

The Story Of Lord Shiva's Marriage With Parvati:

(Based entirely on Goswami Tulsidas' classics:
"Ram Charit Manas" & "Parvati Mangal".)

##

Full Original Text, Roman Transliteration &
A detailed English Exposition with elaborate Notes.

Authored in English by:-

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

Ayodhya (Faizabad, U.P.)

Full address of Author—36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg,
P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123
Distt.—Faizabad, U.P. India.

Mobile: +919451290400, +919935613060

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia

**

© By Author—All rights reserved by the author. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without permission of the author-Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia.

NOTE: Author's Books are available at:--

- (1) www.amazon.com in its Kindle + Paper-Back Print Editions.
- (2) www.pothi.com in a Print edition.
- (3) www.draft2digital.com and its various vendors' platforms in E-Book edition:
URL: <https://www.draft2digital.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia>
- (4) www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com
- (5) Archive.org: https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia
- (6) Goodreads:
https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia

Language: English + Hindi / Vernacular.

CONTENTS

1. Dedication—Page: 4
2. Preface—Page: 5
3. Introduction—Page: 8
4. Chapter 1: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—Page: 13
5. Chapter 2: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand—Page: 246
6. Chapter 3: Parvati Mangal—Page: 253
7. About the Author—Page: 311

-----*****-----

DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED LORD RAM

I dedicate this Book to Lord Sri Ram who is my dearest of dear, most beloved, the essence of my life and being, and for whom, and for whose pleasure, and on whose behest, and on whose divine mission, this book is dedicated.

Nothing that I write is of my own creation. It is the Lord who is getting it done. So I deserve no credit. However, being an ordinary man like the rest of us, I may have committed errors, and for those I beg forgiveness. I hope this book will help to continue the great tradition of singing the glories of the different aspects of same indivisible one Divinity in order to meet diverse needs of the Soul, the Spirit, one such being to find peace and happiness amidst the surrounding turmoil of the world by being able to spend some time in the thoughts of the Divine Being, the same 'Parmatma', the same Lord known by different names in different tongues.

I submit this effort at the holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram, and surely also to Lord Hanuman who was very dear to the Lord and an incarnation of Lord Shiva himself, with this humble little prayer that comes to my lips: 'Lord God; Glorious and Blessed be Thy Name. I yield Thee my most hearty thanks and reverential gratitude that Thou hast given me the honour and the privilege and the opportunity to serve Thee and fulfil Thy desire to spread Thine Good Word for the good and welfare of the human kind through the Books Thou hast got written through these humble hands of mine. And for that mercy and graciousness of Thee, I shall ever and for ever remain Thine grateful and thankful and obliged.'

"He leadeth me! O blessed tho't!
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
What-e'er I do, wher-e'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!" [A Hymn]

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Author

The Story Of Lord Shiva's Marriage With Parvati:

(Based entirely on Goswami Tulsidas' classics:
"Ram Charit Manas" & "Parvati Mangal".)

##

Full Original Text, Roman Transliteration &
A detailed English Exposition with elaborate Notes.

PREFACE

This story of ours describes the legendary marriage of Lord Shiva with Parvati, also known as Uma as well as Bhavaani. This book is based entirely on two classics of Goswami Tulsidas—viz. (i) Ram Charit Manas, and (ii) Parvati Mangal.

Lord Shiva is the greatest of all the Gods in the pantheon. Hence, he is honoured by the title of "Maha-Deva": 'Maha' means 'great', and 'Deva' means a God. He is a patron deity of ascetics, and even amongst the Gods he is revered as a great ascetic and the most enlightened One.

He spends his time in meditation and contemplation, repeating the holy name of Lord Ram who is his chosen and beloved deity whom he reveres more than anyone else.

Lord Shiva is detached from and disinterested in all the material things of this gross creation, its countless temptations, material comforts and pleasures of the sense organs, choosing instead to live in seclusion in the serene recesses of the snow-covered mountains of Mt. Kailash which he has made his home on earth.

Being a God who has renounced everything of pleasure and comfort, being an ascetic who spends his time in meditation and contemplation, it is natural to wonder why he decided to "marry"! This story of Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati as we shall read in this book answers this precise question.

It is a narration culled entirely from Goswami Tulsidas' epic classic known as the "Ram Charit Manas" that describes the divine story of the time, the life and the deeds of Lord Ram who was an incarnation of the Supreme Lord in a human form. This book "Ram Charit Manas" has no parallel in the world of literature with regard to the beauty and magnificence of its poetry, as well as for the immensity and depth of its devotional message, and for the fountain of spiritual and metaphysical knowledge that it contains.

The story of Lord Shiva's marriage is included in Ram Charit Manas' first Canto known as "Baal Kand", from its Doha no. 47—to Doha no. 103. [A "Doha" is one of the many styles in which poetical verses are composed in Hindi, the language in which the original text is written. The other styles employed by its author, Tulsidas, are known as "Chaupai", "Chanda" and "Sortha".]

The divine story of Lord Ram was first conceived in the heart of Lord Shiva who was its first narrator. Tulsidas wished to acknowledge this fact as well as express

his respect to Lord Shiva and pay his obeisance to him. So he decided to narrate the divine story of Lord Shiva before he commenced on the narration of the main text of the book “Ram Charit Manas”.

Now, why did Tulsidas choose to describe Shiva’s marriage instead of any other thing related to the Lord? Well, the answer is this: Shiva had no intention of marrying for he had declared his intention to live a life of an ascetic. But it so happened that a demon named Tarkaasur was born, and the creator Brahma had prophesized that he can be eliminated or killed only by a son born to Lord Shiva. How will this be possible if Shiva remains submerged in meditation and remain aloof from this world? After all, how is it possible to have a son of Shiva who would eliminate the scourge of the demon if Shiva does not marry? So it was devised by the gods that Shiva gets married. In order to overcome his resistance and possibly flatly saying ‘no’, the supreme God, i.e. Lord Ram, himself requested Shiva to do so. Hence, this answers the question: why Shiva married?

As for the question: why did Tulsidas wrote about Shiva’s marriage when the main theme of his book “Ram Charit Manas” was the narration of the life and times of his revered Lord Ram, there are two important reasons—(i) It was Lord Shiva who had first conceived and narrated the divine story of Lord Ram, and Tulsidas wished to pay his respects to Lord Shiva before he starts writing on Lord Ram; and (ii) To explain why the Supreme Being who is supposed to remain aloof from the world had to get entangled in it in order to meet certain contingencies. In the case of Lord Shiva, it was the necessity to marry so that he can have a son who would kill the demon Tarkaasur, and in the case of Lord Ram it was the tyranny unleashed in the world by the demon race led by their king Ravana who had to be eliminated that the Lord had to come to earth as a human being, marry and go thorough all the travails of worldly life.

Had Lord Ram not married Sita, it would not have been possible for the Lord to kill Ravana because there would have been no chance of Ravana kidnapping her and giving an excuse to the Lord to come and kill him.

Similarly, had Lord Shiva not married Parvati, there would not have been a son born to them, and hence there would have been no one who could eliminate the demon Tarkaasur.

This clearly draws a parallel between why Lord Shiva married and why Lord Ram had to marry.

And this also explains why Tulsidas included this story of Lord Shiva’s marriage in his epic narration of Ram Charit Manas.

One another reason for Tulsidas incorporating this story of Shiva’s marriage in a book basically dedicated to Lord Ram is this: Tulsidas wished to pay his obeisance to Lord Shiva whom even Lord Ram had himself praised and held in the highest esteem. Since the marriage of Lord Ram has been narrated in great detail in Baal Kand of Ram Charit Manas, covering nearly the full second half of this Canto, Tulsidas thought it prudent to first narrate the marriage of Lord Shiva as a token gesture of showing respect to the ‘Great God of all the gods’ to invoke the Lord’s blessings and grace before the actual narration of the story of Lord Ram begins later on in Baal Kand.

It ought to be noted here that ‘Ram Charit Manas’ by Tulsidas is the only book describing the holy life and deeds of Lord Ram, popularly known as the “Ramayan”, that contains the story of Lord Shiva’s marriage. No other version of the Ramayan incorporates it.

So, let us now start with the narration of this great story, “The Story of the Marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati”.

Our Book has three chapters as follows—

(i) Chapter 1 is entirely based on Tulsidas’ well-known and most respected classic “Ram Charit Manas”, and quotes the entire text relevant to the subject. In this Chapter no. 1 we shall read the story of Lord Shiva’s marriage with Parvati as it is narrated in Baal Kand (or Canto 1) of the aforesaid book. It describes the story in great detail, including the previous life of Parvati when she was known as Sati, the reason why Shiva abandoned her, how Sati died and took a rebirth as Parvati, her determination to marry Shiva and doing a severe Tapa (penance) for this purpose, how Shiva, who had renounced everything after the death of Sati and engrossed himself in deep meditation, was prevailed upon by the gods to remarry her in her new birth as Parvati, why was this necessary, and then the book goes on to describe the fascinating details of the marriage itself.

(ii) Chapter 2 meanwhile is also based in Ram Charit Manas, but it describes the period of time in Shiva’s life between the death of his consort Sati and her remarrying the Lord in her next birth as Parvati. This part of the narrative is culled from the aforementioned Uttar Kand (or Canto 7).

(iii) Chapter 3 presents one of the other books written by Tulsidas that is entirely dedicated to the theme of Lord Shiva’s marriage, and it is called “Parvati Mangal”. The entire text of Parvati Mangal is included in our present book.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Sri Somil Bharti, B.Tech (IIT, Kanpur) and MBA (IIM, Calcutta) who has kindly done the Roman Transliteration of the verses for me.

I most humbly and prayerfully submit my efforts at the feet of my beloved and dearest Lord, Sri Ram, whom I love and adore with each pore of my existence. By writing on Lord Shiva I kind of follow on the footsteps of the great saint Tulsidas who also wrote on Lord Shiva as a means to pay his respect to the Supreme Lord of the World who has many names but one universal form.

Date—18th November, 2015.

Place: Ayodhya.

Prepared and presented by:

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia:

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Archive.org: https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia

-----*****-----

The Story Of Lord Shiva's Marriage With Parvati:

(Based entirely on Goswami Tulsidas' classics:
"Ram Charit Manas" & "Parvati Mangal".)

##

Full Original Text, Roman Transliteration &
A detailed English Exposition with elaborate Notes.

INTRODUCTION

A brief outline of the story of Lord Shiva' marriage with Parvati

Once upon a time, Lord Shiva, the Lord of the entire creation ('Akhilshwar') went to sage Kumbhaj; he was accompanied by his wife, Bhavani, the Mother Goddess, who was also known as Sati, the pure one. The sage narrated Lord Ram's divine story as he usually used to do at his hermitage. This filled Shiva with immense joy and made him feel ecstatic. On the request of the sage, Lord Shiva described Lord Ram's 'Bhakti' (devotion) for the sage.

After staying for a long time at the sage's hermitage and enjoying the nectar of Lord Ram's devotion as it poured out of constant discourses and discussions, Lord Shiva finally started on his way back to his own abode.

Meanwhile, Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Lord Ram with a divine mandate to eliminate the cruel demons from earth, and at the time Shiva was on his way to his abode, Lord Ram was wandering in the Dandak forest searching for his abducted wife Sita who had earlier been taken away by the demon king Ravana.

When Shiva saw his revered Lord Ram in the forest as he was passing overhead in the sky, he (Shiva) saw it as a rare opportunity to have a close-up vision of the Lord while he was alone in the forest in the guise of a hermit. Shiva could not resist the urge to smile and bow before his beloved Lord, Sri Ram, before moving ahead.

But his wife Sati could not fathom the mystery of her enlightened husband, Shiva, bowing with great respect and getting his eyes filled with tears of love and affection for a prince grieving and searching for his lost wife. Though Shiva told her who this prince actually was, and that his searching for Sita was a well-thought out plan so that the demons are not warned that Lord Vishnu has arrived to kill them and that Sita was no one else but Laxmi, Vishnu's eternal divine consort—because if the demons came to know the secret they would either escape or surrender before the Lord, and the Lord being merciful would be morally bound to forgive them. The whole purpose of Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Ram would be nullified in this case.

But Sati was so overcome with delusions that she would not listen. Such is the power of being stubborn and not paying heed to the advice of the wise ones. She

doubted Shiva's version and wisdom, wandering how it is ever possible for the Supreme Being to behave the way Ram was behaving. Wouldn't it be expected from the Supreme Being, whom her husband Shiva claims Ram to be, to know who had abducted his wife Sita, and to make matter worse he is not expected to wail and lament like an ordinary helpless man the way Ram was doing.

So she wanted to test the veracity of Shiva's statement. Shiva decided that this doubt in her mind is like cancer and it would be ruinous for her spiritual well-being, and therefore it is better to nip the bud at the earliest. So he gave her permission, but with a caveat to be careful and remain within limits of righteousness.

Sati's intellect and wisdom had been eclipsed by Maya (delusions), so she could not think properly. She disguised herself as Sita and stood on the way in the direction Lord Ram was moving ahead in the forest, in the hope that the Lord would not recognize her and think that he has found Sita. This would prove to her that Ram did not know anything, and he was like an ordinary man.

When Lord Ram saw her on the path, the Lord paid his respects to her and asked politely where her husband Lord Shiva was, and what was she doing alone in this dense forest. She should better go back to her husband and say his respects to him. Sati was stunned and completely taken aback.

Sati regretted her misdemeanors and her foolishness. She came back to where Shiva was meditating under a tree while she was gone. Shiva knew everything that was enacted by Sati, and he was very peeved that she had taken the form of Sita, the revered wife of Lord Ram whom Lord Shiva worships as his God. For Shiva, Sita was like his mother, and to imagine that his wife would assume the form of his mother was too much for Shiva to digest. He decided that now onwards he will have nothing to do with Sati in this body—because she had assumed the form of Sita.

So Lord Shiva went quietly back to his abode at Mt. Kailash, without talking to Sati any further, and immersed himself in deep meditation on Lord Ram. Eighty-seven Samvats (centuries) passed. When Shiva woke up from his meditative trance, Sati came to offer her respects to him, but Shiva gave her a seat in the front of him instead of by his side as he usually used to do on earlier occasions. Shiva had mentally abandoned Sati, but since she was immaculate otherwise he did not physically leave her.

This seating alarmed Sati, and in spite of her repeated requests Shiva did not divulge the reason. Sati was very sad, and she knew that without Shiva's love her life was meaningless.

Meanwhile, her father, Dakshaprajapati, held a fire sacrifice, and he invited all the Gods to attend it, except Shiva with whom he nurtured some ill-will. When Sati saw the Gods going through the sky in their decorated chariots, she asked Shiva the reason. The Lord told her everything. Sati then insisted that she be allowed to go to attend her father's fire sacrifice. Shiva told her that since he was not invited by Daksha, it will not be in order for her to go there as it would invite scorn and insult. Showing her stubborn nature for the second time, she insisted that she will go. So Shiva thought that it is the proper time to get rid of Sati in the physical form also as she had become too arrogant and there was no hope of ever rectifying her.

He allowed her to go. At her father's place, things became nasty. She was neither welcome nor would anyone show any respect to her. Like Shiva had predicted, she was ridiculed and made into a laughing stock. The things came to a head when she discovered that during the actual rituals of the sacrifice, no offering was being made to Shiva who was supposed to be the 'Maha-Deva', the Great God. She found that

all the other Gods, even the most inconsequential minor ones, were proudly accepting gifts and sneering at her!

Angry and humiliated beyond measure, she jumped into the blazing fire to end her life, declaring her eternal love for Shiva and vowing to be with him in her next life.

When Shiva came to know of the entire episode, he became angry too, and sent his devotee Virbhadrā to take revenge with Daksha. Virbhadrā completely ruined the fire sacrifice and punished all the attendants.

[This part of the story is the first phase of Parvati's life. It is narrated in detail in Tulsidas' 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 65.]

Now we come to the second phase of Parvati's life, the phase in which she was reunited with Shiva in a marriage ceremony that Tulsidas has elaborately described in his classical composition 'Parvati Mangal', a book exclusively dedicated to the marriage of Shiva with Parvati.

At the time of burning her tainted body by jumping into the fire of the sacrifice, Sati had asked for a boon from Lord Hari (Vishnu)—that she must have love and devotion for the holy feet of Lord Shiva in any birth she takes. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, 1/65/5]

If we closely examine the developments we will see something obvious—that is, though Sati had doubted Shiva's wisdom and tested Ram's integrity by assuming the form of Sati, she had deeply regretted it (Ram Charit Manas, 1/53—1/54/1-2, 1/58/1-4). She had realised that being exceptionally righteous, Shiva had abandoned her because she had assumed to form of Sati whom Shiva worships as Mother Goddess. But the damage had already been done. So one of the reasons why Sati decided to burn herself by jumping into the fire pit was to discard this corrupted body by which she took the form of Sita and annoyed Shiva. She rightly thought for once that if she sincerely wished to be reunited with her beloved husband, Shiva, then it has to be with a new body.

It is now clear why she asked 'Hari' for the boon, instead of say Brahma, the creator who must also have been present on the occasion, because it was Vishnu (Hari) whom she had offended by testing him in the form of Sita.

In her new birth, Sati became a girl child in the household of Himvant, the king of the snow-clad Himgiri, the mighty Himalayas. [It is the mountain range to the north of India.] In this birth she was known as 'Parvati'. Ever since she took birth there was happiness and all round welfare in Himvant's kingdom.

Once the celestial sage Narad arrived at the place and seeing the palm of the child Parvati he made a prediction indicating that her husband would be none else but Shiva. This was an incredulous proposition that made her parents very depressed as Shiva was an ascetic and no one has access to him. But this prediction nevertheless kindled love for the Lord in the heart of the young Parvati who determined that she will break all stereo types and show to the world that everything is possible by firm determination. So she did the severest form of Tapa (penance and austerity) imaginable, and became deserving to marry Shiva. Lord Brahma himself announced it and assured her that her wishes would be fulfilled. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, 1/74/1-8—to 1/75/5.]

Meanwhile, ever since Sati had burned herself, Shiva was unhappy. The Lord loved Sati inspite of her mischief. So when he was in deep meditation, Lord Ram appeared to him and requested him to forgive her as she has done severe Tapa to clean

herself, and was completely devoted to him. Lord Ram finally expressly asked Shiva to go and marry Parvati. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, 1/76, and 1/76/5-8.]

Shiva replied that though this would not what he would like to do if allowed to choose, but since it is the wish of his beloved Lord Ram he has nothing to say and would do whatever the Lord asks him and whatever pleases the Lord. Lord Ram told Shiva that he has kept his promise of leaving Sati because she had assumed the form of Sita, but now he must respect what Ram advises him. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, 1/77/1-7.]

Shiva wanted to test Parvati's love and devotion for him, so he sent the seven celestial sages known as 'Sapta-rishis' to go and find out the depth of Parvati's commitment to him. The sages went and tried every trick they could think of to dissuade Parvati from marrying Shiva, but faced only rebuttal from her. Finally they blessed her and paid their obeisance to before reporting back to Shiva about her sincerity and honesty. Shiva was very pleased, but being a veteran ascetic, he once again immersed himself in deep meditation on Lord Ram, forgetting about the immediate task at hand. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, 1/77—to 1/82/1-4.]

In the meantime, a cruel demon named Tarakaasur began wreaking havoc on the world, and the creator Brahma determined that he can be only be killed by the son of Shiva. But the problem was that Shiva was lost in meditation, and unless he marries there was no chance of him begetting a son. So the Gods collected in a great huddle and asked Kamdeo, the god of passion and lust, to sacrifice himself for the larger good of the rest of them. This was kind of igniting passions in Shiva's heart so that he would have a desire to marry. Kamdeo knew that he was playing with fire, because to disturb Shiva in his meditation would certainly invite his sternest of wraths. And this is exactly what happened. When Kamdeo shot an arrow of flowers at Shiva, the Lord woke up and glared at him with fire blazing from the third eye in his forehead. Kamdeo was immediately reduced to ashes. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, 1/83/8—to 1/87/1-6.]

Kamdeo wife Rati asked for forgiveness from Shiva, insisting that her husband had not done anything for some personal mischief but to serve the interests of the Gods who had asked him to go and disturb the Lord so that he can be married. So, Shiva blessed her that she would be reunited with her husband when Lord Vishnu incarnates on earth as Lord Krishna. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, 1/87/7-8—to 1/88/1-3.]

All the gods assembled and requested Shiva to marry Parvati who had already successfully done severe Tapa to marry him and had been granted such boon by the creator Brahma.

So the process of the marriage between Lord Shiva and Parvati was set rolling. Both the bride's side (Himvant) and the groom's side (the Gods) made elaborate preparations, and the marriage was formalized with great fanfare and ceremony like the way Lord Ram was married to Sita.

Tulsidas' book 'Parvati Mangal' skips all the background developments that led to this marriage and focus its attention on singing about the events that were directly associated with the marriage itself. This part of the episode has been briefly dealt with in Ram Charit Manas, and it is certainly not as detailed as in Parvati Mangal. Perhaps Tulsidas wrote 'Parvati Mangal' to fill this gap—to describe in detail the divine marriage which he could not do in Ram Charit Manas because of some constraints. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, 1/88/4-8—to 1/103/1-4.]

By and by it so happened that Shiva and Parvati had a son known as 'Shatbadan' who eventually killed the demons Tarakaasur. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, 1/103/6-8.]

-----*****-----

The Story Of Lord Shiva's Marriage With Parvati:

(Based entirely on Goswami Tulsidas' classics:
"Ram Charit Manas" & "Parvati Mangal".)

##

Full Original Text, Roman Transliteration &
A detailed English Exposition with elaborate Notes.

Chapter 1

ŚrīRāmaCaritaMānasa

The divine story of Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati (also known as Uma and Bhavaani) according to Goswami Tulsidas' "Ram Charit Manas": 1/45/3—1/46/1; 1/47/1; And 1/48/1—to 1/104/1.

The story of the marriage of Lord Shiva, also known as 'Mahadeva', or the great Lord of all the gods, with Parvati (also known as Uma) has been narrated in detail by Goswami Tulsidas in his epic book "Ram Charit Manas". The story is contained in its Baal Kand (which is Canto 1 of the aforesaid book), from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 104.

However, some of the verses that precede Doha no. 47 lay the background of the story: the place and the time when it was narrated, by whom, and for whom, it was done.

THE BACKGROUND:--

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 45:—

एक बार भरि मकर नहाए । सब मुनीस आश्रमन्ह सिधाए ॥ ३ ॥

जागबलिक मुनि परम बिबेकी । भरद्वाज राखे पद टेकी ॥ ४ ॥

ēka bāra bhari makara nahā'ē. saba munīsa āśramanha sidhā'ē. 3.
jāgabalika muni parama bibēkī. bharadvāja rākhē pada ṭekī. 4.

[Once upon a time as was usual, all the sages and seers had assembled at Prayag, a place where three holy rivers, viz. the Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati, have their

confluence. They used to come here every year on the auspicious occasion of “Makar Sakranti”¹. They stayed at the place for the whole month, and on the final day took a bath at the confluence of the rivers before heading back to their respective hermitages.

However, on one such occasion, sage Bharadwaj, who lived permanently at Prayaag, requested sage Yagyawalkya³, one of the greatest sage and seer of his time, to stay back for some more days and enlighten him about the secrets of Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being. It was during this long and elaborate discourse that unfolded now that sage Yagyawalkya narrates the story of Lord Shiva’s marriage.]

Once upon a time, all the sages and seers who had performed religious rites during the entire holy month of ‘Makar (Sakranti)’, including taking purification baths and doing other rituals daily, did their ablutions on the final day of the month and then cheerfully went away to their respective hermitages. (3)

Sage Yagyawalkya was one amongst them. He was a very wise, learned and enlightened seer. Sage Bharadwaj (who used to live permanently at the place where the sages and seers assembled to spend the holy month of Makar, a place known as Prayaag), fell at the feet of Yagyawalkya and earnestly requested him to stay back for some more time. (4)

[Note—¹Makar Sakranti—The tenth sign of the zodiac known as Capricorn is called “Makar”, and the word “Sarkanti” means a union, the solstice, a planet’s transition from one zodiac to another. In the context of Hindu religious practices, “Makar Sakranti” is the transition of the sun into the tenth zodiac sign of Capricorn. It falls roughly on the 14th of January of each year. It is also known as “Uttaraayan” as the sun moves in the northern direction.

Since “Makar” coincides with the eleventh month of the Hindu lunar year known as “Maagha”, both “Makar” and “Maagha” are commonly used as synonyms.

During this whole month, it is regarded auspicious to take a dip in holy rivers. Since three great rivers, i.e. the Ganges, the Yamuna and the Saraswati, have their ‘union’ or confluence at Prayaag (also known as Allahabad in modern India), it is the place deemed most suitable for performing religious rites as the benefits are symbolically multiplied three times due to the confluence of three rivers here.

A great congregation of sages and seers is held every year during this period when they take holy dip in the rivers, perform various rites and hold discourses—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 44—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45.

²Sage Bharadwaj—He is regarded as one of the seven celestial sages known as Sapta Rishis. Ironically, we find many ancient sages with this name, and therefore it is clear that this word was used more as a surname or title rather than the name of an individual sage or seer. Bharadwaj is regarded as a Vedic sage after whom a lineage of sages and seers of the highest order was established. His disciples assumed their teacher’s name as their title, and came to be known as Bharadwajs.

Sage Bharadwaj Baarhasptya is the seer of several hymns of the Rig Veda, Mandal no. 6. He is the son of Brihaspati, the moral preceptor of the Gods. He was the father of Dronacharya of the Mahabharata who has taught Arjun the science of archery.

The epic story of the life and times of Lord Ram that was written by the legendary poet Goswami Tulsidas, the book titled “Ram Charit Manas”, mentions sage Bharadwaj. He lived in Prayag, the confluence of three holy rivers, viz. the Ganges, the Yamuna and the Saraswati. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 44.

The story of Ram Charit Manas was unveiled as a discourse between sage Bharadwaj and sage Yagyawalkya—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from

Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 44—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 47.

Later on in the narration of Ram Charit Manas we read that Lord Ram had visited the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj during his forest sojourn—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 106—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 109.

Sage Bharadwaj is credited with two great works—viz. Bharadwaj Shrauta-Sutras consisting of ten sections, and Bharadwaj Griha-Sutras.

The profound philosophy pertaining to the divine nature of Lord Ram and him being the Tarak Brahm himself personified is preached to sage Bharadwaj by sage Yagyawalkya in Ram Uttar Tapini Upnishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto nos. 2-3.

In addition to this, the story of Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati was narrated to sage Bharadwaj by sage Yagyawalkya in Ram Charit Manas—refer: Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 104.

³Sage Yagyawalkya—He belonged to that Vedic period when people had an integral and holistic view of life and the reality behind existence, and all-activities, secular or religious, were regarded as one big, wholesome and composite religious sacrifice called a Yagya. Life itself was consecrated and devoted to the realization of the transcendental and supreme truthful Reality. There was no distinction between renunciation and involvement in life's chores. There was no dichotomy between the two, and the various debates arising in Indian spiritual practices due to different interpretations and re-interpretations of the Vedic and Upanishadic tenets was a product of the later period. One such exemplary sage and seer belonging to that golden period was Yagyawalkya—he was an enlightened wise man who was not only a self-realised householder but an ardent ascetic, an acclaimed scholar and an exemplary renunciate man par-excellence, all at the same time.

It is believed that Yagyawalkya was an incarnation of Lord Brahma, the creator, when he was cursed by Lord Shiva. [Skand Puran, Nagar Khand, 1-9.] His father was named Brahmabahu (literally, the limbs of Brahma, because the latter's limbs had manifested as this person). [Vayu Puran, 61.] But according to a book of religious law written by Yagyawalkya himself known as 'Yagyawalkya Sanhita', his father also had the same name. So, our Yagyawalkya was, in effect, 'Yagyawalkya, the second'. [Yagyawalkya Sanhita, 1.]

Yagyawalkya's teacher in the science of Yoga (meditation) and the knowledge of the self (metaphysics and philosophy) was sage Vashistha, son of Hiranyanabha Kaushalya, a king of the Raghu dynasty which ruled Ayodhya in ancient times. [Vayu Puran, 88; Bhagwat Mahapuram, 93/106.] The sage performed severe penances and austerities, know as Tapa, at Mithila, the birth place of Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram. [Skandpuran, Reva Khand, 42.]

He used to attend the court of great ancient wise kings, such as king Janak (the father of Sita—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, canto 3-4) and Yudhisthir (of the Mahabharat fame—Mahabharat, Sabha Parva, 4/32). It was in the court of king Janak that Yagyawalkya had defeated all the assembled scholars of the time on various metaphysical and theological concepts. He is also believed to be a chief priest in Yudhisthir's Rajsu Yagya.

Sage Yagyawalkya was one of the greatest, most erudite, wise and renowned seers of his time. He was a senior and enlightened man, so wise and learned a scholar that even king Janak, who himself was a most self-realised and enlightened king of his era, was so much bowled over by his erudition, depth of knowledge and scholarship that he accepted the sage's discipleship (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahmin 2, verse nos. 1, 4). He was proclaimed the undisputed champion and winner in a metaphysical and theological debate held in the court of Janak during the course of a great fire sacrifice held where great scholars, seers and

sages from far and wide had assembled (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahmin 1-9).

He was a much sought after teacher and an honoured exponent of the eclectic Advaitya Vedanta philosophy of non-duality. This basically propounds, inter alia, that everything in existence, visible or invisible, minute or colossus, important or unimportant, are all fundamentally the same singular unit called Brahm manifested in myriad and diverse ways, that therefore nothing that exists which is not Brahm is not true, that this Brahm is the only supreme Authority and Divinity in the entire creation, that this Brahm and the individual Atma or pure consciousness of the creature are one and the same, and not two independent units, that this Atma is the pure self, etc. Anything contrary to this is false and fallacious.

It is believed that all major Upanishads belonging to the Yajur Veda tradition are either directly or indirectly expounded and enunciated by and elucidated upon by Yagyawalkya or any one of his long line of disciples who had acquired this eclectic knowledge from him. (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/6/1-3, 4/6/1-3 and 6/5/1-3.)

One such example is the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition in which sage Yagyawalkya has taught even the teacher of the Gods, i.e. Brihaspati, about the esoteric secrets and the profound spiritual importance as well as the significance of the Tarak Mantra, and about the divine nature of Lord Ram and his great Mantras that can provide a creature with Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance) once and for all.

The high spiritual prowess and reach of Yagyawalkya can be judged from the fact that he could communicate directly with the Supreme Being called Mandal Purush in his visible manifestation as the brilliant and splendorous Sun as described in Mandal Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. The fact that Yagyawalkya had a repeated communion with the Sun God, at least on four occasion is clearly marked out in Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 1/1/1-2; 2/1/1-2; 3/1/1-2; 4/1/1-2.

Yagyawalkya was a rich householder sage and seer. This is borne out by the fact that (a) on each occasion when he attended great debates he was showered with huge largesse by king Janak in the form of immense quantity of gold and thousands cows (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 3/1/1-2, 4/1/1-7, 4/3/33, 4/4/23), and (b) when he asks his wife Maitreyi to partition his vast estate before he went on to take Sanyas (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/4/1-2, 4/5/1-2).

The creation of Yajur Veda's two branches:- The word 'Yajus' means a liturgy of hymns chanted during the fire sacrifice. The Yajur Veda has been classified into Krishna and Shukla branches. It would be pertinent and interesting to add a brief note here on why the Yajur Veda has come to be known as Krishna and Shukla, meaning 'black' and 'white' respectively. The Yajur Veda Sanhita (a collection of Mantras or hymns) is classified into these two types for a variety of reasons. One of the probable reasons for this Yajur Veda having two names is that the collection in the Sanhita that came to be known as 'Krishna' had a mixture of prose and poetry, and hence considered 'impure and corrupted'. This is because primarily the Vedas were composed in poetry form with the verses structured according to one or the other methods of poetical composition called 'Chandas'. Prose as style of composition came later on and was regarded as an interpolation, interposition or juxtaposition which is all tantamount to corrupting the original method. Hence, that text which had both the poetry and prose was deemed to be 'corrupted and impure form of the Vedic text', and therefore called 'Krishna'—the dark one. On the other hand, the Sanhita which had only poetry was considered un-adulterated and pure form of the Vedic text, and hence called 'Shukla' or the white one, the colour 'white' being the colour of purity, immaculacy, divinity and holiness.

Since the primary use of the hymns of the Vedas in earlier times was for incantatory chanting during religious fire sacrifices, the poetical mode of composition was more suitable than the prose model. That is why these hymns were composed in 'Chandas' which are the different styles in which Sanskrit verses are composed. Later

on, when these verses were also being used for purposes other than the fire sacrifices, the prose model evolved and developed. The Upanishads are mainly in the prose model because they are philosophical treatises and not ritualistic incantatory chanting.

Another plausible reason is that the verses of the Krishna Yajur Veda are more difficult to understand than those of the Shukla Yajur Veda. Hence, the former were called 'dark' or Krishna because of the difficulty in their comprehension and explanation as compared to the more easier ones classified as 'white' or Shukla. The Krishna Yajur Veda Sanhita was more prevalent in the south of India while the Shukla was more common in the north of the country.

The third reason is that the original classifier of Vedas was 'Krishna Dvaipaayana Veda Vyas' who taught the text of the Yajur Veda to his disciple called Vaishampaayana. Hence, the original version of the text was named 'Krishna' in order to commemorate this fact.

There is a fourth probable reason as outlined here. The chief exponent of the Yajur Veda is regarded as the ancient sage Yagyavalkya. He was one of the several disciples of sage Vaishampayana. Once the teacher asked his disciples to perform the 'Brahmavadhya' sacrifice (a type of elaborate penance) for him. Yagyavalkya was so confident of himself, his knowledge and competency that he offered to do it all by himself for his teacher. The teacher thought that he was haughty and boastful. So, disowning or disinheriting him from his line of disciples, he commanded that Yagyavalkya should return all that he had learnt from his teacher. The sage returned all the Mantras of the Yajur Veda that he had learnt from his teacher by 'vomiting' them out. The rest of the disciples were very cunning; they transformed themselves immediately into partridges, called Tittars, and gobbled up everything. From that developed the Krishna Yajur Veda's Taitirriya branch. It is called 'Krishna' after the teacher and 'Taitirriya' after the partridges. Also, since they were 'vomited products' they were regarded as polluted and impure. Such body of knowledge came to be known as 'Krishna'—the impure one.

Now, not to be demoralized so easily and determined to get back his lost knowledge and wisdom, Yagyavalkya worshipped the Sun God who blessed him with a fresh set of Mantras of the Yajur Veda. Since it came from a 'bright source' represented by the sun, this set of Mantras was called the 'Shukla Yajur Veda'. [The word 'Shukla' means 'bright or light or illuminated'.] The sage revised this into fifteen sub-texts, called the Vaaj-sanei, i.e. those belonging to the horse race. This is because the Sun God had assumed the form of a 'horse' to teach him, and the word 'Vaajis' means a horse. The teaching was done in the form of the cosmic neighing. This form of the Sun God came to be worshipped as 'Hayagriva', the Lord with the neck of a horse. An entire Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition is named after this God, and it is called 'Hayagriva Upanishad'. It is the 29th Upanishad of this Veda.

Yagyavalkya had fifteen disciples (e.g. Kaanva, Maadhyandin etc.) who mastered one each of these fifteen sub-text created by Yagyavalkya. [Vishnu Puran, 3-5; Vayu Puran, 60-1.] The list of sages and seers who excelled in the Shukla Yajur Veda branch has been given in Brihad-Aaranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahmin 6, and Canto 4, Brahmin 6.

The Yajur Veda is divided into two major types—viz. the Shukla (white) and Krishna (black or dark). The Krishna Yajur Veda has only four branches existing at present out of the earlier eighty-five—Taitirriya, Maitraayani, Katha, and Kapisthal. Its Brahman is known as Taitirriya Brahman. The Shukla Yajur Veda, also known as the Vaajsaneyi Sanhita, originally had seventeen branches, but now only following two branches exist—Kaanva and Maadhyandeen. Its Brahman is known as Shatpath Brahman.

The sub-Veda of the Yajur Veda is known as Dhanur-Veda which deals with the science of archery and warfare.

The Aaranyakas of the Yajur Veda are—Taittiriya (of the Krishna Yajur Veda) and Brihad-aaranyak (of the Shukla Yajur Veda).

There are 19 principal Upanishads of the Shukla Yajur Veda, and 32 principal Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda—such as Taitiriya, Swetaasvatar, Katha, Brihdaaranakya, Maitri, Ishavasya Upanishads etc.

The priests who used the hymns of the Yajur Veda during fire sacrifices were called 'Yajus' or 'Adhwaryu'.

Family—He had two wives. The elder was named Katayani, and the second was called Maitreyi. From the elder wife, he had a son named Katyanana. [Skandpuran, Nagar Khand, 130; Brihad Aranya Upanishad, 4/5/1.] According to 'Yogi Yagyawalkya', a hand book on Yoga, his third wife was Gargi, though she is depicted as a rival interviewer who tested the sage's erudition and scholarship in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad. [Yogi Yagyawalkya, edited by Upendranath, Vasumati—Calcutta, 1-5.]

Sanyas—Though Yagyavalkya was externally a householder sage and seer, he was internally a self-realised and an enlightened man, a sincere ascetic and a renunciate monk who knew the futility of worldly pursuits. He was not preaching what he did not believe in. So he finally took to the eclectic path of Sanyas as clearly mentioned in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 4/5/15.

Works—Yagyawalkya wrote great texts on Yoga, metaphysics and law pertaining to daily life, much like Manu's Smiriti Law. (i) Yagyawalkya Sanhita contains religious laws; (ii) Yog Sanhita was composed in the hermitage of sage Upmanyu [Kurma Puran, 25.]; and (iii) Yogi Yagyawalkya on Yoga philosophy.

Yagyawalkya was a great and acclaimed Yogi (an ascetic) as well as a metaphysical philosopher and preacher par-excellence who was well-versed in the knowledge of Brahm and the Atma.]

सादर चरन सरोज पखारे । अति पुनीत आसन बैठारे ॥ ५ ॥

करि पूजा मुनि सुजसु बखानी । बोले अति पुनीत मृदु बानी ॥ ६ ॥

sādara carana sarōja pakhārē. ati punīta āsana baiṭhārē. 5.

kari pūjā muni sujasa bakhānī. bōlē ati punīta mṛdu bānī. 6.

Sage Bharadwaj reverentially washed the feet of sage Yagyawalkya and seated him respectfully on a very clean seating-mat. (5)

Then after duly worshipping the great sage, praising his glories and reputation as a wise, learned and enlightened sage, he (Bharadwaj) said most politely and in a reverentially tone¹—(6)

[Note—¹When the person who wants to learn anything and is sincere about it, he is very polite and humble while approaching the teacher for knowledge or removal of doubts. The teacher whom he approaches for an answer is a wise man, and so he senses the seekers earnestness. A good teacher cannot refuse, but feels that it is his moral duty to enlighten the other person and impart the knowledge he seeks. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 48.

The same thing has happened when Uma, the divine consort of Lord Shiva, approached the Lord to remove certain doubts she had in her mind regarding the divinity of Lord Ram—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 107—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 111.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 64 where we learn that it was on the most polite and humble request of

Garud, the celestial eagle which is the mount of Lord Vishnu, that the crow-saint Kaagbhusund narrated the story of Lord Ram for his benefit.

Earlier, Garud had bowed his head before Lord Shiva and had very politely asked him to remove his doubts about the divine reality of Lord Ram, but the Lord sent him to Kaagbhusund because a bird would better understand the language of another bird—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (a) Chaupai line no. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 61; (b) Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 62.]

नाथ एक संसु बड़ मोरें । करगत बेदतत्त्व सबु तोरें ॥ ७ ॥

कहत सो मोहि लागत भय लाजा । जौं न कहउँ बड़ होइ अकाजा ॥ ८ ॥

nātha ēka sansa'u baṛa mōrēm. karagata bēdatattva sabu tōrēm. 7.

kahata sō mōhi lāgata bhaya lājā. jaurm na kaha'um̃ baṛa hō'i akājā. 8.

‘Oh Lord! I have a grave doubt¹, and I know that you are well-versed in all the essential knowledge of the Vedas (scriptures). [Hence, by inference, you are the most suitable seer who can remove my doubts and explain the reality to me. That is why I have approached you and request you to please be kind to enlighten me.] (7)

I am afraid to divulge my ignorance² and ask you to remove my doubts (as it may annoy you that being a great sage myself how come I harboured such ridiculous doubts in my mind; it would seem incongruous to you). But at the same time if I don't say anything about my doubts and confusions, it would be very harmful for me (as it will rob me of my mental and spiritual peace, and cast a dark shadow on my wisdom and my ability to preach others). (8)

[Note—¹The reason for having any doubt is ignorance; it eclipses the wisdom of even great sages and seers. Ignorance does not even spare the Creator from being deluded. These things are clearly stated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (a) Chaupai line nos. 1, 5-7 that precede Doha no. 59; (b) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 60; (c) Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 62.

Lack of wisdom and prevalence of ignorance creates a lot of heartburn, doubts and irrational thoughts—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (a) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 58; (b) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 59.

²As for being afraid to ask someone who is very senior and exalted a question which seems ridiculous because its answer is very obvious and is unexpected from a person who is otherwise regarded knowledgeable and wise, we have other instances in Ram Charit Manas where the person wanting some of his doubts removed is afraid to ask questions out of hesitation. For instance, in Ram Charit Manas we shall read that even Bharat, the dear brother of Lord Ram, had felt hesitant and afraid to ask the Lord about the characteristic features of saints—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 36—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 37. This is obviously because Bharat was supposed to know the qualities of saints, and his wanting to know about them seemed incongruous on the face of it.]

Ram Charit Manas—Baal Kand, Doha no. 4:—

दो०. संत कहहिं असि नीति प्रभु श्रुति पुरान मुनि गाव ।

होइ न बिमल बिबेक उर गुर सन किँ दुराव ॥ ४५ ॥

dōhā.

santa kahahirṁ asi nīti prabhu śruti purāna muni gāva.
hō'i na bimala bibēka ura gura sana ki'ēṁ durāva. 45.

Oh Lord! It is proclaimed by saints and also declared by the scriptures such as the Vedas and Purans that true and pure form of wisdom cannot be expected in the heart of someone who conceals his ignorance from his guru (teacher). [And that is why I have gathered courage to express my lack of knowledge to you so that true and pure form of wisdom can sprout in my inner-self, and I can become enlightened.] (Doha no. 45)

[Note—Sage Bharadwaj wishes to be enlightened about the divinity of Lord Ram, and unless one has pure form of wisdom firmly established in his heart, this knowledge would elude him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 122.

Without proper wisdom no one can expect to cross over this huge ocean-like world and find liberation and deliverance from its horrors—refer also to Vinai Patrika of Tulsidas, (a) verse no. 115, line no. 2 of stanza no. 5; and (b) verse no. 123.]

Ram Charit Manas—Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 46:—

चौ० अस बिचारि प्रगटुँ निज मोहू । हरहु नाथ करि जन पर छोहू ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

asa bicāri pragaṭa'urṁ nija mōhū. harahu nātha kari jana para chōhū. 1.

Considering all the aforesaid facts I have decided to reveal my ignorance. Oh Lord, please be kind to remove it and be gracious upon me who am your follower (or your disciple) (1)

Ram Charit Manas—Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 47:--

चौ० जैसें मिटै मोर भ्रम भारी । कहहु सो कथा नाथ बिस्तारी ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

jaisēm miṭai mōra bhrama bhārī. kahahu sō kathā nātha bistārī. 1.

Oh Lord! In whatever way my ignorance and delusions can be removed, please be gracious enough to tell that story in detail.' (1)

[Note—The above verses are a sort of preamble that introduces the reader to the main part of our narration of Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati. Thus we learn that this story was told to sage Bharadwaj by sage Yagyawalkya at the end of the auspicious month of Makar in the holy city of Prayag where Bharadwaj had his hermitage.

Now we shall read this great story of Lord Shiva's marriage in the following pages.]

Ram Charit Manas: from Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 104:—

[Hearing sage Bharadwaj's sincere plea, the learned sage Yagyawalkya began his narration as follows—]

चौ०. एक बार त्रेता जुग माहीं । संभु गए कुंभज रिषि पाहीं ॥ १ ॥

संग सती जगजननि भवानी । पूजे रिषि अखिलेस्वर जानी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ēka bāra trētā juga māhīm. sambhu ga'ē kumbhaja riṣi pāhīm. 1.
saṅga satī jagajanani bhavānī. pūjē riṣi akhilēsvara jānī. 2.

Once upon a time, during the age of Treta¹, Lord Shiva went to the hermitage of sage Kumbhaj (or sage Agastya)². (1)

The Lord (Shiva) was accompanied by Sati, his divine consort who is also known as Bhavani, and who is the great Mother of the entire creation. The sage reverentially worshipped him, knowing that he (Shiva) was the Lord of the entire creation. (2)

[Note—¹Treta— The *Tretayug* is equivalent to 3600 divine years of Gods, and 12,96,000 human years. It is second era of the 4-era Hindu cycle of creation and destruction. It was during this Yug that Lord Ram manifested on earth as an incarnation of Vishnu, and it concluded when the Lord left the earth for his heavenly abode.

²Sage Agastya/Kumbhaj—Sage Agastya is a renowned sage who had composed several of the hymns of the Rig Veda, e.g. Rig Veda Sanhita, 1/166-191. He is known as a 'Brahm-rishi' or a celestial sage tracing his origin to the creator Brahma. He was born to sage Pulastya and his wife Havirbhuk. During this birth, his other brother was sage Visrawaa. It is also believed that in the Swayambhu Manvantar (age of Manu named Swambhu), he was born as the son of sage Pulastya, but in that birth he was named Dattoli.

According to another version, he was the son of Mitra and Varuna. In this version, he was born in a jar or pitcher known as 'Kumbha'. Hence, he is also known as Kumbhaja (born out of a Kumbha), Kumbhodbhava (rising out of a Kumbha), Kalasi-suta (son born from a Kalas or a pitcher or jar). During this birth, his twin brother was sage Vashistha, the great sage who was the court priest of the kingdom of Ayodhya where Lord Ram was the king.

His wife was a princess of the kingdom of Vidharva, and her name was Lopaamudraa, also known as Kaaveri. The sage had a son whose name was Drudhaasya, also known as Idhmavaaha.

His chief disciple was Agniveshya.

Sage Agastya did severe Tapa and had vast knowledge. He is said to have destroyed the two demons named Ilvala and Vaataapi. The sage had stunted the growth of Mt. Vindhya which was growing and expanding endlessly so much so as to obstruct the light of the sun.

Once, when Indra had killed the demon Vrittaasur, other demons named 'Kaaleya' managed to escape and they hid themselves under the water of the ocean. From there they began terrorizing the sages and seers. They stayed under water during daytime and came out at night to torment and devour these sages, and generally cause nuisance and havoc all around. These demons had not spared even such renowned sages of the time as Vashistha, Chyavan and Bharadwaj, because the demons attacked their hermitages and killed the sages and seers who lived there. It was then that the Gods, led by their king Indra, requested sage Agastya to somehow expose the demons. At this, the sage had scooped up the water of the ocean in a cup

made by joining the two palms of his hands and had drunk the water of the ocean in one gulp so as to expose the demons. The Gods were then able to destroy them.

This story is narrated in: (i) Skanda Puran, Nagar Khand, (ii) Padma Puran, Srishti Khand, and (iii) the epic Mahabharat, Vanparva. This feat of sage Agastya is cited by Goswami Tulsidas in his epic narration of the story of Lord Ram, known as the Ram Charit Manas, in its Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 256.

Some of the demons, however, managed to escape and hid themselves in the nether world. This is how the demon race survived then. However, when the ocean was completely dried up it created another problem for the world because countless marine creatures begin to suffer and die. Besides this, the ocean was the largest natural reservoir of water on earth. So the Gods requested sage Agastya to refill it. The sage replied that the water has been digested in his stomach, but he can oblige the Gods by reproducing the ocean in the form of urine. That is the reason, according to this legendary story of the Purans, why the ocean is salty and sour—because it is the urine of sage Agastya.

