

poison, the entire universe consisting of the mobile and immobile beings and accompanied by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Indra, has been destroyed.

51. You are lord Maheśa. You are the lord of the three worlds. You are the immanent soul of the mobile and immobile beings. The mobile and immobile beings along with the vestures of individual souls, have been completely burnt down. Please revive them quickly and make it (the world) as it was before.

*Lomaśa said:*

52-54. On being eulogized thus by Gaṇeśa, the Lord (Śiva), the sanctifier of all living beings, assumed the form of a *Liṅga* and consumed the *Kālakūṭa* that arose there and caused the destruction of all the worlds. He made everything free from impurities. Since the lord was endowed with great compassion and considerateness, all Devas, Asuras and human beings and all the three worlds were instantaneously saved.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Surendra, the Guardians of the Quarters along with the sages, Yakṣas, Vidyādhara, Siddhas, Gandharvas and groups of celestial damsels—all of them got up as though from sleep.

55. They were struck with wonder. They were agitated and frightened. All Devas and Asuras said in dismay:

56-62. “Where is that immense *Kālakūṭa* by which we had been compelled to flee and made almost dead along with the Guardians of the Quarters?” So said they, but Daityas remained silent. The Guardians of the Quarters beginning with Śakra, who were able to regain strength and happiness with god Brahmā as their leader, said this after honouring Viṣṇu, the lord of all lords:

“By whom has this been caused? We do not know as we are deficient in intelligence.” Then Viṣṇu laughed at Brahmā and all those (Suras). All of them then began to meditate with great concentration of their minds. O Brāhmaṇas, that dispelled base emotions such as lust and anger as well as other feelings by means of the knowledge of Reality. Then Devas and others saw the *Liṅga* present in their own *Ātman* (Soul). Keeping Viṣṇu at their head, they eulogized the Lord for the attainment of the ultimate truth:

“Yogins worship the Supreme Soul through their own souls. The *Liṅga* alone is the greatest knowledge. The *Liṅga* alone is the greatest penance. The *Liṅga* alone is the greatest Dharma. The *Liṅga* alone is the greatest goal. Hence, there is nothing at all which (can be called) greater than the *Liṅga*.”

63. After saying thus, Suras and Asuras along with the Guardians of the Quarters and sages kept Viṣṇu whose complexion is dark like the Indian cinnamon, at their head. They then sought refuge in Śambhu who is worthy of being resorted to:

64. “Save us, save us, O Mahādeva, O merciful lord, O Supreme God. It behoves you to save us as we had been saved before (by you).

65. O Lord of Devas, your lotus-like feet possess greatness befitting our repeated service. They have infinite forms. We have resorted to them. (Save us) with the greatest mercy. Obeisance to you, O excellent one among Devas. Be pleased.”

66. Lord Ramāpati (Viṣṇu), the sanctifier of the living beings, stood in the middle of the form of *Liṅga* along with all the groups of Suras and spoke thus:

67-69. “You are the Lord in the form of the *Liṅga*. You bestow protection from fear on all the worlds. All those who died on account of the poison, have been saved. Hence, O Lord, the conqueror of Mṛtyu (Death), save us, save us. O Mahākāla, the destroyer of Tripura, obeisance to you.”

On being eulogized by Viṣṇu, Lord Maheśvara in the form of the *Liṅga* appeared before them along with Ambā (goddess Pārvatī). He appeared to awaken (i.e. enlighten) those Suras:

70-74. “O Viṣṇu, ye all Suras and Sages, let this be heard. Ordinary people think that the worldly existence is eternal, while it is only transitory. Thereby, they are agitated. O Devas and others, of what avail are the *Yajñas*, austerities and activities connected with holy rites, if one does not perceive the (Supreme) *Ātman* by means of (his individual *Ātman*)? There is no benefit therefrom, whether they are performed collectively or separately. All of you joined together and carried out a very difficult task, namely the churning of the ocean. That you did for the sake of getting nectar. But why was it performed after rejecting Mṛtyuñjaya and always disrespecting me? Hence all of you undoubtedly fell into the mouth of Death.

Lord Gaṇeśa has been created by us for the purpose of achieving success in an undertaking.

75. Those who do not bow down to Gaṇeśa as well as Durgā of similar nature will be victims of distress. There is no doubt about this.

76. All of you are sinful and stubborn. You profess to be learned without knowing what is right and what is wrong. You are deluded by mere false prestige.

77-78. All of you, groups of Devas beginning with Indra, are devoted to the Vedas. All those beginning with Indra are mediocres, pleasure-seekers, praise-mongers and useless ones. O consort of Śacī (i.e. Indra), you do not understand yourself on account of delusion.

79. A great effort has been made by you for getting nectar, O rogue. You attained a kingdom by performing a hundred horse-sacrifices. Even that is under the control of your enemies now. O vicious one, you do not know that.

80. O deluded one, you have been eulogized by ascetics through the Vedic statements (*hymns*). Those ascetics are fools. They propitiate you, because they are prompted by different passions.

81. O Viṣṇu, on account of your partiality you do not know what is good and what is otherwise. Some persons are killed by you, O Viṣṇu, and some have been protected.

82. You are desirous of certain things in this matter. You are always childish in your activities. Why talk of all the other Guardians of the Quarters?

83. If a matter is pursued in a way other than what is proper, the result is bound to be in a way other than (what is expected). You all forgot that thing whereby your efforts are crowned with success.

84-85. It is he by whom all (of you) have been saved from the great fear of Kālakūṭa today. It is he by whom you have been saved from a poison by which Viṣṇu is turned blue (dark-complexioned), by which all of you were defeated and by which all the worlds have been reduced to ash. Hence, the worship of that noble-souled Gaṇeśa should be performed by you.

86. If at the beginning of any holy rite, people do not wor-

ship Gaṇādhipa (Gaṇeśa), they will never realize their objectives as in your own case.”

87. On hearing these words of Maheśa, Suras, Asuras, Kinnaras and Cāraṇas asked Giriśa about the method of worship in the proper manner.