

CHAPTER TWENTYNINE

Reason why Sea Water Is not Fit for Drinking

Īśvara said:

1-3. Thereafter, a pilgrim should go to Agnitīrtha on the auspicious shore of the sea where the Bāḍava (submarine fire) was released by Sarasvatī, O lady of excellent countenance.

It is to the south of Somanātha and is destructive of all sins. It is the Tīrtha well-known in all the three worlds by the name *Padmaka*.

It is said that the Kuṇḍa is within the water at a distance of a hundred *Dhanus* from Someśa. It extends to a hundred *Hastas* and is destructive of sins. There the pilgrim takes his plunge into the sea and takes his bath.

4. First of all he should shave off the hairs (of his head) near Someśvara. Meditating mentally on Śaṅkara, he should cast off the hairs there. After casting off the hairs, he should take bath once again.

5. O Daughter of the Mountain, whatever sin a man commits when in straitened circumstances due to want of sustenance, all that sin remains on his hairs.

6. Hence one should assiduously cast off the hairs there. If the same is carried out in front of Somanātha, the benefit is twofold.

7. The place in the vicinity of Agnitīrtha, in the centre of *Kapardi Dvāra* should be known as the place where the benefit is twofold. At other spots, the benefit is only single.

8. O lady of excellent countenance, shaving off the hairs is not commendable in the case of women with husband alive. Listen to the rite in regard to them from me.

9. Hold together the entire tresses of hairs and cut off two

finger-breadths (of hairs in the end). Then oblations are offered to gods and libations to the Pitṛs duly.

10. In regard to shaving off and observing of fast, this alone is the procedure in all the Tirthas.

11. Shaving off (the head) is laid down on seven occasions. It should be done when visiting Gaṅgā, in the holy spot of Bhāskara, at death of mother, that of father, that of preceptor, on impregnation and at the time of imbibing Soma juice.

12. Even if one performs a thousand horse-sacrifices, one does not get that benefit which is obtained by shaving off (the head).

13. O goddess, if one takes the holy ablution there without uttering Mantra on certain occasions, he may get benefit except the single occasion of the day of festival (*Parvan*).

14. With the exception of Parvan occasions, O goddess of Devas, the great ocean should not be touched by men even with the tip of the Darbha grass without Mantra and without the rite of shaving off.

15-16. After the holy ablution in accordance with the injunctions and the offer of *Arghyas* to the great ocean, the pilgrim adores through sweet scents, flowers, garments and holy unguents and places a gold bangle there within his capacity.

17. After following this procedure, O goddess of Devas, the devotee ritualistically touches the salty ocean uttering this Mantra. Then (the deity) will grace the place with its presence.

18. "Om, obeisance to Viṣṇugupta (one protected by Viṣṇu). to you in the form of Viṣṇu. O Lord of Devas, be present in the salty brine in the vicinity."

19. He should utter the following truthful statement and take the plunge in the Lord of rivers: "Agni is the *Retas*(semen). The body is through Mṛḍā (the protecting deity). Viṣṇu, the navel of Amṛta, is the *Retodhā* (who deposits the *Retas*)"

20. "Om, obeisance to *Ratnagarbha*". With this *Mantra*, O beautiful woman, the pilgrim casts off the bracelet there and then takes his bath as he pleases.

21. Then he should offer libations to Devas, human beings and grandfathers with water mixed with gingelly seeds duly and with great faith.

22. By taking the holy bath once in the salty water of the sea, a man dispels the sins committed in the course of a hundred thousand births.

23. When the rite of shaving off is begun, a bull is to be gifted there. So also, the gifts of a yellow garment and one's own image (replica) should be made.

24-25. By this procedure the pilgrim should perform the rite of holy ablution. He should also touch the submarine fire. Otherwise he will incur a fault since Brāhmaṇas had formerly granted a boon and also imprecated him with a curse.

The Devī said:

26-28. O great god, I have a great curiosity as to why some evil effect is incurred by the bath in ocean water. Where (at what places) does a man get purity by watery bath? Why is defect (evil) incurred in the ocean? I have great curiosity: Why was the boon granted and curse hurled by Brāhmaṇas formerly in the case of the ocean where all the rivers beginning with Gaṅgā come to rest, where Viṣṇu himself lies down and where Lakṣmī personally resides? Tell me everything in detail. I have a great doubt in this regard.

Īśvara said:

29. Formerly, O goddess, the excellent Suras came to Prabhāsa Tīrtha and began a sacrifice of a long duration (*Dirgha Sattra*), with perfect faith.