This fact, that the ocean is sour and salty because it is the urine of sage Agastya, is explicitly narrated in the *Anand Ramayan* (purported to have been written by sage Valmiki), in its Vilaas Kand (Chapter), ninth Sarga (Canto), verse nos. 18-24 where Sita explains to Lopaamudraa, the wife of sage Agastya, why Sri Ram had constructed the bridge in order to cross the ocean to reach Lanka. She explained that the Lord did not ask the sage to dry up the ocean once again by drinking its water because it would be unthinkable to ask the sage to drink his own urine. Even if the sage had actually drunk the water, the Lord would be heaped with the ignominy of being so selfish that he made a Brahmin drink his own urine so that his purpose is served. The Lord did not swim across the ocean because it would be insulting and extremely demeaning for the Lord to swim in urine, and it would also be improper for him to step across a Brahmin's urine because it is to be regarded as holy as the urine of a cow.

There is a legendary story how once sage Agastya had converted king Nahush as a serpent. The story goes that once Indra, the king of Gods, was demoted from his exalted stature due to the curse of killing some Brahmins, and king Nahush had taken his place. Nahush lustfully eyed the consort of Indra, named Indrani. To punish him, Brihaspati, the moral preceptor of Gods, devised a stratagem by which Indrani requested Nahush to come to her riding a palanquin that was never used by anyone earlier. Overcome and blinded by passions, Nahush forgot everything about propriety and probity, and he summoned all the great sages and seers of the time to act as carriers or bearers of his palanquin. Humble sages and seers did not mind because Nahush was now elevated to the stature of Indra, the king of Gods. Nahush was so eager to reach heaven as quickly as possible that he kept prodding and scolding these sages to walk faster. Enraged, astonished and peeved at this nonsense being perpetrated by the haughty king, sage Agastya had then cursed him to become a great and poisonous snake. This story appears in Mahabharat, Anushaashan Parva, 99-100. Sage Agastya lived in the Dandakaaranya forest when Lord Ram met him. The sage had then given some invincible divine weapons to the Lord which stood him in good stead during the epic war of Lanka, as well as in overcoming the demons whom the Lord encountered and destroyed during his sojourn in the formidable forest.

The sage is said to have brought about reconciliation between Indra, the king of Gods, and Maruts, the Wind Gods.

A whole class of people came to be known after him, and in due course the term 'Agastya' became a title and sort of honour given to learned sages and seers who were experts in the philosophy and knowledge that sage Agastya was an expert in and had preached during his lifetime. The sage has been made immortal by finding a place amongst the brightest stars in the sky. He is identified with Canopus, which is the brightest star in the sky of south India. The Canopus has been named after this sage as 'Agastya', and seeing this star in the sky when the sun is in the middle of

Virgo (Kanyaa) sign of the zodiac and worshipping him at night is regarded as an auspicious deed. This is a symbolic way of honouring the sage by elevating him to an exalted stature of a 'bright star' and recognizing his stellar qualities.

He is regarded as the one who had created the Tamil language of South India. He is accredited as being the author of several treatises on medicine, mysticism and magic. One of his books is the 'Agastya Sanhita' which elaborately deals with ritualistic forms of worship.

It is said that once sage Agastya and the noble king named Shankha had a divine vision of Lord Vishnu at the banks of river Swami-pushkarni.]

रामकथा मुनिबर्ज बखानी । सुनी महेस परम सुखु मानी ॥ ३ ॥

rāmakathā munibarja bakhānī. sunī mahēsa parama sukhu mānī. 3.

The exalted sage narrated the divine story of Lord Ram in great detail, hearing which Lord Mahesh (Shiva) found immense sense of contentedness, happiness and bliss. (3)

[Note—The wise sage Agastya knew that Lord Ram was very dear to Lord Shiva, and therefore he concluded that the best way to please Shiva was to narrate Lord Ram's story in detail. When an honoured guest arrives, the host would try his best to please him and entertain him. Lord Shiva was not an ordinary guest; he was the Lord of creation, "Mahesh", the 'Great Ish—Great Lord'. Naturally therefore he should be pleased with something that is the best, and nothing else was the 'best' than narration of the divine story of Lord Ram.

From the perspective of the narration of the story of Lord Ram as narrated in the epic book "Ram Charit Manas", this communion between sage Agastya and Lord Shiva forms the basis, the background against which the story was revealed.

As we would discover in due course of time, Sati was not convinced with whatever Agastya said about the divinity and holiness of Lord Ram, and she harboured her grave doubts just as Bharadwaj had his. Sage Yagyawalkya had chosen this episode of Lord Shiva going to sage Agastya and the latter narrating the divine story of Lord Ram in the presence of Sati to reassure Bharadwaj that he need not feel guilty or ashamed at having some traces of ignorance in him because even Sati, the Mother of creation and the divine consort of Lord Shiva too had her own doubts and she too was eclipsed by the shadow of ignorance inspite of Lord Shiva, the greatest of all the gods and the wisest among them, being her husband and even trying hard to dissuade her from harbouring ignorance as this negative character undermines a person's nobility and wisdom. How Sati (Shiva's wife) was swept off her feet and fell prey to ignorance, and the consequences she faced will be narrated in due course in this story—from Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 50—to Doha no. 64.]

रिषि पूछी हरिभगति सुहाई । कही संभु अधिकारी पाई ॥ ४ ॥

riṣi pūchī haribhagati suhā'ī. kahī sambhu adhikārī pā'ī. 4.

As a return favour, the sage asked the Lord (Shiva) to enlighten him about the pleasant and spiritually elevating virtues of "Hari-Bhakti" (devotion for Lord Hari, or Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being and Lord God of the world whose incarnation on earth was in the form of Lord Ram).

Lord Shiva had been so pleased with the sage and so obliged by him (because the sage had narrated the whole divine story of Lord Ram) that he told the sage the

characteristic features of “Hari-Bhakti” as desired, realising that the sage was eligible to hear it. (4)

[Note—The concept of “Hari Bhakti”, meaning having undiluted devotion and a sense of absolute surrender and loyalty to one’s chosen deity has been elaborately described at a number of places in Ram Charit Manas.

The concept of “Bhakti” has a very broad sweep, and it incorporates such glorious virtues as having, inter alia, sincere devotion, dedication and firm faith in the Lord God, total submission and surrender before the Lord God, having unwavering love, conviction and belief in the Lord God, to be completely dedicated to the Lord and surrender oneself to him, having reverence and veneration for the Lord God, having no other solace, succour, hope and respite except the Lord, treating oneself as a humble servant of the Lord God and feeling fortunate at being able to serve the Lord God, remembering the Lord God at all times and offering each and every deed done and action taken to the Lord without expecting anything in return, remaining unruffled and calm under all circumstances with the view that these are the wishes of the Lord God and one has no right to get overly excited over them. In brief, Bhakti entails honouring the divine forces of creation in the form of some chosen deity who personifies the grandest virtues in creation.

The *Holy Bible* explains the essence of Bhakti in very succinct words as follows — ‘In him we live and move, and have our being’ (Acts, 17/28), ‘Trust in him at all times, you people, pour out your heart before him; for God is a refuge for us’ (Psalms, 62/8).

Narad Bhakti Sutra, literally meaning the fundamental formula that defines what comprises devotion for Lord God as enunciated by sage Narad who was one of the greatest devotees of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, is a treatise on Bhakti that is succinct and is universally respected as being one of the best in its genre. It has only 84 Sanskrit verses.

It says that the easiest (verse no. 58) and the best instrument for God-realisation (verse no. 80, 81) is ‘Bhakti’ because it gives the spiritual fruit or reward for which a person does any auspicious effort in the first place (verse no. 26, 30). It is superior to Gyan (knowledge), to Yoga (meditation), to Karma (rituals and religious observances), and other spiritual traditions (verse no. 25). Bhakti is a complete and wholesome way to attain self and god realisation; it needs no other support or help (verse no. 59).

Bhakti gives eternal peace and bliss of the highest order (verse no. 60).

Bhakti is divided into two aspects—(i) Paraa Bhakti, and (ii) A-paraa Bhakti. The A-paraa Bhakti is divided further into (a) Gauna Bhakti, and (b) Mukhya Bhakti. The Paraa Bhakti is the aim of spiritual practice, while the A-paraa Bhakti is a means to achieve success in it.

Paraa Bhakti is attainment of extreme and eternal bliss obtained upon God-realisation which is equivalent to self-realisation because the Parmatma, the Supreme Soul and the cosmic Spirit, is the same as the individual’s Atma or his own soul. It is like nectar, and gives immortality and supreme form of bliss (verse nos. 2 and 3); it helps eliminate worldly desires and temptations (verse no. 7).

The A-paraa Bhakti involves some methods to make this possible—such as having interest in worshipping the Lord (verse no. 16), having desire and interest in listening to the stories associated with the Lord (verse no. 17), to be engrossed in the thoughts of the ‘self’ or the Atma (verse no. 18), surrendering all deeds to the Lord and always remembering him (verse no. 19).

But it must be noted that Gyan or truthful knowledge of the reality is also conducive to attaining nearness or oneness with God (verse no. 28). In other words, Gyan and Bhakti go hand in hand; they aid each other instead of coneracting one another (verse no. 29). Bhakti is the only way that leads to Mukti—liberation and deliverance from this world of transmigration leading to permanent rest for the soul

(verse no. 33). Bhakti helps one to break free from the shackling effects of this deluding and entrapping world (verse no. 33).

The methods by which Bhakti can be established and made to bloom in one's heart are narrated in verse nos. 34-42 as follows—to abandon attachments to material sense objects and sensual pleasures of this world, to desist from self gratification of the sense organs (verse no. 35), to do Bhajan—or the constant remembrance of the Lord, his divine name and divine deeds (verse nos. 36, 79), to hear and sing the divine stories, the virtues and the holy name of the Lord along with others in the community (verse no. 37), to have contact and communion with holy men such as great saints (verse no. 38-39, 42) which is obtained when the Lord is kind (verse no. 40), to treat true devotees of the Lord as being equivalent to the Lord himself (verse no. 41), to offer all the deeds and their fruits or rewards to the Lord (verse no. 61) along with any trace of negativity such as desires, anger, pride etc. that may still linger on (verse no. 65), and in general doing everything that is auspicious and holy which makes it possible for him to enhance his level of Bhakti (verse no. 76).

Other aids to Bhakti are the following—Abandonment of the feeling of worldly happiness and joy on the one hand, and of sorrow, misery and grief on the other hand, eliminating any sort of desires and passions such as for gain or profit of any kind, and to be careful not to waste a single moment and be prepared for death that may come any time (verse no. 77). Practicing the virtues of 'Ahinsaa' (non-violence), 'Satya' (truthfulness), 'Shaucha' (cleanliness and purity), 'Dayaa' (mercy and compassion), and 'Aastikta' (belief in God and the Holy Spirit as well as the teaching of the scriptures) etc. (verse no. 78).

The main obstacle in Bhakti is bad company (verse no. 43), as well as Kaam (worldly desires and passions), Krodh (anger) and Moha (infatuations, attachments, delusions, entanglements) that lead to Smriti-bhransa (failure to remember the horrible consequences of committing sins and getting entangled in the world), Buddhi-naash (destruction of intelligent thinking and wisdom), and Sarwa-naash (complete ruin) (verse no. 44).

Maya (the web of delusions so characteristic of this world) is a great obstacle and it is overcome only by detachment from all things (verse no. 46). Other methods of overcoming Maya are to live a serene life away from the world (verse no. 67), to break all worldly fetters and bondages, to become neutral by rising above the three Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama, and to discard attempts to acquire and then worry about the protection of worldly possessions (verse no. 47), to not bother about the fruits of one's deeds and labour but do one's duty as ordained by destiny, peacefully and stoically (verse no. 48), and to abandon even the Vedas (excessive study of the scriptures once the basic knowledge and guidance has been obtained) and become free from all doubts, confusions, perplexities and consternations (verse no. 49).

One must avoid the following also—talking about or remembering anything pertaining to women, material wealth, hearsay and talks that create doubts in the mind about the truth of the Holy Spirit, talks about one's enemies or those who are unfavourable—because all these things unnecessarily create vexation for the spirit (verse no. 63); negative characters such as Abhmaan and Dambha (pride and arrogance accompanied by deceit, conceit and pretensions) etc. (verse no. 64); getting involved in worthless debates and arguments (verse no. 74).

The 'Gauna' Bhakti is like a dumb man attempting to describe some delicious food (verse no. 52)—i.e. it is a silent form of devotion for the Lord which has no external signs. Here, the devotee sips the nectar of spiritual bliss that comes with self and god realisation without showing any signs of his spiritual enlightenment. It can be experienced and never be described; nothing more remains to be attained or desired for after that (verse no. 54).

The 'Gauna Bhakti' is of three types (verse no. 56)—(i) Saatvika, (ii) Raajsik, and (iii) Taamsik. These are also called 'Aarta-bhakti', 'Arthaartha-bhakti', and 'Jigyaaasu-bhakti'. Gauna Bhakti is easy because it does not require any effort as it is

done directly by having natural love for the God that arises in one's heart. It leads to internal peace and bliss (verse nos. 58-60).

A true and sincere devotee of the Lord acquires a holy aura around him which makes him effuse divinity and holiness similar to the Lord, thereby making their presence beneficial for the whole world around them (verse no. 68-71). Like the universality and oneness of the Supreme Being, Supreme Spirit, the Supreme Truth and the Supreme Reality, such realised devotees of the Lord have no distinction as to their caste, religion, knowledge, physical form, birth, level of worldly prosperity or poverty, or the type of deeds done by them—because they have risen above such mundane considerations (verse no. 72-73).

The 9 types or paths of Bhakti, called the 'Navadhaa Bhakti', according to Ram Charit Manas, are the following:- (1) hearing about the Lord's virtues, glories, deeds, fames, holy name etc.; (2) talking and discussing about the Lord; (3) remembering him; (4) serving his holy feet; (5) adoring and worshipping him; (6) honouring and revering him; (7) submission and humility before him, treating him as a friend and companion; (8) concentrating on one's pure-self or Atma; (9) and treating the Atma (soul) as being the manifestation of the Lord.

Tulsidas has used this 'episode of Shabari' to elucidate on the concept of 9-fold path of Bhakti in the holy book's Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 35, till Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36.

The importance of 'Bhakti' has been emphasized by Lord Ram in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 86, to Doha no. 87 Ka.

Refer also to the following verses of Ram Charit Manas where the concept of "Bhakti" have been elaborately described:—

(a) Ayodhya Kand—Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 93; Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 131; Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 137; Doha no. 204; Chaupai line nos. 1-2, 5 that precede Doha no. 218; Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 219; Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 265; Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precedes Doha no. 291; Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 299; Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 301.

(b) Aranya Kand—Chaupai line nos. 2-9 that precede Doha no. 16; Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 43.

(c) Kishkindha Kand—Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 12.

(d) Sundar Kand— Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 23; Doha no. 46, and Chaupai line nos. 1-4, 6 that precede Doha no. 47; Doha no. 48 and Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede it.

(e) Uttar Kand— Chanda line no. 5-16 that precedes Doha no. 14; Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 38; Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 46; Chaupai line nos. 7-10 that precedes Doha no. 86; Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 87 and line no. 2 of Doha 87 Ka; Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 116; Chaupai line nos. 3-7 that precedes Doha no. 119; Chaupai line nos. 14-15 that precede Doha no. 120; Doha no. 122 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 15-19.

Refer also to Tulsidas' book "Dohawali", Doha nos. 53-54, 87-88, 126-127, 134-140, 145, 147, 152, .

Other references: (a) Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse no. 37-39; and Uttar Kand, Canto 7, verse no. 60-72.

(b) The Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 8, paragraph nos. 12-14 describe the importance and significance of Bhakti.]

कहत सुनत रघुपति गुन गाथा । कछु दिन तहाँ रहे गिरिनाथा ॥ ५ ॥

मुनि सन बिदा मागि त्रिपुरारी । चले भवन सँग दच्छकुमारी ॥ ६ ॥

kahata sunata raghupati guna gāthā. kachu dina tahāṁ rahē girināthā. 5.
muni sana bidā māgi tripurārī. calē bhavana saṁga dacchakumārī. 6.

The Lord of the mountains (i.e. Lord Shiva)¹ stayed there (at the hermitage of sage Agastya) for some days², hearing and narrating (as well as discussing) the divine glories of Lord Ram. (5)

Then after some time, Lord Tripurari³ asked the sage to give him permission to leave, and then went to his own abode (at Mt. Kailash)⁴ along with the daughter of Daksha⁵ (i.e. Sati, his consort). (6)

[Note—¹Shiva is known as the “Lord of the mountains” as he has his permanent abode in Mt. Kailash, one of the holiest peaks of the mighty mountain range of the Himalayas.

²When Lord Shiva had once gone to the hermitage of saintly crow Kaagbhusund disguised as a swan in order to hear the narration of Lord Ram’s divine story, the Lord had stayed there also for many days—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 57.

Once when the crow saint Kaagbhusund had gone to the hermitage of his own guru he had stayed at the latter’s place, hearing the divine story of Lord Ram—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 113.

³Demon Tripurasur/Tarakasur—Tarakasur was the son of Vajraanga and his consort Varaangi. He had done severe Tapa (austerity and penance) as a result of which the creator Brahma had granted him several boons which had made him invincible. He was killed by Lord Subramanya, the son of Shiva and Parvati. He had three sons—Taaraaksha, Kamlaaksha and Vindyumaali. They had also pleased Brahma and by his blessings built three great cities, collectively called ‘Tripura’. These cities were made of gold, silver and iron. These three demon brothers were collectively called Tripurasur—the demons of the three cities. When they became a nuisance for the Gods, Shiva destroyed these three cities and the demons with one arrow. Therefore he got the name of Tripurari—one who destroyed the three enemy cities.

The story of Tripurasur with a slight variation is narrated in Bhagwat Mahapurān, 7/10/53-58. According to it, once when the demons were defeated by the gods, they went to take refuge with the greatest demon of them all, the mighty demon named ‘Maya Daanav’. He was the one who had created the golden city of Lanka for Ravana.

Maya Danav created three huge planes made of gold, silver and iron. These planes were so huge that they resembled entire cities and were well provided for with all the things necessary for comfortable living. Maya Daanav handed them to the three chief demons named Taaraaksha, Kamlaaksha and Vindyumaali who were said to be the son of Tarkasur. The special quality of these planes was that they were hidden from view and flew stealthily. Emboldened by being invisible, the demons went on the rampage, plundering and laying to waste the three worlds, viz. the heaven, the earth and the sky. The gods could not fight them as these demons were invisible. Besides this, these three city-like planes had a pond of nectar each, the contents of which made the demons invincible and beyond the reach of death.

Frustrated and flabbergasted, the gods approached Lord Shiva to get rid of the demons. Lord Shiva invoked his specially empowered arrow known as the ‘Pashupatastra’. When shot, it produced countless arrows spewing fierce tongues of flame. Though these arrows burnt the three cities or planes (“Tripurs”), the demons however managed to survive by taking a dip in the pond of nectar that was present in each of the three places.

Confused, Lord Shiva invoked Lord Vishnu, the maverick Lord who knows every trick in creation as he is the Supreme Being, to find some solution. Vishnu disguised himself as a cow and made the Creator Brahma a calf. They went to these ponds and drank the nectar. The demons were so dazed by the Lord's Maya (delusion creating powers) that they could not respond and react. After that, Vishnu prepared for the great war—creating the chariot from Dharma (righteousness), the charioteer from Gyan (knowledge), the war standard from Vairagya (renunciation), the horses from Aishwarya (fame and might), bow from Tapa (penance), the body armour from Vidya (skills), arrows from Kriya (deeds and dynamism), and all other paraphernalia of war by employing other mystical powers he had.

Then, on an auspicious moment of the asterism of “Abhijit” (conquer now), Lord Shiva rode this chariot and burnt the three cities by a single arrow.

According to the Ramayana of Valmiki, Baal Kand, Canto 75, two great bows were made from the bones of Dadhichi. One was known as “Sarang” and the other was known as “Pinak”. The former was held by Lord Vishnu, and the latter by Lord Shiva. Vishnu killed the demons with his Sarang bow, while Shiva used his Pinak to destroy the three cities.

Another version of who the demon “Tripurasur” was appears in Skanda Puran, Aawantya Reva-Khand. It says that the son of the demon king Bali was known as ‘Baana-sur’. He had thousand arms. He worshipped Lord Shiva for a thousand years. Pleased with him, Lord Shiva asked him to seek a boon, upon which Baanasur requested the Lord to provide him with a city that is so invincible that none of the gods can ever conquer it, except of course by Lord Shiva whom he had worshipped as his deity. Shiva granted him his wish.

The cunning Baanasur then decided to please the other three gods of the Trinity, i.e. Lords Vishnu and Brahma. So he worshipped them one by one and extracted similar boons from them as he had done from Shiva. Once done, he now had three invincible cities that symbolized his sway and domain covering the three dimensions of creation—viz. the heaven, the earth and the nether world. Then he went mad with recklessness, plundering and pillaging at will. Terrified, the gods approached Lord Shiva as he was the one who had initially blessed Baanasur, and also because the demon had himself exempted Shiva from the boon of immunity from destruction. Then, Shiva strung his bow called Pinak, mounted an arrow called Aghor, and angrily shot it at the three cities ruled by Baanasur. This arrow instantly burnt and reduced the three cities to ashes. Their residue fell in the holy river Narmada. Then Baanasur fervently prayed to Lord Shiva to be pleased with him and give him abode in his own divine Loka known as the ‘Shiva-Loka’, the divine abode of Shiva in the heaven.

The Sharav Upanishad of Atharva Veda, verse no. 14 describes that Lord Shiva is also known as the slayer of the demon Tirpurasur. Hence, Shiva or Rudra is also called Tripurari. The three cities ruled by Tripurasur symbolised the three worlds, viz. the heaven, the earth and the nether world.

⁴Lord Shiva's abode is on Mt. Kailash—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 57; Baal Kand, Doha no. 58 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 6.

⁵Shiva's consort Sati was the daughter of Daksha Prajapati—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Doha no. 60 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 5-8; Doha no. 61; Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 62; and Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 63.

The story of Daksha is narrated as a note to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 60 below.]

तेहि अवसर भंजन महिभारा । हरि रघुबंस लीन्ह अवतारा ॥ ७ ॥

पिता बचन तजि राजु उदासी । दंडक बन बिचरत अबिनासी ॥ ८ ॥

tēhi avasara bhañjana mahibhārā. hari raghubansa līnha avatārā. 7.
pitā bacana taji rāju udāsī. daṇḍaka bana bicarata abināsī. 8.

It was the occasion when Lord Hari (Vishnu) had revealed himself as a human being (in the body of Lord Ram) in the family lineage of king Raghu in order to eliminate the burden of the earth¹. (7)

The imperishable and eternal Lord (i.e. Lord Vishnu as Lord Ram) was wandering at that time (i.e. at the time when Shiva was on his way to his own abode from the hermitage of sage Agastya) in the dense and un-inhabitable part of the forest known as Dandak². The Lord had renounced his kingdom and had gone to the forest attired like a hermit on the instruction of his father (Dasrath)³. (8)

[Note—¹This episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Sortha/Doha no. 183—to Doha no. 192. Briefly, the demons, led by their king Ravana, had wreaked havoc on earth, killing and plundering innocent living beings and committing horrendous crimes. Peeved and disgusted, Mother Earth and the Gods prayed to Lord Vishnu to save them. The Lord promised them that he will descend to earth as a human being in the form of Lord Ram and take birth in the royal household of Dasrath who had done severe Tapa in his previous life and had requested the Lord to become his son. So, two birds would be killed with a single stone as it were—Dasrath's desires would be fulfilled, and the demons would be eliminated at the same time.

²Lord Ram's stay in the Dandak forest has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes Doha no. 13—to Doha no. 46 which marks the end of this Kand.

³The episode of king Dasrath being forced to agree to give his unwilling consent to send Lord Ram to 14 years of forest exile due to family intrigue having its origin in the selfishness of his third wife Kaikeyi who had thrown a tantrum is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 12—to Doha no. 79.]

दो०. हृदयं बिचारत जात हर केहि बिधि दरसनु होइ ।

गुप्त रूप अवतरेउ प्रभु गाँ जान सबु कोइ ॥ ४८ (क) ॥

dōhā.

hr̥dayaṁ bicārata jāta hara kēhi bidhi darasanu hō'i.
gupta rūpa avatarē'u prabhu ga'ēṁ jāna sabu kō'i. 48 (a).

As Lord Har (Shiva) was on his way home, he kept wondering how he would have an opportunity to get a divine glimpse of the Lord (Sri Ram) here (in the Dandak forest). The Lord (Vishnu) had taken a birth as a human being secretly (in order to eliminate the demons), and though it was a secret for others, but every enlightened person (such as sages and seers) was aware of this fact. (Doha no. 48 Ka)

[Note—The fact that Lord Vishnu had come down to earth in the form of Lord Ram was kept a secret because otherwise if the demons got a hint it would be impossible to get rid of them. Only those who had great spiritual powers were aware of the Lord's incarnation. Lord Shiva was obviously privy to this because it was he who had directed the Gods and Mother Earth to pray to Lord Vishnu to overcome their problems—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that

precede Doha no. 185; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that follows Doha no. 48 Kha below.]

सो०. संकर उर अति छोभु सती न जानहिं मरमु सोइ ।

तुलसी दरसन लोभु मन डरु लोचन लालची ॥ ४८ (ख) ॥

sōraṭhā.

saṅkara ura ati chōbhū satī na jānahirīṃ maramu sō'i.
tulasī darasana lōbhū mana ḍaru lōcana lālacī. 48 (b).

Lord Shiva's mind and heart were highly uneasy and anxious¹, but Sati was not aware of the reason why it was so.

Tulsidas says that Lord Shiva's Mana (mind and heart) was overcome with apprehension and he was on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand his eyes were eager to have a divine Darshan (viewing) of Lord Ram, and on the other hand he did not want to reveal the true identity of Lord Ram by first showing his eagerness, and then when the opportunity actually arrived, by paying his obeisance to the Lord (Ram) and bowing at his feet (because these actions would let the cat out of the bag, as it were). (Sortha/Doha no. 48 Kha)

[Note—¹The reasons why Shiva was unhappy and restless are the following—(i) Lord Ram had gone to the forest in order to fulfil his promise to the gods that he would eliminate the demon king Ravana, and for this the Lord had to suffer a lot personally by having to wander in the wild forest infested with wild beast and demons. Lord Shiva loved Lord Ram so much that he had enshrined the Lord's image in his heart like one enshrines a deity in a temple. Shiva was pained to see his beloved and revered Lord Ram wondering barefoot in the wild and undergoing all the hardships that are associated with life in the dense forest. This is one reason why Shiva became uneasy when he saw Lord Ram wandering in the Dandak forest as mentioned in Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 48 herein above.

(ii) Shiva was worried that the enemy of the gods, i.e. the demon king Ravana, was his (Shiva's) ardent devotee, and the irony is that Ravana was to be killed by Lord Ram whom Shiva worships. This was a piquant situation. What would happen if Ravana comes to know of this fact, or if Ravana approaches Shiva to help him against Ram in the epic war at Lanka? Should Shiva go to Lord Ram while he is alone in the secluded part of the forest and discuss this problem with him, or should he desist from it?

(iii) The other reason for Shiva's restlessness was that he was anxious whether or not he (Shiva) would get an opportunity to meet his Lord, Sri Ram, and pay his obeisance to him without the world knowing it. Shiva did not wish to let the secret about Lord Ram's true identity to be leaked because that would warn the demons. But at the same time he did not want to miss this golden opportunity to have a divine glimpse of Lord Ram while he was all alone in the forest. This was the reason for his anxiety and restlessness for he did not know how this will come about without divulging the secret—because when anyone came to know that Lord Shiva had personally bowed before Ram and paid his obeisance to him then it would be easy to conclude who Ram actually was as everyone knew that Lord Ram is Shiva's revered Lord God whose holy name Shiva keeps repeating at all times,

Shiva could not openly go and visit Lord Ram because, for one, Sati was with him and there was a fair chance that she would chatter about the Lord's incarnation and reveal the secret to others. Shiva could not even stop midway indefinitely on his

journey to his abode in Mt. Kailash through the path of the sky, and so it was very uncertain if he would ever have the chance to see Lord Ram in the short span of time while he was passing overhead the forest through the path of the sky. It could only happen if Lord Ram himself decides to create a favourable circumstance where it becomes possible for Shiva to see the Lord somewhere in the open area of the forest.

As we shall read shortly, this indeed happened. Lord Ram obliged Shiva by appearing on an open stretch of the forest path to enable the latter to see him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 50 herein below.]

चौ०. रावन मरन मनुज कर जाचा । प्रभु बिधि बचनु कीन्ह चह साचा ॥ १ ॥

जौं नहिं जाउँ रहइ पछितावा । करत बिचारु न बनत बनावा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

rāvana marana manuja kara jācā. prabhu bidhi bacanu kīnha caha sēcā. 1.
jauṁ nahim jā'uṁ raha'i pachitāvā. karata bicāru na banata banāvā. 2.

[Shiva was lost in thoughts. On the one hand the true identity of Lord Ram had to be kept a secret, and on the other hand this golden opportunity of having a divine view of the Lord cannot be allowed to be missed. So, Shiva was thinking as follows—]

‘It was concluded (i.e. decided after close scrutiny and analysis) that the demon king Ravana could only be killed by a human being, and the Lord wished to make the words of Vidhi (the creator Brahma), given as a boon (to Ravana), truthful¹. (This was the reason for Lord Hari becoming a human being in the form of Lord Ram.) (1)

On the other hand, if I (Shiva) do not go to have a Darshan of my revered Lord (Sri Ram), then I will regret forever for missing this opportunity.’

Thus, Shiva was on the horns of a great dilemma, not being able to decide what to do and what not to. (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 177. Ravana had done severe Tapa, and when Brahma appeared before him to grant his wishes, Ravana asked that he may not be killed by anyone else except a human being and a monkey. Brahma had said ‘okay’ with a rider: he told Ravana that everyone who has been born must die one day, and even he, Brahma, had his life-span determined before he came into existence. So, if the boon is to be made effective then Ravana must ask for some exceptions of his choice. Ravana had thought that if he could conquer the gods, and especially the ‘death god’, on the strength of the boon of immunity from death as granted by Brahma, then it would be impossible for such weaklings as humans and monkeys to ever stand against him and harm him. So he told Brahma that he decided to exempt humans and monkeys from the blanket of immunity of his death. Lord Vishnu exploited this loophole in the shield of immunity from death granted by Brahma to Ravana and became a human being in the form of Lord Ram, while the rest of the gods became monkeys to help the Lord successfully kill Ravana. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 187 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-2, 7-9.]

एहि बिधि भए सोचबस ईसा । तेही समय जाइ दससीसा ॥ ३ ॥

लीन्ह नीच मारीचहि संगी । भयउ तुरत सोइ कपट कुरंगी ॥ ४ ॥

करि छलु मूढ़ हरी बैदेही । प्रभु प्रभाउ तस बिदित न तेही ॥ ५ ॥
 मृग बधि बंधु सहित हरि आए । आश्रमु देखि नयन जल छाए ॥ ६ ॥
 बिरह बिकल नर इव रघुराई । खोजत बिपिन फिरत दोउ भाई ॥ ७ ॥

ēhi bidhi bha'e sōcabasa īsā. tēhī samaya jā'i dasasīsā. 3.
 līnha nīca mārīcahi saṅgā. bhaya'u turata sō'i kapaṭa kuraṅgā. 4.
 kari chalu mūr̥ha harī baidēhī. prabhu prabhā'u tasa bidita na tēhī. 5.
 mṛga badhi bandhu sahita hari ā'e. āśramu dēkhi nayana jala chā'ē. 6.
 biraha bikala nara iva raghurā'ī. khōjata bipina phirata dō'u bhā'ī. 7.

[Verse nos. 3-7 describe the moment when Lord Shiva got the opportunity to see Lord Ram.]

In this way (as narrated in previous verses), Isha (Lord Shiva) was lost in deep thoughts.

During that period of time it so happened that the ten-headed demon king Ravana [3] had taken Marich with him who transformed himself as a golden deer (when the two reached the hermitage of Lord Ram in the forest, at a place near the banks of river Godavari) [4]. (3-4)

The wicked fellow (Ravana) deceitfully stole (kidnapped) Vaidehi (Sita, the daughter of king Videha of Janakpur, and the wife of Lord Ram) because he (Ravana) was not aware of the immense powers and potentials of the Lord (Sri Ram). (5)

Lord Hari (Ram) returned to the hermitage with his younger brother (Laxman) after having slayed the imposter deer (i.e. Marich disguised as a golden deer). When he saw that the hermitage was empty (because Sita had been abducted by Ravana), the Lord's eyes were filled with tears. (6)

Lord Ram, the king of the Raghu dynasty, was overcome with grief and anxiety. Thereafter, the two brothers went out in the forest to search for Sita. (7)

[Note—This entire incident is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 26—to Doha no. 28; and Chaupai line nos. 1-17 that precede Doha no. 30.

The story in brief is as follows—While Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita lived in Panchavati, a demoness named Supernakha was infatuated by the beauty of Lord Ram. She disguised herself as a beautiful lady and approached Lord Ram with a proposal of marriage. When the Lord refused, she became furious. Then the Lord ordered Laxman to cut-off her nose and ears as punishment. She went to her brothers, Khar and Dushan, to complain, and the duo collected their demon army to attack the hermitage of Lord Ram to avenge their sister's humiliation. In the battle that ensued, all the demons were killed.

Then Supernakha went to Ravana to instigate him to take revenge. Ravana went to Marich and forced him to accompany him to Panchavati so that he could kidnap Sita, the wife of Lord Ram to settle scores with the Lord. Marich became a golden deer to lure Sita who wished to have this wonderful deer when she saw it. Lord Ram went very far away in an attempt to catch it, and finally shot the deer with his arrow. While dying, Marich called out for Laxman. When Sita heard the name of Laxman being called out, she thought that Lord Ram was in danger. She forced Laxman to go out and help his brother. Once Laxman had gone, Ravana approached Sita disguised as a mendicant. When Sita came out to give alms to him, Ravana grabbed her and forcibly put her on his chariot to take her away to be kept in captivity at Lanka, his capital city.

Lord Ram and Laxman returned to find the hermitage empty. Then the Lord behaved like an ordinary man, grieving and lamenting at the loss of his wife. The two brothers set out in the wild to search for her.

This entire episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 17—to Doha no. 28; and Chaupai line nos. 1-17 that precede Doha no. 30.

It was at this time that Lord Shiva saw his revered Lord Ram wandering in the forest.]

कबहूँ जोग बियोग न जाकें । देखा प्रगट बिरह दुखु ताकें ॥ ८ ॥

kabahūṁ jōga biyōga na jākēm. dēkhā pragaṭa biraha dukhu tākēm. 8.

It is indeed a wonder that he who is never affected by either union or separation should be overcome with grief of separation (from his beloved wife Sita). (8)

[Note—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand—(i) Chaupai line nos. 7-17 that precede Doha no. 30; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 39.

The answer to the question “why did Lord Ram behave in such a way that made him look like a man who is passionate and tied to the world with fetters of worldly relationships” is found in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 17 that precedes Doha no. 30; and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 39.

These verses say in essence that this peculiar behaviour of Lord Ram, who was supposed to be above all worldly relationships and immune to emotional outbursts, is because he wanted to act his role as a human being to perfection, thereby signalling the natural traits in everyone born as a man, and secondly to show at once how a passionate man behaves vis-à-vis a man who practices courage and resilience.]

दो०. अति बिचित्र रघुपति चरित जानहिं परम सुजान ।

जे मतिमंद बिमोह बस हृदयँ धरहिं कछु आन ॥ ४९ ॥

dōhā.

ati bicitra raghupati carita jānahiṁ parama sujāna.

jē matimanda bimōha basa hṛdayaṁ dharahiṁ kachu āna. 49.

Lord Raghupati’s (Sri Ram’s) deeds and his behaviour is very mysterious and beyond comprehension. Only the very wise and enlightened are able to decipher and understand them correctly. For the ignorant, those who are overcome with delusions, and those who are utterly stupid, these events are interpreted in the wrong light, and they harbour misgivings about the Lord in their hearts. (Doha no. 49)

[Note—The less enlightened think that Lord Ram was a human being who was grieving for his kidnapped wife, but those who are wise know that it was a clever trick by the Lord to keep the demons in the dark about his true identity of Lord Vishnu who had to find an excuse by which to confront the demons and eliminate them. Sita, who was an incarnation of goddess Laxmi, was hidden in the fire element and what Ravana took away was merely her shadow. Besides this, Lord Ram had voluntarily made Sita to be stolen by Ravana so that the Lord could find an excuse to fight with her abductor and punish him by killing him in the battle that would ensue to rescue her from captivity.

This is very clear in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 23—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 24; and Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 27.

In this context, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 113—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 119 where Lord Shiva himself removes the doubts about the authenticity of Lord Ram's divinity when he had preached Parvati, his divine consort who had asked Shiva to enlighten her about the reality of Lord Ram.]

चौ०. संभु समय तेहि रामहि देखा । उपजा हियँ अति हरषु बिसेषा ॥ १ ॥
 भरि लोचन छबिसिंधु निहारी । कुसमय जानि न कीन्हि चिन्हारी ॥ २ ॥
 जय सच्चिदानंद जग पावन । अस कहि चलेउ मनोज नसावन ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

sambhu samaya tēhi rāmahī dēkhā. upajā hiyaṁ ati haraṣu bisēṣā. 1.
 bhari lōcana chabisindhu nihārī. kusamaya jāni na kīnhi cinhārī. 2.
 jaya saccidānanda jaga pāvana. asa kahi calē'u manōja nasāvana. 3.

Lord Sambhu (Shiva) saw Lord Ram at that time¹, and this vision made him extremely exhilarated in his heart. (1)

The magnificent sight of Lord Ram made Shiva so ecstatic with joy and bliss that his eyes were filled with tears of happiness and delight. Shiva filled his eyes with this beautiful sight of Lord Ram who was like an ocean of magnificence and beauty². [That is, Shiva watched the enchanting form of Lord Ram to his heart's content, and till his eyes were fully satisfied with the view.]

But he (Shiva) refrained from introducing himself to Lord Ram to meet him personally to pay his obeisance to the Lord of his heart and exchange greetings, as this was not the proper time to do so³. (2)

So, Shiva merely saluted Lord Ram mentally, exclaiming—“Glory to the Lord who is Sacchidaanand (eternal, supreme Consciousness, truthful, and a repository of spiritual bliss), and is the one who makes the world purified and clean of all sins and negativities.”

Saying thus, Lord Shiva, who had vanquished Manoj (Kamdeo-cupid)⁴, went ahead on his way (to his abode in Mt. Kailash). (3)

[Note—¹At which time did Shiva see Lord Ram? The answer is given in previous verses, in Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 48, and Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 49 herein above.

A very interesting point to note here is this—Lord Ram had gone southwards, towards Panchvati in the Dandakarnya forest and onwards to Lanka, from sage Agastya's hermitage (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 15-18 that precede Doha no. 13), while Lord Shiva was heading towards his abode in Mt. Kailash which lies in the northern Himalayan mountain range—refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 103).

How did, therefore, Shiva see Lord Ram? Well, the answer is that Lord Ram had been searching for Sita in the whole of the forest known as Dandak (refer: Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes Doha no. 30), and naturally he must have been at a spot north of the sage's hermitage when Shiva was passing overhead in the sky.

It is also possible that Lord Shiva had himself taken a detour and was wandering in the sky roughly around the area where Lord Ram was wandering on ground—in an apparent effort to see the latter.

²Lord Vishnu’s divine sight is so fulfilling for the eyes that anyone who sees the Lord is mesmerised by his enchanting and bewitching form. Vishnu is so enchanting and captivating to look at that it appears that he is like an endless ocean of beauty. This fact has been reiterated elsewhere also in Ram Charit Manas. For instance, when Manu and his wife Satrupa had prayed to the Lord, and the Lord had revealed himself before them, the couple were enthralled by the Lord’s fabulous sight which was like an ocean of beauty and charm—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 148.

And the question ‘how beautiful was Lord Ram that Manu and Satrupa were dazed?’ is answered at the same place, viz. Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 146—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 148.

It was the same form that has now mesmerised Lord Shiva.

³Why was it not the proper time to meet Lord Ram? The answer is that it was essential to keep Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as Lord Ram a top secret so that the Lord’s mission of elimination of demons could be accomplished successfully. The demon king Ravana had to be killed by Lord Vishnu in the disguise of a human being (refer: Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 49 above), and if it was revealed that Lord Ram, whose wife Sita was stolen by Ravana, was Lord Vishnu in his form, the whole planning would crumble. The demons must be kept in the dark about the true identity of Lord Ram, and if Shiva went to bow before Lord Ram and pay his respects to him, the demons would immediately come to know of this because surely they must have kept watch over the movement of Lord Ram after their king Ravana stole Sita. The cat would be out of the bag, and this was something which had to be avoided at all costs.

Obviously, if Shiva went to meet Lord Ram, there would have been a lot of showing of respect and affection between the two, such as mutually bowing their heads and paying respects to each other. It would have been impossible to keep the identity of Lord Ram concealed as Shiva would not bow to anyone except the Supreme Lord of creation.

Earlier in Doha no. 48 herein above we have already read that Shiva was very eager to have a divine vision of Lord Ram but was not sure how it would come to happen. Then we read that even as he walked towards his abode, his mind was occupied with this thought—whether he would be able to see Lord Ram, and whether it would be alright to meet the Lord and see him up close—refer: line no. 1 of Doha no. 48 Ka above.

It is always wise to have patience when the time is not proper (“Kusamaya” कुसमय)—this principle is observed by Parvati’s mother later on in the story when she had refrained her emotions at the time of departure of her beloved daughter with Shiva after their marriage. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 102.

⁴We shall soon be reading this story of how and why Lord Shiva vanquished Kamdeo. It appears in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.]

चले जात सिव सती समेता । पुनि पुनि पुलकत कृपानिकेता ॥ ४ ॥

calē jāta siva satī samētā. puni puni pulakata kṛpānikētā. 4.

Lord Shiva, accompanied by Sati, went on moving ahead on his path (for reasons explained above), but the body of the Lord, who is an abode of kindness, graciousness and mercy, was getting repeatedly thrilled all along the way (as he remembered the divine sight of Lord Ram he had just seen a while ago). (4)

[Note—Shiva was moving ahead towards his abode in Mt. Kailash, but his thoughts were fixed on Lord Ram. It ought to be noted here that Shiva was the greatest devotee of Lord Ram, and in fact this story of Ram Charit Manas was conceived by him in his Mana (heart and mind) and then was first revealed by him to his consort Uma—refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand—(i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 30; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 33; (iii) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 35; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 104; (b) Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 3; (c) Uttar Kand—(i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 128; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 129; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 130.]

सतीं सो दसा संभु कै देखी । उर उपजा संदेहु बिसेषी ॥ ५ ॥
 संकरु जगतबंध जगदीसा । सुर नर मुनि सब नावत सीसा ॥ ६ ॥
 तिन्ह नृपसुतहि कीन्ह परनामा । कहि सच्चिदानंद परधामा ॥ ७ ॥
 भए मगन छबि तासु बिलोकी । अजहुँ प्रीति उर रहति न रोकी ॥ ८ ॥

satīṃ sō dasā sambhu kai dēkhī. ura upajā sandēhu bisēṣī. 5.
 saṅkaru jagatabandya jagadīsā. sura nara muni saba nāvata sīsā. 6.
 tinha nṛpasutahi kīnha paranāmā. kahi saccidānanda paradhāmā. 7.
 bha'e magana chabi tāsū bilōkī. ajahuṃ prīti ura rahati na rōkī. 8.

When Sati observed this emotional condition of Shiva, she was confused and great doubts sprouted in her heart.¹ (5)

She thought to herself—‘Lord Shankar (Shiva) is the Lord of the world (“Jagdish”) to whom the whole world pays its obeisance and whom the world worships. All the gods, the humans, the sages and seers bow their head before him (Shiva). (6)

The same Lord (i.e. Shiva) has bowed his head to the son of a king (“Nrip-sut” = the “king’s” “son”) and exclaimed that the latter was “Sacchidaanand” and “Pardhaam” (i.e. he is eternal, truthful and the supreme abode of spiritual bliss, as well as the supreme destination of the soul). [How is it possible?] (7)

Not only this, Shiva had also become so enchanted by the sight of this prince (Lord Ram) that he has been dazed since then. Shiva is so lost in the thoughts of Ram and is so much thrilled that he seems to be overcome with affection for the prince, and this affection does not seem to abate at all. It rather seems to overwhelm him. [I am utterly confused, as Shiva is a renunciate god and he is not easily charmed by anything at all, let alone by the beautiful form of a human being. Besides this, Shiva is an enlightened god and the wisest amongst them. So, his odd behaviour has become a mystery for me.]² (8)

[Note—This confusion in the mind of Sati shows that she wasn’t paying attention to the discussion between her husband Lord Shiva and sage Agastya as narrated earlier in Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precedes Doha no. 48. The two had been discussing at length about the divinity of Lord Ram and had narrated the story of the Lord during the course of this discussion.

This state of immaturity of Sati's mind will come to the fore once again a little later when she would assume the form of Sita, the stolen wife of Lord Ram, and walk in front of the Lord to find out if he is able to recognise her as Sati, or thinks that she is Sita. In the latter case it will be proved that Ram was an ordinary prince, but should he recognise her as Sati then it will be certain that he is indeed the Lord whom Shiva worships. In her zeal to determine the reality of Lord Ram, Sati forgot that to assume the form of Sita would be violative of ethical norms, and that Lord Shiva would not like her doubting his wisdom and assuming the form of the divine consort of the Lord whom her husband worships. Assuming the form of Sita would mean trying to cheat Lord Ram on the one hand, and assuming the form of another person's wife would be betrayal of loyalty vows with her own husband, Lord Shiva. It would be a compounded crime, a deceit that would be multiplied two times over.

¹Refer similar idea expressed in Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 55 herein below.

It is pertinent to note here that Sati's questions to Lord Shiva about who Lord Ram actually was is the basis of the telling of the entire story of the Adhyatma Ramayan written by sage Veda Vyas—refer: Adhyatma Ramayan, Baal Kand, Canto no. 1.

Besides this, this entire episode of Sati getting deluded regarding the authenticity of Lord Ram's divine form is narrated in detail in 'Shiva Puran, Rudra Samhita', in its Canto no. 24. Incidentally, this Puran (ancient mythological history), as its name suggests, is entirely dedicated to the theme of Lord Shiva.

²Refer also to Baal Kand, Doha no. 50 and its following Chaupai line nos. 1-4 herein below.]

दो०. ब्रह्म जो व्यापक बिरज अज अकल अनीह अभेद ।

सो कि देह धरि होइ नर जाहि न जानत बेद ॥ ५० ॥

dōhā.

brahma jō byāpaka biraja aja akala anīha abhēda.

sō ki dēha dhari hō'i nara jāhi na jānata bēda. 50.

Does it make sense to assume that Brahm, the supreme Lord of creation—who is all-pervading and immanent (“Vyaapak”), is immaculate and holy (“Viraj”), is eternal and without a birth (“Aja”), who is free from all attributes and qualities associated with this creation (“Akal”), who is free from having desires and ambitions (“Aniha”), is uniform and without distinct parts (“Avedha”), and is so mysterious and mystical that he is beyond the reach of the knowledge of the Vedas (i.e. whom even the great scriptures have not been able to know and define)—will ever take the gross form of the body of a human being? (Doha no. 50)

[Note—Sati was confused because the virtues of Brahm are in sharp contrast with and opposite to those of a human being. There is no comparison between the two. None of the attributes of Brahm are applicable to a human. So, thought Sati, why would Brahm volunteer to demote himself to the lowly stature of a human being?

