

## CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

## Soma Gets a Boon

*Īśvara said:*

1-2. On being thus instructed by Dakṣa, Soma who bewailed his misdemeanour and was utterly grief-stricken, came to Prabhāsa. He went to the southern shore of the sea and saw nearby the mountain well-known as Kṛtasmara.

3-6. The whole region was occupied by Yakṣas, Vidyādharas and Kinnaras. It was beautified by trees such as sandal, agallocham, camphor, Aśoka, splendid Tilaka, Kalhāra and Śatapatra in full bloom. It appeared beautiful with trees laden with fruits such as Āmra, Jāmbū, Kapittha, Dāḍima, Panasa, Nimbā, Jāmbīra, Nāga, banana, Kramuka, Nāgavallī etc., Śāla, Tamālaka, Bijapūra, date palm, grape-vines sweet and pinkish in colour. There were Bilya, Campaka, Tindu, Kadamba and Kakubha trees.

7. The mountain shone with different kinds of trees—Dhava, Aśoka, Śīriṣa etc. The trees were splendid with pleasant fruits and flowers.

8. The place was resonant with the chirping sounds of various kinds of birds such as Hamsa, Kāraṇḍava, Cakravāka, cuckoos, and parrots.

9-10. Some birds having power to remember previous births spoke with human voice. The excellent mountain shone with couples of Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Serpents etc. who were playing different kinds of divine sports. Devas and Gandharvas were engaged in dances. The notes of flutes and lutes echoed all round.

11. It was resounded with the chanting of Vedas. It was enveloped with smoke which rose up from the fires of sacrifices and *Homas* emitting pleasant smell of clarified butter (oblated in them).

12-19. The mountain was graced by the divine sages and excellent Brāhmaṇas, experts in the four lores (or four Vedas). They were: Atri, Vasīṣṭha, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhṛgu, Marīci, Bhṛadvāja, Kaśyapa, Manu, Yama, Aṅgiras, Viṣṇu, Śātātapa, Parāśara, Āpastamba, Saṁvarta, Kātya (Kāvya? i.e. Śukra), Sage Kātyāyana, Gautama, Śaṅkha, Likhita, Sage Vācaspati, Jāmadagnya, Yājñavalkya, Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, Vibhāṇḍaka, Gārgya, Śaunaka, Dālbhya,

Vyāsa, Uddālaka, Śuka, Nārada, Parvata, the fierce ascetic Durvāsas, Śākalya, Gālava, Jābāli, Mudgala, Viśvāmitra, Kauśika, Jahnu, Viśvāvasu, Dhaumya, Śatānanda, Vaiśampāyana, Jiṣṇu, Śākaṭāyana, Vārdhikya, Agnika, Bādarāyaṇa and the noble-souled Vālakhilyas. In fact all the sages existing on the earth, reside there on Mountain Kṛtasmara. O my beloved, all the righteous sages and the refulgent sons of Brahmā (stayed there).

20. By their penance, all the ascetics were (refulgent like) blazing fire devoid of smoke. Some observed fasts for a month and some for a fortnight.

21. Others took food once in three days. Yet others performed Sāntapana expiatory rite. Some abstained from food. Some had fruits and flowers for food. Some ate only dried and scattered leaves.

22. Some subsisted on cowdung (Pañca-gavya?) and some on mere water. All were excellent scholars performing Agnihotra rites. They pondered over matters pertaining to salvation.

23. There were other sages with Mārkaṇḍeya as the leader. These and many others were experts in Śruti, Smṛti, Itihāsa, Purāṇa etc.

24. All these sages, O goddess, came and stayed on the Kṛtasmara mountain in the holy spot of Prabhāsa. Thus Kṛtasmara is resorted to by all the Devas. Later in this Manvantara, it will be burnt completely by Vaḍavā fire, O fair lady.

25. On seeing the beautiful mountain and the great ocean, Niśākara (Moon) circumambulated it seven times. After circumambulating the mountain he went to the place where Maheśvara was present.

26. The deity was near the ocean, in the form of a *Sparśa Liṅga* (felt by touch?). He then propitiated the Lord with a delighted mind.

27-28. He resolved within himself: 'I seek refuge in Maheśvara for the annihilation of the curse or I shall meet with death or it is better that I meet with death from Śaṅkara'. After resolving thus Soma began to propitiate Śiva by means of penance for a period of a thousand years. He took in only fruits and roots as food.

29. O lady of excellent complexion, when the fourth round of a thousand years concluded Lord Rudra became pleased and spoke these words:

30. "O Candra of good holy rites, I am pleased with you. Do choose your boon. Do tell me what wish of yours shall I fulfill even if it be very difficult to acquire."

31. On seeing that Bull-embled Lord has come within the ken of his vision, *Niśākara* (Candra) devoutly bowed down and eulogized.

*Candra said:*

32. Om, obeisance to Śiva, the Lord of Devas, the supreme soul, the Lord whose form and features cannot be comprehended. Obeisance to the Lord whose form is both manifest and unmanifest.

33. Supreme God! You are the Lord of Yogins. Everything is well-established in you. You are Yajña. You are Vaṣaṭkāra. You are Omkāra and Prajāpati (patriarch).