30. At the close of the *Sattra*, they made gifts of many kinds and *Sarvasva* (the entire possession) to the leading Brāhmaṇas residing in the Prabhāsa Kṣetra.

31. By that time, other native Brāhmaṇas, residents of that place came there in hundreds and thousands for the sake of Dakṣiṇā.

32. Afraid of disappointing them in their expectations, those Devas including Vāsava vanished. On seeing the Suras disappear, the Brāhmaṇas pursued them.

33. Formerly, O goddess, Brāhmaṇas had the great power of moving through the sky. So they rapidly followed them to the place where the Suras had their abode.

34. Becoming aware of their ability to go everywhere, the Heaven-dwellers became frightened. They entered the ocean and said:

35. "O great Ocean, we are seeking refuge in you. We are afraid of the Brāhmaṇas. We do not have the wealth to make the gift. So protect us.

36. On one side are all the Kratus with all excellent monetary gifts, gathered together, and on the other side is the protection of the life of frightened living beings. Especially the protection of the Devas is highly meritorious.”

Samudra (Ocean) said:

37. O excellent Suras, you should not be afraid of the Brāhmaṇas at all. I shall save you all. Enter my belly.

38. Thereupon, all the Devas became delighted at his words. They entered his bowels and remained fearless.

39. The Ocean increased his size very much and held the aquatic creatures near the shore.

40. Thereafter, he took steps to cause downfall of the Brāhmaṇas. He cooked the meat of fish and got it concealed with *Mahānna* (meal for honoured guests).

41-42. Then he bowed down to all the Brāhmaṇas. With palms joined in veneration he said: “O Brāhmaṇas, may it please you to accept my hospitality for a short while. I am in distress and am bowing down to you. I have this perfect meal ready for you all. Have your meals and then go in pursuit of the Heaven-dwellers.”

43. Those Brāhmaṇas considered the Ocean to be very devout. “So be it” they said and partook of the food in gold vessels.

44. As they were distressed with hunger they were not aware that the tasty meal was meat concealed.

45. Once getting their hunger satisfied, the Brāhmaṇas became contented. All these Brāhmaṇas of praiseworthy holy rites offered their benediction.

46. The anger of a Brāhmaṇa comes to an end with a hearty meal. That of Kṣatriyas ends with death of the enemy. The fury of serpents is known to last only till the death of the person bitten. They let the Devas go saying, “You may go”.

47-49. Then the Devas along with Gandharvas hastened through the sky while going. The Brāhmaṇas were duly saluted. But all of a sudden the Brāhmaṇas fell down. They had eaten prohibited food—they had taken in meat.

On seeing the Suras going, they jumped up to follow them for the sake of *Dakṣiṇā*.

50. They realized that it was roguery on the part of the Ocean. Highly infuriated, O great goddess, they became and hurled the curse:

51. "It is laid down in the Smṛti-texts that meat is a prohibited food unto Brāhmaṇas. But that has been served to us well-concealed in regular foodstuffs.

52. On one side are all the types of meat. On another side is the meat of fish. On one side are all the sins. On the other side is the (sin of) ravishing another man's wife.

53. We know fully well the evil result of (eating) meat. Yet all of us have been deceived. We did something without any test or probe whatsoever.

54. Since, O ruthless fellow, we have been deceived by you by feeding us with meat, you shall become impotent.

55-57. You shall become unworthy of being touched by leading Brāhmaṇas as well as other men on the earth. Men of crooked intellect who take bath in your waters will undoubtedly go to a terrible hell.

By touching your waters, men on earth will fall into the worlds set apart for ungrateful persons, into those worlds intended for men of sinful activities."

Īśvara said:

58. Thus the Ocean was cursed by those Brāhmaṇas, O Lady of excellent complexion. Then for a thousand years he remained untouchable.

59-63. Then becoming extremely frightened, he said to all of them: "O Brāhmaṇas, this is a work of the Devas. It has been carried out by me who am lacking in intellect.

I considered that giving shelter to those who seek refuge was the greatest piety. If, out of love, anger, covetousness or even adherence to truth anyone forsakes a person who seeks refuge, he should be known as one committing a great sin.

The Heaven-dwellers sought refuge in me because they were afraid of you. They were saved by me perfectly in accordance with my capacity but through a tricky means.

Since I have been cursed by you angrily I shall dry myself up. Having been denied contact by you all, I am not interested enough to remain alive."