Even if it is assumed that Brahm had to eliminate the scourge of the evil demons, he could do it by his mere wish as he is the almighty and all-powerful “Supreme Being”, without the need to come down on the earth and undergo all the hardships and sufferings like an ordinary man. How can Brahm wail and grieve for a woman like Ram is doing for his abducted wife Sita? Why would Brahm have to take a birth and grow up like a man when he can simply reveal his divine form anywhere and in any shape he wants? Does not Brahm, who is all-knowing and all-pervading, even

know where Sita is that he has to go and search for her in the wilderness like a man as Ram is doing?

None of the external deeds and behaviours of Lord Ram show that he is Brahm, then why did her husband Shiva bow before him, and why was he so enchanted by the sight of Lord Ram that he had lost awareness of everything else? Sati was confounded as she could not understand it!

चौ०. बिष्णु जो सुर हित नरतनु धारी । सोउ सर्बग्य जथा त्रिपुरारी ॥ १ ॥
 खोजइ सो कि अग्य इव नारी । ग्यानधाम श्रीपति असुरारी ॥ २ ॥
 संभुगिरा पुनि मृषा न होई । सिव सर्बग्य जान सबु कोई ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

biṣṇu jō sura hita naratanu dhārī. sō'u sarbagya jathā tripurārī. 1.
 khōja'i sō ki agya iva nārī. gyānadhāma śrīpati asurārī. 2.
 sambhugirā puni mṛṣā na hōī. siva sarbagya jāna sabu kōī. 3.

[Sati thought to herself—] ‘Supposing it is true that Lord Vishnu has taken the form of a human being (as Lord Ram) to protect the interest of the gods and help them (by eliminating the demons), but then it is well known that Vishnu is also omniscient and wise like Tripurari (Lord Shiva). (1)

This being the fact, why would he (Vishnu in the form of Ram) then wander aimlessly in search of his wife like an ignorant man? After all, Vishnu is an abode of all knowledge, he is the Lord of Laxmi (the goddess who is Vishnu’s divine consort) who is inseparable from him, and is the invincible enemy of the demons.

[Given these facts, it is unbelievable that Vishnu in the form of Lord Ram would not know where Laxmi in the form of Sita is, that he would have to suffer separation from Laxmi who is supposed to be eternally inseparable from him, and that Laxmi would be so weak and lacking in mystical powers that she could not protect herself from a demon who would easily kidnap her like an ordinary woman.] (2)

Nevertheless, the words of Shambhu (Lord Shiva)¹ cannot be wrong, because everybody knows that he is all-knowing and wisest.’ (3)

[Note—¹What were the words of Shiva? The answer is found in Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 50 herein above. Shiva has saluted Lord Ram and pronounced that the Lord is ‘Sacchidaanand’, and ‘Jag-Paawan’—i.e. Lord Ram is eternally truthful, pure, divine and an abode of spiritual bliss, as well as the one who purifies the world of its impurities. These are the characteristics of Lord Vishnu. This being so, Lord Ram cannot be equated with ordinary human beings. But his behaviour contradicts these facts, and on the face of it Ram does not appear to bear any resemblance to Vishnu.

These negative thoughts bore heavily in the mind of Sati, and left her bewildered.]

अस संसय मन भयउ अपारा । होइ न हृदयँ प्रबोध प्रचारा ॥ ४ ॥

asa sansaya mana bhaya'u apārā. hō'i na hṛdayaṁ prabōdha pracārā. 4.

There was a great deal of bewilderment in the Mana (heart and mind) of Sati, leaving her confused and perplexed. In spite of great effort to reassure her own self, wisdom

did not emerge in her heart and she could not calm herself down because of these doubts and confusions. (4)

[Note—Refer similar idea expressed in Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 50 herein above.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 93 that says having unwarranted doubts has a stunning affect on a man's wisdom, and it causes so much perplexities and confusions in him as if he has been bitten by a serpent.]

जद्यपि प्रगट न कहेउ भवानी । हर अंतरजामी सब जानी ॥ ५ ॥

jadyapi pragaṭa na kahē'u bhavānī. hara antarajāmī saba jānī. 5.

Although Bhavani (Sati) did not openly expressed the confusions and doubts that were deluging her mind and heart and taking a heavy toll of her peace, Lord Har (Shiva) became aware of it as he is 'Antaryaami', i.e. he knows the internal thoughts of all. (5)

[Note—Sati had acknowledged that Shiva is omniscient in Chaupai line no. 1 herein above. Nothing could be hidden from him.]

सुनहि सती तव नारि सुभाऊ । संसय अस न धरिअ उर काऊ ॥ ६ ॥

जासु कथा कुंभज रिषि गाई । भगति जासु मैं मुनिहि सुनाई ॥ ७ ॥

सोइ मम इष्टदेव रघुबीरा । सेवत जाहि सदा मुनि धीरा ॥ ८ ॥

sunahi satī tava nāri subhā'ū. sansaya asa na dhari'a ura kā'ū. 6.

jāsu kathā kumbhaja riṣi gā'ī. bhagati jāsu mairm munihi sunā'ī. 7.

sō'i mama iṣṭadēva raghubīrā. sēvata jāhi sadā muni dhīrā. 8.

Thus, Shiva told Sati (even though she did not ask the Lord for any clarification as she was afraid to do so lest her husband would be annoyed at her impertinence and stupidity)—'Look Sati. Your temperament is like an ordinary woman (though you are a goddess in your own right and my consort who is supposed to be above such delusory thoughts). It is not good and wise to harbour such baseless doubts in one's heart (as they do more harm and serve no purpose whatsoever).¹ (6)

He whose divine story had been narrated by sage Kumbhaj (Agastya), and the virtues of whose Bhakti (devotion and submission) I had explained to the sage a short while ago² [7],---

---It is the same Lord Raghubir (Sri Ram, the brave warrior of the dynasty of king Raghu) whom I adore as my revered deity ("Istha-Dev"— इष्टदेव) and who is constantly being served (worshipped) by wise, learned and realised sages to whom I have bowed my head and paid my obeisance a little while ago [8].

[In other words, the warrior prince before whom I bowed and upon whom you have cast your doubts is the same Lord Ram whom I worship as my revered deity. He is not an ordinary warrior prince of the Raghu dynasty as you think him to be. Have wisdom, and refrain from falling prey to falsehoods and temptations of Maya—the Lord's maverick power to create delusions. It won't help you in anyway.] (7-8)

[Note—¹In other words, you behave like an ordinary woman who is full of doubts, and is habituated to question the wisdom and actions of her husband. You are a

goddess, and have been living with me for so long. You have always accompanied me whenever I had gone to some sage's hermitage to discuss spiritual and metaphysical topics. You have always observed that I meditate upon Lord Ram and his holy name and form. You also know that I am immune to delusions and don't play fools around with nonsensical things. You are well aware of the level of my wisdom and intellectual prowess, and the fact that gods and their patriarch, the creator Brahma, have often approached me when they themselves could not find an answer to confounding issues faced by them.

Therefore, it is incongruous for you to doubt my wisdom when I declare my faith, devotion and allegiance to Lord Ram.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chuapai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 48 herein above.]

छं०. मुनि धीर जोगी सिद्ध संतत बिमल मन जेहि ध्यावहीं । १ ।
कहि नेति निगम पुरान आगम जासु कीरति गावहीं ॥ २ ॥
सोइ रामु व्यापक ब्रह्म भुवन निकाय पति माया धनी । ३ ।
अवतरेउ अपने भगत हित निजतंत्र नित रघुकुलमनी ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

muni dhīra jōgī sid'dha santata bimala mana jēhi dhyāvahīm. 1.
kahi nēti nigama purāna āgama jāsu kīrati gāvahīm. 2.
sō'i rāmu byāpaka brahma bhuvana nikāya pati māyā dhanī. 3.
avatarē'u apanē bhagata hita nijatantra nita raghukulamanī. 4.

#He (Lord Ram) who is meditated upon with a pure and holy Mana (mind and heart) by wise and learned sages, seers, ascetics, hermits, mystics and saints [1]---

---He whose endless, immeasurable and eternal glories are being sung and lauded continuously by the Vedas and Purans, but still the scriptures fail to understand and define him in entirety, thereby declaring that he is "Neti-Neti"¹ (not this; not this—or that 'whatever has been said of the Lord is not a sufficient description of his true glory nor of his true identity, for it evades description and understanding') [2]---

---It is the same Lord Ram who is Brahm (the Supreme Being)², the all-pervading and immanent lord of the whole universe, the Lord of Maya (i.e. the delusory powers of creation), in a personified form [3]---

---Who has manifested himself, out of his own free will, in a divine form as the gem-of-a-prince in the family of king Raghu ("Raghu-kul-mani") for the welfare and good of his devotees³ [4]. (Chanda line nos. 1-4)

[Note—#Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 and its following Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 126—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 127.

¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 12.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 50.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 26; Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 48.

Sati had raised two questions—one was that Lord Ram was not Brahm, and the second was that Brahm does not incarnate as a human being: refer—from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 50—to Chaupai line no. 2 that follows this Doha. Lord Shiva has addressed her doubts in the above verses, saying that "Lord Ram is indeed Brahm", and then giving the reason "why Brahm became a human being".]

सो०. लाग न उर उपदेसु जदपि कहेउ सिवँ बार बहु ।
बोले बिहसि महेसु हरिमाया बलु जानि जियँ ॥ ५१ ॥

sōraṭhā.

lāga na ura upadēsu jadapi kahē'u sivaṃ bāra bahu.
bōlē bihasi mahēsu harimāyā balu jāni jiyāṃ. 51.

Though Lord Shiva repeatedly told her the reality of Lord Ram, his wise words had no effect upon Sati whose heart did not accept the reasoning. She remained stubborn in her disbelief. [Sati wasn't convinced about what her husband had said.]¹

Understanding in his heart about the stupendous power and the immense influence that Lord Hari's (Lord Vishnu's) Maya (delusion-creating powers) can have upon a person's wisdom² (thereby totally eclipsing it, and hence making him or her susceptible to falling an easy prey to delusions and ignorance), Lord Mahesh ("the Great God", Lord Shiva) smiled wryly and said³—(Sortha/Doha no. 51)

[Note—¹A similar situation has arisen elsewhere in the narration of Ram Charit Manas when we read that the great sage Narad, who is supposed to be a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and above passions and worldly emotions, too had not paid attention to Lord Shiva's advice to him—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 127.

The context in Narad's case was that once he had been so deeply submerged in mediating upon Lord Vishnu that Kamdeo (cupid), the god of passions, could not detract the sage in spite of his best efforts to do so. This achievement filled Narad with a sense of pride, and he went to Lord Shiva to boast of his achievement. It was then that the Lord told him that whatever he had said before him was alright, but he should not go and repeat his boast before Lord Vishnu as the latter is sure to punish him. Narad did not take this advice in the correct light, and thought that Shiva wishes to keep him quiet so that his stunning feat remains obscure so that the world would believe that Kamdeo was defeated by Shiva alone as narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.

As in our present case of Sati suffering due to her disobeying Shiva, Narad too had to suffer horrible ignominy when Lord Vishnu turned him into an ugly faced monkey—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 133; and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 134.

²The power of Maya is extremely strong. It has held under its spell even the wisest and the most learned, and deluded them so much as to portray that they were utterly stupid and ignorant.

It is averred in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 72 that Maya is so powerful that it makes the world dance to its tune—this is the proclamation of the saint-crow Kaagbhusund.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand—(i) Doha no. 41; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precedes Doha no. 59; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71; (iv) Chaupai line nos. 3-7 that precede Doha no. 116.

The Atharva Veda's *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Uttar Kanda/Canto 2, verse no. 9-10 describe the effects of Maya, verse nos. 15-18 the relationship between Maya and the Atma, and verse nos. 33, 44-45 the fact that Maya is a voluntary creation of the Atma as well as of Brahm.

Sage Veda Vyas' *Adhyatma Ramayan*, in its Lanka Kanda, canto 14, verse no. 28-29 describes the relationship between Maya and Brahm.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 132 where we read that Lord Vishnu had smiled at the ignorance and delusions that engulfed the wise sage Narad as a result of the influence of Maya of the Lord.

Lord Ram's Maya is so great and powerful that it had provoked even Sati, the otherwise truthful consort of Shiva, to "tell a lie"—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 56.]

चौ०. जौं तुम्हरेँ मन अति संदेहू । तौ किन जाइ परीछा लेहू ॥ १ ॥
 तब लगि बैठ अहउँ बटछाहीं । जब लगि तुम्ह ऐहहु मोहि पाहीं ॥ २ ॥
 जैसेँ जाइ मोह भ्रम भारी । करेहु सो जतनु बिबेक बिचारी ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

jauṁ tumharēm mana ati sandēhū. tau kina jā'i parīchā lēhū. 1.
 taba lagi baiṭha aha'uṁ baṭachāhīṁ. jaba lagi tumha aihahu mōhi pāhīṁ. 2.
 jaisēm jā'i mōha bhrama bhārī. karēhu sō jatanu bibēka bicārī. 3.

Shiva told Sati—'If you have so strong doubt (that inspite of my trying to tell you the truth you still do not seem to be convinced), then why don't you go and examine the truth for yourself?'¹ (1)

In the meantime, I will sit calmly here under the shadow of a banyan tree², and wait till you come back to me. (2)

Use your wisdom and apply intelligence and careful thought³ to do whatever you think is necessary that would help you to overcome your doubts. [Because harbouring doubts is not good for anyone. Doubts make a person restless and it robs the peace of the mind and heart.]' (3)

[Note—¹Shiva thought that since Sati has been overcome with doubts and has even begin to question her husband's wisdom, then in this situation no matter how hard he tried she cannot be convinced. So it's better to let her examine the truth herself. In a sort of way, there is a lesson in this episode: it is wise for an intelligent person not to get agitated when his best of advice has no effect on the mind of a person whose intelligence and wisdom have become eclipsed. In this situation it is better to let go and retain one's calm.

Another lesson is that when a person becomes stubborn and refuses to hear even his best well-wisher, as we see presently in the case of Sati disbelieving her own husband, it is better to stop arguing and let the other person have his or her way so that he or she learns the lesson the hard way. As we shall see soon, Sati discovers to her horror that what her husband, the wise and all-knowing Lord Shiva, has said about Lord Ram was actually the truth, but by the time she had committed certain errors which were unpardonable.

The consequences were severe for Sati, and it finally led to her being abandoned by Shiva—not so much as for disbelieving him as for her telling lies to him (Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 56) on the one hand, and on the other hand having the temerity and irreverence to attempt to cheat Lord Ram by assuming the visible form of Sita (Baal Kand, Doha no. 52). Sati forgot that Sita is worshipped by Lord Shiva as the Mother Goddess because he worships Lord Ram as the Supreme Lord of creation. How could Sati expect Shiva to accept her again once she has played the role of Sita (Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 56)?

When one begins to doubt even the best of teachers and advisors, when one thinks that everyone else is a fool except himself or herself, then such a person is doomed to suffer as Sati had learnt the hard way—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal

Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 59—and Chaupai line no. that follows this Doha.

²The banyan tree is liked by Shiva, and whenever the Lord sits down to relax or meditate, it is under the shadow of this tree—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 106.

Even in Shiva's abode in Mt. Kailash, there is a banyan tree under which he sits to rest and meditate—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 58.

The banyan tree is the preferred one where saints and sages used to preach. It has a broad girth and a wide area covered by its shadow. Even the saintly crow Kaagbhusund used to tell the divine story of Lord Ram under the shadow of a huge banyan tree—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precedes Doha no. 57. Once, Shiva had himself gone to hear Lord Ram's story at Kaagbhusund's place (Uttar Kand, Doha no. 57 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-10).

³Shiva has already warned Sati to be careful as to how she tests the reality of Lord Ram. Sati should use 'wisdom, intelligence and prudence', and not do anything that violates the basic tenets of Dharma. But the irony is that she was so deluded that she did—one, she assumed the form of Sita to cheat Lord Ram (Baal Kand, Doha no. 52), and second she came back and told lies to her husband (Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 56).]

चलीं सती सिव आयसु पाई । करहिं बिचारु करौं का भाई ॥ ४ ॥

calīm satī siva āyasu pā'ī. karahim bicāru karaum kā bhā'ī. 4.

Thus, after getting the orders from Lord Shiva, Sati went to test the truth and reality about Lord Ram. But she was so confused that she did not know how to do it. So on the way she kept pondering, 'What should I do now?' (4)

[Note—Sati has shown lack of wisdom from the very beginning. First and foremost, she could not pick up the truth inspite of hearing the discourse between the learned sage Agastya and Lord Shiva—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 51.

Then she did not believe her own husband inspite of knowing that Shiva was the most exalted God of creation, and that he never says a lie—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 50; and Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 51.

Thirdly, when Shiva told her to go and find out the truth herself in a wise manner, she should have at least asked him to guide her how best to test the truth about Lord Ram-but she didn't do it. This is because she had already doubted the wisdom and had questioned the intelligence of Shiva.]

इहाँ संभु अस मन अनुमाना । दच्छसुता कहुं नहिं कल्याना ॥ ५ ॥

मोरेहु कहें न संसय जाहीं । बिधि बिपरीत भलाई नाहीं ॥ ६ ॥

होइहि सोइ जो राम रचि राखा । को करि तर्क बढ़ावै साखा ॥ ७ ॥

ihāṁ sambhu asa mana anumānā. dacchasutā kahuṁ nahim kalyānā. 5.

mōrēhu kahēm na sansaya jāhīm. bidhi bipolarita bhalā'ī nāhīm. 6.

hō'ihī sō'i jō rāma raci rākhā. kō kari tarka baṛhāvai sākhā. 7.

Back here (from where Sati had left Lord Shiva sitting under the banyan tree), Lord

Shambhu (Shiva) concluded that Sati is bound to commit some mischief and suffer its consequences. He thought, ‘The daughter of Daksha¹ cannot have any welfare anywhere. (5)

Her doubts were not dispelled inspite of my attempts to tell her the truth. It appears that the creator is ill-disposed towards her and the stars are opposed to her well-being. These are bad omens and they portend harm for her². (6)

What is the use of unnecessarily debating and contemplating upon things which are beyond one’s reach and grasp; what is the benefit of uselessly creating imaginary trees with their extended branches for things? It’s best, therefore, to leave the fate and whatever is to happen in the unknown realm of the future in the hands of Lord Ram, for ultimately it is the Lord’s wish that shall prevail. [So, there is no point in worrying unnecessarily)’ (7)

[Note—¹It is clever to use the phrase “daughter of Daksha” for Sati. Daksha, Sati’s father, was also egoist, stubborn and arrogant by nature. He also lacked wisdom and could not understand that Lord Shiva was not merely his son-in-law by the virtue of marriage of his daughter Sati with him, but is the “Mahadeva”, the greatest of all the gods, the most enlightened and powerful among the entire lot. So Daksha harboured ill-will against Lord Shiva and did not think twice before insulting the Lord. Daksha was so stupid that he did not realise that if Lord Shiva did not pay heed to his insulting behaviour it was not that the Lord was afraid to take revenge or was afraid of Daksha, but it was because Shiva was immune to such gross emotions as feeling elated at being honoured or angry at being insulted as he was beyond such things being a renunciate ascetic and an extremely self-realised god amongst the pantheon of gods. Daksha held Shiva in very low esteem and had boycotted him during the fire sacrifice when offerings are supposed to be made to all the gods without exception—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 62. Being his daughter, Sati inherited many of her father’s traits—one being stubborn, and the other to treat Shiva to be of a low intellect. We shall soon read that inspite of learning the hard way that what her husband Lord Shiva had told her with respect to Lord Ram being the absolute truth, she continued to disobey Shiva and doubt his advice. When the Lord advised her against going to participate in the fire sacrifice organised by her father Daksha because she won’t be welcome, Sati did not pay heed to him and was adamant to go. Of course, she faced scorn and taunts there, and finally, being unable to bear with the insult, she had burnt herself in the fire sacrifice—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 62—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 64.

Sati has also been addressed as ‘the daughter of Daksha’ later on in this narration in Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 55 where it is said that she ‘was so dazed by the magical sighting of numerous images of Lord Ram in his Viraat form that for a moment she felt giddy and her senses were numbed, leading to her being blinded for sometime’.

²And this was the ‘harm’ that Sati suffered—she not only was overwhelmed with guilt that made her lose her mental peace and face (refer—Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precedes Doha no. 55; Doha no. 57 ka; Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 58; and Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 59), but she also acquired ignominy for herself in the annals of history as a stubborn and stupid woman who did not obey her wise husband (refer—Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 59). She also had to suffer being abandoned by her husband (refer—Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 56; and Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 58), and ultimately burn herself in the fire sacrifice at her father’s place, resulting in the ruin of the whole family when Lord Shiva sent his follower named Birbhadra to punish Daksha and destroy his fire sacrifice (refer—Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precedes Doha no. 65).]

अस कहि लगे जपन हरिनामा । गई सती जहँ प्रभु सुखधामा ॥ ८ ॥

asa kahi lagē japana harināmā. ga'īm satī jaham̃ prabhu sukhadhāmā. 8.

Saying so (or, deciding in the manner as narrated in Chaupai line nos. 5-7 herein above) to himself, Lord Shiva began repeating the holy name “Ram” of Lord Hari (i.e. Vishnu—because Lord Ram was Vishnu’s incarnation)¹.

Meanwhile, Sati went to the spot on the ground where the Lord (Ram), who is an abode of happiness and bliss², was present. (8)

[Note—¹Lord Shiva repeated the holy name of Lord Ram to find peace and solace because this holy name of the Lord is a well-recognised universal formula for attaining abiding bliss and tranquillity of the soul.

When Lord Shiva reached Mt. Kailash, his abode in the Himalayas, he sat down under the shade of a banyan tree to meditate, and we learn that the holy name he used for this purpose was “Ram”—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 58; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precedes Doha no. 60; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19.

In fact, Lord Shiva adores this name of Lord Ram so much because he knows its astounding spiritual powers:

(i) It is on the strength of this holy name that he had gulped the horrible poison known as ‘Halaahal’ that was produced at the time of the churning of the ocean (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 19).

(ii) It is on the strength of this holy name—known as the ‘Tarak Mantra’ because it can take the creature across the mundane world consisting of a continuous cycle of birth and death together with their accompanying horrors, a world which is compared to a vast and limitless ocean—that Lord Shiva provides a dying creature with the reward of liberation and deliverance when he utters this holy name of “Ram” in his ears (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19).

²It is important to use the epithet “Sukha-Dhaamaa” (सुखधामा an abode of happiness and bliss) here to remove misgivings about the true nature of Lord Ram who is acting his part of being a human to perfection by wailing and lamenting the loss of Sita, and wondering gloomily in the forest in search of her as if he is an ordinary man overcome with grief and distress. The reader ought to understand that Lord Ram has to do this because he is an expert actor and leaves nothing to chance. How will we judge an actor? Well, the only criterion for judging any actor is the perfection with which he plays the role assigned to him. Here, the Supreme Lord is playing the role of a prince whose wife has been abducted by an unknown enemy in the forest. What is he expected to do in this situation—sing and dance merrily?!

दो०. पुनि पुनि हृदयँ बिचारु करि धरि सीता कर रूप ।

आगें होइ चलि पंथ तेहिं जेहिं आवत नरभूप ॥ ५२ ॥

dōhā.

puni puni hrdayam̃ bicāru kari dhari sītā kara rūpa.

āgēm̃ hō'i cali pantha tēhim̃ jēhim̃ āvata narabhūpa. 52.

Sati repeatedly thought to herself what is to be done (to ascertain whether or not Lord Ram is the divine Lord Vishnu in a human form as advised by Shiva). Finally she decided to test the truth of Lord Ram by assuming the illusory form of Sita, and

having assumed this form she started to walk ahead on the path on which Lord Ram was going in search of Sita. (Doha no. 52)

[Note—Sati decided to assume Sita’s form because she thought that if Lord Ram is indeed the all-knowing Lord Vishnu as Shiva had told her, then surely he would see through the illusionary form of Sita that she has assumed, and would recognise her to be Sati instead.

If Lord Ram, on the other hand, cannot see through her illusionary form and falls for the trap, thinking her actually to be Sita, then in this case it would be established beyond doubt that Ram has no insight or divine powers to see behind a veil of deceit, that he is not all-knowing and omniscient as Shiva had proclaimed him to be. In other words, Lord Ram was an ordinary human prince, and therefore her doubts about him are true. This implies that Shiva was wrong and she was correct.]

चौ०. लछिमन दीख उमाकृत बेषा । चकित भए भ्रम हृदयँ बिसेषा ॥ १ ॥
कहि न सकत कछु अति गंभीरा । प्रभु प्रभाउ जानत मतिधीरा ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

lachimana dīkha umākṛta bēṣā. cakita bha'e bhrama hṛdayaṁ bisēṣā. 1.
kahi na sakata kachu ati gambhīrā. prabhu prabhā'u jānata matidhīrā. 2.

#When Laxman saw Uma in her disguised form (as Sita)¹, he was astonished and flabbergasted. His heart was puzzled² because it was most unexpected. (1)

But he did not say a word because he thought that there was some very serious matter that defies his mind. Knowing about the Lord’s (Sri Ram’s) stupendous abilities and powers as well as his mystical ways, he decided to keep quiet and watch.³ (2)

[Note—¹The first point to note here is that Laxman has become aware of Sati’s true identity. What to say of Lord Ram who is all-knowing, even his fractional form Laxman could not be deceived by Sati.

Another important point to note here is that the word used for Shiva’s consort is “Uma” and *not* “Sati”. This is very crucial here. ‘Uma’ was the daughter of Daksha Prajapati, and like her father she too was arrogant and overcome with delusions. Even Shiva has addressed her as “the daughter of Daksha” in Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 52 to indicate this fact.

On the other hand, the word “Sati” means one who is immaculate and pure, one who is devoted and loyal towards her husband. How can one expect such a woman to disbelieve her loving husband who is giving a good advice for her own good, and how can one expect a true Sati to assume the form of another person’s wife as Uma has done here by becoming Sita?

²Laxman was very surprised and perplexed as he had never imagined in his wildest of imaginations that Lord Shiva’s consort would stoop so low and do this mischief. She has fallen low because she wasn’t a ‘Sati’ now, but was ‘Uma’, the daughter of Daksha, and had inherited the low intellect and wisdom of her over-jealous and ill-advised father.

³Surely there must be some very serious matter with which he is not aware. And so Laxman thought that it was wise and prudent for him to keep quiet lest he would make a clown of himself like Uma.

#There is another way of interpreting these verses, and they have a spiritual message. Laxman was puzzled when he saw Uma, but Lord Ram would not be at all as we shall read below shortly in the verses that follow. The metaphysical implication of this development is that a Jiva (a living being), represented by Laxman, is

confused when he sees so many stunning sights of the world. The Jiva is unable to decide what is true and what is false. So it is best for him to maintain his calm and leave everything in the hands of the Lord God whom he worships, because the Lord knows the truth and what is best for the Jiva. This spares the Jiva from getting tormented by a lot of problems that are avoidable. He is not subjected to unnecessary restlessness and tensions.]

सती कपटु जानेउ सुरस्वामी । सबदरसी सब अंतरजामी ॥ ३ ॥

सुमिरत जाहि मिटइ अग्याना । सोइ सरबग्य रामु भगवाना ॥ ४ ॥

satī kapaṭu jānē'u surasvāmī. sabadarasī saba antarajāmī. 3.

sumirata jāhi miṭa'i agyānā. sō'i sarabagya rāmu bhagavānā. 4.

The Lord of the gods (“Sur-Swaamy”, i.e. Lord Ram) immediately came to know about the deceit of Sati because he is all-knowing, and therefore knows the inner thoughts of all (as he lives in the inner-self of everyone as the Atma, the Soul). (3)

Lord Ram is the “Bhagwan” (the Supreme God) by remembering whom all ignorance and delusions are removed; he is the “Bhagwan” who is all-pervading and omniscient. (4)

[Note—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, line no. 1 of Doha no. 257 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 where sage Vasistha has reiterated exactly the same thing.

Even Lord Shiva has reiterated this sentiment in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 39.

We also find that when Sita has asked Lord Ram to go fetch the golden deer for her, the Lord got up to run behind the illusive deer, knowing fully well that he was a demon named Marich in disguise, that all this was destined to happen as a prelude for Sita’s abduction by Ravana, and that nothing was surprising in it—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 27.

Other similar reference is found in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 6 where sage Atri has honoured Lord Ram by affirming that Lord Ram knows the inner thoughts of all as he is “Antaryaami”—one who lives in the heart of all living beings.]

सती कीन्ह चह तहँहुँ दुराऊ । देखहु नारि सुभाव प्रभाऊ ॥ ५ ॥

निज माया बलु हृदयँ बखानी । बोले बिहसि रामु मृदु बानी ॥ ६ ॥

satī kīnha caha tahaṁhuṁ durā'ū. dēkhahu nāri subhāva prabhā'ū. 5.

nija māyā balu hrdayaṁ bakhānī. bōlē bihasi rāmu mṛdu bānī. 6.

Look at the nature of a woman and the way it affects her thinking and behaviour that even Sati (who is supposed to be of an immaculate character and wise as she is the consort of Lord Shiva, the wisest of all the gods and the greatest devotee of Lord Ram) had chosen to play a cunning trick with Lord Ram (who is the all-knowing Lord of Gods)¹. (5)

Meanwhile, Lord Ram praised in his heart the wonderful strength that his Maya (delusion-creating powers) has, and the magic it can play². So he smiled³ and said politely (to Sati)--- (6)

[Note—¹Chaupai line no. 5 is the comment of the author, Goswami Tulsidas. He means that a woman is easily led astray by delusions so much so that she would not believe even her own husband once an idea gets its hold on her mind.

A similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 47 in the context of Kaikeyi who was so overcome with selfishness that her sense of rationality and probity took a severe beating, and she decided to send Lord Ram to forest so that her son Bharat could ascend the throne, not realising the turbulence this stubbornness would bring upon the whole family and the kingdom.

Once again, it is said in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 162 that “even the creator Brahma (“Vidhi”) is not able to understand the nature of a woman and how she would react”.

²Even Lord Shiva had realised that it was the Lord’s powerful Maya that has got its hold on Sati’s mind so that she has become so stubborn and irrational—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 51.

Later on, when Sati told Shiva a lie that she hasn’t tested Ram, Shiva again wondered at the powerful force of Lord Ram’s Maya that prevailed upon and instigated Sati to commit the unpardonable sin of telling a lie to her husband—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 56.

When Hanuman met Lord Ram later on in the story in Kishkindha Kand, he too could not recognise the Lord due to the deluding powers of Lord Ram’s Maya—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 2.

³Why has Lord Ram smiled? Because he is in awe of his own Maya and the powerful delusions it can create. It is a wry smile, a sort of a teasing smirk with taught lips. Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 51; and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 132.

We shall read later on in Ram Charit Manas that when sage Sutikshan asked the Lord that he be allowed to accompany him to the hermitage of sage Agastya, the Lord had smiled and given his assent. It is because here also Sutikshan has used cunning so that he can be in the company of Lord Ram by saying that he hasn’t met his guru Agastya for quite some time and it is an opportunity to go and meet him with Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 12.

In other words, whenever someone uses cunning tricks with the Lord to serve his or her own agenda, Lord Ram smiles because he knows the real intention.]

जोरि पानि प्रभु कीन्ह प्रनामू । पिता समेत लीन्ह निज नामू ॥ ७ ॥

कहेउ बहोरि कहाँ बृषकेतू । बिपिन अकेलि फिरहु केहि हेतू ॥ ८ ॥

jōri pāni prabhu kīnha pranāmū. pitā samēta līnha nija nāmū. 7.

kahē'u bahōri kahāṁ bṛṣakētū. bipina akēli phirahu kēhi hētū. 8.

The Lord (Sri Ram) joined his palms and reverentially bowed before Sati, introducing himself by his own name and that of his father (king Dasrath). (7)

Then he politely asked her, ‘Say, where is ‘Brishketu’ (one of the names of Lord Shiva)? Why are you (i.e. for what reason are you) wondering alone in the dense forest?’ (8)

[Note—The very fact that Lord Ram bowed his head and then introduced himself by not only saying his own name but being more specific by adding the name of his father shows that he was kind of teasing Sati. He subtly reprimanded her by saying in effect that since she was so stupid that she didn’t know who he (Ram) was in spite of Shiva telling her all essential elements associated with the Lord as narrated

in Chaupai line nos. 7-8 and its following Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 51, it will be better if she is properly introduced with the prince she has come to examine, complete with all the identity credentials such as his own name as well as the name of his father so that no confusion is left in her mind as to which “Ram” she is meeting.

This introduction also signalled to Sati that Lord Ram has recognised who she actually is, that he knows that she isn't Sita. So, her trick hasn't worked!

Lord Ram was in a human form, and as such by bowing before Sati and holding his hands together in his front as a sign of showing great respect to her is a message to the rest of the world as to how one should treat a lady.]

दो०. राम बचन मृदु गूढ सुनि उपजा अति संकोचु ।
सती सभित महेश पहिं चलीं हृदयँ बड़ सोचु ॥ ५३ ॥

dōhā.

rāma bacana mṛdu gūṛha suni upajā ati saṅkōcu.
satī sabhīta mahēsa pahim̐ calīm̐ hrdayaṁ̐ baṛa sōcu. 53.

When Sati heard these polite but significant words of Lord Ram (which clearly indicated that he has recognised her, and has even smiled at her nuisance and idiotic behaviour), she felt very uneasy and confounded.

Afraid out of her wits (as she realised her folly and the grave consequences that she would have to face now), Sati started on her return journey to where Mahesh (Lord Shiva) was (waiting for her to return). On the way, her heart was overcome with immense regret and consternation. (Doha no. 53)

[Note—We observe here that Sati did not have the courage to answer Lord Ram's question asked in verse no. 8 that precedes this Doha—“Where was Lord Shiva, and why was she loitering alone in the forest?”

First, she was already very nervous as she knew deep within her heart that by defying her enlightened husband, Lord Shiva, she was committing a grave sin. This was compounded when all her pretensions were bared naked and she was sort of unmasked. She had failed miserably in the test she so confidently set out to take, and what answer would she now give to Shiva upon return when he asked her how she fared. She was utterly stunned and flabbergasted.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 58.

The lesson to learn here is about the horrendous consequences of falling in the trap of Maya. One must be wary of Maya.]

चौ०. मैं संकर कर कहा न माना । निज अग्यानु राम पर आना ॥ १ ॥
जाइ उतरु अब देहउँ काहा । उर उपजा अति दारुन दाहा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

mair̐ saṅkara kara kahā na mānā. nija agyānu rāma para ānā. 1.
jā'i utaru aba dēha'um̐ kāhā. ura upajā ati dārūna dāhā. 2.

Sati was overwhelmed by contrition and regret. She lamented internally, and muttered to her self, ‘I had not obeyed the words of Lord Shankar (Shiva), and in my stupidity and folly I had cast the shadow of my ignorance on Lord Ram. (1)

Now, what answer shall I go and give him (Shiva)²?

These thoughts filled her heart with immense worry, tormenting it and setting it literally afire. (2)

[Note—Sati was extremely perturbed. She had disobeyed her husband, Lord Shiva, despite his repeated attempts to make Sati see reason (refer: Baal Kand, Doha no. 51), which in its self is a grave sin. This is obviously because she had thought that he is less wise than she is inspite of witnessing how reverentially sage Agastya had welcomed and respected her husband, Lord Shiva in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 48.

To compound the matter further and make it worse, she had cast her ignorance upon someone, i.e. Lord Ram, who was praised unanimously by both sage Agastya as well as her husband Lord Shiva as the Supreme Lord of creation—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 50; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 along with Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 51.

²Her fears were not unfounded as we shall read below that as soon as she reached Lord Shiva, he immediately asked her how she had examined the reality of Lord Ram—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 55.]

जाना राम सतीं दुखु पावा । निज प्रभाउ कछु प्रगटि जनाववा ॥ ३ ॥

सतीं दीख कौतुकु मग जाता । आगें रामु सहित श्री भ्राता ॥ ४ ॥

फिरि चितवा पाछें प्रभु देखा । सहित बंधु सिय सुंदर बेषा ॥ ५ ॥

jānā rāma satīm dukhu pāvā. nija prabhā'u kachu pragaṭi janāvā. 3.

satīm dīkha kautuku maga jātā. āgēm rāmu sahita śrī bhrātā. 4.

phiri citavā pāchēm prabhu dēkhā. sahita bandhu siya sundara bēṣā. 5.

Lord Ram realised that Sati was utterly confounded and worried¹. So he decided to remove all traces of doubts about him that she may still harbour in her mind and heart by revealing some of his mystical powers that cannot be possessed and displayed by an ordinary human being (which Sati had thought him to be). (3)

[So, what did Lord Ram do? He assumed many duplicate forms, all like him, and all accompanied by Sita! This was to show Sati that Sita is never separate from Lord Ram, and Sati should not think that she is the only one who could play tricks on the Lord.]

Sati saw a miraculous spectacle unfold before her eyes#. As she was going back, she saw on the path ahead of her the sight of Lord Ram with Sri (Sita) and his brother (Laxman). (4)

Stunned, she looked back, only to see the beautiful forms of Lord with Sita and his brother.² (5)

[Note—¹It is to be noted that no words were exchanged between Lord Ram and Sati. The Lord had asked her where Shiva, her husband, was, but she hadn't replied, and instead had started retracing her steps in the direction from where she had come. But consternation and perplexities were writ large on her face. Even if she had done her best to hide it, Lord Ram knew the turbulent state of her mind as he is "all-knowing, and is privy to the inner thoughts of everyone"—refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha nos. 3-4 herein above.

²Sati had assumed the form of Sita, Lord Ram's wife who had been abducted by Ravana, by the virtue of mystical powers that she possessed which allow one to change one's form at will. These powers are normally possessed by gods and goddesses, but not by an ordinary human prince. Sati had thought that Lord Ram was

an ordinary prince as is clear by the reading of Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 50, as well as Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that follow this Doha.

So, Lord Ram wished to teach Sati in the language she would best understand—i.e. deceit, falsehood and illusions created by use of magical powers. After all, Sati had also employed deceit to test the Lord, and it is time that she is repaid in the same coin.

#If we were to dramatise this episode then it would be like Lord Ram and Laxman seeing an apparition of Sita. This is the reason why Laxman was dumbfounded in Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 53. And this perhaps is the reason why Sati did not reply to Lord Ram—as shadows, phantoms, ghosts and apparitions don't speak.

What Sati saw now was also an apparition—and we shall observe that the shadowy forms of Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman that appeared all around Sati do not speak a word too! We shall also read that this sight churned the head of Sati like in a whirlpool so much so that she was terrified, her heart shivered and her body became numbed out of fear and shock, even becoming temporarily blind like a person suffering from vertigo and some serious mental illness which results in bouts of hallucination and loss of sight—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 55.]

जहँ चितवहिं तहँ प्रभु आसीना । सेवहिं सिद्ध मुनीस प्रबीना ॥ ६ ॥
देखे सिव बिधि बिष्नु अनेका । अमित प्रभाउ एक तें एका ॥ ७ ॥
बंदत चरन करत प्रभु सेवा । बिबिध बेष देखे सब देवा ॥ ८ ॥

jahaṁ citavahiṁ tahaṁ prabhu āsīnā. sēvahiṁ sid'dha munīsa prabīnā. 6.
dēkhē siva bidhi biṣṇu anēkā. amita prabhā'u ēka tēm ēkā. 7.
bandata carana karata prabhu sēvā. bibidha bēṣa dēkhē saba dēvā. 8.

[What Sati saw was the 'Viraat' form of Lord Ram, the Lord's original form as Lord Vishnu who is also known as the "Viraat Purush". The word 'Viraat' means the vast, the cosmic and the all-encompassing form of the Lord.]

Wherever and in whichever direction Sati saw she could see the Lord seated majestically, and being served by Siddhas (mystics) and wise sages. (6)

Not only this (i.e. not only the mystics and sages), but she also saw many Lord Shivas, Vidhis (the creator Brahma) and Vishnus, all more influential and powerful than the other, [7] ---

---each serving Lord Ram and worshipping the Lord's holy feet. She also saw the gods, in varied forms and attires, serving the Lord too [8]. (7-8)

[Note—This is the cosmic and all-inclusive form of the supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being, from whom not only the three primary gods, viz. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder, have emerged, but also the rest of the creation headed by the gods in heaven, as well as the mystics and sages on earth.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 54—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 55 which too describe Lord Ram's beautiful Viraat form.

The three, Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita stayed together in the forest, and they represented the three symbolic forms of Brahm (Supreme Being), the Jiva (the living being), and Maya (the mystical powers of Brahm) respectively—refer: Ram Charit Manas--(i) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 123; and (ii) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 7; Chaupai line no. 20 that precedes Doha no. 10.

Indeed, Lord Ram's visible form was so astounding that the beholder was left thrilled and dumbfounded—refer for instance: Ram Charit Manas—(i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 148 where this condition was experienced by Manu and Satrupa when the Lord revealed himself before them; and (ii) in Kiskindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 2 when Hauman was thrilled upon recognising his revered Lord, Sri Ram.]

दो०. सती बिधात्री इंदिरा देखीं अमित अनूप ।

जेहिं जेहिं बेष अजादि सुर तेहि तेहि तन अनुरूप ॥ ५४ ॥

dōhā.

satī bidhātrī indirā dēkhīm amita anūpa.

jēhim jēhim bēṣa ajādi sura tēhi tēhi tana anurūpa. 54.

Sati also saw the respective consorts of the gods (she had already seen as narrated in the previous verses). That is, she saw as many Satis (consort of Shiva), Bidhaatris (consort of Bidhi or the creator Brahma), and Indiraas (consort of Indra, the king of gods) in as many forms and in different attires as she saw their respective counterpart gods.

All the female counterparts of the different gods had as many compatible forms and varied attires as they were gods in myriad forms and attires. (Doha no. 54)

[Note—As we shall read below in verse nos. 3-4, Lord Ram and Sita were seen by Sati in one universal form and attire as compared to the varied forms and different attires of the rest of the gods and goddesses. This sight was in conformity with the philosophy of the scriptures that the Supreme Being is steady, constant, uniform, unchanging and universal.]

देखे जहँ तहँ रघुपति जेते । सक्तिन्ह सहित सकल सुर तेते ॥ १ ॥

जीव चराचर जो संसारा । देखे सकल अनेक प्रकारा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

dēkhē jahaṁ tahaṁ raghupati jētē. saktinha sahita sakala sura tētē. 1.

jīva carācara jō sansārā. dēkhē sakala anēka prakārā. 2.

She saw the many Gods with their Shaktis (female counterparts; their consorts) everywhere she saw Lord Ram (“Raghupati”). (1)

Besides them, she also saw all the Jivas (living beings) that inhabit this world—both those who could move (such as the members of the animal kingdom) as well as those who could not (the members of the plant kingdom)—in numerous forms and different stages of evolution. (2)

[Note—In other words, Sati saw the entire creation serving Lord Ram—right from the gods and goddesses in heaven to the exalted sages and mystics as well as the members of the animal and plant kingdoms on earth.]

पूजहिं प्रभुहि देव बहु बेषा । राम रूप दूसर नहिं देखा ॥ ३ ॥

अवलोके रघुपति बहुतेरे । सीता सहित न बेष घनेरे ॥ ४ ॥

सोइ रघुबर सोइ लछिमनु सीता । देखि सती अति भई सभीता ॥ ५ ॥

pūjahim prabhuhi dēva bahu bēṣā. rāma rūpa dūsara nahim dēkhā. 3.

avalōkē raghupati bahutērē. sītā sahita na bēṣa ghanērē. 4.

sō'i raghubara sō'i lachimanu sītā. dēkhi satī ati bha'im sabhitā. 5.

All of the gods in their different forms were worshipping the same Lord (Sri Ram). Sati did not see different forms of Lord Ram as she had seen the gods in myriad of forms. [That is, though she saw many forms of different gods and goddesses, she saw only one universal form of Lord Ram whom all the gods and goddesses were worshipping.] (3)

Though she saw many images of Raghupati (Lord Ram) with Sita [as narrated in Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 54 herein above], yet all these images had the same attire and forms. [In other words, though Sati could see countless images of Lord Ram and Sita in every direction she looked, yet all these physical forms of the Lord and Sita were exactly alike, though the gods who worshipped them had variations in their physical forms and attires.]¹ (4)

Hence, when Sati saw with amazement this magical sight wherein she could see countless images of Lord Ram and Sita but all of them were exactly similar to each other, she became absolutely perplexed and scared². (5)

[Note—¹This miracle of seeing one uniform image of Lord Ram everywhere was experienced by the crow saint Kaagbhusund also as narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha nos. 80—81. More specifically, Kaagbhusund had also seen one form of Lord Ram wherever he had gone—refer: Uttar Kand, Doha no. 81 Ka.

Kaagbhusund had wondered in many universes, and in each of these worlds he saw the same awe-inspiring wonderful sight as Sati has seen here in our present narration.]

हृदय कंप तन सुधि कछु नाहीं । नयन मूदि बैठीं मग माहीं ॥ ६ ॥

बहुरि बिलोकेउ नयन उघारी । कछु न दीख तहँ दच्छकुमारी ॥ ७ ॥

hr̥daya kampa tana sudhi kachu nāhīm. nayana mūdi baiṭhīm maga māhīm. 6.

bahuri bilōkē'u nayana ughārī. kachu na dīkha tahaṁ dacchakumārī. 7.

Sati's heart trembled (with fear) and she lost awareness of her senses (body). She (was so scared and dazed by what she saw that she) shut her eyes close and sat down in the middle of the path¹. (6)

After some time she gathered herself and collected her senses, and then opened her eyes only to find that she could not see anything any more². (7)

[Note—¹Sati felt giddy and reeled under the influence of the stunning things she saw. She felt numbed in her senses, and thought that she was hallucinating. She feared that she has lost her mind or was seeing some terrifying ghosts. Feeling that she will faint and fall down unconscious if she continued to walk further, she closed her eyes and sat down in the middle of the road.

²Well now, this verse has two obvious meanings:—

(i) Sati was so stunned that when she opened her eyes after some time, she could not see properly as happens when a person suffers from some sort of severe mental shock and his or her nerves become temporarily paralysed.

(ii) The miracle of countless stunning images of Lord Ram and Sita being served by as many countless forms of gods, goddesses, mystics, sages and creatures suddenly vanished from sight when Sati reopened her eyes. It was like a nightmare, a bad dream which vanishes as soon as a person wakes up from sleep. Indeed it was so—for Sati would now wake up from the ignorance-inspired delusions and would see the truth and reality. We shall read below in verse no. 8 that the same Sati who was so sceptical when Shiva had bowed before Lord Ram would now bow her own head before the latter.]

पुनि पुनि नाइ राम पद सीसा । चलीं तहाँ जहँ रहे गिरीसा ॥ ८ ॥

puni puni nā'i rāma pada sīsā. calīm tahāṁ jahāṁ rahē girīsā. 8.

She repeatedly bowed her head before Lord Ram (to ask for forgiveness as well as to pay her respects to him), and then went her way to the spot where Girish (literally, the Lord of the mountains; here meaning Lord Shiva) had been waiting for her. (8)

दो०. गई समीप महेस तब हँसि पूछी कुसलात ।

लीन्हि परीछा कवन बिधि कहहु सत्य सब बात ॥ ५५ ॥

dōhā.

ga'īm samīpa mahēsa taba haṁsi pūchī kusalāta.

līnhi parīchā kavana bidhi kahahu satya saba bāta. 55.

When Sati reached Lord Mahesh (Shiva), he smiled¹ and asked about her welfare, if everything was alright with her².

Shiva asked her, 'How did you examine Lord Ram? Tell me everything truthfully³.' (Doha no. 55)

[Note—¹Lord Shiva was intelligent, wise and prudent. He could observe the pale face of Sati, and her crestfallen manners. He smiled because he thought that today Sati has had her share of wonder that is so characteristic of the deluding world, that she has learnt the truth the hard way, and that she has had a hands-on bitter experience of doubting Lord Ram's divinity on the one hand, and the words of her husband, Lord Shiva, on the other hand.

