughingly these words to Bali:

57-58. "Many gems and jewels, elephants etc. have dropped into the ocean, while you were bringing them here. They belonged to us then. They should be recovered from the ocean by you as well as by us, O heroic one.

59. We must hurry up in exerting ourselves to recover those jewels from the ocean. Hence, it must be churned by you for the purpose of achieving the desired result."

60. Induced thus by Śakra, Bali, the slayer of Suras, spoke to Śakra immediately, "By whom and with what should the churning be done?"

61-63. Then an ethereal voice with the majestic rumbling sound of cloud said: "O Devas, O Daityas, do churn the Ocean of Milk. There is no doubt about this that your strength will increase. Make the Mandara mountain the churning rod and Vāsuki the requisite rope. Afterwards, O Devas and Daityas, join together and let the ocean be churned."

64. On hearing the words of that ethereal voice, all Suras exerted themselves along with Daityas.

65. Those Suras and Asuras came out of Pātāla. They all came to the matchless, excellent mountain Mandara.

66. Daityas were ten million in number. So also were Devas undoubtedly. Preparing themselves, they came to Mandara having golden lustre.

67-68. It abounded in gems and precious stones. It was globular in shape. It was very big and exceedingly lustrous. Many gems were (lying scattered) all round. It had many trees such as sandal tree, Pārijāta, Nāga, Punnāga and Cāmpaka. It was full of various kinds of animals and deer, lions and tigers.

69. On seeing such a great mountain, all the excellent Suras joined their palms in reverence and said :

Devas said:

70. O mountain, all of us, the Suras have come here to submit to you. Listen to it, O great mountain, the helper of others.

71-72. On being requested thus by Devas and Daityas then, the mountain Mandara came out in an embodied form and in that form the mountain Mandara said : “What for have all of you come to me? Let that be mentioned.”

73. Then Bali said these words befitting the occasion. Indra too hurriedly spoke these courteous and sincere words :

74. “O mountain Mandara, you cooperate with us in a great undertaking. O observer of holy vows, you should be the churning rod for the production of nectar.”

75. Saying “So be it” and honouring their words, because it was for the accomplishment of the task of Devas, he spoke these words to Devas and Asuras and particularly to Indra :

76. “My wings have been cut (by you) with the thunderbolt of hundred spikes. How is it possible for me to go for realizing your purpose?”

77. Then all Devas and Asuras praised the mountain. They then uprooted that incomparable and wonderful Mandara mountain.

78. But, though they were desirous of taking it to the Milky Ocean, they proved incapable of doing it. The mountain fell on Devas and Daityas.

79. Some were crushed. Some died. Some fell into a swoon. Some of them began to blame and censure and some suffered great pain.

80. Thus, Asuras, Suras and Dānavas failed in their attempt. When they regained consciousness, they eulogized the Lord of the universe :

81. “Save us, save us, O great Viṣṇu, O lord compassionate to those who seek refuge. The entire world, mobile as well as immobile, is pervaded by you.”

82-83. Then Hari appeared before them for the accomplish-

ment of the purpose of Devas. Viṣṇu who was seated on Garuḍa, saw them and suddenly and sportingly lifted up the excellent mountain and placed it on Garuḍa.¹ Then, the lord granted all of them protection from fear.

84. Rising from there (and taking leave of) those Devas, he took the old mountain to the northern shore of the Ocean of Milk. After placing it in the waters, he went away from that place.

85. Then all those groups of Suras arrived there along with Asuras, taking Vāsuki with them. Then they made the agreement.

86. After making Mandara the churning rod and Vāsuki the rope, all of them, Suras and Asuras, churned the Ocean of Milk.

87. As the Ocean of Milk was being churned, the mountain sank deep into Rasātala. At that very instant, the Lord of Ramā, Viṣṇu, became a tortoise and lifted it up. That was something really marvellous.

88. When the mountain rotated, it was further pulled and pushed by Suras and Dānavas. Now it rotated without any basis, like the understanding without a preceptor.

89. Viṣṇu, the supreme soul, then became the basic support of the Mandara mountain. With his four hands he gathered it up and churned pleasantly.

90. Then all Suras and Asuras churned the Ocean of Milk after uniting together. Very powerful themselves, by uniting together, they became all the more powerful.

91. The excellent mountain had adamant strength. It rolled on the back, neck, thighs and the space between the knees of the noble-souled tortoise. Due to the friction of these two, submarine fire was generated.