34. There are two hundred twenty-four Bhuvanas (worlds). Above them the supreme refulgence of yours solely shines and keeps vigil.

35. Obeisance to thy refulgent Liṅga that became the pillar of support to the Cosmic Egg when, at the conclusion of the Kalpa, the primordial Varāha deserted it.

36. Obeisance to you having the name *Anāmaya*. Obeisance to *Kṛttivāsa*. Obeisance to *Bhairavanātha*. Obeisance to you, *Someśvara*.

37. You *Amṛteśvara* are eulogized by excellent Suras of the past, present and future, through these names worthy of being eulogized.

38. When there was the first *Brahmā*, the grandfather of the worlds called by the name *Virañci*, O Consort of *Pārvatī*, your name was *Mṛtyuñjaya*.

39. When the second *Brahmā* became well-known as *Padmabhū*, your name had been glorified as *Kālāgnirudra*.

40. When the third *Brahmā* became well-known as *Svayambhū*, your name was glorified as *Amṛteśa*, a name causing enhancement of glory.

41. When the fourth *Brahmā* became well-known as *Parameṣṭhin*, O Lord of Devas, your name had been remembered as *Anāmaya*.

42. When the fifth *Brahmā* became known as *Surajyeṣṭha*, O destroyer of *Tripura*, your name was *Kṛttivāsa*.

43. When the sixth Brahmā was remembered as Hemagarbha, your name was glorified as Bhairavanātha.

44-45. Now the Brahmā who is present is known as Śātānanda. The Ādisoma (primordial Soma) who originated from your left eye brought that Brahmā when he was eight years old, in order to install your Liṅga. He was in the form of a boy. Hence your name is glorified as Somanātha.

46. Since then two Lakh two thousand one hundred six Somas have come and gone.

47. O Mahādeva, I am the seventh and am well-known as Ātreya. Being cursed by Dakṣa, the son of Pracetas, I seek refuge in you. O Lord of the chiefs of Devas, protect me suffering from the fell disease Phthisis.

48. As Candra eulogized thus, the compassionate Lord Rudra became pleased and spoke these words:

49. "O Candra of good holy rites, I am pleased with you. Choose you boon. What wish of yours shall I fulfill? Tell me, even if it be very difficult to acquire.

50. These secret names of mine are dear to me. I will grant everything mentally cherished by those men who recite these.

51. In the 'case of Candras of the past and future, this Liṅga shall be worthy of being adored till another Brahmā of eight years arrives.

52. Henceforth, the four-faced Brahmā will be born; the name of the God will be Prāṇanātha then.

53. Winds are called by the name *Prāṇa*. The name for the sake of propitiation is called Prāṇanātha. That will be my name now.

54-56. Thereafter, these names will be used: Agniśa, Kālarudra, Tāraka, Mṛtyuñjaya, Tryāmbakeśa, Īśa, Bhuvaneśa, Bhūtanātha, Ghora, Brahmeśa, Pṛthviśa and Ādinātha.

57. Then the Lord will have the names Kalpeśvara and Candranātha. The future names of the Lord have now been revealed.

58. These and other names have been self-reckoned as sixteen. Those that have gone by will be revived, since infiniteness is the nature of Time.

59. Each of the names continues to exist till the dissolution of Brahmā. Then another name crops up befittingly.

60. Of what avail is much talk? The secret has been revealed to you. O dear one, tell me entirely the purpose for which all this penance has been undertaken by you. I am pleased with you. I shall grant you the boon."

*Candra said:*

61. I have been cursed by Dakṣa for some reason. I have been reduced in size through Phthisis. It behoves you to save me therefrom.

*Śambhu said:*

62. Now, do look upon all the daughters of Dakṣa impartially. Reduction in your size is inevitable per fortnight. There will be waxing in the next fortnight.

63-64. O Soma, with my favour, you will regain the lustre as it was previously. It is impossible to alter the utterance of Dakṣa, the son of Pracetas, the Brāhmaṇa whose sins have been destroyed by penance. No one else, not even Suras can alter his utterance. If infuriated Brāhmaṇas may kill, may reduce one to ashes by the power of their own refulgence.

65. They can reduce Devas to the position of non-Devas. They can destroy this universe. Brāhmaṇas and Devas constitute one mass of refulgence split into two.

66. Brāhmaṇas are Devas, the perceptible (ones) in the world. Devas are invisible and are present in heaven. Without Devas Brāhmaṇas are non-entities; without Brāhmaṇas Devas are non-entities.

67. Mantras are present on one side. Refulgence is present on the other. Brāhmaṇas are deities in the world. Brāhmaṇas are Devatās in heaven. Brāhmaṇas are the most excellent ones in all the three worlds. Brāhmaṇas alone are the cause (of welfare).

68. Excellent Brāhmaṇas employed in the holy rites of Pitṛs, become Pitṛs and if they are engaged in the rites of Devas, they become Devas. With the water sprinkled with their palms, the excellent Brāhmaṇas become Devas.

69. The great fear and danger arising from *Pretas* (ghosts) do not assail Brāhmaṇas interested in the Vedic themes and engaged in the *Ṣaṭkarmas* (six duties of a Brāhmaṇa) due to their devotion to them.