²He wondered if everything was alright with her, for he had his doubts. We have already read earlier that when Shiva failed to persuade Sati to abandon her adamancy and listen to him to his wise council not to try acting smart to test the authenticity of Lord Ram or the truthfulness of the words of Shiva, he had decided that the fate of Sati was not good—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 52.

³It is very significant here that Shiva has asked her to tell 'everything truthfully'. It shows that he had his doubts whether Sati would tell him 'everything' without hiding anything, and say it 'truthfully'. He guessed it correctly that Sati would try to hide her mischief so as not to annoy her husband any further. She had already disobeyed Shiva, and had to bite a bitter pill for her audacious and impertinent behaviour, and now if she told him the truth of what she did, i.e. assumed the form of Lord Ram's wife Sita, it would surely stoke the fire of anger in him further. Sati was scared stiff like a person who is caught between the devil and the deep sea. She was bound to try more tricks to save her skin; she would surely now try to deceive Shiva so as to escape being punished by him.

Hence, Shiva concluded, there were fair chances of Sati hiding things from him and telling a lie to save herself from his wrath.]

मासपारायण, दूसरा विश्राम (māsapārāyaṇa, dūsarā viśrāma)

Pause no. 2 for a 30-day recitation of Ram Charit Manas

चौ०. सतीं समुझि रघुबीर प्रभाऊ । भय बस सिव सन कीन्ह दुराऊ ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

satīm samujhi raghubīra prabhā'ū. bhaya basa siva sana kīnha durā'ū. 1.

Realising the truth about the greatness of Lord Ram¹, the brave warrior in the race of king Raghu, Sati was so awed and scared that she hid from Shiva the reality of what had happened (or, what mischief she was upto in order to test the truth of Shiva's assertions pertaining to Lord Ram and the latter's greatness)². (1)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 54 where we read that Lord Ram has decided to reveal his astounding mystical powers to Sati when he found that she was feeling miserable.

What was the reason for Sati feeling so miserable? Well, she had realised her mistakes though it was too late to make amends now. She admits her error when she says—"I have not listened to what Shiva told me, and have cast the shadow of my stupidity and ignorance upon Lord Ram. Now, what and how shall I answer Shiva when I go back to him?" Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 54.

²So we see that Sati was completely confounded and dazed. On the one hand she had committed a grave sin by disbelieving and disobeying her husband, a sin that itself demanded stern punishment, and on the other hand her head was still reeling from the effects of the frightening experience she had had a little while ago when she saw out-of-world visions of countless images of Lord Ram and Sita being served by countless gods, goddesses, sages and others that surrounded her from all sides.

To make matters worse for her, she had, in her stupidity, taken the form of Sita, another person's wife, and this was sure to annoy her own husband Shiva because this was against all norms of good conduct and ethics. She had tried to cheat Lord Ram though her husband Lord Shiva had clearly told her that Ram is the Lord whom he worships—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 51.

With this big baggage of stupid, stubborn, unethical, impertinent and irreverential behaviour, what more can be expected from Sati other than she being scared out of her wits so much that she was afraid to tell the truth. She tried to hide her follies and mischief by taking recourse to falsehood, thereby compounding her miseries further, instead of abating them.

What was the effect of all this tumult on Sati? Well, the answer is found below in verse nos. 2-3 where we read that she hides her actions and tells Shiva a lie.]

कछु न परीछा लीन्हि गोसाईं । कीन्ह प्रनामु तुम्हारिहि नाई ॥ २ ॥

जो तुम्ह कहा सो मृषा न होई । मोरें मन प्रतीति अति सोई ॥ ३ ॥

kachu na parīchā līnhi gōsā'īm. kīnha pranāmu tumhārihi nā'īm. 2.
jō tumha kahā sō mṛṣā na hō'ī. mōrēm mana pratīti ati sō'ī. 3.

Sati told a lie to Shiva. She told him—‘Oh Lord! I have not tested him (Lord Ram) in any way. I just bowed my head before him like you had done. (2)

Indeed oh Lord, whatever you had said is the truth, and I am fully convinced of it. [Or, whatever you say cannot be wrong, and I have firm faith in my Mana (mind and heart) regarding the truthfulness of your words.]’ (3)

[Note—Sati has said two blatant lies here: One is that she did not test Lord Ram, which she had actually done, and another is that she has full faith in the truthfulness of Lord Shiva’s words, which she hadn’t.

She could have said instead that she did not test Lord Ram because though she had her doubts about the divine aspect of the Lord in the beginning but by the time she reached him she thought over the matter and decided that Shiva cannot tell something that is wrong, and therefore she had aborted her test and came back to him. That would have somewhat eased the intensity of her lies.]

तब संकर देखेउ धरि ध्याना । सतीं जो कीन्ह चरित सबु जाना ॥ ४ ॥

taba saṅkara dēkhē'u dhari dhyānā. satīm jō kīnha carita sabu jānā. 4.

Then Lord Shiva closed his eyes and contemplated in order to see beyond the visible spectrum of sight¹. In this transcendental state of the mind he came to know whatever Sati had done. (4)

[Note—¹It is well known that Lord Shiva is the patron deity of ascetics, and remains perpetually submerged in deep meditation and contemplation. The Upanishads dealing with Yoga tell us that in this state of existence, the person acquires a state of transcendental consciousness when he goes above and beyond the gross and mundane level of existence to reach a higher state to observe things in their real form from a neutral and detached perspective.

Transcendental state of consciousness obtained by practicing Yoga and Dhyān (meditation and contemplation) enables the viewer to rise above the grossness and the mundane plane of physical existence in this world to get a truthful and honest picture of any given thing or situation from a higher viewing point that lends the viewer to have a broader bird’s eye perspective which is untainted by worldly pre-conceived ideas, and is not distorted by the grossness of the various organs of perception of the viewer’s physical body when the same thing or situation is observed from the physical plane limited to this gross world.

Since Lord Shiva is expert in meditation and contemplation, he immediately employed this tool to find out the truth. When he saw Sati, her fidgety behaviour, demeanours and countenance clearly indicated to him that there was something wrong, and Sati was not telling him the truth. There was no use in trying to extract the truth from her by either persuasion or threat. So it’s better to investigate the matter himself, he thought, and the best way to do it was to contemplate or do “Dhyān”.]

बहुरि राममायहि सिरु नावा । प्रेरि सतिहि जेहिं झूठ कहावा ॥ ५ ॥

bahuri rāmamāyahi siru nāvā. prēri satihī jēhīm jhūṁṭha kahāvā. 5.

Having realised the truth, Shiva bowed his head to Lord Ram’s Maya (delusion creating powers) which is so powerful that it had provoked Sati to tell lies. (5)

[Note—Not only telling lies, but the Lord’s Maya had even eclipsed Sati’s wisdom and sense of probity when it inspired her to assume the form of Sita (refer: Doha no. 52).

Not only this, Maya had even made her so arrogant and over confident of her own intelligence that she thought Shiva to be wrong in assuming that Lord Ram, who was roaming on the ground in search of his wife Sita, was no one else but the Supreme Being himself in a human form. ‘How can it be?’ thought Sati (refer: Doha no. 50 and its following Chaupai line nos. 1-2).

In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas—(a) Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 51; (b) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 2; and (c) Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 59; (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 72.]

हरि इच्छा भावी बलवाना । हृदयँ बिचारत संभु सुजाना ॥ ६ ॥

hari icchā bhāvī balavānā. hr̥dayaṁ bicārata sambhu sujānā. 6.

Lord Shambhu (Shiva) thought to himself, ‘The wish of Lord Hari (Vishnu; Lord Ram), as well as one’s own destiny (or fate) are very powerful forces (as they determine what course a person’s life would take)¹.’

[In other words, it is almost impossible to oppose them. Whatever Lord Hari wants will happen. Whatever is written in one’s destiny is destined to happen. One has almost no control over these factors. Yes, it is true that one can always act diligently and change the course of his life, but this can only happen by the grace of Lord Hari, and this indirectly means that a person has to be mindful of the fact that nothing can happen without keeping the Lord in the loop.] (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 128; line no. 1 of Doha no. 174; and Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 171.]

सतीं कीन्ह सीता कर बेषा । सिव उर भयउ बिषाद बिसेषा ॥ ७ ॥

जौं अब करउँ सती सन प्रीती । मिटइ भगति पथु होइ अनीती ॥ ८ ॥

satīṁ kīnha sītā kara bēṣā. siva ura bhaya'u biṣāda bisēṣā. 7.

jauṁ aba kara'uṁ satī sana prīṭī. miṭa'i bhagati pathu hō'i anīṭī. 8.

The fact that Sati had assumed the form of Sita caused immense grief and sorrow in the heart of Shiva. He felt very disconsolate within. (7)

He decided—‘If I now show any affection to Sati, and tend to neglect or overlook her actions, it would be gravely improper and tantamount to destroying the path of Bhakti (having devotion and loyalty for one’s chosen deity, who in the case of Shiva was Lord Ram).’ (8)

[Note—Sita was an incarnation of goddess Laxmi and the consort of the Lord (Sri Ram) whom Shiva worshipped as his chosen deity. This being so, Sita was like a ‘mother goddess’ for Shiva. Therefore, to assume the form of Sita was an unpardonable sin on the part of Sati.

Secondly, it is totally unethical and immoral for someone’s loyal and chaste wife to play the role of another person’s wife under any circumstance. This is another great sin that Sati committed.

Thirdly, she had tried to play dirty tricks with Lord Ram whom her husband reveres, especially when her husband had tried his best to dissuade her from doing so.

And all these sins were compounded when she boldly told lies to Shiva without

fearing the consequences. It would have been much better for her to come out clean and tell him the truth at the outset, asking for forgiveness and praying that the intensity of punishment which was now due to her be reduced. But again, thought Shiva, it was Lord Ram's Maya which prevented Sati from taking this straight path. It was Lord Ram's wish and the destiny of Sati which have together brought things to such a pass.

If Shiva accepts Sati inspite of her sins, then obviously it would create a bad precedent, especially when Shiva was not an ordinary person but the most exalted amongst the gods. He is regarded as the wisest, the most enlightened and the greatest devotee of Lord Ram as well as the Lord's original form as Lord Vishnu. Think, what will the other gods say of him if he stoops low to overlook the grave mischief of Sati just because she is his wife and he loves her dearly? Is his love for his wife more important than his love for his Lord God, Sri Ram, whom he worships day and night?

The path of Bhakti demand total surrender and loyalty towards the chosen deity, and a devotee's relationship with his or her chosen deity takes precedence over all other relationships that exist in the world. So, thought Shiva, should he compromise on this sacrosanct principle of Bhakti? Is Lord Ram's will and the holiness of the position of the Lord's consort (his wife Sita) worthy of neglect to please his own wife Sati who has committed such horrible sins as telling lies even to her husband and not paying heed to his advice?

Perhaps, Shiva thought to himself, Lord Ram wants him not to accept such an unrespectful and deceitful lady as his wife, a lady who has no faith in her husband, a lady who can play dirty tricks, a lady who does not bat an eyelid before telling lies. This is why Lord Ram created a situation whereby Lord Shiva would become aware of the true nature of his wife and be warned that she is not worthy to remain by his side. After all, her father insults Shiva and treats him with utter contempt (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 62). Is it ever advisable to have someone as one's wife under these circumstances?]

दो०. परम पुनीत न जाइ तजि किँ प्रेम बड़ पापु।

प्रगटि न कहत महेसु कछु हृदयँ अधिक संतापु ॥ ५६ ॥

dōhā.

parama punīta na jā'i taji ki'ēṁ prēma baṛa pāpu.

pragaṭi na kahata mahēsu kachu ḥṛdayaṁ adhika santāpu. 56.

Shiva was on the horns of a dilemma literally. He thought to himself that Sati was otherwise most immaculate and so it looks difficult to abandon her. On the other hand, it would be a grave sin to show affection to her (for reasons cited in the above verses).

Though Shiva did not say anything aloud, but these opposing thoughts churned his heart and extremely tormented it. (Doha no. 56)

[Note—Shiva realised that except for the sins she has committed in the present case, like not believing him, or taking the form of Sita, or telling lies, she was otherwise pure and incorruptible. Having doubts is not a sin par-se; everyone has his doubts. After all, Sati did not argue with Shiva or insult him in public, or said any words of insult. She had kept quiet—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 51.

She had assumed the form of Sita not to lure Lord Ram with any passion in her mind; her intention was just to find out if the Lord recognises her as Sati or falls into the visual trap and thinks her to be Sita. If the latter thing would have happened then surely it would be established that Ram was just an ordinary prince who could see

things with his gross organ of sight, i.e. the eye, and had no power to see beyond. So, though assuming the form of Sita was a wrong thing to do as such, but the intention was not sinful.

The third error of Sati was to speak lies. Once again, she did so to escape harsh punishment, and not done out of habit. Hence, this was also pardonable to some extent.

These arguments are alright in themselves. But the problem was that all these acts of Sati were sinful and fell within the ambit of impropriety and unethical conduct from the perspective of the principles of Dharma—which means conduct that is ethical, proper, righteous and noble. So she deserved punishment, and not condoning.

These contradictory thoughts filled the heart of Shiva with grief and sorrow. It would be hard to abandon Sati, and it would be equally hard to accept her now.]

चौ०. तब संकर प्रभु पद सिरु नावा । सुमिरत रामु हृदयँ अस आवा ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

taba saṅkara prabhu pada siru nāvā. sumirata rāmu hr̥dayaṁ asa āvā. 1.

Then, Shankar (Shiva) bowed his head (mentally) at the holy feet of the Lord (Sri Ram). As soon as Shiva remembered the revered Lord (Ram), the latter emerged in his heart (to bless Shiva and give him internal peace, as well as to guide him to decide what is the proper thing for him to do now in the given set of situations that had torn his mind).

[This verse has another interpretation and can also be read as follows: “Then (when?—after Sati told him lies and he came to know the truth by contemplation), Shiva mentally bowed his head at the feet of Lord Ram (in order to invoke the Lord and request him to show the correct path to be followed at this juncture). As soon as he invoked the Lord, he appeared in Shiva’s heart to inspire him to think in the manner as described in the following verse.”] (1)

[Note—As we have read in Doha no. 56, Shiva could not decide what to do. In this dilemma, he decided to take refuge with his beloved Lord Ram and seek the latter’s guidance.

How does one seek the Lord’s advice and guidance? Here is the answer: first pay your respect to the Lord God by bowing your head at the Lord’s holy feet and invoking him in your heart. Then the Lord would answer your queries by inspiring your soul to think in the way the Lord wants you to act.

Now, this is a great lesson for all of us. Remember: the voice of the soul is the voice of the Lord God, and it reveals in the form of what we call the “voice of conscience”. One who heeds the voice of one’s conscience treads the righteous path, and one who neglects it turns a deaf ear to the Lord.

So, what was the advice of Lord Ram? The answer is found in the following verse no. 2 herein below.]

एहिं तन सतिहि भेट मोहि नाहीं । सिव संकल्पु कीन्ह मन माहीं ॥ २ ॥
ēhīm tana satihī bhēṭa mōhī nāhīm. siva saṅkalpu kīnha mana māhīm. 2.

Shiva decided in his Mana (mind and heart)—‘I cannot have any connection (relationship) with Sati as long as she remains in the present body.’ (2)

[Note—This is a prelude of things to come. Shiva has not completely abandoned Sati; he has decided to have no relationships with Sati “in the present body”. This is

because she has polluted her body by assuming the form of Sita, and she has committed the sin of telling lies with this body. But at the same time, she is otherwise immaculate. So what is the practical solution? The answer is this: Sati should first discard this body and take another birth, or ‘her soul should live this tainted body and enter a new fresh one’ so that Shiva can accept her.

Remember: it is the gross body that becomes tainted by worldly corruptions, but the ‘soul’ always remains pure and immaculate. This is the lesson of this verse. A person’s sins and the body which commits these sins are to be punished, but not the ‘person himself’. Incredulous it seems, but it is the truth—for the true identity of the person is not his or her gross body, but the Atma, the soul, which is absolutely immaculate and eternal. The Atma remains above the mundane deeds done by the gross body, and is never involved in grossness.

It is when a person overlooks the voice of the Atma, known as the “voice of conscience; the inner voice”, that he or she commits sins. Even in the case of Sati this has been true. Her Atma, her “inner voice”, had warned her not to disbelieve Lord Shiva, but she had overlooked it—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 51. Had she paid heed to the voice of her “conscience”, she would not have had to suffer now.

So, this was the guidance Shiva got from Lord Ram. ‘He should abandon Sati in her present form, but should accept her when her Atma takes a new form or assumes a fresh new body, which in practical terms means to take a new birth.’

We shall read a little while later that eventually this is what has happened. Sati burnt her corrupted body in the sacrificial fire of her father Daksha, and at that time had prayed to the creator to give her another birth where she can be accepted by Lord Shiva once again. Hence, she took birth in the household of Giriraj, the king of mountains, as Parvati. She did severe penance and was accepted by Shiva as his divine consort once again.

Sati’s Atma, i.e. her pure conscious soul which was her “true self”, remained the same; it was the gross body that changed. It was like a person discarding dirty clothes, taking a bath, and then doning fresh new clothes.]

अस बिचारि संकरु मतिधीरा । चले भवन सुमिरत रघुबीरा ॥ ३ ॥

asa bicāri saṅkaru matidhīrā. calē bhavana sumirata raghubīrā. 3.

Deciding thus, Lord Shankar (Shiva), who is very wise and patient, started on his journey for his abode (on Mt. Kailash), all the while remembering Lord Ram (“Raghubir”) on the way. (3)

[Note—Shiva was going to his abode at Mt. Kailash from sage Agastya’s hermitage when this episode of Sati took place. So he had waited under the shadow of a banyan tree till Sati came back to him after testing Lord Ram. Now that things have taken a nasty turn and it became clear to him that he has to neglect the presence of Sati henceforth, he got up to move onwards to his abode in Kailash. For all practical purposes, Shiva considered himself alone hereafter.

That is why he kept his mind submerged in the thoughts of Lord Ram which amounts to him remaining engrossed in meditating upon the Lord even as his physical body was moving towards his hermitage.]

चलत गगन भै गिरा सुहाई । जय महेस भलि भगति दूढ़ाई ॥ ४ ॥

अस पन तुम्ह बिनु करइ को आना । रामभगत समरथ भगवाना ॥ ५ ॥

calata gagana bhair girā suhāī. jaya mahēsa bhair bhagatī dr̥rhāī. 4.
asa pana tumha binu kara'i kō ānā. rāmabhagata samaratha bhagavānā. 5.

Even as Lord Shiva moved forward on his journey to his abode, a pleasant disembodied voice was heard in the sky¹. It complimented Shiva for his decision (of abandoning Sati in her present body to uphold the laws of Dharma and Bhakti). This voice said—‘Glory to Mahesh! You have done well to reinforce and uphold the virtue of Bhakti². (4)

Who else would have taken this stern decision that you have taken³? Indeed, you are a great devotee of Lord Ram, and are an able Lord God in your own right.’ (5)

[Note—¹The disembodied voice was the voice of the ‘Super Consciousness, the Supreme Atma’. It has approved the decision of Shiva not to accept anyone who has become corrupted, and especially one who cast doubts on the divinity of the Supreme Lord himself who was in the form of Lord Ram.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 186, as well as Chaupai line no. 6 that follows below.

²For a true devotee of Lord Ram, there is no other relationship more important than the Lord, and anyone who shows disrespect to the Lord is obviously worthy of abandonment no matter how close or dear he or she may be. The only relationship that a devotee values is one with his revered Lord—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand—(i) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 72; (ii) Doha no. 130 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 5; and (iii) Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 131.

In the present case, Sati has cast doubts on the integrity of Lord Ram and has shown disrespect to him by assuming the form of his wife Sita. It ought to be noted carefully here that when she appeared before Lord Ram disguised as Sita, she had *not* bowed before the Lord or shown any other sign of respect to him. This in its self was showing great disrespect to Lord Ram whom Shiva reveres and worships. So, Shiva was right in abandoning her to uphold the principles of Bhakti and Dharma. And his decision was endorsed by the supreme Atma. That is, Shiva’s “higher Self” approved of his decision.

³Lord Shiva’s decision is narrated in Chaupai line no. 2 herein above.

Even Lord Ram praises the steady devotion of Lord Shiva and his ability to stick to strict codes of self-discipline. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 76.]

सुनि नभगिरा सती उर सोचा । पूछा सिवहि समेत सकोचा ॥ ६ ॥

कीन्ह कवन पन कहहु कृपाला । सत्यधाम प्रभु दीनदयाला ॥ ७ ॥

sunī nabhagirā satī ura sōcā. pūchā sivahi samēta sakōcā. 6.

kīnha kavana pana kahahu krpālā. satyadhāma prabhu dīnadayālā. 7.

When Sati heard the voice from the sky, she became anxious and nervous, not knowing what it meant or indicated. She became suspicious and began pondering its meaning in her heart, and unable to determine anything, she hesitantly asked Lord Shiva—(6)

‘Oh merciful Lord! You are an abode of truthfulness, and are compassionate towards the humble, the meek, the lowly and the downtrodden. Tell me please, what vows have you taken?’ (7)

[Note—Like any guilty person, Sati was suspicious of what next step Shiva would take to punish her. If Shiva had said something openly to admonish Sati for her mischief and misdemeanours, it would have been better for Sati because by this

method the anger of Shiva would have been vented out. But when he decided to keep quiet and move on, not saying anything to Sati by way of even slightest of reprimand in spite of her grave and unpardonable sins, this did not portend good for her. When an able person or senior authority is offended by another person but decides to keep quiet, it is not a good sign for the latter, for this anger keeps boiling inside only to erupt like a volcano later on.

Sati's conscience was pricking her like a crown of thorns. So when she heard the heavenly voice praising Lord Shiva's stern vows, she immediately became suspicious that there was something grave in it.

She was 'hesitant' because she knew she was guilty of a grave and unpardonable sin, for otherwise she knew that Lord Shiva loved her very much and there was no cause of her feeling terrified to ask him such basic questions as 'what vow have you taken?'

We must also note that she has used pleasing words to appease her angry husband—such as he being merciful, truthful, compassionate etc. This was her subtle way of pleading with Shiva to have mercy and compassion on her even if she had committed a grave error and even if he was angry at her.]

जदपि सतीं पूछा बहु भाँती । तदपि न कहेउ त्रिपुर आराती ॥ ८ ॥

jadapi satīm pūchā bahu bhāntī. tadapi na kahē'u tripura ārātī. 8.

Though Sati asked Shiva to tell her what vows he had taken and what the heavenly voice meant, Lord Tripurari (Shiva) kept quiet and did not reply to her.

[Shiva's quiet and reluctance to reply to Sati added to her woes, as she was now sure that Shiva is very angry at her and has virtually abandoned her for all practical purposes. This will be clear in the following Doha no. 57.] (8)

दो०. सतीं हृदयँ अनुमान किय सबु जानेउ सर्वग्य ।

कीन्ह कपटु मैं संभु सन नारि सहज जड़ अग्य ॥ ५७ (क) ॥

dōhā.

satīm hṛdayaṁ anumāna kiya sabu jānē'u sarbagya.

kīnha kapaṭu mair̥ sambhu sana nāri sahaja jaṛa agya. 57 (a).

Sati concluded in her heart that the all-knowing Lord Shiva has come to know all the misdeeds she had done. She thought to herself, 'Lord Shiva has become aware of all the cunning and deceit I had undertaken, all the mischief I have committed.'

She realised that she has behaved like an ordinary silly and stupid woman (instead of being wise and prudent as was expected from the divine consort of such a wise and enlightened god as Shiva). (Doha no. 57 Ka)

सो०. जलु पय सरिस बिकाइ देखहु प्रीति कि रीति भलि ।

बिलग होइ रसु जाइ कपट खटाई परत पुनि ॥ ५७ (ख) ॥

sōraṭhā.

jalu paya sarisa bikā'i dēkhahu prīti ki rīti bhali.
bilaga hō'i rasu jā'i kapaṭa khaṭā'ī parata puni. 57 (b).

It is well said by the wise ones the unifying and bonding power of love is like the relationship of water and milk because when ordinary water (which has no special monetary value independently) is mixed with milk, it blends so perfectly with the latter that it becomes as valuable as milk and acquires the same sale value as pure milk. But when even a drop of acid symbolising falsehood, and lack of trust and faith is added to this homogenous liquid, the water and milk are not only separated but the taste of milk too becomes horrible. (Sortha no. 57 Kha)

[Note—This metaphor is employed to say that as long as Sati had not used falsehood and deceit against her loving husband Lord Shiva, as long as she had full trust in him and his words, Lord Shiva and Sati were inseparable from each other. Wherever Shiva went, Sati accompanied him. But now this acid of lies and mistrust has soured their cordial relation so much so that Shiva turned away from Sati and completely neglected her.

This episode and Sortha has a great practical message for all of us—it is that we must be true and honest with our partner if we wish to sustain the relationship and be cordial with each other. Otherwise, sooner or later the relationship would sour.]

चौ०. हृदयँ सोचु समुझत निज करनी । चिंता अमित जाइ नहिं बरनी ॥ १ ॥
कृपासिंधु सिव परम अगाधा । प्रगट न कहेउ मोर अपराधा ॥ २ ॥

caupā'ī.

hṛdayaṁ sōcu samujhata nija karanī. cintā amita jā'i nahim baranī. 1.
kṛpāsindhu siva parama agādhā. pragaṭa na kahē'u mōra aparādhā. 2.

Sati's heart was overwhelmed with grief and contrition as she realised her stupidity and misdeeds. She was extremely worried, but did not know what to do now. (1)

She was extremely perturbed and thought to herself—'Lord Shiva, who is like a fathomless ocean of mercy and grace, has known my mischief and misdeeds, but he's so merciful and kind that he refrains from overtly telling me about my sins.'¹ (2)

[Note—¹Shiva did not want to add to her woes by admonishing her or telling her what nonsense she has done. The Lord did not want to hurt Sati any more because he understood that she was already full of regret as she has realised her mistakes by then, and when she would come to know that he has abandoned her, the intensity of her torments would be beyond measurement. Being loving, merciful and gracious, Lord Shiva did not wish to add fuel to her tormenting fire any more. So he decided to keep quiet.]

संकर रुख अवलोकि भवानी । प्रभु मोहि तजेउ हृदयँ अकुलानी ॥ ३ ॥

निज अघ समुझि न कछु कहि जाई । तपइ अवाँ इव उर अधिकाई ॥ ४ ॥

saṅkara rukha avalōki bhavānī. prabhu mōhi tajē'u hṛdayaṁ akulanānī. 3.
nija agha samujhi na kachu kahi jā'ī. tapa'i avāṁ iva ura adhikā'ī. 4.

When Sati observed the behaviour and attitude of Shiva (that clearly hinted at his disenchantment with her), Sati's heart trembled (in fear) because she realised that the Lord has abandoned her. (3)

Since it was she who was at grave fault and had committed a horrific sin, she did not know what to say to the Lord in her defence; she could not protest to Shiva that he should not be so heartless with her so as to abandon his chaste and loyal wife.

Perturbed and distressed beyond measure, Sati's heart was smouldering in grief and contrition like being put in a furnace. (4)

[Note—Through these verses, the great saint Tulsidas wishes to tell all of us what fate awaits us if we take recourse to falsehood, deceit and pretensions in our lives, if we tell lies and disbelieve our well-wishers like Sati had disbelieved and lied to Shiva who was her best well-wisher in this world.

Even the best of relationship, the most cordial and the coveted relationship, would crumble like a house of cards and sour like milk in which acid is dropped if one is not careful not to use cunning and falsehood, distrust and dishonesty in it.]

सतिहि ससोच जानि बृषकेतू । कहीं कथा सुंदर सुख हेतू ॥ ५ ॥

बरनत पंथ बिबिध इतिहासा । बिस्वनाथ पहुँचे कैलासा ॥ ६ ॥

satihi sasōca jāni br̥ṣakētū. kahīm kathā sundara sukha hētū. 5.
baranata pantha bibidha itihāsā. bisvanātha pahuṁcē kailāsā. 6.

When Lord Brishketu (literally the Lord who has the sign of a bull on his standard/flag; i.e. Shiva) realised that Sati was very sad and contrite, he narrated different stories to divert her mind and keep her engaged¹. (5)

In this way, while narrating stories from the different Purans and Itihasas (ancient scriptures and mythological histories) on the way, the Lord of the world, “Vishwanaath”, reached Kailash, his abode. (6)

[Note—¹Shiva is a very merciful Lord. The measure of his graciousness and kindness is that instead of taking any severe punitive action against Sati and scolding her using stern language, he remained quiet. Then when he observed that Sati is suffering from guilt and remorse, and feeling contrite, he decided to divert her attention by telling her stories so that her pain and sorrows are diffused a bit.

The use of the epithet “Vishwanaath”, the ‘Lord of the world’, is significant here. It implies that Lord Shiva was aware of the fact that this world is not perfect; it is full of contradictions. Delusions and ignorance, falsehood and deceit are as much part of it as are enlightenment, knowledge and wisdom, as well as truthfulness and honesty. They coexist in this world; they are a part of the nature of creation.

Another point to note is that it is said in verse no. 4 herein above that “Sati's heart was so much tormented by grief as if it was put in a furnace”. It means that she was already getting self-punished by her own conscience, and this was more effective than any other form of external punishment. She has realised her mistake, and she is already suffering like hell inside, so, being a merciful Lord, Shiva thought that it would be extremely cruel to torment her any further. Therefore he decided to comfort her a bit by telling stories.]

तहँ पुनि संभु समुझि पन आपन । बैठे बट तर करि कमलासन ॥ ७ ॥

संकर सहज सरूपु सम्हारा । लागि समाधि अखंड अपारा ॥ ८ ॥

tahaṃ puni sambhu samujhi pana āpana. baiṭhē baṭa tara kari kamalāsana. 7. saṅkara sahaja sarūpu samhārā. lāgi samādhi akhaṇḍa apārā. 8.

When Shiva reached Kailash, he remembered his vows (that he would have nothing to do with Sati any longer, and would instead spend his days like a lonely hermit or ascetic). So, he sat down under a banyan tree¹ in a meditative posture known as the 'lotus posture'. [This is the posture adopted by ascetics when they meditate upon the 'pure conscious Self'.] (7)

Shiva immersed himself in deep meditation, concentrating his thoughts on his true Self, the pure consciousness known as the Atma or Soul. In this way, he entered the state of steady Samadhi—a perpetual state of transcendental existence of consciousness when the practitioner experiences absolute bliss and tranquility even as he remains completely unaware of the external world because all his gross organs of action and perception go to virtual sleep. (8)

[Note—¹It has been affirmed elsewhere also that the banyan tree is the preferred tree under the shadow of which Shiva meditates and rests in his abode at Mt. Kailash—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 106.

Kailash is the well-known abode of Lord Shiva on earth—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 105.]

दो०. सती बसहिं कैलास तब अधिक सोचु मन माहिं ।

मरमु न कोऊ जान कछु जुग सम दिवस सिराहिं ॥ ५८ ॥

dōhā.

satī basahim kailāsa taba adhika sōcu mana māhim.

maramu na kō'ū jāna kachu jug sama divasa sirāhim. 58.

Meanwhile, Sati lived a lonely and forlorn life at Kailash. Her mind and heart were overcome with worry and grief. The secret of her sorrows was not known to anyone as she kept quiet and to herself. In this way, days that passed away seemed like long eras (years; ages) to her. (Doha no. 58)

[Note—Life seemed like a burden to her. There was no one with whom she could share her pain and woes. Shiva was lost in meditation, and there was an eerie silence all around. It was like living alone in a cremation ground.

The internal grief and mental agony of a woman whose husband has abandoned her is portrayed here. Though physically she may be alive, but mentally she feels herself no better than a dead person. Life becomes a burden for her, and days seem like ages.]

चौ०. नित नव सोचु सती उर भारा । कब जैहउँ दुख सागर पारा ॥ १ ॥

मैं जो कीन्ह रघुपति अपमाना । पुनि पतिबचनु मृषा करि जाना ॥ २ ॥

सो फलु मोहि बिधाताँ दीन्हा । जो कछु उचित रहा सोइ कीन्हा ॥ ३ ॥

अब बिधि अस बूझिअ नहिं तोही । संकर बिमुख जिआवसि मोही ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

nita nava sōcu satī ura bhārā. kaba jaiha'uṃ dukha sāgara pārā. 1.
 mairṃ jō kīnha raghupati apamānā. puni patibacanu mṛṣā kari jānā. 2.
 sō phalu mōhi bidhātām dīnhā. jō kachu ucita rahā sō'i kīnhā. 3.
 aba bidhi asa bījhi'a nahim tōhī. saṅkara bimukha jī'āvasi mōhī. 4.

Contrition and grief held Sati's heart in their firm grip. She was tormented daily with guilt, and wondered when it would be possible for her to cross this endless ocean of sorrows and miseries¹. (1)

She lamented—'I have insulted Lord Ram and slighted his dignity (by playing dirty tricks with him and trying to trap him by disguising myself as his wife Sita), and I had compounded my follies by not believing the words of my husband (Lord Shiva)². (2)

The creator Vidhaata (Brahma) has given me the bitter fruit (punishment) that I deserved for my own misdeeds (and therefore I can't blame either him or anyone else). Indeed, the Creator has done what was correct and judicious³. (3)

Still, oh Creator, it is unfair and cruel for you to force me to live separate from my beloved husband⁴ (to whom I am totally devoted). (4)

[Note—¹Sati has been tormented ever since she realised that whatever Shiva had told her regarding Lord Ram was the absolute truth. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 53 and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.

Then once again when there was a heavenly voice praising Shiva for his vow not to accept a tainted Sati as his consort any longer, her apprehensions were further reinforced. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 57.

²That is, I have committed two grave sins—one was to play fools with the Supreme Lord, Sri Ram, and demeaning the Lord's authority and holiness by pretending to be his wife in spite of my husband clearly warning me not to do so. To add to my woes, I was so stupid and deluded that I did not even pay my obligatory obeisance to Lord Ram before I went ahead to test him. Not only this, I dared to think that my husband is attempting to mislead me, and by not believing in his words about the divinity and greatness of Lord Ram I have implied that he lacks wisdom and knowledge. Now, this has thrown me in a whirlpool of miseries and grief because my husband had abandoned me for all practical purposes. He has not even asked me to repent for my sins, nor has he admonished me, or told me how to do penance to neutralise the bad effects of my sins. So it's clear that Shiva is firm not to accept me under any circumstance.

³That is, I have no right to blame either the creator Brahma or my husband Shiva for my self-inflicted miseries and torments. I have myself invited and courted trouble. Whom should I blame?

⁴Therefore, let me die and leave this body. I don't want to keep this tainted body with which I have committed such sins. On the one hand I have offended my husband Shiva by slighting the authority and dignity of Lord Ram who is worshipped by him. It is tantamount to desecrating the deity he worships. Then I have disobeyed him and treated his word with doubts. As if this was not enough, I lied to my husband! Couldn't I tell Shiva the truth of my misdeeds and ask him for forgiveness, in which case I could have invoked his merciful and forgiving nature to get my punishment reduced or kept in abeyance to let me repent and reform my self and my foolish nature. But I did not do so. So, whom shall I accuse for my horrors than my own self? One reaps what one sows, and this is the universal law of Nature that also applies to me now.]

कहि न जाइ कछु हृदय गलानी । मन महँ रामहि सुमिर सयानी ॥ ५ ॥
 जौं प्रभु दीनदयालु कहावा । आरति हरन बेद जसु गावा ॥ ६ ॥
 तौ मैं बिनय करउँ कर जोरी । छूटउ बेगि देह यह मोरी ॥ ७ ॥
 जौं मोरें सिव चरन सनेहू । मन क्रम बचन सत्य ब्रतु एहू ॥ ८ ॥

kahi na jā'i kachu hṛdaya galānī. mana mahum̐ rāmahi sumira sayānī. 5.
 jaum̐ prabhu dīnadayālu kahāvā. ārati harana bēda jasu gāvā. 6.
 tau maim̐ binaya kara'um̐ kara jōrī. chūṭa'u bēgi dēha yaha mōrī. 7.
 jaum̐ mōrēm̐ siva carana sanēhū. mana krama bacana satya bratu ēhū. 8.

The intensity of regret, contrition and grief in the heart of Sati were so huge that they could not be measured or described. Then, the wise/clever Sati¹ finally sought refuge with Lord Ram. Thus, she invoked the Lord in her heart by remembering him. (5)

She prayed to him (Lord Ram)—‘Oh Lord! If you are indeed the merciful Lord so much praised by all and honoured as such by the Vedas who univocally assert that you eliminate the sorrow and grief of those who seek your refuge and pray to you for help, (6)---

---Then I join my palms as a sign of submission before you to earnestly plead with you that let me shed this gross body (with which I have committed such grave sins, and which will never be accepted by my husband Shiva). (7)

And if I have true devotion and affection for the holy feet of Lord Shiva (like a loyal wife and true devotee must have), and this statement of mine is true to its core in all respects, if I am truthfully dedicated to Shiva’s feet with my entire being employing my Mana (mind and heart), my actions, and my words, (8)---

[Note—¹Sati has been called “wise or clever” (“Sayaanī”—सयानी) because at last she came to her senses. She has now sought the refuge of Lord Ram, which was a very intelligent decision on her part. This is because she realised that the best way to seek pardon for her sins was to surrender before Lord Ram whom she had insulted and shown disrespect to. This would be the best way to seek forgiveness from her husband because he had taken more umbrage at her showing disrespect to the Lord whom he worships (i.e. Lord Ram), rather than her disobeying him (Shiva).

The root of all the trouble was her disbelieving Shiva’s words that Lord Ram was indeed the Supreme Being who is the almighty Lord of creation. Now, this being the case, the wise course of action for her was to pray to the ‘Supreme Being’ himself whom she had insulted. When someone asks to surrender and prays to a senior Authority, it becomes virtually impossible for the latter to refuse. Committing mistakes or sins, and then accepting one’s errors and asking to be forgiven, in any manner that the sinner thinks fit, is a sufficient ground for commuting of punishment. We shall read below in Doha no. 59 that Sati asks that she be allowed to die because she was certain her husband, Lord Shiva, would not accept her in her present body under any circumstance.

Sati’s decision to pray to Lord Ram stood her in good stead as will be clear when we read a little later that it was Lord Ram who had intervened on her behalf to persuade Shiva to marry her in her next birth as the daughter of Himwan, the king of mountains. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 76—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 77.]

दो०. तौ सबदरसी सुनिअ प्रभु करउ सो बेगि उपाइ ।

होइ मरनु जेहिं बिनहिं श्रम दुसह बिपति बिहाइ ॥ ५९ ॥

dōhā.

tau sabadarasī suni'a prabhu kara'u sō bēgi upā'i.
hō'i maranu jēhim binahim śrama dusaha bipaniā bihā'i. 59.

---Then oh all-knowing¹ Lord (Ram), please listen to my earnest plea. Make an arrangement soon whereby I can die without sufferings so that all my torments and bad days are done with (and I am relieved from this ignoble life).' (Doha no. 59)

[Note—So we see that at last Sati had to seek refuge with the same Lord Ram upon whom she had cast so much doubts and aspersion. Her episode is an example of the power of the Lord's Maya, and the fact that in the final analysis it is the Lord who will come to our rescue in spite of our mischief and irreverent behaviour.

¹Addressing Lord Ram as being "all-knowing" is significant. Sati meant to convince Lord Ram that whatever she had said to him by way of prayer was the truth, and there was no deceit in it. This was necessary because for all practical purposes Sati has created a very bad reputation for herself—as a liar and deceitful woman. So, let Lord Ram be convinced that notwithstanding whatever lies and cunning she may have adopted earlier, but this time around she is being absolutely truthful and honest.

There are umpteen numbers of verses that reiterate that Lord Ram is all-knowing. For instance, refer Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 53.

Now, why was Sati so confident that in spite of being offended, Lord Ram would still heed her requests if she prayed to him with total truthfulness and surrender? The answer is found in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 219 which affirms that "Lord Ram always keeps the wishes of his followers, and this habit of his is endorsed and witnessed by the Vedas, the Purans, the gods and saintly people".

There are some interesting aspects to this tale. Sati has stated while praying to Lord Ram: "if I have true devotion and affection for Lord Shiva's feet" (refer: Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 59—like a loyal wife must have), then she should die without suffering (refer: Doha no. 59). In other words, she makes two important requests: one is that in spite of her mistakes she still has true and undiluted devotion and affection for Lord Shiva, and wishes to serve the Lord's feet, and the other is that she wishes to leave this body but do it without pain. The first request—that she be allowed to serve Lord Shiva's holy feet may not be explicit here, but all ambiguity about it is removed later on in Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 65, and Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 64—where she explicitly asks this blessings from Lord Hari or Lord Ram (because Ram is an incarnation of Hari).

The all-forgiving, all-merciful and most considerate Lord Ram has accepted all her requests. (i) She will get to marry Shiva again in her next life as Parvati—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 65. (ii) She would not have to suffer long and indefinitely as she would die soon by jumping in the sacred fire at her father's fire-sacrifice—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 64.

Another interesting aspect is the way Sati left her body. It is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 64 that Sati burnt herself by jumping into the raging fire of the sacrificial pit at her father's fire sacrifice ritual. Fire is a well-known and reputed medium of purification because it burns all impurities without affecting the original material. Even gold is purified by putting it in fire. Shiva had taken a stern vow that he will have nothing to do with Sati in her present body because she had committed a grave sin by disguising herself as Sita, Lord Ram's wife—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that

precedes Doha no. 57. And then Sati asks Lord Hari to bless her that she be Shiva's wife in the next birth so that she is able to serve the Lord's holy feet—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 65.

These two apparently opposing situations had to be reconciled. The only way was to “purify Sati's tainted body” so that she becomes acceptable to Shiva, and the best medium to do so was to put her in the ‘fire’. It is interesting to note that this “purifying by fire” is also carried out on Sita at the end of the war at Lanka—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 14 that precedes Doha no. 108—to Chanda line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 109. Quite a coincidence indeed! That is why Lord Shiva's consort was called “Sati”—it was a traditional process in ancient Indian society wherein a woman proved her chastity and loyalty to her husband by burning herself in the cremation fire with her dead husband's body. If she resisted or abstained from doing so, more often than not she was scorned at and castigated by the rest of the clan.]

चौ०. एहि बिधि दुखित प्रजेसकुमारी । अकथनीय दारुन दुखु भारी ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

ēhi bidhi dukhita prajāśakumārī. akathaniya dārūna dukhu bhārī. 1.

In the above narrated way, the daughter of Daksha Prajapati (i.e. Sati) suffered from horrible grief and misery which cannot be described (because it was immense and constantly tormenting her). (1)

बीतें संबत सहस सतासी । तजी समाधि संभु अबिनासी ॥ २ ॥

bītēṁ sambata sahasa satāsī. tajī samādhi sambhu abināsī. 2.

Eighty-seven thousand Samvats (years) passed while the immortal (eternal and imperishable—“Abinaashi”)¹ Shiva remained deeply submerged in the transcendental state of consciousness known as Samadhi (or “meditative trance”).

At the end of this period, he woke up from this transcendental state of existence to the realities of the gross world². (2)

[Note—¹The word “Abinaashi” (अबिनासी) literally means that which does not decay and die, that which is eternal and imperishable. It also means immortal. Shiva is a god, and from the perspective of creation he is ‘immortal’ in the sense that unlike the rest of creation which perishes at the end of each Kaal (era; epoch), he remains perpetual.

The time frame of 87,000 Samvats is not a joke. It's a very long period of time from human perspective. The gross body will naturally age and become feeble during the course of this long time. But ascetics overcome this problem by immersing themselves in Samadhi. It is believed that all physical functions of the body go into hibernation mode during Samadhi, and that period when the ascetic remains in Samadhi is not added to his physical age. Thus for instance, if an ascetic enters into Samadhi when he is say 13 years old, and remains in Samadhi for say next 100 years, then when he wakes up from Samadhi his age would still be 13 years. In other words, the body will not grow old by 100 years for the entire period of Samadhi. This is why our ancient sages, seers, hermits and ascetics could live for ‘thousands of years’.

This is the physical perspective. From the metaphysical angle however, the word “Abinaashi” refers to the soul, the Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’ of any living being, which is eternal and imperishable by nature. Only those who are ‘self-realised’ know

this fact because they identify themselves with the Atma and not the physical body. Shiva is the most enlightened and highly self-realised god in the entire pantheon of gods—and therefore this epithet of being “Abinaashi” aptly applies to him.

²This is because while he remained totally oblivious of his surroundings during the period of Samadhi, when he left it he became aware of the world. That is why he realised Sati was there now. Refer: Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that follow below.]

राम नाम सिव सुमिरन लागे । जानेउ सतीं जगतपति जागे ॥ ३ ॥

जाइ संभु पद बंदनु कीन्हा । सनमुख संकर आसनु दीन्हा ॥ ४ ॥

rāma nāma siva sumirana lāgē. jānē'u satīm jagatapati jāgē. 3.

jā'i sambhu pada bandanu kīnhā. sanamukha saṅkara āsanu dīnhā. 4.

As soon as he woke up from the state of Samadhi, he started muttering the holy name of Lord Ram¹. When Sati heard it she realised that the Lord of the world has woken up from his meditative trance. (3)

She went and offered her obeisance to the holy feet of Lord Shambhu (Shiva). Shankar acknowledged her gestures, and politely gave her a seat to sit down in his front (facing him)². (4)

[Note—¹When a true devotee of Lord Ram wakes up to the realities of the gross world after sleep during which time his sub-conscious mind was detached from the affairs of the external world, he is characterised by first remembering and uttering the name of Lord Ram as a means of paying obeisance to his Lord as well as symbolically offering his new day to the Lord with a subtle prayer to take care of him during his waking time. We see this happening in the case of Vibhishan who uttered the name of Lord Ram the first thing upon waking up in the morning, and like Sati here, this pronouncing the Lord's name helped Hanuman realise that Vibhishan was a true friend and devotee of the Lord in the jungle-like fort of demons at Lanka, the capital of the demons—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 6.

Uttering the holy name of Lord Ram the first thing upon getting up from sleep also proves that even during sleep the devotee's sub-conscious mind was focussed on the Lord because the two states of existence of consciousness, viz. 'the waking state' and the 'sleeping state' are relative by nature vis-à-vis the relationship of the creature's body with the physical world of material existence. In both these cases, the mind and sub-conscious remains active—the only difference is that while in the 'waking state' the external organs of the body such as those of perception (eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin) and action (hand, leg, mouth, genital and excretory) are active, in the 'sleeping state' they become inactive. But the mind and sub-conscious continues to work behind the curtain. Therefore, since the muttering of the name of the Lord is done by the tongue it only indicates that the concerned person has 'woken up' from sleep, that his gross organs, such as the tongue, have become active. But it does not mean that while asleep his mind was not thinking of the Lord—only that during sleep the tongue remained inactive.

So, when Shiva started uttering the name of Lord Ram, Sati realised that he has woken up from his Samadhi (meditative trance like state), which for an ascetic like Shiva is akin to an ordinary person's 'sleep'.

Lord Shiva always chanted Lord Ram's holy name day in and day out as a spiritual formula that gave him eternal peace at all levels, the external world as well as his inner-self. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108 that is explicit on it.

²A wife is seated to the left of her husband—and not in front. By making Sati sit in his front, Shiva clearly indicated that he has stopped treating her as his consort. This is clear later on in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 107 where it is said that when Parvati, who was actually Sati in her new birth, came to Lord Shiva to ask the Lord to tell her the story of Lord Ram once again because she was still confused about the Lord's holy essential form and divine nature, something for which she had to suffer in her previous birth as Sati, Lord Shiva had “given her a seat to his left”.]

लगे कहन हरिकथा रसाला । दच्छ प्रजेस भए तेहि काला ॥ ५ ॥

देखा बिधि बिचारि सब लायक । दच्छहि कीन्ह प्रजापति नायक ॥ ६ ॥

lagē kahana harikathā rasālā. daccha prajāsa bha'e tēhi kālā. 5.

dēkhā bidhi bicāri saba lāyaka. dacchahi kīnha prajāpati nāyaka. 6.