92. The Halāhala poison too emerged and it was seen by Nārada. Thereafter, the celestial sage of unmeasured splendour spoke these words:

93-94. "The churning of the ocean should not be carried on by you all now. O Devas, all of you pray to Śiva.² Have you

1. In Mbh, *Ādi* 18.8 it was the serpent Śeṣa who carried Mt. Mandara to the sea. Here the credit is given to Garuḍa, Viṣṇu's vehicle.

2. Our text is a propagandist of Śiva. In the Mbh it is Nārāyaṇa who

forgotten the sacrifice of Dakṣa and what Virabhadra did there?

Hence, let Śiva be immediately remembered, O Devas. He is greater than the greatest; he is beyond the greatest. He is the embodiment of supreme bliss. He is worthy of being meditated upon by Yogins; he has no form. (As a matter of fact) however, he is formless and unmanifest (or without diversity)."

95. Devas were eager to achieve their purpose. Therefore, they hurriedly went on churning the ocean. All those who are overwhelmed by desires do not listen (to the advice of others), because they become irrational and stupid.

96. They should not be given many pieces of advice and instructions. They are subject to *Rāga* (desire) and *Dveṣa* (hatred). All of them are averse to Śiva.

97. With their sheer continuous exertion, they churned the Ocean of Milk. Due to excessive churning, the poison called Halāhala was generated from the Ocean of Milk.¹

98. It was strong enough to burn down the three worlds. It came up to kill the heaven-dwellers. It went up still further and spread to all quarters. The entire sky was pervaded by it. The Kālakūṭa poison advanced to consume all the living beings.

99. They observed the huge king of serpents grasped by their own hands. They left him there along with the mountain and then went (immediately) away. They fled along with Asuras.

100. So also the sages beginning with Bhṛgu, sages in hundreds (fled in all directions). It was like what happened at the sacrifice of Dakṣa.

101. Earnestly urged by Bhṛgu, all of them went to Satyaloka: "This poison Kālakūṭa will be quelled by means of various Vedic Sentences. O Devas, there is no doubt in this matter. It is true; I am speaking the truth unto you."

guides Devas and Asuras in churning the ocean. Śiva is not mentioned at all in this context (Mbh, *Ādi* 18).

1. VV 97-113 describe the disastrous effect of the poison Kālakūṭa, viz. burning down of the entire three worlds. The author's object is to heighten the greatness of Śiva in drinking the poison (see the next chapter). Mbh sums it up in one line:

*prāgrasat loka-rakṣārtham brahmaṇo
vacanāc chivaḥ (Ādi 18.42b)*

'At the instance of god Brahmā, Śiva consumed it (the poison) for saving the world.'

102. On hearing these words uttered by Bhṛgu, all of them distressed by the poison Kālakūṭa went to Satyaloka and sought refuge in Brahmā.

103. Brahmā saw the blazing Kālakūṭa with sparkling lustre. He found that Suras and Asuras were ignorant of their duties. He was about to curse them, but he was prevented by Nārada.

Brahmā said:

104. O Devas, what a wrong thing has been committed by you? Why has this explosive thing cropped up? It is Īśvara's anger. My speech cannot be otherwise.

105. Thereupon, surrounded by Devas, the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and the different kinds of Āgamas, he proceeded ahead out of fear of the Kālakūṭa.

106. Then, Devas who were worried said to one another, "We are enveloped in *Avidyā* (nescience) and lust. How can we do anything to Śaṅkara?"

107. Then Devas kept Brahmā at their head and hurriedly went to Vaikuṅṭha, because they were afraid of Kālakūṭa.

108. Brahmā and others as well as the groups of sages sought refuge in the great lord Viṣṇu, the primordial Puruṣa, the mighty lord who had resorted to Vaikuṅṭha, Mādhava, Adhokṣaja. The groups of Suras and Asuras sought refuge in lord Viṣṇu.

109. By that time, the great poison Kālakūṭa came there. After burning Brahmā's world at the outset, it burned Vaikuṅṭha.

110. Viṣṇu who dwells in the cavity of the heart of everyone, was burned by the fire of Kālakūṭa also with his attendants. Immediately he acquired the colour of Tamāla.

111. Vaikuṅṭha also became blue in colour. It was surrounded by all the worlds. Hence, all the worlds became encircled by the poisonous substance from the waters.

112. The wonderful poison of the waters reduced to ash the whole of the Cosmic Egg with its eight outer coverings and along with Brahmā.

113. There was no earth, no water, no fire, no wind, and no ether. There was neither *Ahaṅkāra* (Cosmic Ego), nor *Mahat* (the Great Principle). There was no *Mūlāvidyā*. On account of Śiva's wrath, the entire universe became reduced to ash.