

CHAPTER THIRTYTWO

*The Burning of Kāla*¹

Lomaśa said:

1. Thus all the rites pertaining to the worship of Śiva (*Śiva-dharmāḥ*) were narrated by him, O Brāhmaṇas. It was out of grace that the Pāśupata doctrines were explained in details in particular.

2. Doctrines enshrined in various Āgamas were declared truthfully in accordance with the principles. The different sects of *Kāpālikas* were described succinctly as well as in details.

3. Various kinds of holy rites were recounted to Nandin then.

The sages said:

4. The highly auspicious story of Kumāra which has nothing to surpass it, has been completely heard by us, O highly fortunate one. We shall enquire of something more.

5. The narrative of the leonine king Śveta is wonderfully mysterious. By means of his boundless devotion, Śiva-Rudra has been gratified by him.

1. This chapter illustrates Śiva's kindness and alertness in protecting his devotees. Kāla, the supreme destroyer of the world, was burnt down by Śiva in order to protect his devotee, King Śveta, and he was resuscitated at the request of the victim-King.

6. Those who worship Lord Mahāśambhu devoutly, are great devotees of noble souls. They are experts both in the path of spiritual knowledge (*Jñāna*) and of religious rites (*Karman*).

7. Hence all of us enquire of you about the story of Śankara as you and none else know everything through the favour of Vyāsa.

8. On hearing the words of those sages, Lomaśa said :

Lomaśa said :

9. Let that wonderful anecdote be listened to, O highly fortunate ones. Even as that king was enjoying all sorts of royal pleasures, the mind of that noble-souled Śveta was directed towards virtue and piety.

10. He protected the subjects righteously and ruled the earth. He was heroic and truthful in speech. He was well-versed in the Vedas. He was a constant and faithful devotee of Śiva.

11. That king administered the kingdom in accordance with his capacity. With devotion, he always worshipped Śambhu, the great lord, the Supreme Being, greater than the greatest, the quiescent one, the ancient lord in the form of the Supreme Spirit.

12-14. His whole life was spent in worshipping the Supreme Lord. Let the story of this highly fortunate (king) be listened to. My words cover Śiva's story and are full of wonders. Neither mental agonies nor physical ailments harassed the king. No natural calamity afflicted him. The people were free from all the *Ītis*¹ (i.e. abnormal calamitous phenomena such as excessive rain, drought etc.) and were devoid of afflicting distresses.

15. In the realm of that king medicinal herbs grew naturally without being cultivated. Ascetics and Brāhmaṇas and common people adhered to the discipline of the four castes and stages of life.

16. No one had, at any time, the misery due to the death of a son. No one was insulted. There were no deadly (diseases). No one ever suffered from poverty.

17. Thus a great deal of time passed even as that noble-

1. *Īti*: Plague or any calamity of the season such as drought, excessive rainfall, swarms of locusts, foreign invasions etc.—MW, 17.2.

souled king successfully engaged himself in the worship of Śīva, O Brāhmaṇas.

18-19. Once, Yama sent his messengers to that king who was worshipping Śaṅkara, the bestower of the greatest aim in life (i.e. salvation). At the instance of Citragupta, the messengers were deputed and instructed, "Let Śveta be brought." Thinking that it should be so, the messengers came to the temple of Śīva.

20. Desirous of taking the king away, the messengers of Yama who had nooses in their hands and were very frightful, came there and looked for the king hurriedly.

21-23. Then the messengers could not carry out the command of Dharma. After knowing this, Yama himself came there. He suddenly lifted up his baton and was desirous of taking the king away. The deity of great arms saw the king engaged in the meditation of Śīva. He was endowed with great devotion to Śīva. He was quiescent and possessed of pure spiritual knowledge. On seeing the king, Yama became highly excited.

24-26. Immediately the king of dead ones became excessively agitated and remained (motionless) as though he was painted in a picture.

The deity who in the form of Kāla, caused perpetual destruction of the subjects, came very furiously to that king at that very same instant. (He was armed) with a sword of very sharp edge and a big shield.