Shiva began narrating to Sati various interesting stories related to Lord Hari (Vishnu)¹.

Meanwhile, sometime during that time, Daksha (Sati's father) became a guardian of all living beings in this creation. (5)

The creator Bidhi (Brahma) deemed him suitable in every possible way to be a guardian of his creation. Hence, he appointed Daksha as the leader (king) of all living beings in his kingdom (creation)². (6)

[Note—¹Earlier we have read that when Shiva was on his way to Kailash from the hermitage of sage Agastya and Sati had played mischief on the way, Shiva had mentally abandoned her. This made Sati very sad. When the Lord found Sati extremely distressed, he had narrated many stories to her to keep her mind diverted from her miseries—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 58.

But the irony is that inspite of suffering so much, and inspite of getting to hear Lord Hari's divine stories at least three time by now—once in the hermitage of sage Agastya, then on the way to Kailash, and the third time now—Sati was still disillusioned. This is why she has asked Shiva for the ‘fourth time’ to tell her the divine story of Lord Hari (Ram): refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 108—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 110.

²The story of Daksha: According to Padma Puran, the creator Brahma, in order to roll out this creation and make it self-sustaining, created the first human in his own likeness, and named him ‘Manu’. This Man was a sort of a revealed form of the invisible Brahma. He was called ‘Swayambhu Manu’ or the self-created Manu because he had no physical parent.

It is also written that Bhrigu, Pulaha, Kratu, Angiraa, Marichi, Daksha, Atri and Vasistha were the mentally-created “Manas Putra” of Brahma, and similar to him in all respects—i.e. had the same mystical powers and knowledge as the creator himself. These nine are also known as the ‘Nine Brahmas’.

In Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 1, verse no. 1-2, sage Maitreye had told Bidur that the Swayambhu Manu had a wife named Shatrupa. From her he begot three daughters—viz. Aakuti, Devhuti and Prasuti. ‘Aakuti’ was married to Prajapati Ruchi.

Then later on in Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 1, verse nos. 10-11, sage Maitreye had told Bidur that Swayambhu Manu had married his second daughter named ‘Devhuti’ to sage Kardam, and his third daughter ‘Prasuti’ to Daksha Prajapati, the son of Brahma.

According to Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 1, verse nos. 47-53, Manu married his daughter Prasuti Daksha Prajapati, the son of the creator Brahma. Prasuti gave birth to sixteen daughters, out of whom thirteen elder ones were married to Dharma, one was married to Agni (Fire God), one to all the Pittars (spirits of dead ancestors who have become demi-gods), and one to Lord Shiva.

The eleven daughters who were married to Dharma were the following—Shraddha (who gave birth to Shubha), Maitri (who gave birth to Prasaad), Dayaa (who gave birth to Abhaya), Shaanti (who gave birth to Sukha), Tushti (who gave birth to Moda), Pushti (who gave birth to Ahankaar), Kriyaa (who gave birth to Yoga), Unnati (who gave birth to Darpa), Buddhi (who gave birth to Artha or financial well-being), Medhaa (who gave birth to Smriti or memory), Titikshaa (who gave birth to Kshema or taking care of necessities of life), Hrii or Lajja {modesty and dignity} (who gave birth to Prasraya or prayerful submission), and Murti (who gave birth to two great sons named Nar and Naaraayan).

The youngest daughter who was married to Lord Shiva was called Sati. This lady later on burnt herself out of anger and insult in the fire sacrifice of her own father. This incident however is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 60—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 65.

At the time of death however, she wished to be married to Lord Shiva once again as she was fully devoted to the Lord and did not want to marry anyone else in her next birth. So took birth as Parvati in the household of the king of mountains known as Himwaan. Parvati did severe Tapa to marry Lord Shiva. This story is narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 72—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 103.

A different version is narrated in Garud Puran. According to it the story is as follows:—With the aim of creating a world with living beings, the creator Brahma created five “Manas Putras” or mental-born sons in his own likeness. They were Dharma, Rudra, Manu, Bhrigu and Sankaadi. Then with his right thumb, Brahma created Daksha, and with his left thumb he created the wife of Daksha who produced 16 daughters. They were the following—Shradhaa, Maitri, Dayaa, Shaanti, Tushti, Pushti, Kriyaa, Unnati, Buddhi, Medhaa, Murti, Titikshaa, Hli, Swaahaa, Swadhaa and Sati.

Swaahaa was married to Agni, Swadhaa to the Pittars, and the other thirteen daughters were married to Dharma. The 16th daughter, Sati, was married to Rudra whose other name is Shiva. When Daksha had insulted Shiva by not inviting him to the fire sacrifice he had organized, and in which Sati had burnt herself as narrated in Ram Charit Manas (Baal Kand, from Doha no. 61—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 65), Shiva had cursed him (Daksha) that he would be demoted to become a human being and take birth in the family of Dhruv. One of the descendents of Dhruv was known as Prachetaa who did severe Tapa (penance) to get the power of reproduction and spread his progeny. He married the daughter of Kanduu, named Maarishaa, and from her he begot a son named Daksha. Then this Daksha produced so many living beings by his mere mental wish men that they filled all the four corners of the world. But the irony was that these mental-born creatures were unable to reproduce themselves—i.e. they could not beget children in order to perpetuate this creation consisting of living beings on earth. In other words, once they died the land would be barren once again.

In order to overcome this problem, Daksha married Asikni, the daughter of Veeran Prajapati. From her he produced thousand sons and countless daughters. These daughters were the ones from whom Kashyap and others were able to perpetuate this creation. In other words, this present generation of living beings, of all genres and families, has Daksha as their ancestor in the present cycle of creation.

The story of Daksha and his sons (numbering ten thousand) is narrated as a note appended to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 79.]

बड़ अधिकार दच्छ जब पावा । अति अभिमानु हृदयँ तब आवा ॥ ७ ॥

नहिं कोउ अस जनमा जग माहीं । प्रभुता पाइ जाहि मद नाहीं ॥ ८ ॥

bara adhikāra daccha jaba pāvā. ati abhimānu hr̥dayaṁ taba āvā. 7.
nahim kō'u asa janamā jaga māhīṁ. prabhutā pā'i jāhi mada nāhīṁ. 8.

When Daksha acquired an exalted stature of being appointed as the guardian of the living beings of the kingdom of the Creator by the latter himself, immense sense of self-pride and arrogance took root in his heart¹. (7)

Indeed it is true that there is no one who has taken birth in this world but does not have pride and ego if he or she gets to acquire high stature and position, or is honoured by someone who is great (like the creator Brahma who had honoured Daksha by making him the guardian of his creation)². (8)

[Note—¹Daksha became exceedingly proud of himself, thinking—“Oh, I am so great and able that the Creator has selected me to lead the world out of all the candidates for this coveted position. Now I am the king of the world, rivaling Indra who is the king of gods. No one can match me now. Oh, I am the undisputed sovereign now. None can challenge my position now because I have been appointed by the Creator himself.

²This is an important observation. It is worth noting here that only those who have taken birth in this world created by Brahma, the creator are prone to this negative trait of becoming arrogant and haughty. That is why the ‘self-born’ Supreme Being is free from this taint—because he is *not* created by Brahma, the creator.

So therefore, Lord Ram was never subjected to being influenced by the negative traits of ego, pride, arrogance or haughtiness for the simple and straight reason that he had come to this world out of his own free will, and not created by Brahma the creator like other living beings.]

दो०. दच्छ लिए मुनि बोलि सब करन लगे बड़ जाग ।

नेवते सादर सकल सुर जे पावत मख भाग ॥ ६० ॥

dōhā.

daccha li'ē muni bōli saba karana lagē bara jāga.
nēvatē sādara sakala sura jē pāvata makha bhāga. 60.

To celebrate his newly acquired stature, Daksha summoned all the sages and began to perform a huge fire sacrifice. He sent invitations to all the gods, respectfully inviting them to come and take their respective shares of the offerings during the fire sacrifice. (Doha no. 60)

[Note—Who were invited? This is answered below in verse nos. 1-2. It ought to be noted that Shiva is left out.]

चौ० किंनर नाग सिद्ध गंधर्वा । बधुन्ह समेत चले सुर सर्बा ॥ १ ॥

बिष्णु बिरंचि महेसु बिहाई । चले सकल सुर जान बनाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kinnara nāga sid'dha gandharbā. badhunha samēta calē sura sarbā. 1.
biṣṇu birañci mahēsu bihāī. calē sakala sura jāna banāī. 2.

The Kinnars (celestial dancers), the Naagas¹ (subterranean serpents), the Siddhas (mystics), the Gandharvas (celestial musicians and singers), and all the rest of the gods², accompanied by their respective consorts, proceeded to attend the fire sacrifice of Daksha. (1)

All the gods and their consorts—except the three chief gods of the Trinity, viz. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder³—boarded their decorated aerial chariots and headed to the fire sacrifice of Daksha. (2)

[Note—¹The “Naagas”—Though the word ‘Naag’, simply put, means a sepent or snake, from mythological point of view they are semi-gods. the brief story of their origin is as follows—Sage Kashyap and his wife Kadru had 1000 sons who had 1000 hoods each. They were called the ‘Naagas’, and they ruled over the subterranean world. Out of them, there were 26 main Naagas such as Anant, Vaasuki, Shesh, Karkootak, Shankha, Kambal, Mahaaneel, Takshak, Padma, Mahaapadma, Mahaashankha, etc. The story is narrated in Padma Puran, Sristi Khanda, and Vishnu Puran, Section 1, Canto 21, verse no. 1-3.

²The Gods and their sub-classes—The creator Brahma created ten levels in creation. Out of them, the ‘gods’ constitute one level. According to Bhagwat Maha Puran, 3/10/27-28, the ‘gods’ themselves are classified into eight sub-classes or sections—viz. (i) Devta (the higher immortal gods), (ii) Pittar (spirit of dead ancestors), (iii) Asur (non-gods, but not mortal creatures), (iv) Gandharva and Apsara (celestial singers and musicians and their women), (v) Yaksha and Raksha (lower forms of Asurs and demoted spirits; demons in spirit form), (vi) Siddha (mystics), Chaaran (bards) and Vidyaadhar (lower spirits who possessed special skills and were learned but not qualified to become full gods), (vii) Bhut-Pret-Pishach (ghosts, phantoms, evil spirits), and (viii) Kinnars (celestial dancers). Refer also to: Amarkosh, Swarga Varga 1, verse no. 11.

The Gandharvas have a yellow complexion. They are said to be the sons of Kashyap Prajaapati and his wife Arishtaa. The Apsaraas are said to be their wives. They are regarded as the custodians of ‘Soma’ (the elixir of the gods that is stored in the Moon), medicine men of gods (because they give the Soma as a miracle potion for all ailments), propagators of heavenly knowledge, the controllers of the Nakshatras (zodiac signs and stars), etc. The patron god of the Gandharvas is ‘Varun’, the Water-God, and their chief or leader is Chitra-rath. The main Gandharvas are eleven in number as follows—Haha, Huhu, Chitrasen/Chitra-rath, Vidhyaadhar, Hansa, Vishwaa-vasu, Paraa-vasu, Gomaau, Tumburu, Viraadha and Nandi.

According to Taittiriya Aaranyaka, (i, 9, 3), there are eleven sub-classes of Gandharvas. But according to Agni Puran, the Gandharvas have twelve sub-classes, and they are Abhrajya, Andhaari, Rambhaari, Suryavarchaa, Kridhu, Hasta, Suhasta, Hans/Swan, Murdahwaan, Mahaamanaa, Vishwaa-vasu, and Krishaanu.

³Daksha had become so arrogant that he did not even invite his mentor, the creator Brahma. Daksha kept ill-will with Shiva, and since all the gods of the Trinity were deemed to be the same Brahm, the Supreme Being, in three different forms to carry out three different functions of creation, viz. to create (Brahma), to sustain (Vishnu) and to conclude (Shiva), Daksha decided to neglect all of them. But the

other gods should have paid attention to the fact that these three gods of the Trinity were the senior most amongst them, and to by-pass them just to get their own share of the sacrificial offerings by someone (Daksha) who has insulted the Trinity Gods by not inviting them, and to whom all the gods paid their obeisance and bowed before, was an unacceptable thing by any criterion. The gods had to pay a heavy price for this deemed insult to the Trinity Gods—because we shall read a little later how Lord Shiva sends his disciple named Veerbhadra to destroy the fire sacrifice of Daksha and punish the gods—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 65.]

सतीं बिलोके व्योम बिमाना । जात चले सुंदर बिधि नाना ॥ ३ ॥

सुर सुंदरी करहिं कल गाना । सुनत श्रवन छूटहिं मुनि ध्याना ॥ ४ ॥

satīm bilōkē byōma bimānā. jāta calē sundara bidhi nānā. 3.

sura sundarī karahim kala gānā. sunata śravana chūṭahim muni dhyānā. 4.

Sati observed different types of decorated aerial vehicles flying through the sky. (3)

In them, beautiful women-folk of the gods were singing such melodious songs with a sweet voice that if sages heard them they would be so enchanted that they would be inspired to abandon their meditative trance to listen and enjoy them (i.e. the meditating sages would be sufficiently enticed to stop their meditation and hear these pleasant songs and see the sight of magnificently decorated aerial vehicles flying through the sky in colourful formations). (4)

पूछेउ तब सिवँ कहेउ बखानी । पिता जग्य सुनि कछु हरषानी ॥ ५ ॥

pūchē'u taba sivaṁ kahē'u bakhānī. pitā jagya suni kachu haraṣānī. 5.

When Sati asked Lord Shiva about this wonderful sight and what it meant, he told her everything (regarding Daksha's fire sacrifice and the gods going to attend it).

When Sati heard of the fire sacrifice at her father's place, she felt a bit excited. (5)

[Note—Amid the gloom that had surrounded her because of Shiva adopting a detached attitude towards her, this news was a sort of diversion for her depressed mind that would give her some moments of pleasure and a chance to reinvigorate herself. So she asked Shiva to give her permission so that she can go and attend this fire sacrifice—refer: Doha no. 61 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8 herein below.]

जौं महेसु मोहि आयसु देहीं । कछु दिन जाइ रहौं मिस एहीं ॥ ६ ॥

पति परित्याग हृदयँ दुखु भारी । कहइ न निज अपराध बिचारी ॥ ७ ॥

jauṁ mahēsu mōhi āyasu dēhīm. kachu dina jā'i rahaurṁ misa ēhīm. 6.

pati parityāga hṛdayaṁ dukhu bhārī. kaha'i na nija aparādha bicārī. 7.

She thought to herself—If Mahesh gives me permission then I can go and live there (at my father's place) for some time on this excuse (of having come to attend the fire sacrifice)¹. (6)

[The reason why she wanted to go to her father's place for some days, and why she was reluctant to freely ask her husband to give her permission, is this—] Her

heart was full of sorrow and grief because her husband had abandoned her. But she was very hesitant to approach him due to the guilt of her sins (as she feared he would become more angry with her that instead of doing penance to atone for her sins she wishes to enjoy the celebrations at her father's place, and therefore perhaps he would not allow her to come back to him when she returned from her father's place at the end of the fire sacrifice). (7)

बोली सती मनोहर बानी । भय संकोच प्रेम रस सानी ॥ ८ ॥

bōlī satī manōhara bānī. bhaya saṅkōca prēma rasa sānī. 8.

[But, unable to resist herself, she approached Shiva.] Sati spoke to Shiva hesitantly because she was afraid of him. When she finally spoke it was with a very pleasant and polite tone as if her words were soaked in affection. (8)

[Note—Sati knew of her mistakes, and was scared that her asking Shiva to give her permission to go to her father's place to attend celebrations instead of doing something to atone for her sins would not go down well with her husband. He could have sternly admonished her that at a time when she was expected to do some sort of repentance and show remorse for her misdeeds, she wants to enjoy celebrations at her father's place. Wasn't she concerned about who would serve her husband during her absence? Even after suffering so much, hasn't she learnt any lesson in life?

So, Sati was unusually polite when she finally gathered courage to ask Shiva to give her permission and let her go to her father's place, in order to diffuse the tension as best as she could and behave normally as if nothing has happened.]

दो०. पिता भवन उत्सव परम जौं प्रभु आयसु होइ ।

तौ मैं जाउँ कृपायतन सादर देखन सोइ ॥ ६१ ॥

dōhā.

pitā bhavana utsava parama jaum̐ prabhu āyasu hō'i.
tau maim̐ jā'um̐ kṛpāyatana sādara dēkhana sō'i. 61.

Sati requested Lord Shiva—'There is a celebration at my father's place. So, oh compassionate Lord, if I am given your kind permission then I respectfully say that I could go and see it.' (Doha no. 61)

चौ०. कहेहु नीक मोरेहुँ मन भावा । यह अनुचित नहिं नेवत पठावा ॥ १ ॥

दच्छ सकल निज सुता बोलाई । हमरें बयर तुम्हउ बिसराई ॥ २ ॥

ब्रह्मसभाँ हम सन दुखु माना । तेहि तें अजहुँ करहिं अपमाना ॥ ३ ॥

caupā'i.

kahēhu nīka mōrēhuṁ mana bhāvā. yaha anucita nahim̐ nēvata paṭhāvā. 1.
daccha sakala nija sutā bōlā'im̐. hamarēm̐ bayara tumha'u bisarā'im̐. 2.
brahmasabhāṁ hama sana dukhu mānā. tēhi tēm̐ ajahuṁ karahim̐ apamānā.
3.

Lord Shiva replied to Sati, ‘What you said is primarily alright, and on the face of it, it is okay to my mind as well.

But there is a problem here, and it is this: it is not proper to do so (i.e. to go to your father’s place to attend the fire sacrifice ceremony) because he (your father, Daksha) has not sent us an invitation¹. (1)

Daksha has invited all his other daughters, but he has not invited you and has ignored you because of his animosity and grudge with me. (2)

He once took an offence at me in the heavenly court of Brahma, the creator, and ever since that time he has been insulting me². [And this is why he has not sent an invitation to either me or you.] (3)

[Note—¹When a religious function is underway in a person’s father’s home, there is no harm in going and attending it. So, primarily Sati’s request was okay. But the problem was that her father harboured severe ill-will with Sati’s husband, Lord Shiva. Going uninvited to someone’s place irrespective of who he or she is, and how closely he or she is related, is sure to invite rebuke, insult, scorn and ridicule. Sati did not think of this. The fact of the matter is that she was so overcome by the powerful forces of Maya that she had lost wisdom to judge what is good and what is bad.

This error of judgement and inability to think wisely and intelligently as to what is good and what is not is at the root cause of all her miseries in the first place. It is this lack of wisdom which prevailed upon her to test the authenticity of Lord Ram by disguising herself as the Lord’s wife without thinking of the consequences of such an action, and it was the same lack of wisdom that later on made her tell lies to her husband. And now it is the same lack of wisdom that prevented her from understanding that it is highly improper to go to someone’s place without a proper invitation, especially when that person keeps ill-will with one’s closest kin, and for a wife her husband is obviously the closest relation.

Sati forgot that if she did go uninvited to her father’s place it would send a strong signal to all those present there that she did not bother about the insult that has been cast upon her husband, Lord Shiva. And this wrong signal would boomerang upon her as the entire community of gods and goddesses assembled there would ridicule her and treat her with contempt as someone who has no respect for her husband. It would result in all her self-respect, dignity and honour being sent for a toss. As the events unfolded, this is exactly what has happened—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 63 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8.

²This episode of Daksha taking offence at Shiva’s behaviour is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Maha Puran, Skandha no. 4, Canto no. 2, verse nos. 4-33. Briefly it is as follows—

Once, the creator Brahma had organised a fire sacrifice in which all the gods and semi-gods as well as all the sons of Brahma who were assigned the task of propagating this creation were invited. Both Shiva and Daksha were invited too. It so happened that when Daksha entered the venue, all other gods got up to show their respects to him, but Lord Shiva kept sitting. This is because Daksha was not even a senior god, and was merely a “Prajapati” (caretaker of Brahma’s creation). But those who are of a low mentality and are full of ego think themselves to be too big or higher in stature than they actually are. So, Daksha took offence at Shiva’s behaviour.

Daksha was so haughty that he immediately rebuked Shiva and told the latter that he would excommunicate him from his society and avenge his insult by not inviting Shiva to participate and accept any offerings during any fire sacrifice that Daksha would organise in his kingdom. Shiva is an exemplarily self-restrained and highly dispassionate Lord God as he is an ascetic of the highest order, and so it did not matter to him whether or not Daksha insulted him, or did not invite him to a fire sacrifice, or didn’t offer Shiva his share of the sacrificial offerings.

The question is ‘why did Daksha take special offence at Shiva when Brahma and Vishnu too had not got up as he entered the venue’? The answer is this—‘Daksha’s

daughter Sati was married to Shiva, and therefore the latter was his son-in-law. Daksha took special umbrage at Shiva because he treated Shiva's showing indifference to him as an insult inflicted upon his dignity and stature by his son-in-law. Daksha forgot, in his misplaced sense of false importance and ego, that Shiva was one of the almighty gods of the Trinity and not merely his son-in-law. The other two senior gods, i.e. Brahma and Vishnu, were not related to Daksha as was Shiva, and this was the reason why he was especially very angry with Shiva.

But Shiva's insult did not go down well with Nandi (the Bull) who is his devout follower and mount. So Nandi counter-cursed Daksha that if he did so (i.e. if he did not offer the required share of sacrificial offerings to Shiva as ordained by the scriptures) then his fire sacrifice would be ruined.

Shiva all but forgot about this incident, but Daksha tied a firm knot in his mind that he will definitely insult Shiva by holding a fire sacrifice and neglecting him.

During the fire sacrifice organised by Brahma, when Daksha entered the venue, not only Lord Shiva but the other two senior-most gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, and Vishnu the sustainer, too had not got up. This is the reason why we learn here that Daksha had not invited even Brahma and Vishnu in his fire sacrifice—refer: Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 61.]

जौं बिनु बोलें जाहु भवानी । रहइ न सीलु सनेहु न कानी ॥ ४ ॥
जदपि मित्र प्रभु पितु गुर गेहा । जाइअ बिनु बोलेहुँ न सँदेहा ॥ ५ ॥
तदपि बिरोध मान जहँ कोई । तहाँ गएँ कल्यानु न होई ॥ ६ ॥

jaur̥m binu bōlēm jāhu bhavānī. raha'i na sīlu sanēhu na kānī. 4.
jadapi mitra prabhu pitu gura gēhā. jā'i'a binu bōlēhuṁ na saṁdēhā. 5.
tadapi birōdha māna jahaṁ kō'ī. tahāṁ ga'eṁ kalyānu na hō'ī. 6.

Oh Bhavani (another name of Sati)! If you go there without any invitation, then your honour, self-respect and dignity would suffer. (4)

Although it is alright, without doubt, to go to the house of one's friend, one's Lord, or one's father even without a formal invitation, (5)---

---but still it is not good for anyone to go to the place of someone who harbours animosity and ill-will.' (6)

[Note—Whatever Shiva warned Sati proved to be true. She was neglected and insulted at her father's place: refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 63 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8.]

भाँति अनेक संभु समुझावा । भावी बस न ग्यानु उर आवा ॥ ७ ॥
कह प्रभु जाहु जो बिनहिं बोलाएँ । नहिं भलि बात हमारे भाएँ ॥ ८ ॥

bhāṁti anēka sambhu samujhāvā. bhāvī basa na gyānu ura āvā. 7.
kaha prabhu jāhu jō binahim bōlā'eṁ. nahim bhali bāta hamārē bhā'eṁ. 8.

Shiva tried his best to explain things to Sati (and try to persuade her not to go to her father's place without an invitation), but so powerful is one's fate and destiny that wisdom eluded her; she would not see the reason and remained adamant.

[It is this stubborn nature of hers that had led to her miseries in the first place. She had not listened to Shiva's advice not to cast doubts on Lord Ram's divinity and integrity, and Sati's stubbornness had resulted in Shiva's abandonment of her when

she assumed the form of Sita to test Lord Ram, and later resorted to telling lies in order to hide her misdemeanours.] (7)

Deciding that she won't listen to his advice, Lord Shiva finally gave up and said in a remorseful mood—'Well, if you go without being invited, do as you like, but I don't think it to be a good thing to do. I don't like it, and nor do I agree with it.

[Do as you think fit because you are stubborn and won't heed sane advice. But don't think I have given any bit of consent to it. I do not like your going to your father's place when he has completely neglected us, but you seem to be adamant. So, I think that it is wise for me to keep quiet now as it is clear that your fate is doomed.]' (8)

दो०. कहि देखा हर जतन बहु रहइ न दच्छकुमारि ।
दिए मुख्य गन संग तब बिदा कीन्ह त्रिपुरारि ॥ ६२ ॥

dōhā.

kahi dēkhā hara jatana bahu raha'i na dacchakumāri.
di'ē mukhya gana saṅga taba bidā kīnha tripurāri. 62.

Lord Har (Shiva) tried his best to persuade the daughter of Daksha¹ (Sati) not to go (uninvited to her father's place), but unfortunately she would not listen.

So finally, Lord Tripurari² (Shiva, the Lord of the three dimensions of the world) sent her (i.e. allowed her to go to her father's place) along with his chief attendants to accompany her. (Doha no. 62)

[Note—¹The epithet "daughter of Daksha" is used here to indicate that after all Sati had inherited the genes of her father—to be stubborn, to lack wisdom, and inclined to show disrespect to Shiva and his words by disobeying him—in spite of the fact that Shiva was not an ordinary god but ²Tripurari, "the Lord of the entire world consisting of three levels of existence, viz. the heaven, the earth and the nether world".]

चौ०. पिता भवन जब गई भवानी । दच्छ त्रास काहुँ न सनमानी ॥ १ ॥
सादर भलेहि मिली एक माता । भगिनीं मिलीं बहुत मुसुकाता ॥ २ ॥
दच्छ न कछु पूछी कुसलाता । सतिहि बिलोकि जरे सब गाता ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

pitā bhavana jaba ga'īm bhavānī. daccha trāsa kāhuṁ na sanamānī. 1.
sādara bhalēhi milī ēka mātā. bhaginīṁ milīm bahuta musukātā. 2.
daccha na kachu pūchī kusalātā. satihi bilōki jarē saba gātā. 3.

When Bhavani (i.e. the wife of Lord Bhava, Shiva) reached her father's house, no one welcomed her due to fear of inviting the wrath of Daksha. (1)

However, her mother was the only person who met her respectfully. [That is, Sati's mother met her affectionately, and she was the only person who welcomed her.]

Her sisters too met her, but all of them were smiling (in a sarcastic manner)¹. (2)

*Daksha did not as much as asked for her well-being even as a matter of formal courtesy. Instead, when he saw her he was so agitated that his body burnt like it was afire. [His blood-pressure rose and he became exceedingly annoyed.] (3)

[Note—¹Why were they ‘smiling in a sarcastic manner’? Because Sati had come alone, without being accompanied by her husband Shiva, whereas the rest of her sisters were accompanied by their respective husbands. Besides this, they smiled scornfully to indicate that though they were sisters but in the present situation Sati was the lowliest amongst them as not only her husband Lord Shiva was an ascetic but he had discarded her. To add to her woes, she wasn’t received well by her father, and her husband had been excommunicated from the community of gods so that he could not participate and take his share of the offerings of the fire sacrifice. Being fully aware of this, Sati chose to come, and this meant that she had no sense of self-respect, dignity and honour, something that was bound to invite scorn and ridicule.

*This verse no. 3 can be interpreted as follows: Daksha did not welcome her, and did not even ask for her welfare. When Sati observed this rude attitude of her father, as well as the scornful smile of her sisters, she became very angry and her entire body became so agitated as if it was burning in fire.

What made Sati so angry, especially when Shiva had forewarned her of the type of reception she must expect at her father’s place? Well, firstly, Sati had little faith in her husband’s wisdom as is evident when she had not believed him with respect to his advice on Lord Ram. So, even in the case of her father she had not paid much weight to Shiva’s advice that she won’t be welcome—because she thought that her father may harbour ill-feelings for her husband but he will not have any hard feelings against her as all fathers love their off-springs.

Her father may not have invited her husband out of personal enmity, but she thought that when she would meet him he would naturally show a father’s inherent affection for his daughter, and would treat her in the same way he treated his other daughters, her sisters. But as the event turned out, it was not to be so. All her sisters had nothing but scorn for her, and quite the contrary to her expectations her father loathed her more than anyone else.

In this scenario, Sati became very agitated and angry. The “burning of the body as if on fire” is a figure of speech to imply that the concerned person is highly agitated and angry as if his or her body is being scorched by heat.]

सतीं जाइ देखेउ तब जागा । कतहुँ न दीख संभु कर भागा ॥ ४ ॥

तब चित चढ़ेउ जो संकर कहेऊ । प्रभु अपमानु समुझि उर दहेऊ ॥ ५ ॥

satīṁ jā'ī dēkhē'u taba jāgā. katahuṁ na dīkha sambhu kara bhāgā. 4.

taba cita caṛhē'u jō saṅkara kahē'ū. prabhu apamānu samujhi ura dahē'ū. 5.

[Sati virtually bit her lips in disgust and somehow managed to suppress her anger in the initial phase. But then her anger burst out in the open when—] Sati went to see the fire sacrifice, but she could not find Lord Shiva’s share of offerings. [During a fire sacrifice, offerings meant for the different gods are kept aside. Sati looked over them and found that no offering has been set aside for Shiva.]¹ (4)

At that moment she recalled what her husband, Lord Shiva, had told her (or had warned her—that it is sure that Daksha wouldn’t offer any sacrificial offerings to him due to past animosity)².

Interpreting this as an affront to the honour of the Lord (Shiva) and a clear public insult of him, her heart was outraged and it began burning with anger and seething with disgust (with a desire to seek retribution). (5)

[Note—¹When Sati glanced over the offerings she discovered to her dismay that though the other two gods of the Trinity, viz. Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma, had not come, but still their share of sacrificial offerings had been kept aside. Only Lord Shiva had been singled out for utter neglect and contempt as not even a trace of the offerings were set aside for him even in a token and perfunctory manner as absolutely necessary to be done during a fire sacrifice. This is because during such religious rites, offerings must be made to ‘all the gods without exception’.

Had no offerings been kept aside for Vishnu and Brahma, the affront to Shiva would not have been so marked, but as the things stood Sati could not digest that Shiva be singled out for such brazen insult.

²Refer notes appended to Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 62 herein above.]

पाछिल दुखु न हृदयँ अस व्यापा । जस यह भयउ महा परितापा ॥ ६ ॥

जद्यपि जग दारुन दुख नाना । सब तें कठिन जाति अवमाना ॥ ७ ॥

pāchila dukhu na hṛdayaṁ asa byāpā. jasa yaha bhaya'u mahā paritāpā. 6.
jadyapi jaga dārūna dukha nānā. saba tēṁ kaṭhina jāti avamānā. 7.

The previous sorrows from which she was already suffering till now (that her husband had repudiated her) had not tormented her heart as much as this new horror (of witnessing her husband’s public insult and the scorn heaped on him). This new torment was intolerable, and it shook her heart from its core. (6)

Although there are many types of great sorrows and grief that torment a person during his or her interaction with the world, but the greatest amongst them is being insulted, scorned at and rebuked in front of the society.

[*This verse can be interpreted in another way also as follows: “Although there are many types of great sorrows and grief that torment a person during his or her interaction with the world, but the greatest amongst them is the insult, the rebuke and the scorn that is heaped on one’s own people, such as one’s kith and kin.”] (7)

[Note—The reader would note that all of Sati’s miseries have their genesis in her stubborn nature and lack of faith and trust in her husband who was not an ‘ordinary husband’ but the wisest of all the gods. The lesson that one learns is that one ought to pay attention to one’s sincere advisor, especially when he is a learned and wise one, and not be too stubborn or over-confident about one’s own wisdom and intelligence.

The second lesson to be learnt is that one should never go anywhere uninvited, no matter what happens, especially at a place where one is certain that he or she would not be welcome because the host harbours ill-feelings towards one’s close relatives. In the present case we observe that Sati had not personally offended her father Daksha in any way, and on the contrary had come to her father’s place in good faith and with full confidence that he would show fatherly affection for her, but as it turned out, she discovered to her dismay, that since he had ill-will for her husband he treated even his own daughter with disdain.]

समुझि सो सतिहि भयउ अति क्रोधा । बहु बिधि जननीं कीन्ह प्रबोधा ॥ ८ ॥

samujhi sō satihi bhaya'u ati krōdhā. bahu bidhi jananiṁ kīnha prabōdhā. 8.

This thought (as described in verse nos. 5 and 7 herein above) made Sati furious with indignation and anger. Her mother tried to calm her down in various ways.

[Her mother tried to soothe her ruffled feelings in the best way she could, and tried to dissuade her from taking any reckless action in anger. But as it turned out, the events had gone out of hand, and it was too much for Sati to cope with Shiva's public insult and humiliation—as will be clear in the following narrative.] 98)

दो०. सिव अपमानु न जाइ सहि हृदयँ न होइ प्रबोध ।
सकल सभहि हठि हटकि तब बोलीं बचन सक्रोध ॥ ६३ ॥

dōhā.

siva apamānu na jā'i sahi hṛdayaṁ na hō'i prabōdha.
sakala sabhahi haṭhi haṭaki taba bōlīm bacana sakrōdha. 63.

Insult to Lord Shiva was unbearable and unacceptable for Sati, and she could not pacify her heart on this count. So, outraged and unable to restrain herself, she poured scorn at the whole assembly and reproached it sternly in angry words—(Doha no. 63)

चौ०. सुनुहु सभासद सकल मुनिंदा । कही सुनी जिन्ह संकर निंदा ॥ १ ॥
सो फलु तुरत लहब सब काहूँ । भली भँति पछिताब पिताहूँ ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunahu sabhāsada sakala munindā. kahī sunī jinha saṅkara nindā. 1.
sō phalu turata lahaba saba kāhūṁ. bhālī bhānti pachitāba pitāhūṁ. 2.

Sati angrily snubbed the whole assembly and said angrily—‘Listen all the members of this assembly, including the sages who are present here. Listen all of you who have criticised Lord Shiva or have heard such insults being inflicted upon the Lord. (1)

All of you will immediately be given the fruits of your deeds (i.e. you will be summarily punished for your insulting Shiva). Let my father also regret fully and repent (for his misdeeds and sin of insulting Lord Shiva). (2)

संत संभु श्रीपति अपबादा । सुनिअ जहाँ तहँ असि मरजादा ॥ ३ ॥
काटिअ तासु जीभ जो बसाई । श्रवन मूदि न त चलिअ पराई ॥ ४ ॥

santa sambhu śrīpati apabādā. suni'a jahāṁ tahaṁ asi marajādā. 3.
kāṭi'a tāsu jībha jō basāī. śravana mūdi na ta cali'a parāī. 4.

It is a matter of rule that wherever and whenever you hear saints, Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu (“Sri-Pati”, the Lord of Sri or goddess Laxmi) being reviled (abused, insulted, scorned at or criticised) [1], then if it is within your means you should chop-off the tongue of the reviler, and if it is not possible to do so then you should close your ears (so that you don't have to listen such vile words) and run away (get away) from the place [2]. (1-2)

जगदातमा महेसु पुरारी । जगत जनक सब के हितकारी ॥ ५ ॥

पिता मंदमति निंदत तेही । दच्छ सुक्र संभव यह देही ॥ ६ ॥

jagadātamā mahēsu purārī. jagata janaka saba kē hitakārī. 5.
pitā mandamati nindata tēhī. daccha sukra sambhava yaha dēhī. 6.

It is such an irony that Lord Mahesh (Shiva), who is the universal Atma (soul) of the entire creation (“Jag-daatma”), who is the Lord of the entire world (“Puraari”), who is the Father of the whole world (“Jagat Janak”), and who is the well-wisher of all (“Hitkaari”) [5]---

---My father is so stupid and of a low intellect that he has chosen to criticise and revile the same great Lord of creation! And it is an irony and my bad luck that this body of mine is produced by his sperms (because most unfortunately I happen to be his daughter) [6]. (5-6)

तजिहउँ तुरत देह तेहि हेतू । उर धरि चंद्रमौलि बृषकेतू ॥ ७ ॥

अस कहि जोग अगिनि तनु जारा । भयउ सकल मख हाहाकारा ॥ ८ ॥

tajiha'uṁ turata dēha tēhi hētū. ura dhari candramauli bṛṣakētū. 7.
asa kahi jōga agini tanu jārā. bhaya'u sakala makha hāhākārā. 8.

It is for this reason (as narrated in verse nos. 3-6 herein above, but especially verse no. 6) that I will leave my sinful, hateful and vile body immediately (because it is born out the despicable sperms of my sinful father Daksha). And while I do so, I will enshrine Lord Shiva, who is adorned with the crescent moon on his forehead and whose flag has the emblem of the Bull (“Brish”—which stands for the virtues of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, and noble conduct), in my heart.¹ (7)

Saying thus, Sati burnt her physical gross body in the fire of produced by doing Yoga². As soon as she burnt herself, there was a tumultuous plaintive cry of dismay and horror³. (8)

[Note—¹Sati has now realised that the root cause of all her miseries is that she carries the genes of her sinful, stubborn, stupid and haughty father Daksha. He had not understood the divine nature of Lord Shiva, and had treated him as an ordinary god. That Shiva had married his daughter Sati further reduced the stature of the Lord in his eyes—for Daksha started treating Shiva as being inferior to him by the virtue of him being Shiva’s father-in-law. In his ignorance, naivety and sense of false self-importance, Daksha had forgotten that Shiva was the Lord of creation, and that is why he is honoured by the epithet “Maha-Deva”, the Great God. No other god has this honour.

Lord Shiva is a highly self-realised and enlightened Lord who knows that the gross physical body is not the true self of any living being, but that the true self is the Atma, the Soul which is a universal pure conscious entity that lives in the body of all living beings. That is why Shiva is called “Jagdaatma”—the universal Soul of the entire world.

It is said that when a person dies, the last thoughts that are in his or mind decide where he or she goes in re-birth. For instance, if one thinks of Lord God then after death his soul migrates to the abode of the Lord. If he thinks of this world and its pleasures, then he is reborn in the world to fulfill his desires to enjoy it.

In the case of Sati, she enshrined Shiva in her heart, which is saying that her mind and sub-conscience was fixed on Shiva, and therefore she was bound to go where Shiva was in her next birth. As it eventually happened, Sati was re-born as Parvati in

the household of Himvaan, the king of the snow-covered mountains known as Himalayas. She married Lord Shiva in this new incarnation.

²The word used in the text for the fire in which Sati burnt herself is “Yog Agni”. This is the type of fire that is kindled inside one’s body by friction caused by the vital winds. Usually this is the sort of death achieved by ascetics who are expert in doing Yoga. Since Sati was the consort of Shiva who is an expert ascetic himself and the patron god of all ascetics, it is natural to expect that she had full knowledge of this sort of death. It is painless and voluntary.

According to some versions, however, the phrase “Joga Agni” (जोग अग्नि) refers to the fire of the sacrificial pit. If this is to be treated as the means by which Sati left her body then it would obviously mean that she jumped into the fire sacrifice to burn herself. The word “Sati” refers to ancient practice in India wherein the dead man’s widow burnt herself in the cremation fire lit to cremate her husband’s body. In this case, the widow rode atop the funeral pile consisting of firewood, and then fire was lit.

³Sati’s burning of herself during the process of the sacrifice was tantamount to it getting disrupted. A disrupted fire sacrifice portends great evil for the patron who hosts it. As we shall read below, Lord Shiva sent his chief disciple named Birbhadra who came angrily and not only completely defiled and upturned the fire sacrifice ritual but also severely punished all the gods and sages who were present there.]

दो०. सती मरनु सुनि संभु गन लगे करन मख खीस ।

जग्य बिधंस बिलोकि भृगु रच्छा कीन्हि मुनीस ॥ ६४ ॥

dōhā.

satī maranu suni sambhu gana lagē karana makha khīsa.
jagy bidhnsa bilōki bhṛgu racchā kīnhi munīsa. 64.

As soon as the attendants of Lord Shiva, who had accompanied Sati on the instructions of Shiva (see line no. 2 of Doha no. 62 herein above), heard of her death¹, they immediately began to spoil the fire sacrifice.

When sage Bhrigu* saw that the fire sacrifice was being ruined, he intervened and saved it from complete destruction². (Doha no. 64)

[Note—¹This shows that the attendants of Shiva who had accompanied Sati were not allowed to enter the venue, but stood guard outside the gates. When Daksha had decided to completely neglect Shiva it is natural that the latter’s attendants would also be boycotted. So, when Sati burnt herself inside the pavilion and a huge tumult was raised, these Shiva’s attendants rushed inside to find out what had happened. And as soon as they saw that Sati had died, they became furious and drew their weapons, creating mayhem inside the pavilion to avenge Sati’s death and Shiva’s insult.

²When Shiva’s attendants started ruining the fire sacrifice, sage Bhrigu invoked some mystical Mantras (secret formulas) of the Yajur Veda which help to overcome those forces that disrupt a fire sacrifice. Bhrigu invoked those specialised Mantras and offered oblations to the fire once again. This resulted in creation of thousands of semi-gods named “Ribhu”, who immediately chased away Shiva’s attendants. This saved the fire sacrifice from immediate ruin.

This statement that the ‘fire sacrifice was saved by sage Bhrigu’ shows that he was the presiding priest of the sacrifice. But it was a temporary relief because soon Lord Shiva sent Birbhadra who came angrily to completely ruin the sacrifice and punish all those present, including Daksha. Refer verse nos. 1-3 herein below.

*Sage Bhrigu is a well known sage and seer who appears in a number of Vedic and Purnaic works. His name ‘Bhrigu’ is derived from the root word ‘Bhrij’ or

‘Bhraaj’ which literally means to roast or burn, and therefore it could mean the sage, who was a fire sacrifice priest, had some mystical powers which allowed him to kindle the altar fire automatically by use of Mantras. According to mythological history, the patron God of lightening, Lord Maatarishwan, brought the celestial lightening down to earth and taught three priests the art of kindling the sacred altar fire using the Aranis (‘the fire sticks’ used to kindle fire by vigorous rubbing together). These three priests were the Bhrigu, the Angiras, and the Atharvan.

Sage Bhrigu has is regarded as being one of the nine ‘Manas Putras’ of Brahma, the creator. [That is, Bhrigu was born as the son of Brahma because the latter wished in his mind and heart, the ‘Mana’, to have a son, a ‘Putra’, rather than the usual process by which a son is born, i.e. the physical process of procreation by intercourse.]

He is one of the seven celestial sages known as “Sapta-rishis”.

He is also stated elsewhere as being the son of Indra (the king of Gods). The Taittiriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 3, Anuvak 1 describes him as ‘Bhirgu Vaaruni’, i.e. the son of Varun (the Water God). He was the father of Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation. That is why Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, is also known as Bhargavi, the daughter of Bhargava, or Bhrigu.

According to Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 1, verse nos. 43-45, sage Bhrigu had a wife named ‘Khyaati’ from whom he begot two sons named Dhaataa and Vidhaataa, and a daughter named Sri. ‘Sri’ (whose another name was Laxmi) was later married to Vishnu. Meanwhile, sage Meru married his daughters Aayati and Niyati to Dhaataa and Vidhaataa respectively. Aayati gave birth to Mrikand, and Niyati gave birth to Praan. Mrikand’s son was the famous sage Markendeya, and Praan’s son was Ved-shiraa. Hence, sage Markendeya was a great grandson of Bhrigu.

According to Bhagwat Maha-puran, 3/24/21-24, and 4/1, it is narrated that in the epoch called Swayambhu-Manwantar, king Manu’s daughter named Devhuti was married to sage Kardam from whom she begot nine daughters. They were named Kalaa, Anusuya, Shraddha, Havirbhu, Gati, Kriyaa, Urjaa or Arundhati, Chiti and Shaanti, and Khyaati. They were married repectively to sages Marichi, Atri, Angiraa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasistha, Atharvan and Bhrigu.

In other births sage Bhrigu is regarded as the grand-father of Shukracharya (also known as Ushnaa), the moral preceptor of the Demons (Refer: Bhagwat, Skandha 4, Canto 1, verse no. 45). [Bhrigu’s son was Kavi, and the latter’s son was Shukracharya.]

He was one of the ancient sages after whom a lineage was established—and his descendents assumed his name as their surname or title. It is ‘Bhargava’ or ‘Bhrigu’. Some well known names of sages who followed him in this lineage are sages Jamdagni and Parashuram.

He is one of the four sages (the others being Marichi, Atri and Kashyap) who had elaborately described the Vakhaanas Aagam followed by some Vaishnav sects (followers of Vishnu worship).

He performed severe austerity and penance at a place called Bhrigu Kaccha located on the banks of river Narmada where it merges with the Arabian Sea. It is situated in the Broach area of Gujrat state of western India.

He is credited with composing the tome of astrology and horoscopes known as ‘Bhrigu Sanhita’. It is said to contain a data base of all possible horoscopes that can be created by considering all possible permutations and combinations of the nine planets and twelve zodiac signs.

The third chapter, called Valli no. 3, of the famous Taittiriya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is revealed by Varun to Bhrigu when the latter approached his father Varun to ask him the method by which Brahm can be realised.

He once tested the Trinity Gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) and determined that Vishnu is the best amongst them and alone deserves worship. This story in brief is as follows—

Once all the sages had collected and decided to judge which of the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder, is the greatest. Sage Bhrigu was appointed to find it out. Bhrigu first went to Brahma and did not show any respect to him. This enraged Brahma, but somehow he managed to control himself. Then Bhrigu went to meet Shiva. Shiva came forward but Bhrigu did not want to meet him, accusing the Lord of following inauspicious way of life. This enraged Shiva who lifted his trident to kill Bhrigu. Then Parvati, the consort of Shiva, intervened and pacified him.

Finally, Bhrigu went to Vishnu who was reclining in his divine abode known as Vaikuntha. Bhrigu got annoyed that Vishnu did not get up to welcome him, and so he kicked the Lord on his chest. Lord Vishnu woke up from his sleep, and instead of becoming angry at Bhrigu asked for his forgiveness as he was unaware that the Brahmin has arrived as he was asleep. Further, Vishnu showed Bhrigu great respect and said that instead of feeling insulted on being kicked on the chest, he is feeling honoured that a great sage had blessed him by touching his body with his august feet. This stunned Bhrigu; he was dumbfounded at the gracious and forgiving nature of Vishnu. But Vishnu's consort Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, was extremely peeved, and she cursed the Brahmin that henceforth the entire Brahmin race will have to suffer because of lack of wealth and would be forced to beg for their sustenance.

Lord Vishnu wears the mark made by the sage's footprint on his chest as a token of respect that he has for learned Brahmins.

Bhrigu came back and narrated the entire thing to the assembly of sages. They decided that indeed it was Lord Vishnu who was the greatest because he had conquered anger, the worst of all the negative qualities and the cause of all strife and destruction. Anger was to become the greatest of evils and vices in this world, and forgiveness as the greatest of virtues.]

चौ०. समाचार सब संकर पाए । बीरभद्रु करि कोप पठाए ॥ १ ॥

जग्य बिधंस जाइ तिन्ह कीन्हा । सकल सुरन्ह बिधिवत फलु दीन्हा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

samācāra saba saṅkara pā'ē. bīrabhadru kari kōpa paṭhā'ē. 1.

jagya bidhansa jā'i tinha kīnhā. sakala suranha bidhivata phalu dīnhā. 2.

When Lord Shiva got the news (of Sati's death and the cause of it)¹, he became furious. He angrily sent Beerbhadra² to take revenge and punish the perpetrators. (1)

He (i.e. Beerbhadra) went immediately and laid to waste the fire sacrifice of Daksha, punishing the various gods and other attendees in a proper manner. (2)

[Note—¹How did Shiva come to know of the developments that resulted in the death of Sati? One answer is that his attendants, whom he had sent with Sati to escort and protect her (as narrated in Doha no. 62), came rushing back to inform him of the developments at Daksha's place.

But there is a different version given in Shiva Puran, Kashi Khand, Canto 89, verse nos. 5-12. According to it, sage Narad came to Shiva and reported how and why Sati had died. Shiva showed indifference, saying that it is the way of the mortal world, that one should be detached from such developments and remain aloof from being honoured or insulted, or being attached to worldly relationships such thinking someone as one's wife or father-in-law. Sage Narad told Shiva that though this is a

highly correct way of spiritual thinking but from the practical point of view it is counter-productive. Say, what will the world think if Shiva remains indifferent and does not take any action? The wicked world, which does not realise Shiva's stellar spiritual philosophy and highly enlightened state of being, would think that Shiva was afraid to take action, or he was too weak or impotent to seek retribution for his own insult as well as the ignominious way his wife Sati had died. His exalted stature in the community of gods would be severely undermined. This motivated Shiva to send Beerbhadra to punish those who were responsible for Sati's death.

The same story is narrated in Kedaar Khand, Canto 3.

²Beerbhadra—The name means “a gentleman (“Bhadra”) who is very brave (“Beer or Veer”)”.

According to Kedaar Khand, Canto 3, angry Shiva tore at the lock of hairs on his head and uprooted some of its strands. Then he slammed them angrily on the side of the mountain at Kailash. This produced Beerbhadra and his army of attendants.

Beerbhadra's birth and the subsequent destruction of Daksha's fire sacrifice is narrated in detail in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 5 as follows:--

According to its verse nos. 1-6—“As soon as Shiva heard of how he was insulted in the fire sacrifice of Daksha that resulted in Sati's death, he became furious. Chewing his lips with his teeth in anger, he got up, tore at the lock of hairs on his head, uprooted some of its strands, and slammed them against the earth. This produced Beerbhadra. He had a colossal body, thousand arms that held countless forms of weapons, three eyes as brilliant as the sun, ferocious sharp teeth, hairs that resembled leaping flames of a raging fire, dark complexion, and he wore a garland of skulls.

Beerbhadra stood before Lord Shiva with palms joined in submission, and asked Shiva for instructions. Shiva told him—‘Oh son, you have been created from a fraction of my own body (because Beerbhadra was created from Shiva's hairs). You will be called another Rudra like me. Go and punish Daksha in an appropriate manner.’ Beerbhadra lifted his trident and rushed to the fire sacrifice of Daksha. At that time it appeared that a huge storm has arrived.”

Mahabharat, Shanti-parva, however, presents a little variation of how Beerbhadra was created. Here, Vaismapaayan Veda Vyas told Janmanjaya that “Shiva produced Beerbhadra from his mouth. The latter was an image of Shiva, and a personified form of anger. Hence, Beerbhadra was called ‘Rudra’, meaning the angry form of Shiva. When Shiva ordered him to go punish Daksha and ruin his sacrifice because it was not being conducted according to the sanction of the scriptures, Beerbhadra produced countless devil warriors from each root of his hair on his skin. They were aided by Mahakaali, the ferocious form of Sati's spirit.

Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 5, verse nos. 13-26 describe in detail the destruction of the fire sacrifice of Daksha and how those who had caused insult to Shiva, such as the selfish gods, the priests, as well as Daksha were punished.

So, as soon as Beerbhadra reached the site of the fire sacrifice, he and his warriors surrounded the venue of the sacrifice and laid everything to ruin (verse nos. 13-15).

To punish sage Bhrigu who had taken the side of Daksha and scorned at Shiva in as much as he not only sneered at the Lord and challenged his authority but also helped Daksha to resume the fire sacrifice and chased away Sati's escorts by creating demi-gods by the virtue of mystical powers of Mantras of the Yajur Veda in which he was an expert.

As soon as Beerbhadra reached the venue of the fire sacrifice, he took Daksha Prajapati as captive. His companion Chandish held Pusha as hostage, and Nandi (the Bull of Shiva) caught hold of Bhagdeva (the personified forms of various gods who were there to take their shares of the offerings made to the sacred fire).

Then Beerbhadra pinned Bhagdeva to the ground and gorged out his eyes because he had used his eyes to signal encouragement to Daksha to insult Shiva in the court of Brahma earlier (verse no. 20).

Then he pulled out the teeth of Pusha because when Daksha was insulting Shiva in the same court of Brahma, Pusha was laughing with an open mouth and showing his thirty-two teeth in mirth (verse no. 21).

Finally, Beerbhadra pushed Daksha to the ground, sat on his chest, squeezed and wringed his neck so as to break it from the shoulders like one breaks the neck of a sacrificial animal. Then he threw this severed neck into the fire pit. After thus punishing all chief offenders, Beerbhadra returned to Lord Shiva at Kailash—(verse nos. 22-26).

The remaining gods, sages and others were obviously so terrified that they made good their escape before Beerbhadra could turn his attention at them—Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 6, verse no. 1.

In Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 7, verse no. 60, sage Maitreye told Bidur that the former had heard of this story of how Daksha's fire sacrifice was ruined because he had insulted Lord Shiva from Uddhav.

The story of how Daksha had insulted Shiva in the court of Brahma is narrated in Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 2, verse nos. 4-33.

At that time Beerbhadra had cut-off the head of Daksha and threw it in the fire pit of the sacrifice. This fire was called "Dakshinaagni", the same one in which sage Bhrigu was offering oblations. After this incident, Brahma etc. prayed to Lord Shiva to forgive Daksha as the latter was Brahma's son who was created by him to oversee this creation as its guardian. The all-forgiving and merciful Lord Shiva agreed, and to revive Daksha he stitched the head of a goat on his torso. Daksha came alive, and he thanked Shiva by praying to him in the voice of a goat, but bleating meekly. This pleased Shiva. Henceforth, Shiva blessed Daksha that whenever anyone offers worship to him (Shiva) then the worshipper should conclude his prayers by making the sound similar to that made by a goat.

This entire episode is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-puran, Skandha 4—(i) Canto 6, verse nos. 1-8, 33, 41-53 (where Brahma has prayed to Shiva to forgive the punished gods and revive them); (ii) Canto 7, verse nos. 5, 7-8 (Shiva stitching the head of a goat on Daksha), verse nos. 9-15 (where Daksha has prayed to Shiva), and verse no. 16 (where it is said that Daksha, who now had the head of a goat, resumed his fire sacrifice after being forgiven by Shiva).]

भै जगबिदित दच्छ गति सोई । जसि कछु संभु बिमुख कै होई ॥ ३ ॥

यह इतिहास सकल जग जानी । ताते में संछेप बखानी ॥ ४ ॥

bhai jagabidita daccha gati sōī. jasi kachu sambhu bimukha kai hōī. 3.
yaha itihāsa sakala jaga jānī. tātē mair̄ sañchēpa bakhānī. 4.

The ignoble and contemptible fate of Daksha and all others who had the temerity and audacity to insult Lord Shiva (the greatest amongst the gods) was in line with the fate of anyone who dares to insult the Lord. (3)

This history is known by the whole world (and narrated in detail in the Purans), and therefore I (sage Yagyawalkya¹) have narrated it in brief. (4)

[Note—¹Remember: This story of Lord Shiva's marriage is being narrated by sage Yagyawalkya to sage Bhradvaj when the latter asked him to narrate the divine story of Lord Ram. Yagyawalkya started his narration with the visit of Lord Shiva to sage Agastya's hermitage and subsequent events that led to the narration of Shiva's marriage with Parvati. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 47 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 2-8.]

सतीं मरत हरि सन बरु मागा । जनम जनम सिव पद अनुरागा ॥ ५ ॥
तेहि कारन हिमगिरि गृह जाई । जनमीं पारबती तनु पाई ॥ ६ ॥

satīm marata hari sana baru māgā. janama janama siva pada anurāgā. 5.
tēhi kārana himagiri gṛha jāī. janamīm pārabatī tanu pāī. 6.

At the time of her death, Sati asked Lord Hari (Vishnu, the Supreme Being), to bless her with a boon that she may have affection and devotion for (i.e. serve) the holy feet of Lord Shiva in all her successive births. (5)

It is for this reason that she was re-born in the household of the king (or the patron deity) of the snow-covered mountains (known as the Himalayas) as Parvati. (6)

[Note—An exactly the same thing is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 7, verse no. 58.

An interesting thing is to be noted here. Sati had requested Lord Hari “to grant her a boon so that she may serve or have devotion for the feet of Lord Shiva in all her forthcoming births”, instead of seeking “final dissolution of her gross body so that her soul finds its liberation and deliverance, or in other words, seek final emancipation and salvation for herself”. This is because she had a desire to serve Lord Shiva like all ‘Bhakts’ or devotees want. In order to serve Shiva’s holy feet it was necessary to take a birth once again. If she had sought final dissolution for her soul, if she had sought final emancipation and salvation for her soul it would have meant that the soul would merge with its primary source, the cosmic Soul known as Brahm, and there would be no rebirth for her. This destiny of the soul is known as “Moksha”. If she had sought Moksha then in this situation it would have been the end of the cycle of birth and death for her, and this meant she wouldn’t be able to fulfil her desire to serve Lord Shiva any longer.

A ‘Bhakta’ (devotee) does not want Moksha; he or she wants to be able to serve the object of his or her adoration and devotion for a long-long time. Ascetics and hermits, those who are self-realised and well-versed in the higher learning of the metaphysical philosophy of the Upanishads, however, prefer dissolution of their gross body and find final freedom for their soul for all times to come. In other words, they seek ‘Moksha’.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chanda line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 10 where we read that Baali, the monkey king of Kishkindha, had sought a similar sort of boon from Lord Ram at the time of his death.

Similarly, in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 24 we find that the friends and common citizens of Ayodhya pray to God that they be so blessed that in every birth they have to take due to the cumulative effect of their deeds in any given birth, they can have unstinted devotion for Lord Ram and are able to serve him.

Even sage Vasistha, who was the royal priest of the kingdom of Ayodhya and the son of the creator Brahm, had also sought this type of blessing in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 49.

Now, why was she born in the household of ‘Himwaan’, the king or the deity of the snow-covered mountains known as Himalayas? There are the following possible reasons for it—

(i) At the time of death she had asked that in her next birth she could serve Lord Shiva, and it is well known that Shiva’s terrestrial abode is in Mt. Kailash which is located in the northern fringes of the Himalayas.

(ii) Sati was scorched in heat of two kinds—one was the heat generated by her anger, and the other was the heat that burnt her physical body. So her soul wished to

be born in a cold environment, and no other place suited its desire better than the 'snow-covered mountains'.

(iii) Her soul wished to take birth in a home where the general ambience was of contentedness, calmness and tranquility as opposed to ambition, greed, and a false sense of pride, arrogance and ego. Himwaan, the king of the mountains, was inherently cool and calm by temperament as symbolised by the snow that covered his kingdom. Himalayan mountain ranges are by their inherent nature a tranquil and serene place where hermits and ascetics seeking solace and succour for their souls can live in peace, as opposed to kingdoms in the plains where agitation, restlessness, greed, arrogance, strife, jealousy, malice and other worldly taints are order of the day and the dominant features.

Sati had had enough of it when she was born as the daughter of Daksha Prajapati. So she wanted peace in her new birth, and therefore her soul chose to take re-birth in the Himalayas.

(iv) It was destined for the soul of Sati that it would serve Lord Shiva again in her next birth. But to attain Shiva was not easy; it required doing severe Tapa (penance and austerity). Himalayas are the ideal place for doing Tapa. Even those who are born in the plains go to the Himalayas in the last days of their lives when they decide to do Tapa to attain emancipation and salvation for their tormented soul. This is also one of the prime reasons why Sati was born in the lap of the Himalayas themselves so that she finds it easy and convenient to do Tapa in a place close to her birth place, a place that has an environment and topography with which she is familiar since birth so as to facilitate her to cope with the rigours of doing severe Tapa.]

जब तें उमा सैल गृह जाई । सकल सिद्धि संपति तहँ छाई ॥ ७ ॥

जहँ तहँ मुनिन्ह सुआश्रम कीन्हे । उचित बास हिम भूधर दीन्हे ॥ ८ ॥

jaba tēm umā saila gr̥ha jā'īm. sakala sid'dhi sampati tahaṁ chā'īm. 7.

jahaṁ tahaṁ muninha su'āśrama kīnhē. ucita bāsa hima bhūdhara dīnhē. 8.

Ever since Uma (Sati's name in her new birth; the other name being 'Parvati') took birth in the household of the king of mountains ("Sail Griha"*), all imaginable sorts of prosperity and well-being spread in all the directions of the realm. The mountains became an abode of blessings and abundance. (7)

Sages and hermits established their holy hermitages here and there, everywhere, and the king of the realm (Himwaan) gave them land and other facilities for the purpose. (8)

[Note—*The word "Sail" (सैल) means 'mountain', and 'Griha' (गृह) means 'home'.

Ever since the time Uma was born in the lap of the grand mountain ranges of the Himalayas, it became a preferred destination for sages and hermits seeking to establish their hermitages and spend their lives in tranquility, serenity and peace, doing meditation and penances, and initiating disciples into the eclectic disciplines of spiritualism and metaphysics. It is a remarkable thing to note that even today this tradition continues, though of course the present corrupt age of Kaliyug has had its negative effect on this noble and holy tradition.

When a divine and blessed soul lives at a place, it is transformed miraculously from being a god-forsaken abhorable place to an oasis of blessedness, happiness, peace and well-being. We shall read later on in Ram Charit Manas that when Lord Ram came to live in Chitrakoot, an otherwise densely forested area pregnant with wild animals and far away from any civilised habited part of any kingdom, the place metamorphosed into a virtual heaven-on-earth. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya

Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 137—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 139.

Once again we find that when Lord Ram went to live on Mt. Prabarshan near Rishyamook mountain range, the hill became heavenly with its magnificent beauty and outworldly charm—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 12—to Doha no. 17.]

दो०. सदा सुमन फल सहित सब द्रुम नव नाना जाति ।
प्रगटीं सुंदर सैल पर मनि आकर बहु भाँति ॥ ६५ ॥

dōhā.

sadā sumana phala sahita saba druma nava nānā jāti.
pragaṭīṁ sundara saila para mani ākara bahu bhānti. 65.

In those mountains there sprang up countless verdant forests of beautiful ever-green lush trees that were laden with flowers, fruits and leaves of various kinds. These trees flourished everywhere irrespective of the season.

Likewise, mines of precious stones (gems, jewels) emerged on the mountains.
(65)

[Note—Refer note appended to verse nos. 7-8 herein above.]

चौ०. सरिता सब पुनीत जलु बहहीं । खग मृग मधुप सुखी सब रहहीं ॥ १ ॥
सहज बयरु सब जीवन्ह त्यागा । गिरि पर सकल करहिं अनुरागा ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

sarītā saba punīta jalu bahahīṁ. khaga mṛga madhupa sukhī saba rahahīṁ. 1.
sahaja bayaru saba jīvanha tyāgā. giri para sakala karahīṁ anurāgā. 2.

All the rivers flowed with clean water, and all the birds (“Khaga”), the animals (“Mriga”) and the insects (“Madhup”) lived happily. (1)

All those who lived on the mountains abandoned their natural apprehensions, their animosities and antipathies with one another, and lived in perfect harmony. (2)

[Note—Refer note appended to verse nos. 7-8 herein above.]

Life was happy and friendly in the realm of Himwaan, the king of the Himalayas, ever since Uma was born there.]

सोह सैल गिरिजा गृह आएँ । जिमि जनु रामभगति के पाएँ ॥ ३ ॥
नित नूतन मंगल गृह तासू । ब्रह्मादिक गावहिं जसु जासू ॥ ४ ॥

sōha saila girijā gṛha ā'ēṁ. jimi janu rāmabhagati kē pā'ēṁ. 3.
nita nūtana maṅgala gṛha tāsū. brahmādika gāvahīṁ jasu jāsū. 4.

When Girijaa (the daughter of ‘Giri’, a word that stands for a personified form of the mountains where she was born) made her advent in the household of the king of the mountains, his home as well as the rest of his realm became as cheerful and enlivened

with happiness as when a devotee of Lord Ram gets access to Bhakti (devotion) for the Lord¹. (3)

Indeed it is expected that every day there would be renewed auspiciousness, cheerfulness and delight in the household where someone whose glories and virtues are sung regularly by the creator Brahma and others is born. [This ‘someone’ is Uma, the Mother Goddess who is the divine consort of Lord Shiva, the “Mahadeva” or the ‘Great God’ of creation.]² (4)

[Note—¹That is, everyone was cheerful and contented ever since Uma took birth in the mountains. Just like a devotee feels fulfilled and absolutely contented when his desire for having Bhakti (devotion) for the Lord God bears fruit, the entire realm of the mountains effused an aura of vibrancy, abundance, liveliness and cheerfulness after the birth of Uma there. A devotee of Lord Ram does not want any other thing in this world except devotion for the Lord and a chance to serve the Lord. If this desire of his is fulfilled, he regards himself as the happiest person in existence. The same feeling of contentedness, happiness, joy and delight permeated in the kingdom of the mountains when Uma was born there.

Refer also to Tulsidas’ book “Parvati Mangal”, verse nos. 7-8 also describe the prosperity in the household of Himwaan when Parvati (the daughter of the mountains) was born.

²Later on in the story of Ram Charit Manas we shall read that when Lord Ram was born in the household of Dasrath, the king of Ayodhya, a similar environment of auspiciousness and happiness prevailed, and the king felt that he is most fortunate that the Lord of the world has come to his home as a child—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 193.]

नारद समाचार सब पाए । कौतुकहीं गिरि गेह सिधाए ॥ ५ ॥

nārada samācāra saba pā'ē. kautukahīm giri gēha sidhā'ē. 5.

When the celestial sage Narad (pronounced as “Naarad”) heard of this whole episode, he was amazed and very astonished. So, he set off for the household of the king of mountains (to learn the truth and see things for himself). (5)

[Note—Narad was astonished and amazed at this development, and he wished to examine it closely. So he decided to go and see everything first hand.

Why was Narad so amazed and astonished? The home where Sati took birth as Uma was the household of ‘Himgiri’, the king or the deity of the snow-covered mountains (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 65). Now, “Him” means snow, and “Giri” means mountain. The lofty peaks of the Himalayan mountain ranges are covered round the year with snow. Everyone knows that there are no forests in the higher reaches of the Himalayas, but we read in Doha no. 65 that ever since Uma took birth in the lap of the mountain ranges, the entire place was covered with lush green trees laden with fruits, flowers and leaves. Then in Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 65 we read that sages and hermits established their hermitages there.

Another stunning development was that those animals who were inherently inimical towards each other became friendly and lived together, sharing their forested habitat and its assets—refer: Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow Doha no. 65.

All these developments were most unusual and stunning. So Narad wondered at the cause of all these miraculous developments, and how it all came about.

Another point that can be deduced is that the time when Narad came to pay a visit at Himgiri’s house was much later after Uma’s birth. We have read that “ever since Uma took birth in the Himalayas, there was all-round happiness, prosperity and auspiciousness; even sages and hermits came from other places to establish their

hermitages there; there were ever-green trees laden with succulent fruits, colourful flowers and vibrant leaves; the rivers flowed with clean sparkling water; all animals were happy and friendly”. All these developments took some time to unfold; they can’t happen overnight.

Then we shall read below that when Narad came to pay a visit, Himwaan, the father of Uma, called her and asked Narad to prophesise her fate and destiny. Narad foretold that she would be married to an ascetic, though he did not know even himself who that ‘ascetic’ would be. However, Uma got an inspiration that she should do Tapa to attain the hand of Lord Shiva. Then we learn that Parvati or Uma actually did Tapa. This means she had reached an age when it was possible to do Tapa; she wasn’t an infant, or a toddler or a child still too young for Tapa.

Hence, it is reasonable to assume that Narad had heard of the miracles unfolding in the Himalayan region much after the day when Uma was born. Perhaps he was wondering in the universe as was his wont when somewhere he had heard of the mystical things happening in the mountains. So he decided to come and see things.

By reading verse nos. 9-10 of Parvati Mangal, a book dedicated to the marriage of Shiva and Parvati written by Goswami Tulsidas, it becomes clear that the time when Narad arrived at the house of Hingiri was when Parvati or Uma was grown up and her parents were worried about finding a suitable groom for her.]

सैलराज बड़ आदर कीन्हा । पद पखारि बर आसनु दीन्हा ॥ ६ ॥

नारि सहित मुनि पद सिरु नावा । चरन सलिल सबु भवनु सिंचावा ॥ ७ ॥

निज सौभाग्य बहुत गिरि बरना । सुता बोलि मेली मुनि चरना ॥ ८ ॥

sailarāja bara ādara kīnhā. pada pakhāri bara āsanu dīnhā. 6.

nāri sahita muni pada siru nāvā. carana salila sabu bhavanu sincāvā. 7.

nija saubhāgya bahuta giri baranā. sutā bōli mēli muni caranā. 8.

When sage Narad arrived, ‘Sailraaj’, the king of the mountains, welcomed him with great respect and honour. The king duly washed the feet of the guest and gave him a comfortable mat to sit¹. (6)

Then he, along with his wife, bowed his head at the feet of the sage, and sprinkled the water that was used to wash the sage’s feet throughout his house to sanctify it and invoke auspiciousness. [This sprinkling of water everywhere in the house is a symbolic gesture that implies that every nook and corner of the house is sanctified by the holiness associated with great sages. It is a symbolic gesture that means that the sage has walked in the house to purify its environment.] (7)

The king of the mountains praised his extremely good luck that he has had the privilege of welcoming and serving a great sage² of the stature of Narad. Then, as is the custom, he called his daughter (Uma) and made her prostrate before the feet of the sage. (8)

[Note—¹When sage Vishwamitra visited the court of king Dasrath of Ayodhya, the same process is observed there as well—the king first bowed and welcomed the sage, gave him a nice seat, summoned his four sons, Lord Ram and his three brothers, and made them bow before the feet of the great sage. The king praised his good luck that a sage of the exalted stature of Vishwamitra has come to pay a visit to his household even without an invitation, something to be exceedingly glad about. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 207.

The king praised his good luck because exalted saints and sages are met only when a person is rewarded for some good deeds done by him, and not otherwise:

refer—Ram Charit Manas, (i) Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 7; and (ii) Uttar Kand, the 1st half of Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 45.

When sage Vasistha went to meet Lord Ram, the latter had praised his own good luck because it is a privilege to have a person of high stature as an honourable guest—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 9.

²Refer specifically to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 207 where king Dasrath has praised his luck in exactly the same way when sage Vishwamitra arrived in his court.]

दो०. त्रिकालग्य सर्बग्य तुम्ह गति सर्बत्र तुम्हारि ।
कहहु सुता के दोष गुन मुनिबर हृदयँ बिचारि ॥ ६६ ॥

dōhā.

trikālagya sarbagya tumha gati sarbatra tumhāri.
kahahu sutā kē dōṣa guna munibara ḥṛdayaṁ bicāri. 66.

The king said to sage Narad—‘Oh Lord! You are ‘Trikaalagya’, i.e. you are able to see (know) everything of the past, the present and the future (the three dimensions of time). Hence, everything is known to you, and you have access to all spheres of the world and phases of time.

Oh the greatest and the most exalted of all sages (“Munibar”—मुनिबर)! Please contemplate in your heart and tell me truthfully the virtues and the shortcomings of my daughter. [That is, please tell me what fate holds for her; what will be good for her future, and what precautions I should take.] (Doha no. 66)

[Note—In Tulsidas’ “Parvati Mangal”, verse no. 9 it is said that Parvati’s parents were worried about finding a suitable groom for her, and in verse nos. 13-14 it is said that Maina, the wife of Himwaan and the mother of Parvati, fell at the feet of Narad and requested him to tell her about a suitable groom for Parvati.

There is another episode narrated in Ram Charit Manas where Narad had been asked to outline the goodness and drawbacks in a girl when he visited her parent’s palace—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 130.]

चौ०. कह मुनि बिहसि गूढ़ मृदु बानी । सुता तुम्हारि सकल गुन खानी ॥ १ ॥
सुंदर सहज सुसील सयानी । नाम उमा अंबिका भवानी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kaha muni bihasi gūṛha mṛdu bānī. sutā tumhāri sakala guna khānī. 1.
sundara sahaja susīla sayānī. nāma umā ambikā bhavānī. 2.

The sage smiled and said pleasant words that had a significant meaning and were cloaked in mystery¹.

He said—‘Your daughter is a mine of all good virtues. (1)

She is pretty, simple, courteous, wise and dignified. Her name is ‘Uma’, and she is the ‘Mother of the world’ (“Ambikaa”) known as Bhavaani². (2)

[Note—¹What was significant and mysterious in Narad’s words will be revealed shortly.

Narad was “Trikaalagya”, i.e. he knew well that Uma was Lord Shiva’s consort Sati in her previous life, and that she was destined to marry Lord Shiva in her present life too. But he restrained from telling everything in detail and divulging the truth. Why? Because Uma’s previous form as Sati had many negative characters as we have already read about in the previous verses. She had burnt herself in anger, she had lied to her husband, and she had disobeyed him and shown disrespect even to an incarnation of the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram. If Narad had divulged these facts, Uma’s parents would have gone in severe depression and may be they would have begun loathing her and treating her with contempt. This would be an ugly situation which Narad wished to avoid.

So, whatever he said was cloaked in mystery and had a double-meaning. He did not wish to divulge that Shiva would be her husband according to destiny because of one very obvious reason—Parvati’s father was the king of the mountains, and Shiva was a renunciate ascetic-god living in Mt. Kailash which also fell within his kingdom or realm. A king worth his name would never like his daughter, the princess of the kingdom, to marry such a person!

Himwaan was also well aware of the unconventional life-style of Shiva, and the fact that Shiva lived like a hermit, was an ascetic par-excellence, had ghosts and phantoms as his attendants as he is the God of death, and he was attired in the most unusual way with serpents wrapped around his body that is smeared in ash, remained half-naked, and was generally detached from the affairs and attractions of the world. Say, which parent would like to marry his or her daughter with such a groom, especially if this groom is a ‘subject’ of the kingdom of the princess’ father?

²Though Narad did not directly tell Uma’s father that she is destined to marry Shiva, but he has given ample hints. “Bhavaani” and “Ambikaa” point in this direction. ‘Bhava’ is one of the many names of Lord Shiva, and therefore ‘Bhavaani’ clearly hints that Uma would be Shiva’s wife. Again, since Shiva is the Father of the world, his consort would obviously be the ‘Mother of the world’, the ‘Ambikaa’.]

सब लच्छन संपन्न कुमारी । होइहि संतत पियहि पिआरी ॥ ३ ॥

सदा अचल एहि कर अहिवाता । एहि तें जसु पैहहिं पितु माता ॥ ४ ॥

saba lacchana sampanna kumārī. hō’ihi santata piyahi pi’ārī. 3.

sadā acala ēhi kara ahivātā. ēhi tēm̄ jasu paihahim̄ pitu mātā. 4.

Your daughter is endowed with all the good characters and virtues. She would be loved by saints and sages*, and she would win the unfailing love and affection of her dear husband as well. (3)

Her husband will live an eternal life*. And her glory would help her parents themselves to achieve good name and fame. [You and your wife will bask in the glory of your exalted and virtuous daughter. She would outshine you and your fame; you will become famous and honoured in the whole world by the virtue of her being your daughter. What more would any parent want!] (4)

[Note—Refer: Parvati Mangal, verse nos. 15-16.

*Refer: Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 334 where Sita’s mother has blessed her in the same way.]

होइहि पूज्य सकल जग माहीं । एहि सेवत कछु दुर्लभ नाहीं ॥ ५ ॥

एहि कर नामु सुमिरि संसारा । त्रिय चढ़िहहिं पतिव्रत असिधारा ॥ ६ ॥

hō'ihī pūjya sakala jaga māhīm. ēhi sēvata kachu durlabha nāhīm. 5.
ēhi kara nāmu sumiri sansārā. triya caḍhihahim patibrata asidhārā. 6.

She would be worthy of praise, honour and worship in the whole world. Nothing would be inaccessible or un-obtainable for someone who worships her and offers his or her obeisance to her. (5)

By remembering her name and invoking it, women-folk of the world would be successful in following the path of being loyal and submitted to their husbands (known as “Pati-brat Dharma”)¹, a path that is as difficult and testing as walking on the sharp edge of a sword². (6)

[Note—¹This path is known as “Pati-brat Dharma”. It is a righteous and noble path that all married women are expected to follow. It has been explained to Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram, by Anusuiya, the chaste wife of sage Atri during Lord Ram’s forest wonderings. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 5 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-19.

²This path is compared to the edge of a sword as it is very difficult to observe its strict principles. But if a woman succeeds in doing so, she acquires immense religious merit that virtually empowers her with the same strength as possessed by goddesses in heaven.]

सैल सुलच्छन सुता तुम्हारी । सुनहु जे अब अवगुन दुइ चारी ॥ ७ ॥

अगुन अमान मातु पितु हीना । उदासीन सब संसय छीना ॥ ८ ॥

saila sulacchana sutā tumhārī. sunahu jē aba avaguna du'i cārī. 7.
aguna amāna mātu pitu hīnā. udāsīna saba sansaya chīnā. 8.

Oh Sail¹ (the king of the mountains)! Your daughter has all the good virtues one can expect to have. However, there are some two-or-four negative traits: now listen to them. (7)

[Now, I (Narad) shall tell you the characters of her future husband—] Someone who has no remarkable attributes (“Agun”; is neutral; is free either being judged as having any good quality or possessing any bad one), who has no ego and a sense of self-pride (“Amaan”—is not bothered if he is honoured or insulted because he is highly self-restrained, dispassionate, self-realised and enlightened), who has no father or mother (because he is ‘unborn’ and ‘eternal’), who is uninterested in anything or any affair of the gross visible world of material sense objects, is detached and dispassionate towards everyone and everything (“Udaaseen”), and is free from all confusions and doubts (“Sansaya Chhina”)---(8)

[Note—¹The word “Sail” (pronounced as “saila”) literally means a ‘mountain’. Parvati’s father was known by this name as he was the supreme ‘king of the mountains’ just like we have an emperor. His name became synonymous with the mountains. In the Indian context, the Himalyan Mountain in the north is the loftiest and the longest of all the mountains and hill ranges. So, the king who ruled over this mountain was deemed to be the king of all the mountains and hills of the country.

In literary lore, the different aspects of Nature have been personified and assigned a name that identified the latter with the former.]

दो०. जोगी जटिल अकाम मन नगन अमंगल बेष ।

अस स्वामी एहि कहँ मिलिहि परी हस्त असि रेख ॥ ६७ ॥

dōhā.

jōgī jaṭila akāma maṇa nagana amaṅgala bēṣa.
asa svāmī ēhi kahaṁ milihi parī hasta asi rēkha. 67.

---He who is a stern ascetic and hard to deal with or please (“Jogi; Jatil”), whose mind and heart have no desires and passions (“Akaam Mana”), who remains naked (“Nagan”—i.e. he has nothing to hide, he wears the sky as his garment like a true ascetic and hermit), whose attire is unconventional and unholy from the perspective of the world (“Amangal Vesha”—because he wears snakes and skulls on his body, keeps it smeared with ash, has a tiger skin wrapped around the hips, and so on)---

Well unfortunately, this is the sort of husband she is destined to get. It is written in the lines marked on her palms.’ (Doha no. 67)

[Note—We have read in verse no. 1 that preceded this Doha no. 67 that Narad’s words were ‘significant and cloaked in mystery’. So, Narad gave enough hints to Parvati’s father Himwaan who her future husband would be, but at the same time he kept the name secret.

This is the reason for it: Shiva’s characters seemed so odd and unconventional on their face that any father would wince at the thought of marrying his daughter with such a weird man as the one whose characters Narad described in the above verses. From the worldly perspective all these traits are negative, but from the view point of metaphysics and spiritualism these same characters are much sought after by aspirants who seek to attain higher levels of existence of consciousness. Great mystics and sages laud such characters as they are the noble and auspicious virtues of the Supreme Being known as Brahm.

Narad has already told Himwaan that his daughter would give him immense fame and honour—refer: Chaupai line no. 4 herein above. Indeed she will—just like Sita gave honour and fame to her father Janak when she was married to Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Chanda line nos. 6-7 that precedes Doha no. 326; (ii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 340; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 342.

But Uma’s parents did not get this hint as would be clear in the next verse no. 1 that says that when the parents heard Narad’s words, they felt very sad and remorseful.

In “Parvati Mangal” verse no. 17 we read that Narad has clearly told Parvati’s parents that she is destined to get a mad and weird husband. Further on we read in Parvati Mangal that when Lord Shiva had disguised himself as a Brahmin and had gone to test the sincerity of Parvati and her firm determination of marrying Shiva in spite of all the advice to the contrary, he (Shiva in disguise) has outlined the characters of her future husband in almost the same language as Narad has done here. Refer: Parvati Mangal, verse nos. 49-54.]

चौ०. सुनि मुनि गिरा सत्य जियँ जानी । दुख दंपतिहि उमा हरषानी ॥ १ ॥

नारदहूँ यह भेदु न जाना । दसा एक समुझब बिलगाना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunī muni girā satya jiyāṁ jānī. dukha dampatihi umā haraṣānī. 1.
nāradahūṁ yaha bhēdu na jānā. dasā ēka samujhaba bilagānā. 2.

Hearing the words of the sage and knowing fully well in their hearts that what he has said is the truth (because Narad was a “Trikaalagya” sage who knew everything of the past, the present and the future, and therefore whatever he says cannot be wrong—refer: Doha no. 66), the couple (the parents of Uma) were sorrowful, but Uma felt elated and pleased in her heart¹. (1)

Even the all-knowing and wise Narad wasn't aware of this difference in attitude with which his prophesy was received by them. It was because externally all of them (Uma and her parents) showed no signs of emotions and appeared to be stoically calm (as if nothing special was said, though internally they received the news and interpreted its meaning differently)². (2)

[Note—¹Refer: “Parvati Mangal”, verse nos. 17-18 which also say the same thing.

²Narad did not know that the things he had told Uma's parents about their daughter in Doha no. 67 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 were received as bad news by them, but it made Uma happy instead. Outwardly they maintained their composure, but internally they received the same news with different attitudes. Whereas Uma's parents were shaken by it—because it meant that Uma's husband would be someone who was very unsuitable for a married way of life of a householder, that her future husband would be virtually mad and weird, which would in turn mean that Uma would have to live unhappily for the rest of her life.

On the other hand, Uma was very happy because her soul was the same that had previously dwelt in the body of Sati, and in that body she had prayed to Lord Hari that she may be so blessed that in whatever body she is reborn she can have unflinching devotion for Lord Shiva and be able to serve him (refer: Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65). Since the soul or the pure conscious Atma is the ‘true identity’ of any individual, the essential ‘self’ of Sati and Uma were the same, and it was only her gross physical body that has changed from one known as Sati to one known as Uma. Hence, as soon as her Atma heard Narad say that her future husband would possess such and such characteristics that were similar to those of Lord Shiva, Uma immediately realised in her internal self that her prayers seem to have been answered, that she is destined to be reunited with the beloved Lord of her dreams and of her previous life, i.e. Lord Shiva.

This secret was known only to her and not to her parents. That is why they were dismayed at Narad's prophesying, but Uma was happy. She was happy that she would be reunited with her beloved Lord Shiva in this birth too, but her parents were worried that her stars were so bad that she is destined to have a weird husband.

Refer verse no. 3 herein below which describes how externally the reactions of everyone who heard the words of Narad were the same though internally they interpreted them differently as stated in verse no. 2 above.]

सकल सखीं गिरिजा गिरि मैना । पुलक सरीर भरे जल नैना ॥ ३ ॥

sakala sakhīm girijā giri mainā. pulaka sarīra bharē jala nainā. 3.

All those who were present on the occasion, viz. the female friends of Girija (Uma, the ‘daughter of Giri’), Giri (the king of hills or mountains), and Maina (his wife; the mother of Uma), were thrilled in their bodies, and tears welled-up in their eyes. (3)

[Note—We have read in the previous verse no. 2 that Narad did not understand the reason or the secret of why Uma had felt happy and her parents had become remorseful internally at his words because externally they behaved in the same way. What was their external reaction to Narad's prophesies is described in this present verse no. 3.

Uma (Girija), her friends, her father Giri and her mother Maina—they were “thrilled in their bodies” and “their eyes were filled with tears”.

Uma was thrilled and had tears in her eyes because she was exceedingly happy and exhilarated that her prayers made in her previous life as Sati that she be reunited with Lord Shiva in her next birth have been answered.

Her parents and friends were thrilled at the words of Narad that listed her exemplary virtues as narrated in Chaupai line nos. 1-6 and 1st half of Chaupai line no. 7 that preceded Doha no. 67. But when they heard the bad news as mentioned in Doha no. 67 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 regarding Uma's husband, they were very dismayed and worried. This is the reason why they had tears in their eyes.

Refer also to Chaupai line no. 8 herein below.]

होइ न मृषा देवरिषि भाषा । उमा सो बचनु हृदयँ धरि राखा ॥ ४ ॥

उपजेउ सिव पद कमल सनेहू । मिलन कठिन मन भा संदेहू ॥ ५ ॥

hō'i na mṛṣā dēvariṣi bhāṣā. umā sō bacanu hrdayaṁ dhari rākhā. 4.

upajē'u siva pada kamala sanēhū. milana kaṭhina mana bhā sandēhū. 5.

'The great sage's words can't go in vain'—Uma was convinced of this and had firmly established his words (regarding her future husband) in her heart. (4)

This inspired a natural affection for Lord Shiva and devotion for his lotus feet in her heart. But since it was very difficult to attain the Lord, she had her doubts. (5)

[Note—Once again we see that Uma has not discarded her natural habit to have 'doubts', even in the words of great sages. In her previous life as Sati it was the character that led her to her ruin—(i) she knew that Lord Shiva's words cannot be false but still she had doubted them regarding the divinity of Lord Ram (refer: Doha no. 51 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 3-8), and (ii) she had doubted the wisdom of Shiva's advice when the Lord had tried to persuade her not to go to her father's place without an invitation, especially when he harbours ill-will against her husband (refer: Doha no. 61—to Doha no. 62).

But there is a perceptible difference here. In her previous birth as Sati, when she had doubts she had insisted on doing what pleased her. For instance, she went ahead to test the authenticity of Lord Ram in spite of her husband Lord Shiva telling him that Lord Ram was not an ordinary human, and later on she had gone to her father's home to attend the fire sacrifice in spite of Lord Shiva advising her that it would give her sorrow.

This was not so in her present birth as Uma though she still had the habit of having 'doubts'. When she learnt that her husband would be someone with the unique characters that matched that of Lord Shiva, she did feel that it is a far-fetched idea because it is 'very difficult to attain Lord Shiva' but 'she believed in Narad's words'. She did not doubt his words par-se, but only did not understand how it would materialise—that was her only doubt. But since she firmly believed in Narad's words—that what he said can't be in vain, she went out to make all efforts to put it into practice: she did severe Tapa, and she never got distracted from her chosen path. This will be clear as we read on further.

Uma had started treating Narad as her 'Guru' or moral preceptor and guide. It was he who had shown her the way ahead for her future, albeit in a veiled term. It was on his words that she relied firmly and decided to do severe Tapa to attain Lord Shiva (refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 73, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows this Doha). Since it is wise to have a firm faith in the words of one's guru, and a great sage of the exalted stature of Narad is no less than a guru, Uma succeeded in her mission. She has clearly affirmed her faith in Narad and his words in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 80.

Refer also to "Shiva Puran", 8/14.]

जानि कुअवसरु प्रीति दुराई । सखी उछँग बैठी पुनि जाई ॥ ६ ॥

jāni ku'avasaru prīti durā'ī. sakhī uchaṅga baiṭhī puni jā'ī. 6.

Realising that the time was not proper to openly express her affection and devotion for Lord Shiva that had sprouted in her heart after she had heard the words of Narad, Uma concealed her emotions within her heart, and went to sit on the lap of one of her dear friends¹. (6)

[Note—¹Sitting on the lap of her friend is just a figure of speech to indicate that Uma was very young in age at the time, and this 'friend' perhaps was her maid so close to her that she treated the latter as one of her dearest friends.]

झूठि न होइ देवरिषि बानी । सोचहिं दंपति सखीं सयानी ॥ ७ ॥

उर धरि धीर कहइ गिरिराऊ । कहहु नाथ का करिअ उपाऊ ॥ ८ ॥

jhūṭhi na hō'i dēvariṣi bānī. sōcahiṁ dampati sakhīṁ sayānī. 7.

ura dhari dhīra kaha'i girirā'ū. kahahu nātha kā kari'a upā'ū. 8.

'The celestial sage's words can't be false'—thought the couple (i.e. Uma's parents) and her friends. (7)

So, keeping patience in his heart and gathering courage, the king of the mountains ("Gri-raau"; "Giri" = mountain; "Raau" = king) asked the sage (Narad), 'Oh Lord! Please advice me what solution can be devised (to help us overcome the predicament about Uma's future in relation to the sort of husband you have described for her¹)'. (8)

[Note—¹The father of Uma was naturally worried about her future because of the sort of weird husband Narad said she was destined to get—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 67 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8. Therefore he requested the sage to tell him if any way can be found to bypass or overcome this negativity.

This verse also explains why he and his wife had tears in their eyes according to verse no. 3 herein above.]

दो०. कह मुनीस हिमवंत सुनु जो बिधि लिखा लिलार ।

देव दनुज नर नाग मुनि कोउ न मेटनिहार ॥ ६८ ॥

dōhā.

kaha munīsa himavanta sunu jō bidhi likhā lilāra.

dēva danuja nara nāga muni kō'u na mēṭanihāra. 68.

The sage replied—'Listen Himwant (the king of the snow-covered mountains)! Whatever the 'Bidhi' (the creator who determines the destiny of the entire creation) has written in a person's destiny and decided to be his or her fate cannot be changed or erased by anyone, be it a god, a demon, a human being, a Naga (serpents who have mystical powers) or even a sage (no matter how powerful and resourceful he may be)^{1*}. (Doha no. 68)

[Note—Bidhi is the creator Brahma. Out of the three Trinity Gods, he is the one who writes or determines a creature's fate. The other two gods, viz. Vishnu and Shiva, are

responsible for sustenance and conclusion of the creation, but not tamper with destiny determined by Brahma. There is a clear demarcation of duties of the three gods; no one of them interferes with the duty and responsibility of the other.

Hence, if it is written in the fate of Uma that her husband would be a person like the one described by Narad, then it cannot be changed. However, there may be many candidates who may all have the characteristics outlined by Narad, but by effort a solution can be devised in the sense that the best amongst them can be found for Uma. And Narad advised this solution below.

¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 97 where Parvati has affirmed the same thing while pacifying her mother Maina who was excessively agitated to see the physical unconventional form of Lord Shiva when the latter came to marry Parvati.

*Narad had said that whatever the creator of one's destiny, the Creator known as Vidhi or Brahma, has written, no god, demon, human, serpent or sage can alter. But he has cleverly skipped the names of 'Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu' from this blanket immunity. The reason is that these two are senior Gods, and not ordinary junior rung gods. They are part of the Trinity of Gods, the third God being Brahma himself. These three gods of the Trinity, Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder, are merely three manifestations of the same universal Supreme Being known as "Brahm" who has metamorphosed into three distinct forms to carry out three distinct functions of creation—viz. origin, sustenance, and conclusion.

It's like the same Sun seen at three times of the day—at sunrise, at mid-day, and at sunset. Does the different colours of the sky and the way the Sun is seen at these three main points during its journey across the sky in anyway affect the basic identity of the Sun or its character? Similarly, the three gods of the Trinity have equal powers, but they refrain from interfering into the jurisdiction of the other to maintain order and system in this creation. Otherwise, there would be chaos.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precedes Doha no. 70 below where this observation is endorsed—because Narad says that "Lord Shiva is able to erase the destiny if he is pleased by penances".]

चौ०. तदपि एक मैं कहउँ उपाई । होइ करै जौं दैउ सहाई ॥ १ ॥
 जस बरु मैं बरनेउँ तुम्ह पाहीं । मिलिहि उमहि तस संसय नाहीं ॥ २ ॥
 जे जे बर के दोष बखाने । ते सब सिव पहिं मैं अनुमाने ॥ ३ ॥
 जौं बिबाहु संकर सन होई । दोषउ गुन सम कह सबु कोई ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

tadapi ēka mair̥m kaha'uṁ upāī. hō'i karai jaum̐ dai'u sahāī. 1.
 jasa baru mair̥m baranē'uṁ tumha pāhīm̐. milihi umahi tasa sansaya nāhīm̐. 2.
 jē jē bara kē dōṣa bakhānē. tē saba siva pahim̐ mair̥m anumānē. 3.
 jaum̐ bibāhu saṅkara sana hōī. dōṣa'u guna sama kaha sabu kōī. 4.

Nevertheless, I shall advice you of one solution. If the Lord God wants, it may help you and serve your purpose. (1)

The sort of groom I have described to you shall be found for Uma. (2)

In my opinion, whatever so-called faults or shortcomings that are destined to be in the groom of Uma are all present in Lord Shiva (one of the great three gods of the Trinity). (3)

Therefore, if she is married to Lord Shiva then it will be best for her. If this happens then all the demerits (faults or shortcomings) in the would-be husband of Uma would turn out as merits. No one in the world would ever scorn at Uma's fate of having a husband with this odd characters if that husband is Lord Shiva because the world had great respect for the Lord. [It is because all the so-called negativities of characters that I have listed herein above are deemed to be praise-worthy and positive characters when they are applied to Lord Shiva.]¹ (4)

[Note—¹Saying this, Narad then goes on to explain with examples in verse nos. 5-8 that follow herein below why the some set of characters that are surely negative in the conventional view of thinking are viewed differently by the world as being positive when they are present in powerful entities in this creation.

A close examination of all the characteristics listed by Narad in Doha no. 67 and its Chaupai preceding line no. 8 show that they are unique qualities of Lord Shiva who is lauded as being the wisest, the most enlightened, the most exalted, a highly self-realised and the senior-most amongst the entire pantheon of gods. Shiva is honoured by the title of 'Maha-Deva' which means a 'Great God', an epithet that no other god is honoured with, not even the creator Brahma or the sustainer Vishnu.

Remaining detached from the material world and its temptations, being aloof from its charms and sensual pleasures, keeping the mind focused on meditation and contemplation instead of allowing it to be indulgent in the gross world and its affairs, turning oneself away from enticing sights and pleasures and instead turning inwards to face the Atma which is the pure conscious 'self', observing exemplary self-restraint over the sense organs of perception and action that helps the person to maintain internal tranquility, stability, calm and poise, and such like characters that are unique to Lord Shiva are not negative traits at all, but highly praised positive ones according to the scriptures such as the Upanishads that deal with the eclectic philosophy of metaphysics and spiritualism.

So, the fear of Uma's husband being 'weird and mad and unsuitable to be her partner if he has these characters' is absolutely unfounded, imaginary and relative by nature because the same characters are present in Lord Shiva, and no one in this creation says that Shiva is unholy or mad. On the contrary, if these characters are present in any other ordinary living being then of course he would be laughed at and no one would dare to marry his daughter with such a mad person.

Therefore, since it is not possible to change Uma's destiny with respect to the characters her husband would have, the best way out is to select someone who has these traits, but at the same time is honoured by the world for possessing the same set of character that have instilled fear and worry in the heart of the parents of Uma. These so-called negative traits in Shiva are praised by the world instead of being scoffed or riled at.]

जौं अहि सेज सयन हरि करहीं । बुध कछु तिन्ह कर दोषु न धरहीं ॥ ५ ॥

भानु कृसानु सर्ब रस खाहीं । तिन्ह कहँ मंद कहत कोउ नाहीं ॥ ६ ॥

सुभ अरु असुभ सलिल सब बहई । सुरसरि कोउ अपुनीत न कहई ॥ ७ ॥

समरथ कहँ नहिं दोषु गोसाईं । रबि पावक सुरसरि की नाईं ॥ ८ ॥

jauṁ ahi sēja sayana hari karahīṁ. budha kachu tinha kara dōṣu na dharahīṁ. 5.

bhānu kṛsānu sarba rasa khāhīṁ. tinha kahaṁ manda kahata kō'u nāhīṁ. 6.

subha aru asubha salila saba bahaī. surasari kō'u apunīta na kahaī. 7.

samaratha kahum̐ nahim̐ dōṣu gōsā'īm. rabi pāvaka surasari kī nā'īm. 8.