He (Yama) overwhelmed by fear was standing at the entrance. Kāla spoke to Yama, the son of the Sun:

27-28. "Why was this great king not taken away by you, O Dharmarāja? O Yama, (though) you are assisted by your messengers, you appear to me to be frightened. Do not delay, O deity of good holy rites. At my instance do everything quickly."

On being told thus by Kāla, Dharma spoke these words befitting the occasion:

29. "I shall do according to your command. There is no doubt about this. This devotee of Śīva cannot be tackled by us.

30. Due to fear from the Trident-bearing Lord, we stand (motionless) as though painted in a picture."

On hearing Yama's words, Kāla became infuriated. Hurriedly he took up the sword intending to kill the king.

31-36. As he furiously entered the temple of Śiva, resembling twentyfour Suns, he was seen by Śiva, the Pināka-bearing Lord (who thought): 'This (deity) is desirous of killing my devotee, the excellent king Śveta. He is absorbed in his own soul by way of meditation. His mind has become purified by the bright light of pure knowledge. Without any differentiation he meditates upon his Ātman in the form of the innermost Ātman. He is self-luminous. He is greater than the greatest standing in front of him. The king is thinking about the foot of Śiva who is of the nature of the Supreme Being, the cause of salvation and complete identity in form.' Kāla was rushing at him and was seen by Sadāśiva, the slayer of Kāla. The rogue was approaching him undeterred arrogantly. When he was seen midway between himself and Nandikeśvara by Śiva, the lord of the universe, the affectionate kinsman of devotees, he was stared at with the third eye by the great Lord who wanted to protect his devotee. He became reduced to ash in an instant.

37. He burned Kāla who had many colours, who had opened his mouth very wide, whose form was extremely terrible and frightening, whose sole food was the universe and who was very fierce. He was burned by a series of flames.

38-40. The groups of Devas who had gathered together along with Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Piśācas, Guhyakas, Siddhas, groups of celestial damsels, all the sky-walkers, serpents, birds and the Guardians of Quarters, saw Kāla enveloped in flames and stationed in front of Īśvara.

The king then regained consciousness and looked again and again at Kāla who had come to kill him and who was then being burnt by fire. Without being excited, he prayed to Rudra who resembled the fire of Kāla:

The king said:

41. Obeisance to Rudra the quiescent one, who is the moonlight unto himself, is the creator of himself, who is perpetual and subtle. I bow to the lord of the luminaries.

42. You alone are indeed the saviour, O Lord of the universe. You are the father, mother, friend and comrade. You alone are the kinsman and relative. You are Īśvara, the lord of people and of all the worlds.

43. What has been done by you, O Śambhu? Who is this who has been burned in front of me? I do not know what has taken place here; what great thing has been carried out and by whom.

44. On hearing this expression of the pain of that (king) who was praying thus, Śaṅkara spoke these words enlightening that king:

Rudra said:

45. This Kāla was burnt by me in front of you for your sake. He was seen being burnt and overwhelmed by a great mass of flames.

46. On being told thus by Śambhu that excellent king became humble before Śiva and spoke these words to him:

47. "What misdeed has been committed by this (Kāla), O Śambhu? Tell me exactly. O Bhava, what for has he been reduced to this plight, ending with his death?"

48. On being requested by him the Supreme Lord said: "O great king, he is one who swallows all living beings.

49. O lord, it was for the purpose of swallowing you that this cruel one had come near me now. Hence, O lord, O great king, he was burnt by me.

50-51. Desiring the welfare of many persons, I have killed him particularly.

Those who are sinners, those who engage themselves in unrighteous activities, those who cause the annihilation of the worlds and those who propagate heretic doctrines—all these are to be killed by me."

On hearing the words of Rudra, Śveta spoke thus:

52-53. "It is on account of Kāla that the whole world always performs meritorious deeds: Some abide by righteous activities; some are endowed with great devotion; some are engaged in *Upāsanas* ('devotional rites'); others become *Jñānins* ('possessors of knowledge'); some practise spiritual pursuits; and some are liberated.

54. Indeed Kāla is the annihilator of all mobile and immobile beings. Similarly, he is the matchless protector too (of all).