[In these 4 verses, nos. 5-8, Narad gives the reason why the so-called negative traits are not regarded as being 'negative' when applied to Lord Shiva.]

Though Lord Hari (Vishnu) sleeps on the back of a poisonous snake (known as 'Seshnath' while it floats on the surface of the celestial ocean known as 'Kshirsagar'), no wise one finds fault with it and regards this as a condemnable thing to do by any account. [Instead of finding fault with Lord Vishnu for selecting this weird way of sleeping, the world pays its greatest of respects to him and deems him to a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Brahm.]¹. (5)

The Sun and the Fire are known to absorb all sorts of "rasa" (moisture; vapour) from all sorts of things in this world, but they are not decried by anyone in this world for doing so. [On the contrary, people praise the Sun-God and the Fire-God and say that they purify the world by absorbing or burning all its impurities.]² (6)

All sorts of things—some that are acceptable and not so bad, while others that are utterly reprehensible and polluting—float in the water of a river, but no one says that the water of the river Ganges has been made unclean or unholy, no one says that the sanctity of Ganges has been eroded by the debris floating in it.³ (7)

Therefore we conclude that those who are powerful and authoritative are not accused of any wrong-doing or possessing any negative character just like the examples of the Sun, the Fire and the river Ganges.⁴ (8)

[Note—¹That is, though it is unconventional, weird and sheer madness to sleep on the coiled body of a poisonous sea-serpent as it floats on the surface of water, with its thousand hoods hissing and spouting hot gas on the head of Vishnu as he reclines on its body, no sage, seer or scripture has ever condemned this act of Vishnu and derided him to choose this weird way of sleeping.

²The heat of the sun dries water in all sorts of water-bodies—be it an ocean, a river, a stinking drain, a swamp from where poisonous fume emanates, or a dirty pond. This 'dried water' is in the form of vapour that ultimately forms the cloud, and when this cloud gives the same water extracted from say a filthy stinking drain or swamp no one criticises it. Rather, all people pray and offer their respects to the Sun-God and proclaim that no life is possible without the Sun. The world forgets that the Sun inhales toxic fumes emanating from swamps, drains and marshes.

Similarly, the fire dries up everything put near it—it would as easily dry a wet rug that is clean as one that stinks. When any wet thing is put in the fire, the latter extracts the moisture from it and makes it stiff and dry. No one accuses the fire of accepting rubbish and despicable things as its food; no one says that the fire has become corrupted by its association with dirty things. Rather, the world universally believes that the fire is incorruptible and purifies the world by burning its impurities.

³All sorts of things float on the surface of the water of river Ganges: Some are acceptable such as flowers and other things that do not cause any pollution in the water, and were duly offered to gods and deities before being put in the river. Other things are horrible—such as filth and effluent from cities and factories situated all along the river's course, the carcasses that float in the water, the dirt and garbage that the river collects from its banks all along its journey from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal. In spite of knowing this, the world regards Ganges as a holy river; the world never winces from taking a purifying dip in its water. That is, the Ganges is universally regarded as a holy river in spite of all its shortcomings.

⁴A similar idea is expressed in Shiva Puran, 2/3/8/20.

The examples that Narad has cited have a direct relation with Lord Shiva. Now, let's see how:--

(i) Vishnu sleeps on the coiled body of a poisonous serpent, and Lord Shiva has serpents coiled around his body.

(ii) The sun and the fire burn everything and it is not wise to play fools with them, so is with Shiva—his ‘third eye’ located on the forehead spews fire and had actually burnt Kamdeo when the latter tried to act smart with the Lord (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 87).

Shiva is believed to live in cremation ground surrounded by cremation fires.

(iii) Shiva has given river Ganges a respectful place in the thick lock of hairs on his head.

So, even as no one finds faults with Vishnu, Sun, Fire and Ganges, no one finds fault with Shiva who represents all these four entities at once. Therefore, if Uma marries Shiva, there shall be no problem with her also in any way whatsoever.]

दो०. जौं अस हिसिषा करहिं नर जड़ बिबेक अभिमान ।

परहिं कल्प भरि नरक महुँ जीव कि ईस समान ॥ ६९ ॥

dōhā.

jaum̄ asa hisiṣā karahim̄ nara jaṛa bibēka abhimāna.

parahim̄ kalapa bhari naraka mahum̄ jīva ki īsa samāna. 69.

If a person is foolish enough that he starts comparing his gross mortal existence in this world with the exalted nature of God due to his misplaced sense of wisdom driven by ignorance and pride, then surely such stupid person falls in the great hell for a Kalpa (the duration of one life-time of the universe).

Say, can a ‘Jiva’ (a living being with a gross body which dies and takes birth in an endless cycle and remains engrossed in the world that itself is gross and perishable) ever be like the ‘Ish’ or the Lord God (who has characters and virtues just the opposite of a Jiva). [The answer is ‘No’.]¹ (Doha no. 69)

[Note—¹The “Jiva” is a living being who takes a birth, has a gross body, remains involved in the affairs of the gross world of material objects, dies and is re-born, is subjected to the laws of ‘Karma’ (which states that he is rewarded or punished according to the deeds that a Jiva does in his life), and so on and so forth. A Jiva has no control over his fate. He has physical limitations due to his gross physical body.

On the other hand, “Ish” (meaning Lord God) has none of these limitations. The Lord God neither takes a birth nor dies as he is eternal; he has no physical gross body; he is not bound to either the deeds or the world; he has no physical limitations as he is omnipresent, all-pervading, as well as sublime and subtle by nature instead of being gross and mundane.

The point to note here is that Vishnu and Shiva are manifestations of the supreme Brahm, the Lord of creation. The Sun is visible manifestation of the supreme powers of Brahm and also of the fire element which is one of the five basic elements of creation. The other element is water whose manifested form is river Ganges. None of these highly placed entities are corruptible by the lower entities of the world.

The entities listed by Narad (i.e. Vishnu, Sun, Fire and river Ganges) are not regarded as faulty though they possess characters that are ordinarily considered as negative because they are above the level of lowly existence of the world that is gross and mundane. Their existence is at a level that is subtle, sublime and transcendental.]

चौ०. सुरसरि जल कृत बारुनि जाना । कबहुँ न संत करहिं तेहि पाना ॥ १ ॥

सुरसरि मिलें सो पावन जैसें । ईस अनीसहि अंतरु तैसें ॥ २ ॥

caupāṭī.

surasari jala kṛta bārūni jānā. kabahuṃ na santa karahim tēhi pānā. 1.
surasari milēm sō pāvana jaisēm. īsa anīsahi antaru taisēm. 2.

[Narad gives more reasoning why even apparently negative traits are deemed to be positive when they are applied to Lord Shiva.]

Even if wine is mixed with the otherwise holy waters of river Ganges, saints and holy people will not drink it. [For saints and holy people, wine is a prohibited liquid. Merely adding the holy water of river Ganges won't change wine's basic character; it will still remain a prohibited drink.]¹ (1)

But the same wine becomes acceptable when it is added (or poured) into the main body of the river Ganges. [No matter how many bottles of wine are poured in the river Ganges, no one says that the river has become defiled and its water has lost its sanctity as being a purifying liquid. People continue to take bath in it and sip the water of Ganges.]²

This is the difference between 'Isha' (pronounced as "Eesha"; the Lord God) and a 'non-Isha' (the Jiva, the living being)^{3*}. (2)

[Note—¹The main part of the liquid is 'wine', and the water of Ganges is only an addition to it to make wine dilute. No saint or holy men would drink wine in the mistaken belief that since the holy water of river Ganges has been added to it, wine has become drinkable for them. Since 'wine' is an intoxicating liquid that is prohibited for holy people, mere addition of water of the Ganges would not change the former's basic character as being a prohibited drink.

²But suppose we pour bottles full of wine in river Ganges; will it mean that the water of Ganges becomes undrinkable? No, it is not so. The river Ganges and its water would continue to be respected and regarded as holy irrespective of addition of how much wine is poured into the water of the river. Ganges won't lose its holy and sanctified character.

This can be easily explained with the help of an example. Suppose water is added to pure milk, would this change the basic nature, nomenclature, character or virtue of the white liquid known as 'milk'? Milk would still be known as 'milk' no matter how much quantity of water is added to it.

On the other hand, suppose a huge canister full of pure milk is poured into a river, will anyone in his senses call the water of the river as 'milk'? No, the answer is that no matter how much milk is added to a river, the latter would always be said to contain 'water' and 'not milk'.

³'Isha' is the supreme God and Lord of everything that exists. This entire universe with all its diversity has its origin in him. He lives inside and outside this creation. He has all the exemplary good virtues in creation. He is eternal, immortal, uncorrupt, without attributes, subtle, sublime, pure Consciousness; he remains even, uniform and steady in the midst of the ever-changing nature of universe; he is all-pervading and all-encompassing; he is omniscient and omnipresent. In other words, 'Isha' is beyond measurement by any yardstick by which we measure the rest of the entities of creation; he is beyond comprehension and grasp of the limited abilities of the mind and intellect just like the sky that cannot be measured.

The 'non-Isha' or the Jiva, the living being, on the other hand, cannot become equivalent to 'Isha' though it is true that the Jiva is a 'fraction of Isha'. A 'fraction' obviously cannot be the 'whole'!

The metaphysical reason behind saying that Jiva is a fraction of Isha is that the true identity of their 'self' is the pure conscious Atma, the essential element known as the 'Soul'. This Atma is nothing but pure Consciousness. In the case of 'Isha', this

Consciousness exists in its purest form and exalted state of transcendental existence. It has no physical limitations or barriers; it is subtle and sublime instead of being gross and mundane; it is eternal and imperishable instead of being mortal and subject to death and birth. Isha has no gross physical body as opposed to a Jiva that lives in a gross physical body.

So, since the ‘Consciousness’ is the true and factual identity of the ‘self’ in both the cases of an Isha and a non-Isha or Jiva, they appear to be the same in theory. But the similarity ends there—because Isha has a greater density of wholesome pure Consciousness as opposed to a Jiva or non-Isha which has only a ‘fraction’ of this Consciousness. So the distinction is crystal clear.

It is like the case of ‘water in a glass of milk’ and ‘milk in the water of a river’. In the former case, the liquid will still be called ‘milk’, whereas in the latter case no one calls the ‘water of a river’ as being milk.

In this example, the milk is like the Jiva, and the water is like the Consciousness. The Jiva gets its identity and life because of the Consciousness present in it just like the milk getting its identity as a liquid which is life-sustaining because of its basic water content. Without water milk would be a solid chunk just like a Jiva whose body would be life-less without the presence of Consciousness in it. But water in milk is invisible; one sees only the white colour of the milk. Similarly, one sees the gross body of a Jiva while the Consciousness remains hidden from view.

The situation is reversed in the case of Isha. Here, the Consciousness dominates, and all the grosser aspects of creation lay hidden just like the case of milk in the water of a flowing river. We recognise the ‘water’ of the river, and ‘not the denser liquid known as milk’ that is present in it.

Now, the question is: If ‘Isha’ is supposed to be pure and holy Consciousness, then why should it have even a trace of negativity in him? The answer is clear: The whole creation is a visible manifestation of the invisible Isha. Isha permeates every pore of this creation, surrounding it from the outside and living within it at the same time. This being the case, all the traits of this creation, whether good and positive, or bad and negative, would be reflected in and tagged to Isha. Being an integral part of this creation, Isha cannot remain immune to the effects of the good or the bad traits of creation. But that is all, for none of these traits actually define the true nature of Isha. The traits are, at the most, sticking to or hanging to the main body of virtues of Isha, and as soon as this creation dissolves, these hangings also vanish, and out comes the immaculate nature of Isha.

*The difference between an Isha and a Jiva, and the relationship between them has been narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Doha no. 14—to Doha no. 16.]

संभु सहज समरथ भगवाना । एहि बिबाहँ सब बिधि कल्याना ॥ ३ ॥

sambhu sahaja samaratha bhagavānā. ēhi bibāhaṁ saba bidhi kalyānā. 3.

Lord Shiva, put in simple words, is the all-able Lord God (“Bhagwaan”). Hence, this marriage (between Uma and Shiva) will be auspicious and a provider of well-being in all possible ways*¹. (3)

[Note—*Refer: Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70 herein below.

¹This verse concludes what has been said by Narad earlier in verse no. 4 that preceded Doha no. 69. He clearly indicates in this verse that Himwaan and Maina should stop worrying about who would be a suitable groom for Uma, and also remove their fears about the perceived negative traits of Shiva. Instead, they should not focus their attention as to how their daughter could find the hands of Shiva in marriage.

Narad was all-knowing and wise (refer: Doha no. 66), so he could easily realise the storm blowing in the minds of the parents. So he told them, in the following verse nos. 4-8 and Doha no. 70, how to bring into effect what he has just prophesised.]

दुराराध्य पै अहहिं महेसू । आसुतोष पुनि किँ कलेसू ॥ ४ ॥

जाँ तपु करै कुमारि तुम्हारी । भाविउ मेटि सकहिं त्रिपुरारी ॥ ५ ॥

durārādhyā pai ahaḥim mahēsū. āsutōṣa puni ki'ēṁ kalēsū. 4.

jauṁ tapu karai kumārī tumhārī. bhāvi'u mēṭi sakahim tripurārī. 5.

Though it is certainly true that it is very difficult to please Lord Mahesh (Shiva), yet it is also true that he is as easily and quickly pleased (“Aashutosh”) if one is determined to do so and takes the necessary trouble to propitiate him (by doing penance and undergoing hardships with a single-minded devotion for the Lord). (4)

Therefore, if your daughter does severe Tapa (penance, austerity and suffering of hardship for a cause) to please Lord Tripurari (Shiva), then be reassured that the all-able Lord can even erase the lines of fate that seem to be detrimental for her future happiness and well-being¹. (5)

[Note—¹In other words, even if there are any traces of negativity that may be lurking in your daughter’s fate that was determined as her destiny by the Creator at the time of her birth, but there is nothing to worry about it. This is because if your daughter manages to please the almighty Lord Tripurari, if he is satisfied by her sincerity, devotion and faith as well as her austerity and penance, then be assured that he is fully cable and competent to remove the darker sides of your daughter’s fate, and instead ensure a bright and happy future for her.

So, you must stop worrying and procrastinating, and instead follow my wise advice to prevail upon your daughter to do Tapa to please Lord Shiva.

In Doha no. 68 above, Narad had said that whatever the creator of one’s destiny, the Creator known as Vidhi or Brahma, has written, no god, demon, human, serpent or sage can alter. But he has cleverly skipped the names of ‘Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu’ from this blanket immunity. The reason is that these two are senior Gods, and not ordinary junior rung gods. They are part of the Trinity of Gods, the third God being Brahma himself. These three gods of the Trinity, Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder, are merely three manifestations of the same universal Supreme Being known as “Brahm” who has metamorphosed into three distinct forms to carry our three distinct functions of creation—viz. origin, sustenance, and conclusion.

It’s like the same Sun seen at three times of the day—at sunrise, at mid-day, and at sunset. Does the different colours of the sky and the way the Sun is seen at these three main points during its journey across the sky in anyway affect the basic identity of the Sun or its character? Similarly, the three gods of the Trinity have equal powers, but they refrain from interfering into the jurisdiction of the other to maintain order and system in this creation. Otherwise, there would be chaos.]

जद्यपि बर अनेक जग माहीं । एहि कहँ सिव तजि दूसर नाहीं ॥ ६ ॥

jadyapi bara anēka jaga māhīm. ēhi kahaṁ siva taji dūsara nāhīm. 6.

Although there may be many grooms in the world that may fit the description I have made¹, but for her there is no other suitable groom other than Lord Shiva². (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Doha no. 67 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 where Narad outlines the negativities in the character of

the future groom of Uma, and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 69 where he has explicitly said that if Uma marries Lord Shiva then all the negative traits that destiny has written her future husband will have, and which is the cause of worry for her parents, would automatically turn out to be laudable characters that are praised by the world instead of being criticised.

Then we have read how Narad explains this is possible in Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 68, and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.

²It is said in Doha no. 66 herein above that Narad is “Trikaalagya” (one who can see the events of the past, the future and of course the present) and “Sarvagya” (one who is all-knowing). This naturally means he knows about the past life of Uma, that she was Sati in that life, and why and how she died to take birth as Uma. He was privy to the secret that Uma’s eternal husband is no one else but Lord Shiva, and that at the time of death in her previous life she had prayed to Lord Hari to let her serve the feet of Shiva in her future birth too—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65.

That is why Narad was so certain and positive in his assertion that for Uma there is no other groom except Shiva.]

बर दायक प्रनतारति भंजन । कृपासिंधु सेवक मन रंजन ॥ ७ ॥

इच्छित फल बिनु सिव अवरार्धे । लहिअ न कोटि जोग जप सार्धे ॥ ८ ॥

bara dāyaka pranatārati bhañjana. kṛpāsindhu sēvaka mana rañjana. 7.
icchita phala binu siva avarādhēm. lahi'a na kōṭi jōga japa sādheṁ. 8.

[Now, Narad lists the other positive virtues of Lord Shiva in order to reassure the parents of Uma as well as herself. It acted as a motivation for Uma to help set aside all her initial inhibitions and reservations, and declare her allegiance to Shiva.]

He (Lord Shiva) is the one who grants desired boons to seekers; he is the one who eliminates the sorrows of those who seek refuge and succour with him; he is an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness; he is the one provides happiness and bliss to the Mana (heart and mind) of his followers and devotees; (7)---

---He is the one who gives the desired fruits and fulfils the wishes of his devotees. Verily, without worshipping Lord Shiva and pleasing him, one cannot expect to fulfil one’s wishes no matter how hard one tries or whatever means one adopts to achieve one’s objective¹.

[In other words, if one wishes to see success in fulfilment of his or her dreams, then the only way is to please Lord Shiva. If Shiva is pleased, then even those wishes of the worshipper which may be against what is written in his or her destiny can be realised. Even things unimaginable and almost impossible to be realised can be made within one’s reach if Lord Shiva so wants.]’ (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 310.]

दो०. अस कहि नारद सुमिरि हरि गिरिजहि दीन्हि असीस ।

होइहि यह कल्याण अब संसय तजहु गिरीस ॥ ७० ॥

dōhā.

asa kahi nārada sumiri hari girijahi dīnhi asīsa.
hō'ihī yaha kalyāna aba sansaya tajahu girīsa. 70.

Saying this, Narad invoked Lord Hari (Vishnu) and blessed Girija (Uma, the daughter of the mountains).

He then reassured her father with these words—‘This (doing of Tapa for Shiva by your daughter Uma, and the subsequent marriage of the two) will pave the way for all-round welfare and auspiciousness. So now, oh Girish (the king of the mountains), set aside all your doubts and inhibitions (and instead become cheerful; stop worrying and procrastinating).’ (Doha no. 70)

चौ०. कहि अस ब्रह्मभवन मुनि गयऊ । आगिल चरित सुनहु जस भयऊ ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

kahi asa brahmabhavana muni gaya'ū. āgila carita sunahu jasa bhaya'ū. 1.

Saying thus, the sage (Narad) went on his way to the abode of Brahma (the heavenly abode of the Creator).

Now, listen to what happened next. (1)

पतिहि एकांत पाइ कह मैना । नाथ न मैं समुझे मुनि बैना ॥ २ ॥
जौं घरु बरु कुलु होइ अनूपा । करिअ बिबाहु सुता अनुरूपा ॥ ३ ॥
न त कन्या बरु रहउ कुआरी । कंत उमा मम प्रानपिआरी ॥ ४ ॥
जौं न मिलिहि बरु गिरिजहि जोगू । गिरि जड़ सहज कहिहि सबु लोगू ॥ ५ ॥
सोइ बिचारि पति करेहु बिबाहू । जेहिं न बहोरि होइ उर दाहू ॥ ६ ॥

patihi ēkānta pā'i kaha mainā. nātha na mairm samujhē muni bainā. 2.

jauṁ gharu baru kulu hō'i anūpā. kari'a bibāhu sutā anurūpā. 3.

na ta kan'yā baru raha'u ku'ārī. kanta umā mama prānapi'ārī. 4.

jauṁ na milihi baru girijahi jōgū. giri jaṛa sahaja kahihi sabu lōgū. 5.

sō'i bicāri pati karēhu bibāhū. jēhirṁ na bahōri hō'i ura dāhū. 6.

When Maina (mother of Uma) found her husband (“Gririraaj”, the king of mountains) alone, she pleaded with him earnestly—‘Oh Lord! I could not understand the meaning of what the sage has said. (2)

Search and find a suitable home and groom for our daughter, and then get her married. (3)

Otherwise, let her remain unmarried (because she can't be allowed to get married to a groom not suitable for her). Oh dear husband, I love her very much; she is dear to me like my own life. (4)

If a suitable groom is not found for her (and you marry her to someone who is weird as advised by Narad), then the world will scorn at us, saying sarcastically that

the king of the mountains is as dumb and dull by nature as the realm of the heartless stony mountains (“Giri”) over which he rules.¹ (5)

So oh dear husband, think over the matter with due diligence and act with wisdom so that later on our hearts are not subjected to torment and grief arising out of regret and repentance.’ (6)

[Note—¹There is a clever play on the word “Giri” here. It applies both to the mountains as well as its king.

The mother was very worried about her daughter’s fate. She felt that her husband has been carried away by Narad’s prophesies. Instead of trying to do his best to find a suitable groom for Uma, he seems to have become biased after Narad’s advice, and seems to resign to Uma’s fate. This is not a good thing to do for him. She thought that the king has come to believe in the words of Narad who first told them about the fate of Uma that her groom would have such-and-such negative traits (as narrated in Doha no. 67 and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it), and then went on to insist that Shiva is the most suitable groom for Uma (as narrated in Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70).

Not limiting himself to making a prophesy alone, Narad had gone further and had tried to brainwash the father of Uma by saying that if she does Tapa and pleases Lord Shiva, then the Lord can even change the course of her destiny (refer: Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 70).

All this discourse has affected the rational thinking of the king of mountains, Giriraj. And so Uma’s mother tried to persuade him to neglect Narad’s advice and become more practical. He should search for a suitable groom for her instead of relying on a soothsayer’s words. Otherwise the world would laugh at him and say that he was as stupid, dull and ill-witted as the lifeless and gross mountains over which he rules—because he had not applied his mind and intelligence but had relied on hearsay and words of a soothsayer to put the future of his daughter at peril.]

अस कहि परी चरन धरि सीसा । बोले सहित सनेह गिरीसा ॥ ७ ॥

बरु पावक प्रगतै ससि माहीं । नारद बचनु अन्यथा नाहीं ॥ ८ ॥

asa kahi parī carana dhari sīsā. bōlē sahita sanēha girīsā. 7.

baru pāvaka pragaṭai sasi māhīm. nārada bacanu an'yathā nāhīm. 8.

Saying this, she (Maina; the mother of Uma) humbly fell at the feet of her husband and placed her head on them to plead with him.

Girish, the king of the mountains, politely lifted her and said to her lovingly—
(7)

‘Listen dear. It may be possible that fire erupts on the moon, but it is certain that Narad’s words cannot go in vain or that his words are lies. (8)

[Note—The king tries to explain to his wife Maina that she must not think that he is being stupid or dumb by believing Narad’s words. He does not believe in soothsayers par-se, but Narad was not an ordinary sage but someone who was “Trikaalagya and Sarvagya” (Doha no. 66). Therefore, what Narad has said can’t be overlooked, and it would be rather naïve and stupid to do so.

It would be dumbness to by-pass Narad’s advice to let Uma do Tapa to seek Shiva in marriage, and instead go around looking for another suitable groom for her.]

दो०. प्रिया सोचु परिहरहु सबु सुमिरहु श्रीभगवान ।

पारबतिहि निरमयउ जेहिं सोइ करिहि कल्यान ॥ ७१ ॥

dōhā.

priyā sōcu pariharahu sabu sumirahu śrībhagavāna.
pārabatihi niramaya'u jēhiṁ sō'i karihi kalyāna. 71.

Therefore, oh dear, discard all worries and stop grieving. Instead, invoke and remember Lord God (“Sri Bhagwaan”; the Supreme Being). ‘He’ (i.e. the Sri Bhagwaan) who has created Uma, ‘he’ who has given her birth, ‘he’ is the one who will take care of her and her welfare in an auspicious way and in a manner that is best for her. (Doha no. 71)

[Note—A similar idea is expressed in “Parvati Mangal”, Chanda no. 13 and verse no. 109.]

चौ०. अब जौं तुम्हहि सुता पर नेहू । तौ अस जाइ सिखावनु देहू ॥ १ ॥
करै सो तपु जेहिं मिलहिं महेसू । आन उपायँ न मिटिहि कलेसू ॥ २ ॥
नारद बचन सगर्भ सहेतू । सुंदर सब गुन निधि बृषकेतू ॥ ३ ॥
अस बिचारि तुम्ह तजहु असंका । सबहि भाँति संकरु अकलंका ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

aba jaurṁ tumhahi sutā para nēhū. tau asa jā'i sikhāvanu dēhū. 1.
karai sō tapu jēhiṁ milahiṁ mahēsū. āna upāyaṁ na miṭiḥi kalēsū. 2.
nārada bacana sagarbha sahētū. sundara saba guna nidhi bṛṣakētū. 3.
asa bicāri tumha tajahu asaṅkā. sabahi bhāṁti saṅkaru akalaṅkā. 4.

[Giriraj, the king of mountains and the father of Uma, told his wife, Maina—] ‘Now, taking into consideration what I have said above, if you have sincere affection for our daughter and are concerned about her future welfare, then you should go and give her a wise advice (1)---

---so that she does Tapa (penance and austerity) in order to attain Lord Shiva¹. Otherwise, there is no other way to eliminate the grief and worries (that have overwhelmed both of us)². (2)

Remember: The words of Narad are rich in subtle meaning and very reasonable. [Don’t think that he is an ordinary clairvoyant who has cast his magical spell on me to mislead me to fall into some kind of trap. What he has said is not without reason, and it has some secret meaning of which, may be, we are not aware. He is a “Trikaalagy and Sarvagya” sage; he knows about the past life of Uma as well as what is in store for her future. Narad is a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, and when he says that our daughter must seek the hand of Shiva in marriage, he must surely have some sound reason behind it. He is not the type of sage who will tell a lie to suit his vested interest.]

[He has already told us that—] Lord Brishketu (i.e. Lord Shiva whose flag has the emblem of a Bull which stands for Dharma, or the virtues of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety and nobility) is indeed glorious and a treasury of beautiful virtues in all imaginable ways³. (3)

Think this over and recognise the truth of what I am saying. So, you must dispel all your doubts, misgivings and consternations. Shiva is absolutely free from all perceived taints and negativities that can be ever imagined. [Hence, you need not unnecessarily worry.]⁴ (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 70.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 70.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5, and 7-8 that precede Doha no. 70.

⁴Here the king has answered his wife's concerns expressed in Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 71 where she says that he must weigh all the pros and cons before deciding on the groom for their daughter Uma so that later on they are not tormented by grief and remorse at having made a wrong choice due to reliance on the word of a sage who has already said so many negative things about the future of their beloved daughter in order to fill their minds with fear and doubt.

Uma's father, king Giriraj, told her mother Maina: "Remember: Narad has been truthful to us by telling us the reality about our daughter's future. That is a good thing to do. Say, is it not wise to know the truth so that a person can make amends and find a wise way out while still there is time, instead of being in the dark and landing in an unforeseen trouble at a later date when it is already too late?"

His advising us about the possibility of choosing Lord Shiva as a groom for Uma was out of his sincere desire to help us out of the quagmire we have found ourselves in. Since no one can change a person's destiny (refer: Doha no. 68), what the wise, compassionate and noble-hearted sage Narad did was to give us a ray of hope amidst the gloom of darkness, saying in effect that everything is not lost and doomed, and that there is still hope. Though it is not possible to change the destiny of Uma that she will get a husband with the negative traits listed by the sage (refer: Doha no. 67 and its preceding Chaupai line no. 8), but in the given circumstances if efforts are made to please Shiva sufficiently by doing Tapa, then the Lord can turn the doomed future of our daughter into a glorious one by accepting to become her husband (refer: Chaupai line no. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 69).

My dear Maina, Narad has no ill intent whatsoever; he is not against our welfare and happiness. Please remove your misgivings about him and his integrity. He is not wicked sage.

Remember: It will be a great privilege for Uma to be the consort of Lord Shiva who is the greatest of gods and one of the Trinity Gods. Say, who can ever imagine of this good fortune coming his way; and you worry about it?

Don't allow your mind to go astray; have faith in Narad's words because he is a wise one. Remember: Uma is dear to me as she is to you. How can I ever disregard her welfare? But we must not turn our blind eyes to reality, and it is always wise and prudent to pay heed to wise ones like Narad, because if we try to act smart it is then we shall have to regret and not by heeding Narad's advice.

So, cheer up and go to Uma, cheer her up also, and persuade her to do Tapa in order to attain Shiva. Remember what Narad said: 'It is only Lord Shiva who can change her destiny if the Lord is pleased by her Tapa, because the Lord is all-able and competent to change the course of one's destiny (refer: Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 70)'.

Therefore, Narad is not misleading us by hiding anything—neither the future destiny of Uma nor the character traits of Shiva. He has told us the truth. But while telling us that the characters of Lord Shiva are negative when viewed from the perspective of the world and its mortal beings, he has sought to ally our fears by emphasising they the same set of characters acquire a complete different meaning, a positive one, when applied to the Lord. He has explained to us why it is so in detail while advising that the best course of action for Uma would be to please Shiva and request him to accept her as his consort to overcome the negativities of her fate—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 69—to Chaupai line nos. 3 and 5 that precede Doha no. 70.”]

सुनि पति बचन हरषि मन माहीं । गई तुरत उठि गिरिजा पाहीं ॥ ५ ॥
उमहि बिलोकि नयन भरे बारी । सहित सनेह गोद बैठारी ॥ ६ ॥

sunī pati bacana haraṣi mana māhīm. gaī turata uṭhi girijā pāhīm.
umahi bilōki nayana bhare bārī. sahita sanēha gōda baiṭhārī. 3.

Hearing the encouraging and reassuring words of her husband, she (Maina) felt delighted at heart (and all her doubts, worries, misgivings and consternations abated). She immediately went to Girija (Uma). (5)

She called Uma and, with eyes filled in tears (of affection for her)¹, she lovingly made the latter sit on her lap. (6)

[Note—¹Maina had tears in her eyes. When her husband had explained things to her she had felt reassured. But when she saw the face of her daughter, all her misgivings resurfaced, and she became highly emotional. She slipped into depression and worries once again, thinking about the sage's prophesy regarding her daughter's doomed fate, and the fearful prospect of her being forced to do severe Tapa and endure its hardship if this doomed fate is to be somehow mended in her favour.

Uma has had a pampered upbringing, and now she faced the horror of doing severe penance and austerity, and suffering hardship to which she was not accustomed. This very thought send a chill down the spine of Uma's loving mother, forcing tears to well-up in her eyes.

Later on in Ram Charit Manas we shall read another incident when the eyes of mother Kaushalya are filled with tears when she learns that her son, Lord Ram, has been ordered to go to forest exile for 14 years. It was a natural emotional reaction of a loving mother because she could visualise the hardship her son will have to undergo in the wilderness of the forest, something for which he was not trained. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 54.

See also verse no. 7 herein below and its accompanying note no. 1.]

बारहिं बार लेति उर लाई । गदगद कंठ न कछु कहि जाई ॥ ७ ॥
जगत मातु सर्बग्य भवानी । मातु सुखद बोलीं मृदु बानी ॥ ८ ॥

bārahīm bāra lēti ura lāī. gadagada kaṇṭha na kachu kahi jāī.
jagata mātu sarbagya bhavānī. mātu sukhada bōlīm mṛdu bānī. 4.

The mother repeatedly held her daughter to her bosom and hugged her. The mother's throat was choked with emotions so much so that she could not speak a word to her daughter. (7)

Realising the predicament in which her mother found herself to be in, Bhavani (Uma, the future consort of Bhava, Lord Shiva)¹, who is the Mother of the whole world and Sarvagya (all-knowing) broke the ice and spoke sweet words to comfort her mother. (8)

[Note—¹By addressing Uma as "Bhavaani", the author of this epic, i.e. Goswami Tulsidas, has given us a subtle hint of what is to come next. This hint is this: that from this moment Uma has determined in her mind that she will become a consort of Lord Bhava, another name of Shiva. She did not need any persuasion from her mother for she had already decided to do Tapa to attain Lord Bhava and acquire the right to be called 'Bhavaani', 'Lord Bhava's consort'.]

दो०. सुनहि मातु में दीख अस सपन सुनावउँ तोहि ।
सुंदर गौर सुबिप्रबर अस उपदेसेउ मोहि ॥ ७२ ॥

dōhā.

sunahi mātu maim̐ dīkha asa sapana sunāva'uṁ tōhi.
sundara gaura subiprabara asa upadēsē'u mōhi. 72.

Bhavaani (alias Uma) told her mother, 'Listen mother! I have seen a dream, and I shall tell you what I have seen.

A handsome, fair-complexioned and noble Brahmin had given me an advice (as described in the following verses). (Doha no. 72)

[Note—In 'Shiva Puran', 2/3/9/15-18, Parvati, who was none else but the all-knowing goddess Kalikaadevi, the Supreme Goddess known as Parmeshwari, tells her mother: "Mother, listen. In the early morning hours of the previous night, I had a dream. An honourable and noble Vipra (Brahmin) has told me affectionately that I must do Tapa for attaining Lord Shiva."]

चौ०. करहि जाइ तपु सैलकुमारी । नारद कहा सो सत्य बिचारी ॥ १ ॥
मातु पितहि पुनि यह मत भावा । तपु सुखप्रद दुख दोष नसावा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

karahi jā'i tapu sailakumārī. nārada kahā sō satya bicārī. 1.
mātu pitahi puni yaha mata bhāvā. tapu sukhaprada dukha dōṣa nasāvā. 2.

The noble Brahmin told me in my dreams—'Oh Sailkumari (the daughter of the mountains)! Go and do Tapa, realising the truth of Narad's words. (1)

Even your parents (mother and father) have agreed to this viewpoint that Tapa is always a provider of happiness and an eliminator of all sorrows and grief.¹ (2)

[Note—¹A similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 163.]

तपबल रचइ प्रपंचु बिधाता । तपबल बिष्नु सकल जग त्राता ॥ ३ ॥
तपबल संभु करहि संघारा । तपबल सेषु धरइ महिभारा ॥ ४ ॥
तप अधार सब सृष्टि भवानी । करहि जाइ तपु अस जियँ जानी ॥ ५ ॥

tapabala raca'i prapañcu bidhātā. tapabala biṣṇu sakala jaga trātā. 3.
tapabala sambhu karahim̐ saṅghārā. tapabala sēṣu dhara'i mahibhārā. 4.
tapa adhāra saba sṛṣṭi bhavānī. karahi jā'i tapu asa jiyam̐ jānī. 5.

The creator Vidhata has created this complicated and diversified universe on the strength of Tapa (austerity, penance, suffering hardship for some noble cause). It is on the strength of Tapa that Lord Vishnu is able to eliminate all miseries that afflict this creation and is able to sustain and look after its welfare. (3)

It is on the strength of Tapa that Lord Shambhu (Shiva) finally annihilates the world (when its life ends and the time comes to wind up one cycle of creation so as to pave the way for a new one). It is on the strength of Tapa that Lord Seshnath (the

legendary celestial serpent) is able to bear the weight of the earth on his hood (because it is believed that the earth is supported from below by Seshnath who holds it on his hood. (4)

Oh Bhavaani¹! The entire creation is founded on the strength of Tapa (i.e. all the activities associated with this creation—its origin, sustenance and conclusion; its various activities and changes; its evolution and diversity, et-al—derive their energy and momentum by the virtue of its patron deities responsible for its various functions doing Tapa to enable them to carry out their assigned duties)².

Therefore, realising the stupendous strength and immense potentials of Tapa (and how its practice enables the practitioner to achieve super-natural powers that makes it possible for one to do feats that would be otherwise beyond imagination and one's abilities), you must go and do Tapa (to overcome the hurdles in your fate, and to attain the hands of Lord Shiva in marriage as advised by Narad).³ (5)

[Note—¹Bhavaani is the divine consort of Lord Bhava, Shiva. By addressing Uma as 'Bhavaani', the Brahmin who appeared in Uma's dream implied that if she wishes to attain this exalted stature of being the consort of Lord Bhava, then the only way it to do Tapa.

²A similar idea exhorting the virtues and astounding empowering abilities of Tapa is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 163.]

सुनत बचन बिसमित महतारी । सपन सुनायउ गिरिहि हँकारी ॥ ६ ॥

मातु पितहि बहुबिधि समुझाई । चलीं उमा तप हित हरषाई ॥ ७ ॥

प्रिय परिवार पिता अरु माता । भए बिकल मुख आव न बाता ॥ ८ ॥

sunata bacana bisamita mahatārī. sapana sunāya'u girihi haṁkāri. 6.
mātu pitahi bahubidhi samujhā'ī. calīm umā tapa hita haraṣā'ī. 7.
priya parivāra pitā aru mātā. bha'e bikala mukha āva na bātā. 8.

Hearing these mysterious words from her daughter, the mother was amazed. She called her husband Giri, and narrated the daughter's dream to him. (6)

The parents, the mother as well as the father, explained the things to their daughter in various ways (to remove her doubts and confusions, as well as to inject confidence and determination in her mind and heart so that she does Tapa with a firm conviction and succeeds in it).

Then, encouraged and convinced, Uma cheerfully (and with great confidence) started-off on her mission of doing Tapa. (7)

As she went away to do Tapa, her dear kith and kin, her loving family members, her parents, everyone, were overcome with grief so much so that they could not utter a word.¹ (8)

[Note—¹Doing Tapa is not a joke nor a child's play. Its severity would shake the confidence of even the hardened war veterans. Just how tough it is to do Tapa and how severely punishing it is will be clear if one reads the following instances in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Uma's Tapa as described in Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 74; (ii) Manu and Satrupa's Tapa as described in from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 144—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 145.

Even a single casual reading of the way Tapa is done and its effect on the body will make even those with stern hearts wince in fear. It is imaginable how hard and difficult it would have been for a girl as young as Uma to bear with the rigidities and hardships of doing Tapa. The mere imagination of the hardships and sufferings

involved in doing Tapa sent chill down the spine of the loved ones of Uma, viz. her friends, family members and parents, and they were all drowned in gloom and despair. But there was no way out; Uma was determined to do Tapa.

An interesting lesson is to be learnt here: If a person has firm determination, if one is convinced of the path he or she has chosen, of one has self-confidence in the strength of the Spirit, then there is no hurdle in this creation that can come in his or her path, and for such a resolute person victory and success are virtually served on a platter.]

दो०. बेदसिरा मुनि आइ तब सबहि कहा समुझाइ ।
पारबती महिमा सुनत रहे प्रबोधहि पाइ ॥ ७३ ॥

dōhā.

bēdasirā muni ā'i taba sabahi kahā samujhā'i.
pārabatī mahimā sunata rahē prabōdhahi pā'i. 73.

At the time when all the family members were thus overwhelmed by distress and gloom, sage Ved-siraa came and consoled them, explaining the glories of Parvati and extolling her divine virtues.

Learning about Parvati's divinity and heritage (that in her previous life as Sati she was already the consort of Lord Shiva, that she herself had sought to be Shiva's consort in her next life, the present one, at the time of death, and that she was thus an eternal partner of Shiva and therefore is sure to succeed in her Tapa), all the family members and her friends felt reassured and comforted. Their sense of despair and gloom was dissipated, and they became calm. (Doha no. 73)

चौ०. उर धरि उमा प्रानपति चरना । जाइ बिपिन लागीं तपु करना ॥ १ ॥
अति सुकुमार न तनु तप जोगू । पति पद सुमिरि तजेउ सबु भोगू ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ura dhari umā prānapati caranā. jā'i bipina lāgīm tapu karanā. 1.
ati sukumāra na tanu tapa jōgū. pati pada sumiri tajē'u sabu bhōgū. 2.

Enshrining the holy feet of her beloved Lord (Shiva) in her heart, she (Uma/Parvati) went to the forest and began doing Tapa (to attain her beloved Lord)¹. (1)

Her body was very delicate and fragile, not at all suitable for Tapa. In spite of this, she invoked the holy feet of her husband (Lord Shiva) in her heart, and remembering him she discarded all thoughts of comfort and pleasures that are associated with the body and related to the world². (2)

[Note—¹Uma had decided that Shiva would be her eternal husband, and this determination made her all the more resolute and firm in doing Tapa.

Her Tapa was different from the Tapa done by others to propitiate the chosen deity. While the rest of the world does Tapa to seek some reward, whether it is worldly or spiritual, some kind of blessing from the worshipped deity by way of a boon or two, or for fulfilment of some other kind of desire that is otherwise difficult or almost impossible to achieve, Uma did Tapa to be an 'eternal companion of the deity'.

Her interaction with the deity, in this case Lord Shiva, was not for some moments when the Lord appears before his devotee, grants him or her some boon, and then vanishes from sight. She wanted to be with her deity for the rest of her life. And so this Tapa was special because the desire that needed to be fulfilled was also unique. Consequentially, the intensity and dimension of Uma's Tapa also had to be special and different from the way others did Tapa. In other words, her Tapa was more severe and its sufferings were more intense as compared to the Tapa done by others.

When examined closely we observe that when Manu and Satrupa did Tapa to request Lord Vishnu to become their son, which resulted in the Lord incarnating as Lord Ram to become the son king Dasrath (Manu) and queen Kaushalya (Satrupa), the couple had to do severe Tapa that matched that done by Uma. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 144—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 145.

²Tapa involves stern self-restraint, and overcoming all temptations for comfort and pleasure. As we shall be reading shortly below, all desires to please the gross organs of the body, such as the desire of tongue to eat delicious things, the desire of the skin to seek physical comfort, and so on are to be overcome if one were to succeed in Tapa. This exercise of exemplary self-restraint and self-denial is treated as an ideal way of offering that is made to the deity worshipped during a religious sacrifice. Tapa is a sacrifice of one's own self, an exercise that is far better and more effective than making offerings of things that are bought by money, that may cause harm or pain to others (such as animal sacrifices or forcing others to donate against their wishes), and that is done by professional priests for monetary considerations.

To understand how penances and sacrifices done by one's own self are more fruitful and effective than hiring priests to do so we may draw a parallel with going on a pilgrimage to any holy site. The pilgrim who walks up the arduous path to the shrine has done more religiously meritorious deed than the pilgrim who hires an air-conditioned taxi to go there. Though both the persons have gone to the same place with the same religious value, but the first one is a true 'pilgrim' who has walked on foot, and he is the one who gets more credit points and therefore is better rewarded than the air-conditioned taxi-riding 'tourist'.]

नित नव चरन उपज अनुरागा । बिसरी देह तपहिं मनु लागा ॥ ३ ॥

nita nava carana upaja anurāgā. bisarī dēha tapahim manu lāgā. 3.

Every passing day saw renewed affection for the holy feet of the Lord (Shiva) sprouting in the heart of Uma so much so that gradually she lost consciousness (awareness) of even the basic comforts of her physical gross body, and instead her mind and heart ("Mana") got deeply involved in doing Tapa (for which she had set out from her home). (3)

[Note—This verse is significant. It underlines the psychological aspects of entering into enterprise, such as Tapa in this case. When a person sets out from the comfort zone of his home to achieve his goal in life, he is very enthusiastic in the beginning. But as soon as he starts to feel the heat of the new path that is not so well-trodden, an unconventional path that he has chosen for himself, his enthusiasm and zest begins to ebb, and he may become disillusioned and disheartened by initial hardships and failures. But if he is resolute and firm in his convictions, if he has faith in himself and his spirit, if he is determined to succeed, then after the initial hiccoughs all obstacles vanish in thin air and the path clears out of its own for him.

Uma was raised in a king's household, being pampered and well-looked after. The initial days were most testing for her. The hardships of living alone in a forest, being deprived of food and basic physical comforts that she was so accustomed of at her home, may have made her disillusioned and jittery. But this did not happen. She

was determined to attain Lord Shiva as the only single goal of her life. So what happened? She succeeded.

The first few days of Tapa life were sort of acclimatization and test for her when she was to judge for herself if she can actually cope with the rigours of Tapa. ‘Yes, she could’—she found out to her joy. And from then onwards the journey was much easier!]

संबत सहस मूल फल खाए । सागु खाइ सत बरष गवाँए ॥ ४ ॥
 कछु दिन भोजनु बारि बतासा । किए कठिन कछु दिन उपबासा ॥ ५ ॥
 बेल पाती महि परइ सुखाई । तीनि सहस संबत सोइ खाई ॥ ६ ॥
 पुनि परिहरे सुखानेउ परना । उमहि नामु तब भयउ अपरना ॥ ७ ॥
 देखि उमहि तप खीन सरीरा । ब्रह्मगिरा भै गगन गभीरा ॥ ८ ॥

sambata sahasa mūla phala khā'ē. sāgu khā'i sata baraṣa gavāṃē. 4.
 kachu dina bhōjanu bāri batāsā. ki'ē kaṭhina kachu dina upabāsā. 5.
 bēla pāti mahi para'i sukhā'ī. tīni sahasa sambata sō'i khā'ī. 6.
 puni pariharē sukhānē'u paranā. umahi nāmu taba bhaya'u aparānā. 7.
 dēkhi umahi tapa khīna sarīrā. brahmagirā bhai gagana gabhīrā. 8.

[Now in the following verses, we shall read about the severity of Uma's Tapa. Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, verse nos. 38—40.]

She survived by eating edible roots and fruits for a thousand years, and then for the next hundred years ate only leaves and stems. (4)

For some days she lived by eating and drinking only air and water, and for some days she abstained from all foods by observing stern fast. (5)

For three thousand years she survived by eating creepers and leaves that had fallen on the ground and had dried up in a natural way. (6)

Then she abstained from eating even dried and fallen leaves etc. It is from that time that she was called ‘Aparnaa’ (to commemorate the severity of her Tapa). [The word “Aparnaa” means one who had denied himself even the leaves.] (7)

Observing that Uma's body had become extremely emaciated due the severity of the Tapa done by her, a divine voice known as ‘Brahm's voice’ (the formless sound heard from the heaven and is believed to be spoken by the Holy Spirit, the Lord God; the voice of an Oracle; the voice of Brahma the creator speaking on behalf of the Lord God)# said from the sky (the heaven)¹. [Next Doha no. 74 and its following verses narrate what this Brahm's voice said to Uma.] (8)

[Note—The way Uma did Tapa for particular numbers of days coincides symbolically with numbers of Mantras used for offering worship to Lord Shiva as ordained in the Shukla Yajur Veda. Out of the many Mantras of this Vedas, those that are exclusively dedicated to Shiva were extracted and listed as a body of Mantras known as “Rudri”. There are said to be 11 forms of Lord Shiva, known as the “11 Rudras”.

Uma did Tapa as follows: 1000 years + 100 years (verse no. 4) = ‘11’00 (‘eleven’ thousand) years. They symbolise the 11 Rudras or 11 Rudri Mantras.

Then the next verse no. 5 says that she spent some days eating air, drinking water and fasting. Since a Tapa is done in a systematic manner, therefore we can assume that this second phase also followed the same pattern: that is, she survived on air and water for 1000 years and ate nothing for the next 100 years, bringing the total number

of days to 1100 years. Like in the previous instance, this completed her 'second' round of Rudri.

This was followed by the third round as narrated in verse nos. 6-7 by which time she had done Tapa for 3000 years + 300 years = '33'00 years. The figure of '33' in '3300' stands for $11 \times 3 = 33$ Rudri Mantras. That is, Uma symbolically worshipped all the 11 Rudras for 'three times' to imply that she is devoted to them in all the three dimensions of time—the past, the present, and the future.

The 'zero' that is added to the numerals 1, 11, 3 or 33 mean the number of times the main Tapa was multiplied in terms of magnitude or intensity. That is, if others did a Tapa say for 11 years with a certain degree of intensity, the Tapa of Uma was a hundred times more intense.

¹When the Tapa was successful, there was always a voice from the heaven to indicate it to the person who was engaged in doing Tapa, and this was followed by a request to him or her to seek the desired boon.

When Manu and Satrupa's Tapa was successful, a similar voice was heard from the sky, asking them to seek a boon—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 145.

Similarly, when the Tapa of the demon king Ravana and his brothers were successful, the creator Brahma had spoken to them and asked them to seek a boon: refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 177.

#Usually it was 'Brahma, the creator' who spoke on behalf of the Supreme Being. Hence, this voice is aptly called the "voice of the Oracle".]

दो०. भयउ मनोरथ सुफल तव सुनु गिरिराजकुमारि ।
परिहरु दुसह कलेस सब अब मिलिहहिं त्रिपुरारि ॥ ७४ ॥

dōhā.

bhaya'u manōratha suphala tava sunu girirājakumāri.
pariharu dusaha kalēsa saba aba milihahim tripurāri. 74.

[The voice from the heaven said—] 'Listen, oh daughter of Giri! All your desires have been fulfilled; all your wishes are granted.

Now henceforth, set aside all your sorrows and grief, and you need not suffer any longer for now you will have access to Lord Tripurari (Shiva). (Doha no. 74)

चौ०. अस तपु काहुँ न कीन्ह भवानी । भए अनेक धीर मुनि ग्यानी ॥ १ ॥
अब उर धरहु ब्रह्म बर बानी । सत्य सदा संतत सुचि जानी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

asa tapu kāhuṁ na kīnha bhavānī. bha'ē anēka dhīra muni gyānī. 1.
aba ura dharahu brahma bara bānī. satya sadā santata suci jānī. 2.

[The voice from the sky, the heaven, which was like the voice of an Oracle, said—] 'Oh Bhavaani! No one has ever done the type of Tapa as you have done, though there were many a patient, courageous and wise sages and hermits¹. (1)

Now have faith in the eclectic and wise words of Brahm, the supreme Lord of creation. Realising that these words are always truthful, honest and sincere, as well as sacred and venerable, you must keep them in your heart². (2)

[Note—¹Refer: “Parvati Mangal”, verse no. 40 also.

Sages and hermits did Tapa as a routine affair. Their whole life was virtually devoted to Tapa, but it had become more of a religious duty and a sort of ritual for them rather than a concerted and single-minded effort to achieve a particular goal. And amongst them who actually did Tapa in the rigorous and intensive way Uma had done, they were successful in acquiring special super-natural powers and spiritual seniority that others lacked.

Patience and courage are the hall-marks of all dedicated saints, sages and hermits because without these virtues they can't cope with the rigour of the life they have chosen for themselves, a life that requires strict self-discipline, remaining distanced from the charms of the physical world, overcoming the natural instincts of the body and the desire of the sense organs for gratification, and the other natural pulls and tugs of worldly life.

It's like the case of a university class. Hundred and thousands of students pass through the portals of a university, but only a few selected ones do something that is path-breaking and unique which will make them remembered in history as legends.

The severity of Uma's Tapa was one of its kind, and no one had suffered so much for the objective she had in mind—viz. to have a husband. Refer also to: Kalidas' “Kumar Sambhava”, Canto 5, verse no. 29 which also says that the severity of Uma' Tapa was unprecedented.

So, the voice of Brahma, the Creator, praised Parvati for her Tapa.

²The voice Uma heard was not the voice of an ordinary creature, not even of an ordinary god, but the voice of the Lord of creation. The words that the Lord speaks are never false or cloaked in deceit or driven by vested interest; these words are sacred and honourable. Not everyone is fortunate to hear them; only a few privileged ones hear it. The words of Brahm are always for the good and welfare of the devotee of the Lord. So, mindful of this fact, Uma is advised to bring them to her heart and do as advised by it.

Remember: Brahm does not speak often, and it is only when the Lord is pleased by the devotee that he chooses to address him or her directly. There are other instances where this has happened in Ram Charit Manas. Refer: Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 148 (with respect to Lord Vishnu blessing Manu and Satrupa); and (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 177 (with respect of Brahma blessing the demon brothers, Ravan etc.).

Not only the supreme Lord, even ordinary human sages blessed those upon whom they were pleased—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 164 where we read that the hermit has blessed king Pratapbhanu and asked him to seek any boon he wishes.]

आवै पिता बोलावन जबहीं । हठ परिहरि घर जाएहु तबहीं ॥ ३ ॥

मिलहिं तुम्हहि जब सप्त रिषीसा । जानेहु तब प्रमान बागीसा ॥ ४ ॥

āvai pitā bōlāvana jabahīm. haṭha parihari ghara jā'ēhu tabahīm. 3.

milahim tumhahi jaba sapta risīsā. jānēhu taba pramāna bāgīsā. 4.

When your father comes to call you back home¹, at that time you must not resist him but return home immediately² (with him). (3)

When you meet the seven celestial sages known as ‘Sapta-rishis’, then you would be reassured about the authenticity of this prophesy made by this Oracle³. (4)

[Note—¹It was Uma's father who was instrumental in sending her to do Tapa by overruling her mother's initial doubts and objections (refer: Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 71—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no.

72). So, when her father himself comes to her to ask her to go back home, Uma would have no doubts about his intentions.

Another interesting observation is that Uma has been advised to go home without “resistance”. This means that her father had tried to bring her home on previous occasions as well when he had learnt about the immensity of her sufferings as outlined in verse nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 74. Remember: Her father was the king of the mountains, and so obviously he must have kept someone to keep a watch on her. So he was aware of her sufferings during the process of Tapa. He must have either come himself or sent someone in order to persuade Uma to return home, but she must have refused. That is why this Oracle had to tell her “not to resist her father when he comes to ask her to return home”.

²The next question is: After doing Tapa, why was it necessary for Uma to “go home” instead of remaining in the hermitage where she did Tapa? Well, the answer to this question is as follows: Uma did Tapa to ‘marry Shiva’, and marriage necessitates that she remains in with her parents at her parental home so that all the formalities and rites associated with marriage and its religious ceremonies can be done according to the sanctioned process of the scriptures. Marriage cannot be done with full rituals and ceremony in a forest hermitage.

³Why was it necessary for the voice of Brahm to give a proof of its authenticity to reassure Uma when it said that “when you meet the Sapta-rishis, you will be assured of the truthfulness of this voice and prophesy”.

Well, the reason is that when someone does Tapa, the deity who is offered this form of sacrifice is the one who reveals before the devotee to bless him or her. For instance, when Manu and Satrupa did Tapa, they did it for Lord Vishnu, and it was Vishnu who appeared before them to bless them—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 143 (where it is said that they worshipped Lord Vasudeo, another name of Vishnu), and from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 146—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 148 (where we learn that the Lord Vishnu revealed himself as Lord Ram with Sita representing goddess Laxmi by his side).

But this did not happen in the case of Uma. It was “Brahm’s voice” and not “Shiva’s voice”. So, in order to remove her doubts, the voice had to give her certain proof by citing events in the future. And the two events that it cited are: (i) her father coming to her with a request to go home, and (ii) the seven sages coming to her.

Brahma had made predictions elsewhere also. For instance, later on in the story of Ram Charit Manas it is narrated that when Hanuman entered Lanka and was confronted by the demoness called Lankini, he had hit her viciously with his fist, leading her to fall and vomit blood. At that time Lankini recalled the prophesy made by Brahma when he saw her after granting boons to the demon king Ravana and his brothers Kumbhakaran and Vibhishan. Brahma had told her that “when she would fall down upon being hit by a monkey, she should be warned that the end of the cruel demons was near”—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 4.]

सुनत गिरा बिधि गगन बखानी । पुलक गात गिरिजा हरषानी ॥ ५ ॥

sunata girā bidhi gagana bakhānī. pulaka gāta girijā haraṣānī. 5.

Hearing the instructions of the sacred voice of Vidhi (the creator Brahma) from the heaven, Girijaa’s body was thrilled with happiness and she was very delighted. (5)

[Note—The reason for her happiness and joy was obvious: it was now certain that her efforts at acquiring Lord Shiva as her divine husband were successful. What more would any person want?]

उमा चरित सुंदर मैं गावा । सुनहु संभु कर चरित सुहावा ॥ ६ ॥
जब तें सतीं जाइ तनु त्यागा । तब तें सिव मन भयउ बिरागा ॥ ७ ॥
जपहिं सदा रघुनायक नामा । जहँ तहँ सुनहिं राम गुन ग्रामा ॥ ८ ॥

umā carita sundara mair̥m gāvā. sunahu sambhu kara carita suhāvā. 6.
jaba tēm satīm jā'i tanu tyāgā. taba tēm siva mana bhaya'u birāgā. 7.
japahim sadā raghunāyaka nāmā. jahaṁ tahaṁ sunahim rāma guna grāmā.
8.

[Now there is a pause in our narration. We shall read below what happened during the intervening time after Sati had died by burning herself in fire at her father Daksha's place, and the present sequence of events in her new birth as Uma when she was blessed by Brahma that her wishes to marry Shiva are sure to be fulfilled.]

I (sage Yagyawalkya said to sage Bharadwaj) have narrated the beautiful and interesting events in the life of Uma. Now, listen to the other interesting events that are associated with the pleasant story of Lord Shiva. (6)

Ever since the time Sati had gone (to her father's place during the fire sacrifice) and left her gross body (i.e. died by burning herself in the fire of Yoga), Shiva's mind and heart became like a recluse: he assumed a renunciate attitude, becoming totally aloof and detached from everything. (7)

[So, what was he doing in the meantime?] He spent his time constantly repeating (doing "Japa" of) the holy name of Lord Ram¹, as well as preaching and listening to the divine story of Lord Ram and the sacred events associated with the life and times of the Lord while he lived on earth². (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 52.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 48.

It is fascinating to research where Lord Shiva heard the divine story of his beloved Lord Ram during this time. The answer is found in Ram Charit Manas itself, in its Uttar Kand, which is its last Canto or Chapter. There, Lord Shiva himself tells Parvati that in the intervening period of time, from her death in her previous life as Sati, till her reunion with the Lord in her current life, Shiva had been wondering from place to place to listen the divine story of Lord Ram being narrated by renowned sages and saints. During one of such sojourns he had heard the story at the place of saintly crow named Kaagbhusund. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 58.

This part of the narrative is included in our present book under Chapter 2.

दो०. चिदानंद सुखधाम सिव बिगत मोह मद काम ।
बिचरहिं महि धरि हृदयँ हरि सकल लोक अभिराम ॥ ७५ ॥

dōhā.

cidānanda sukhadhāma siva bigata mōha mada kāma.
bicarahim mahi dhari hṛdayaṁ hari sakala lōka abhirāma. 75.

Lord Shiva—who is eternally blissful, who is an abode of abiding happiness and joy, and who is free from all kinds of worldly taints such as 'Moha' (attachments,

delusions), ‘Mada’ (arrogance, haughtiness, ego and false pride) and ‘Kaam’ (passions, desires and lust)—roamed freely on this earth with Lord Hari (Vishnu; Lord Ram), who is the Lord who gives eternal peace and bliss to the entire creation, reverentially enshrined in his heart. (Doha no. 75)

चौ०. कतहुँ मुनिन्ह उपदेसहिं ग्याना । कतहुँ राम गुन करहिं बखाना ॥ १ ॥
जदपि अकाम तदपि भगवाना । भगत बिरह दुख दुखित सुजाना ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

katahuṁ muninha upadēsahim gyānā. katahuṁ rāma guna karahim bakhānā.
1.
jadapi akāma tadapi bhagavānā. bhagata biraha dukha dukhita sujānā. 2.

While roaming on earth, Lord Shiva visited the hermitages of sages, seers and saints, preaching them and dispensing knowledge of metaphysics and spiritualism at some places, while at other places he described the divine virtues and glories of Lord Ram. (1)

Though he was dispassionate and detached from everything, having no desire whatsoever in his heart, but still he was a compassionate Lord who was moved by the grief and misery of his devotee (here alluding to the sufferings of Uma who had done severe Tapa for him)¹. (2)

[Note—¹Externally, Lord Shiva maintained a stoic expression of dispassion and neutrality, but internally his heart was uneasy. This uneasiness was not because he had some hidden passions inside him, but because his devotee known as Uma was suffering for him. Being a compassionate Lord, this made him restless, and this is the primary reason why he left his mountainous abode in Mt. Kailash to come down to the plains and visit the different hermitages of sages to preach and listen to the stories of Lord Ram. This helped him to keep his remorseful heart at peace and engaged so that it is kept diverted from his deep-seated sorrows generated by his awareness of the sufferings of Uma.

Shiva has acknowledged this fact—that he was remorseful, very sad and overcome with grief at his separation from Sati due to unfortunate circumstances—later on in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 56.]

एहि बिधि गयउ कालु बहु बीती । नित नै होइ राम पद प्रीती ॥ ३ ॥
ēhi bidhi gaya'u kālu bahu bīṭī. nita nai hō'i rāma pada prīṭī. 3.

In this way, a lot of time passed away. In the meanwhile, affection and devotion for Lord Ram kept on sprouting in the heart of Lord Shiva with renewed vigour and freshness on a daily basis. (3)

नेमु प्रेमु संकर कर देखा । अबिचल हृदयँ भगति कै रेखा ॥ ४ ॥
प्रगटे रामु कृतग्य कृपाला । रूप सील निधि तेज बिसाला ॥ ५ ॥
बहु प्रकार संकरहि सराहा । तुम्ह बिनु अस ब्रतु को निरबाहा ॥ ६ ॥

nēmu prēmu saṅkara kara dēkhā. abicala hṛdayaṅ bhagati kai rēkhā. 4.
 pragaṭē rāmu kṛtagya kṛpālā. rūpa sīla nidhi tēja bisālā. 5.
 bahu prakāra saṅkaraḥi sarāhā. tumha binu asa bratu kō nirabāhā. 6.

Observing the steadfastness and sincerity of Shiva's self-discipline and affection for him (for Lord Ram), and the fact that the eclectic virtue of Bhakti (devotion, submission and dedication) was as permanent in Shiva's heart as an indelible line (marked on stone), (4)---

---Lord Ram felt highly thankful and grateful to Lord Shiva, and was obliged to reveal himself before the latter. When Lord Ram appeared before Shiva, the Lord (Ram) looked most amiable and charming in his beautiful and splendid form that was radiant with a bright halo of exceptional brilliance and divinity. (5)

Lord Ram praised Shiva in many ways, lauding the latter's virtues and glories. Lord Ram told Shiva—'Who else would have been successful in observing so strict vows as you have done? [That is, no one in this world can be so strict and steady in observing the disciplined way of life as Shiva does—both from the perspective of remaining detached from everything associated with this world as well as from the spiritual perspective by having steady and robust devotion for Lord Ram who personifies the Supreme Being himself.]¹ (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 57 which endorses this statement.

Lord Ram explains why he was obliged to manifest himself before Lord Shiva. Lord Ram saw that Shiva's devotion for him was unprecedented, that Shiva remembers him day in and day out, and that Shiva's heart was not at peace (refer: verse no. 2 herein above). Since Shiva was Lord Ram's ardent and most faithful devotee, the Lord felt obliged to intervene and help find a way to remove the cause of unease in Shiva's heart.

As we shall find soon, this is exactly what has happened. Lord Ram knew the cause of pain in Shiva's heart: being a compassionate god himself, Shiva was tormented by the sufferings of Uma who wanted Shiva to be her husband. So, Lord Ram advised Shiva to marry her: refer: Doha no. 76 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8.

Remember: Lord Vishnu, whose manifested form is Lord Ram, reveals himself instantly anywhere if his devotee invokes the Lord with intense love and affection just like the omnipresent 'fire element' that can be produced anywhere if the conditions are proper—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3, and 5-7 that precede Doha no. 185.

So, when Lord Ram found that Shiva's heart was ripe with devotion for him, the Lord immediately revealed himself before Shiva.]

बहुबिधि राम सिवहि समुझावा । पारबती कर जन्मु सुनावा ॥ ७ ॥

अति पुनीत गिरिजा कै करनी । बिस्तर सहित कृपानिधि बरनी ॥ ८ ॥

bahubidhi rāma sivahi samujhāvā. pārabatī kara janmu sunāvā. 7.
 ati punīta girijā kai karanī. bistara sahita kṛpānidhi baranī. 8.

Lord Ram explained to Lord Shiva things in various ways while narrating to him the birth of Parvati. (7)

The merciful Lord Ram narrated the finer details about the immaculate virtues of Girijaa (the daughter of the mountains; Parvati or Uma). (8)

[Note—Lord Ram knew the reason why Shiva had decided to renounce his ties with Uma/Parvati, the daughter of the king of mountains, in her previous birth as Sati. Shiva had taken a vow that he will not have anything to do with her because she had taken the form of Sita, the consort of Lord Ram whom Shiva adores as his deity and Lord God, because it violated the basic principle of Dharma. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 2 that follows this Doha.

Lord Ram pointed out to Shiva that his vows have been upheld, and that he (Lord Ram), whom Shiva reveres so much, is very pleased with him and his devotion. But now if he marries Uma he would not be violating any of the vows he had taken. This is because Shiva's vow was that he would not accept Sati in her present form or body (refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 57). That tainted body of Sati has been burnt in fire, and therefore all its impurities have also been burnt with it. The soul is untainted and eternal; the body commits a sin and is subject to punishment for those sins, but the soul remains pure and holy.

Shiva was a highly self-realised and enlightened god, and he knew this fact. Lord Ram only reminded him of it. Lord Ram explained to Shiva that the tainted body of Sati is already burnt and dead, and that her soul was pure and holy. The soul cannot be blamed for the mischief committed by the body. Besides this, Shiva must remember that he has an obligation to fulfil the desire of his own devotees just like Lord Ram has towards his devotees. So, since Sati's death-wish was to be reunited with Shiva and at the time of death she had invoked Lord Ram to request him to grant her this single wish (refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65), he (Ram) was under obligation to fulfil that wish—because the wish of a dying person must be fulfilled. And therefore, he (Lord Ram) has now come personally to Shiva to intercede on behalf of Uma that Shiva must forgive her for past sins and accept her as his wife.

After all, Sati had committed an offence against Lord Ram, so if the latter is ready to forgive her and has even come personally to advocate her cause, then Shiva must relent and also be reasonable enough to forgive her and accept her hand in marriage.]

दो०. अब बिनती मम सुनुहु सिव जौं मो पर निज नेहु ।
जाइ बिबाहहु सैलजहि यह मोहि मागें देहु ॥ ७६ ॥

dōhā.

aba binatī mama sunahu siva jaur̄m mō para nija nēhu.
jā'i bibāhahu sailajahi yaha mōhi māgēm dēhu. 76.

Lord Ram pleaded with Lord Shiva—‘Now oh Shiva, please pay heed to my prayers if you really have affection for me. [In other words, if you respect me and think that I cannot give you a wrong advice, then you must pay attention to my request.]

I have one request to make to you which please accept—Go and marry the daughter of the mountains.’ (Doha no. 76).

[Note—Lord Ram has virtually instructed Shiva to “go and marry Uma”. Though this instruction is made in polite manner by using such words as “it is my prayer or request; if you have affection for me then please grant me one wish” etc., but after all it was an explicit “order”, a clear “instruction” to “go and marry the daughter of the mountains”.

So we see Shiva had no choice, and he has made this clear in verse nos. 1-4 that follow herein below. Shiva could not imagine defying the orders of his most beloved

Lord Ram. It also helped Shiva to overcome his reluctance and any sense of guilt at having to break his vows of remaining a renunciate for the rest of his life—for he had to obey his Lord, Sri Ram whose commands take a precedence over everything else.]

चौ०. कह सिव जदपि उचित अस नाहीं । नाथ बचन पुनि मेटि न जाहीं ॥ १ ॥

सिर धरि आयसु करिअ तुम्हारा । परम धरमु यह नाथ हमारा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kaha siva jadapi ucita asa nāhīm. nātha bacana puni mēṭi na jāhīm. 1.
sira dhari āyasu kari'a tumhārā. parama dharamu yaha nātha hamārā. 2.

Lord Shiva said to Lord Ram—“Though it is not proper to do so¹ (i.e. marry Uma), but nevertheless oh Lord, it is not possible to defy your words. (1)

It is my most auspicious and holy duty to obey your orders by keeping them on my head (i.e. by bowing my head and accepting your orders)².

[That is, it is obligatory for me, who am your devotee and worshipper, to honour your words and do as you tell me without asking questions. I accept your advice with a bowed head.] (2)

[Note—¹What was “not proper to do?” Why was Shiva reluctant to marry Uma?

After Shiva had decided that he will renounce all links with Sati and lead a life of renunciation and dispassion like a hermit, spending his time in meditation and contemplation, repeating the holy name of Lord Ram, preaching about him and hearing his divine stories being narrated at different hermitages on sages and saints on earth, and generally living a life of a Sanyasi (a reclusive hermit or ascetic), it will be highly inappropriate to marry and go back to the life of a householder. In this context, refer to the following verses of Ram Charit Manas—(a) Baal Kand:-- (i) Chaupai line nos. 2-6 that precede Doha no. 57; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 58; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 75—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 76; and (b) Aranya Kand:-- (iv) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Doha no. 44 (where Lord Ram explains to sage Narad why the former prevented the latter from getting married).

It is not expected even from human beings that once they have renounced the world and declared that they will live a life of a hermit or ascetic, they go back on their vow and re-enter a householder's life by marrying and living with a female partner. If an ordinary human is not expected to do so because it is violative of the sanctions of the scriptures, then how someone as exalted and honourable as Lord Shiva is expected to do so? It will be a highly unacceptable act.

This being the situation, how do we justify the position that Lord Ram is not giving Shiva a wrong advice or instruction that violates the scriptures by telling him to marry Uma? Well, the answer is this: Firstly, Shiva had taken a vow that he will have nothing to do with Sati in her present body because she had unfortunately assumed the form of Sita, Lord Ram's consort (refer: from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 57). But that does not mean that Shiva would not accept Sati with a new body, in her new life that had nothing to do with her previous life. The sin that Sati's body committed was burnt with the body of Sati. The Atma or the soul is eternal and incorruptible. So, the Atma of Sati was not tainted by the sins committed by her body. When her Atma assumed a new body of Uma, this new form had no links with the tainted body of the previous life; that body had been ‘burnt to ashes’ (refer: Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 64). This fact is alluded to by Lord Ram when he tells Shiva that his vows of not accepting Sati as his wife is already fulfilled, and thus Shiva should

now honour the Lord's words of marrying Uma (refer: Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 77 herein below).

Secondly, Shiva is also an exalted senior God, one of the Trinity Gods. This being the case, it is obligatory upon him to fulfil the wishes of his devotees who do Tapa to please him. There are countless instances in the Purans and other scriptures that when someone did Tapa to please Lord Shiva, the latter appeared and granted the worshipper his desired boon. Therefore, Shiva just could not refuse this privilege to Uma when she did Tapa to have him as her husband.

We have already read that Sati had burnt her body which had become tainted by her assuming the form of Sita, and so all her sins were burnt along with that body. Uma's Tapa had further purified her of whatever traces of past sins that may have dogged her into her new birth. She had reiterated her loyalty towards Lord Shiva by single-mindedly pursuing Tapa to attain the Lord, and inspite of provocatory statements made by the Sapta-rishis who had come to test her sincerity and loyalty, he had remained steadfast in her vows to be loyal to Lord Shiva and accept him as her husband no matter what happens.

Thirdly, Uma had already got the blessing of Brahma, the creator, when he appeared before her upon completion of her Tapa to grant her the wish that she would marry Shiva (refer: Doha no. 74 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8). Brahma's words cannot go wrong because he is the one who determines the fate of all living beings; Brahma's words have to be kept.

Shiva regards Lord Ram as his revered deity and Lord, and therefore it is obligatory for him to obey the latter. This is why Shiva says "that Lord Ram's words must be honoured without asking any questions". A similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 177 in relation to Bharat accepting the principle that one should always obey his seniors such as parents and guru (moral preceptor and teacher).

Shiva explains why he has decided to accept Lord Ram's "orders", which is actually a polite request, in verse nos. 3-4 herein below.

All these events add upto one conclusion: There was no problem if Shiva marries Uma.]

मातु पिता गुरु प्रभु कै बानी । बिनहिं बिचार करिअ सुभ जानी ॥ ३ ॥

तुम्ह सब भाँति परम हितकारी । अग्या सिर पर नाथ तुम्हारी ॥ ४ ॥

mātu pitā gura prabhu kai bānī. binahim bicāra kari'a subha jānī. 3.

tumha saba bhānti parama hitakārī. agyā sira para nātha tumhārī. 4.

One should keep the words of one's parents, a guru (moral preceptor and teacher) and the Lord (here meaning both the worshipped deity as well as one's Master)¹. (3)

You are my well-wisher in every imaginable way, and therefore I will willingly accept your orders by keeping them on my head (which is another way of saying that I am bowing my head before you and accepting your instructions without questions). (4)

[Note—¹A similar idea is expressed at other places in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand—(i) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 177 in relation to Bharat accepting the principle that one should always obey his seniors such as parents and guru (moral preceptor and teacher); and (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 315 where Lord Ram gives this advice to his younger brother Bharat, saying that if one follows the path advised by one's parents, guru and Lord, then even if that path is not auspicious, the person's efforts still won't go in vain.]

प्रभु तोषेउ सुनि संकर बचना । भक्ति बिबेक धर्म जुत रचना ॥ ५ ॥

कह प्रभु हर तुम्हार पन रहेऊ । अब उर राखेहु जो हम कहेऊ ॥ ६ ॥

prabhu tōṣē'u suni saṅkara bacanā. bhakti bibēka dharma juta racanā. 5.
kaha prabhu hara tumhāra pana rahē'ū. aba ura rākhēhu jō hama kahē'ū. 6.

The Lord (Sri Ram) was satisfied when he heard Lord Shiva's words which were infused with elements of 'Bhakti' (devotion), 'Vivek' (wisdom) and 'Dharma' (righteousness, propriety, noble conduct)¹. (5)

The Lord (Sri Ram) told Shiva—'Oh Har (Shiva)! Your vows have been kept². Now please be kind to keep in mind what I have told you.' (6)

[Note—¹Three things are mentioned here—viz. 'Bhakti', 'Vivek' and 'Dharma'. Lord Shiva was a devotee of Lord Ram, and had the highest degree of devotion for his revered Lord, i.e. for Lord Ram. Bhakti requires that one should be submissive, devoted and loyal towards the revered deity whom he worships. A devotee must regard his worshipped Lord as his best well-wisher, and all the orders of the Lord are to be honoured without question. So, since Shiva humbly accepted whatever his revered Lord Ram advised him to do, the former's answer is said to be soaked in 'Bhakti'.

Shiva's acceptance had elements of 'Vivek' and 'Dharma' because he was aware of the principle that one must honour the words of his parents, his guru and his Lord. He was also aware of the fact that the body that commits a sin must be punished, but the Atma is incorruptible. Sati had been severely punished because she died by burning herself. Uma was absolutely flawless. Whatever vestiges of past sins that might have remained clinging to her Atma were eliminated when Uma did severe Tapa. Remember: Tapa is highly purifying and enabling. Besides this, it was obligatory for Shiva to honour the wish of his devotee—in this case Uma—who wants to have him as her life-partner. Shiva did not violate any of the principles of moral law and ethics when he decided to obey his Lord's words instructing him to marry Uma.

Shiva's decision to accept Lord Ram's instructions were in line with the principles of Dharma and Vivek, besides being in accordance with the principles of Bhakti.

²Shiva had taken a vow that he will not accept Sati in her present body or form because she had assumed the form of Sita—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 2 that follow this Doha. He had kept this vow as long as Sati lived as is clear from reading the subsequent verses, viz. from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 57—right upto Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 60. Shiva had abandoned Sati from his mind and heart; mere presence of her meant nothing to him just like a renunciate ascetic or hermit who is unconcerned and unaffected by his surroundings.

Later on we read that Sati had burnt herself—and this ended her existence once and for all. So, in effect, Shiva lived upto his vows—"not to have any thing to do with Sati as long as she lived". This is history now. Uma is a new individual, born at a new place, has her own fate and life. So, this was a new beginning, a new chapter. Shiva won't break his vows if he accepted Uma.]

अंतरधान भए अस भाषी । संकर सोइ मूरति उर राखी ॥ ७ ॥

तबहिं ससरिषि सिव पहिं आए । बोले प्रभु अति बचन सुहाए ॥ ८ ॥

antaradhāna bha'ē asa bhāṣī. saṅkara sō'i mūrati ura rākhī. 7.
tabahim̄ saptariṣi siva pahim̄ ā'ē. bōlē prabhu ati bacana suhā'ē. 8.

Giving his instructions to Lord Shiva as narrated above, Lord Ram vanished from sight. Lord Shiva enshrined that divine image of his revered Lord Ram in his heart. (7)

Just at that time, the seven celestial sages, known as the 'Sapta Rishis', came to Lord Shiva (as prophesised by Brahma)¹. Lord Shiva spoke to them in pleasant words (as narrated herein below). (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 75.

The "Sapta-rishis" was a group of seven ancient sages or seers consisting of the following—Kashyap, Atri, Jamdagni, Vishwamitra, Vasistha, Bharadwaj and Gautam.

Here in Ram Charit Manas it is just said that the seven sages came to Lord Shiva after Lord Ram vanished from sight. That means, the seven sages were askewd by the creator Brahma to go and meet Shiva before proceeding to meet Parvati.

But in Tulsidas' "Parvati Mangal", verse no. 75, it is said that the sages came when Lord Shiva remembered them.

These seven sages were the following—Kashyap, Atri, Jamdagni, Vishwamitra, Vasistha, Bharadwaj and Gautam.

The same narration of coming of the Sapta-rishis when Lord Shiva remembered them is also mentioned in Shiva Puran, 2/3/25/7-11.

Another variation in the narrative of Ram Charit Manas and other books, such as Parvati Mangal and Shiva Puran, is that while Lord Shiva asks these sages to go and test the sincerity of Parvati in Ram Charit Manas (refer: Doha no. 77 herein below), he has sent them to the father of Parvati to fix a date for the marriage and do whatever is necessary in Parvat Mangal, verse no. 78.]

दो०. पारबती पहिं जाइ तुम्ह प्रेम परिच्छा लेहु ।
गिरिहि प्रेरि पठएहु भवन दूरि करेहु संदेहु ॥ ७७ ॥

dōhā.

pārabatī pahim̄ jā'i tumha prēma paricchā lēhu.
girihi prēri paṭha'ēhu bhavana dūri karēhu sandēhu. 77.

First of all, you go and test the sincerity of affection and devotion of Parvati. Once you are satisfied, then go to Giri (her father) and inspire him to persuade his daughter Parvati to return home. Dispel all his doubts and clear the air of confusion and uncertainties that have clouded his mind and heart. (Doha no. 77)

[Note—Brahma knew that Shiva would like to test Parvati's sincerity and devotion. This is because Brahma is the 'creator' and is 'all-knowing'. He knows what will happen in the future point of time. That is why he had told Uma that, first the Sapta Rishis would come to you, and then her father would come to persuade her to return home, at which time she must not resist but oblige him.

The question arises: When Lord Ram has already requested Shiva to marry Parvati, and Shiva has accepted it, then why did he wish to "test Parvati's devotion and sincerity"? The probable reason is that Shiva was sceptical of Parvati as he knew her nature from her past life as Sati—that she was of a fickle mind. Shiva had accepted Lord Ram's orders rather 'reluctantly'—refer: Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that

precede Doha no. 77. He wanted to be sure if Parvati has changed for good, or whether she still has the same nature as was in her previous life as Sati.

If Parvati had by chance still exhibited even a trace of her past self, then Shiva would have found an excuse to refuse Parvati's marriage with him. Shiva would then have invoked Lord Ram to tell him that she hasn't changed a bit, that she still carries the old corrupt habit in her new life as Parvati, and therefore it is not at all advisable for him to accept her as his consort, especially when he had taken a stern vow of having nothing to do with her.

But on the contrary, if she had completely undergone a transformation, if she shows reformation and resolution in character, then surely she can be forgiven and accepted in the fold. Even Lord Ram tests the sincerity of his devotee before accepting him or her as one of his own; testing a devotee's sincerity and dedication is acceptable.

Another interesting interpretation is this: Lord Shiva was aware of Parvati's love for him as is clear when we read Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 76 above which says, in essence, that "though Shiva was a renunciate and a recluse, still he was feeling sorry because his devotee (here meaning Parvati) was suffering due to the pain of his separation". So, Shiva had no doubts about Parvati's sincerity, *but* the world wasn't aware of it, and the world is so nasty that if Shiva accepted Parvati without any test then a lot of wicked tongues would start wagging. Hence, it was necessary to tell the world that he had accepted Parvati after due testing, and this testing was done not by him but by "a jury of seven celestial sages" so that no trace of doubt is left in anybody's mind about the purity and holiness of Parvati. This was very crucial because all the gods and their respective goddesses, as well as the great sages and Brahmins who had gathered to attend the fire sacrifice of Daksha had scorned at Sati's loyalty and faith when she had defied her husband (Shiva) to go and attend her father Daksha's fire sacrifice against his advice not to do so (refer: Doha no. 62 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8), leading to her getting angry and burning herself in disgust—refer: from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 63—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 64).

Later on in the story of Ram Charit Manas we shall read that Lord Ram had subjected Sita to the "fire test of purity" at the end of the war at Lanka—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 108—to Doha no. 109. Does this mean that Sita was corrupt, or that Lord Ram doubted her integrity? The whole war was fought to liberate her from the clutches of the demons, and then this to happen was incredulous? But Lord Ram was very wise: he knew that it was necessary to keep tongues from wagging false accusations.]

चौ०. रिषिन्ह गौरि देखी तहँ कैसी । मूरतिमंत तपस्या जैसी ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

riṣinha gauri dēkhī tahaṁ kaisī. mūratimanta tapasyā jaisī. 1.

The (seven celestial) sages saw Gauri (Parvati) there (i.e. at the place where she had been doing Tapa) as if she was a personified form of Tapa (penance, austerities and sufferance for a noble cause) itself. [She was radiant with the divine aura acquired by doing penances and observing austerities. She personified all the virtues of Tapa, and when the sages saw her they found her in a state of exalted existence that can come only when one has attained the highest level of purity as a fruit of successful Tapa.]

(1)

[Note—Refer also: Shiva Puran, 2/3/25/19.

Even the first glance of Parvati convinced the sages that she was absolutely immaculate and worthy of being Shiva's partner. Whatever may be her sins in her previous life as Sati, all those sins have been burnt along with her physical body when she burnt herself in the fire of Yoga (as narrated in Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 64).

Presently in her new birth as Parvati, her Atma (i.e. her 'pure self' or Soul) was as divine, as holy and as immaculate as it could ever be. Even as the ordinary fire burns all the impurities of anything that is put into it, the rigours of Tapa too leaves the person who undertakes it fully purified and free of any after-effects of sins committed by him or her. This results in the shine of the Atma coming to the fore in the form of a radiant and glorious halo around the concerned person just like the brilliant halo that surrounds the sun in the sky.]

बोले मुनि सुनु सैलकुमारी । करहु कवन कारन तपु भारी ॥ २ ॥

केहि अवराधहु का तुम्ह चहहू । हम सन सत्य मरमु किन कहहू ॥ ३ ॥

bōlē muni sunu sailakumārī. karahu kavana kārana tapu bhārī. 2.

kēhi avarādhahu kā tumha cahahū. hama sana satya maramu kina kahahū. 3.

The sages said to Sailkumari (the daughter of the mountains; Parvati)—‘Listen to us, oh Sailkumari! Why are you doing such a severe Tapa? (2)

Whom do you worship, and what is your wish? Why don't you tell us the secret of your heart (that has led you to undertake doing such a severe Tapa)?’ (3)

[Note—Refer also: Shiva Puran, 2/3/25/21 where the sages have asked Parvati—“Oh Sailkumari; why are you doing such severe Tapa? Which deity do you worship; what do you want as a reward? Tell us everything.”

An interesting point to note here is this: The sages did not adopt any conceit or a fictitious form when they went to Parvati to test her. Compare this to Sati who had assumed the form of Sita, Lord Ram's wife, when she had gone to test the Lord (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 52). In a way the sages told Parvati that the proper way to test someone is to be honest with him. They had straightforwardly asked Parvati why she was doing Tapa without using any disguise to hide their identity to mislead her.]

कहत बचन मनु अति सकुचाई । हँसिहहु सुनि हमारि जड़ताई ॥ ४ ॥

मनु हठ परा न सुनइ सिखावा । चहत बारि पर भीति उठावा ॥ ५ ॥

नारद कहा सत्य सोइ जाना । बिनु पंखन्ह हम चहहिं उड़ाना ॥ ६ ॥

देखहु मुनि अबिबेकु हमारा । चाहिअ सदा सिवहि भरतारा ॥ ७ ॥

kahata bacana manu ati sakucāī. haṁsihahu suni hamāri jaṛatāī. 4.

manu haṭha parā na suna'i sikhāvā. cahata bāri para bhīti uṭhāvā. 5.

nārada kahā satya sō'i jānā. binu paṅkhanha hama cahahim uṛānā. 6.

dēkhahu muni abibēku hamārā. cāhi'a sadā sivahi bharatārā. 7.

Parvati (“Sailkumari”) was very hesitant¹ as she replied—‘Oh Sages! You will laugh when you hear my stupidity, stubbornness and ill-wittedness (“Jad-tai”). (4)

My Mana (heart and mind) has become adamant and it won't listen to any advice or imploring. It wants to raise a wall on water! [This is a metaphoric way of saying that “my mind and heart want something as impossible as desiring to erect a

wall on the flowing water of a river or ocean, something which is absolutely impossible. But what can I do? As I have already told you, my Mana is very stubborn.”] (5)

Believing in the words of sage Narad, I am trying to fly in the air without having wings! [That is, like making an impossible attempt to fly without wings, I too am trying to make an attempt to marry Shiva without having the required qualifications for it.] (6)

Oh sages, look at my stupidity that I am trying to become a wife of Lord Shiva! [I know that what I am trying is impossible to achieve—i.e. to marry Shiva. But what can I do? I am stubborn by nature; my mind and heart won't hear reasoning and logic.] (7)

[Note—Parvati did not wish to be disturbed. She had a hunch that these seven sages will prod her to abandon her Tapa and forget about marrying Shiva as this is impossible to achieve. In fact, this is what would happen soon. In their attempt to test the sincerity of Parvati's devotion for Lord Shiva and her determination to have the Lord as her husband, they will try their best to deter her from pursuing this objective of marrying Shiva and change course. They will go to the extent of highlighting all the perceived negativities of character in Shiva and provide her with better options, such as opting for Lord Vishnu who has fine characters, in order to see how firm she is in her devotion for Shiva, how resolute her mind is, and if she harbours any kinds of doubts about him.

Parvati was fully devoted and committed to Lord Shiva, and so she wanted to pre-empt any nonsensical talk by the sages that would irritate her. That is why she said up front that her mind is stubborn and her heart is not ready to reason. So the sages should please better shut up!

¹Parvati was “hesitant” to reply. Why was she reluctant? She knew that the persons who have asked her the reason for her Tapa were great sages and they have already told her to speak the truth. For a girl to say that she wants to marry such and such person is a bit difficult for her if she has to say this to even her father in private audience, and here she is forced to disclose this secret desire in public, and that too in front of not one, not two nor three—but ‘seven’ sages. This made her very uneasy because this was a private affair for her. She even could not take the recourse of lies before the sages, not could she refuse to reply. She was in a sort of a quandary.

She feared that the seven sages would ridicule her for her outlandish decision and far-fetched desire to marry Shiva. That is why she said even before they could make any adverse comments that her wish to marry Shiva was like (i) erecting a wall on water (verse no. 5), and (ii) flying without wings (verse no. 6). She expected that these comments would make the sages keep their quiet and go away. But this was not to be. Just like Sati hadn't got the hint when Shiva had tried to enlighten her about the divinity of Lord Ram and had instead gone ahead to test the latter, these sages too didn't get a hint of what Parvati meant. Instead, they continued with their ‘testing assignment’.

Such is the wonder of the Lord's “Maya” (delusion-creating powers) that even the wisest ones fail to pick up the hint when something is destined to happen as devised by the supreme Creator!]

दो०. सुनत बचन बिहसे रिषय गिरिसंभव तव देह ।

नारद कर उपदेसु सुनि कहहु बसेउ किसु गेह ॥ ७८ ॥

dōhā.

sunata bacana bihasē riṣaya girisambhava tava dēha.
nārada kara upadēsu suni kahahu basē'u kisu gēha. 78.

When the sages heard the words of Parvati, they laughed in derision, saying—‘After all, you have been born as a daughter of Mountains! [There is a sarcastic undertone in this comment. It means that like the grossness and the dullness of the mountains, whatever is produced in their realm too acquires their basic nature of being gross and dull. The mountains lack greenery and vibrancy of life; they are made up of lifeless and hard rocks. These are metaphors for dullness and grossness of mind and heart. In other words, Parvati is dull and stupid as well as stubborn and hard to reason with like the place where she is born.]

Say, has anyone’s home established if he or she had heeded the words (advice; suggestions) of Narad? (Doha no. 78)

[Note—Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 97 where Maina, the mother of Parvati, also accuses Narad in a similar way. A note appended to Chaupai line nos. 1-2 therein explains the matter further and why the accusations against Narad are misplaced and unjustified.

Narad was the greatest devotee of Lord Vishnu, and a true sage and saint. His constant endeavour was to help the creature attain freedom from the endless cycle of birth and death. Narad always tried to wean away the creature’s Atma, i.e. his soul, from being entangled with this world, and instead move towards attaining permanent liberation and deliverance. Narad was a ‘Sanyasi’ par-excellence, and a Upanishad named “Narad Parivraajak Upanishad” that describes in detail the philosophy of Sanyas (life of worldly renunciation) is attributed to him. This Upanishad is one of the best of its category.

This being so, Narad always dissuaded those with whom he came in contact from getting entangled into the world by marrying and raising a household because then the creature gets sucked in a vortex of worldly attachments, charms and responsibilities from which he finds himself difficult to extract later on in life. It’s like putting a foot in quicksand or quagmire or whirlpool: it’s quick and easy to get in, and virtually impossible to get out.

What the seven sages meant here is that Parvati was being misled into believing Narad that she can lead a happy householder’s life by marrying Shiva. Didn’t she know that Shiva lives like an ascetic; in fact he was a patron god of all ascetics? Didn’t she know that he has no permanent house, but lives alone in the mountainous caves of Mt. Kailash? Didn’t she know that he has taken a vow of not marrying anybody after the incident of Sati defying his advice and assuming the form of Sita?

They meant “Isn’t she being stupid to expect the impossible prospect of being happily married to a renunciate ascetic such as Shiva just because a sage named Narad, who is reputed to turn creatures away from getting entangled in worldly affairs, advised her to do Tapa to do so, knowing fully well that Shiva is a reclusive ascetic and can never qualify as a good householder? Isn’t she dull-witted and a block-head in the given circumstances to believe Narad and pursue a path that would not give her happiness, but ridicule her instead?”]

चौ०. दच्छसुतन्ह उपदेसेन्हि जाई । तिन्ह फिरि भवनु न देखा आई ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

dacchasutanha upadēsēnhi jāī. tinha phiri bhavanu na dēkhā āī. 1.

[The Sapta-rishis said to Parvati—] ‘He (Narad) went and gave some advice to the sons of Daksha¹. The result was that they did not come back to see their homes again. [After hearing Narad’s advice, the sons of Daksha developed profound renunciation in their hearts, and so they took to the lives of a ‘Sanyasi’, i.e. the life of a renunciate mendicant or hermit. They decided not to do Tapa to start a family, and instead do it to attain liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. They therefore renounced the world completely, never to return home.]² (1)

[Note—¹The word “Daksha” means one who is wise, skilled and expert in things. Narad had motivated the thousands of sons of Daksha to renounce the world, forego family life and become mendicants. What the Sapta-rishis meant to tell Parvati is that when even the sons of an expert father like Daksha were misled by Narad to renounce their homes, how can anyone expect that the daughter of the king of mountains who is surely not as wise as Daksha will not be an easy prey to Narad’s tricks?

If Narad had successfully turned thousands of sons of the wise caretaker of the world, i.e. Daksha Prajapati who was appointed by the creator Brahma himself expressly for the purpose of propagating this creation, away from their homes and become mendicants like himself (i.e. like Narad), forgetting about their duty towards their father who had ordered them to do Tapa to start the process of creation, what better can be expected from Narad in the case of Parvati who was also doing Tapa to marry Lord Shiva and start a home and a family?

So, Parvati must be aware of Narad’s tricks and be careful in following him.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 60 and note no. 2 that is appended to it.

²The story of Daksha and his sons is narrated in (i) Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 6, Canto 5, verse nos. 1-43, and (ii) Matsya Puran, Canto 5, verse nos. 4-12. The story in brief is as follows:--Daksha married the daughter of another Prajapati named Panchajan. From her he begot ten thousand sons who were jointly called ‘Haryashva’. Perhaps the eldest one had this name, and all his siblings were known after him. {According to Matsya Puran, there were only a thousand sons, and not ten thousand.}

Since Daksha had a desire to expand his kingdom to all corners of the earth, he advised his sons to go and do Tapa (penance and austerity) to acquire the ability to populate the earth. They went to a place known as Narayansar where the river Sindhu meets the Arabian ocean. There they took their bath and started doing Tapa.

Sage Narad was on his wonderings, and coincidentally he came that way. Seeing these sons doing Tapa, he asked them the reason. When he learnt that they have decided to endure so much hardship to empower themselves to produce children who would fill all corners of the world, Narad thought that it was a waste of precious time and energy because the same effort could be devoted for attaining spiritual liberation and achieving nobler goals of life. So he decided to enlighten the sons about the futility of the exercise they were undertaking as it would only entangle their souls in the web of worldly affairs and trap them for eternity in the cycle of deeds and their effects. This Tapa could instead be used to give them eternal peace and bliss by way of liberation from this delusory world of falsehoods, illusionary charms and material entanglements that lead to nowhere, and which results in nothing but constant pain and misery instead of happiness, bliss and peace.

Narad approached them and said—‘Have you seen the end of the earth? Without this knowledge, how do you know how many children you need to fill it, what is the

size of your kingdom, and what resources you have? Even though you are the sons of Prajapati Daksha (who is supposed to be an expert of this knowledge because the word “Daksha” literally means one who is an expert of a subject and skilled in knowledge), it looks you are inept to handle the cosmic machine of the creator because one should not do anything without proper knowledge of its consequences. {That is, you don’t know that you will be trapped in your own web if you start procreating and populating the world, that you will be sucked-in the quagmire of worldly miseries and worries once you start a large family, and then your soul will never find peace anywhere in life. A wise man does not do engage in doing Tapa for such a mundane and worldly thing as producing children. Tapa is a highly evolved spiritual exercise one should undertake to attain higher goals of life such as obtaining spiritual bliss and salvation that are not attainable by other ordinary means, and it should not be bartered for such worthless things as desiring sons and daughters, or for any other thing related to a material world that is perishable, a world that is full of pain and grief!

You don’t have even the basic knowledge any learned man is expected to have. So how will you ever succeed in doing Tapa which is an extremely hazardous journey, and even if you do succeed you will not know how to judiciously use its eclectic rewards. It’s like sitting on a dynamite power-keg which would blow you off if you are not careful.

Let me see. Do you know the answers of the following ten questions that would show you are wise and enlightened enough to be eligible to do Tapa? The questions are these: (i) Do you know that country where there is only one ‘Purush’ (Chief; Lord; Authority; Sovereign)? (ii) A ‘hole’ in which one can find a way to go in, but from which no one knows the way out? (iii) A ‘river’ that flows both ways—up and down (i.e. which rises to inundate high ground on one side of its bank, and undercuts the ground of the other side of its bank)? (iv) A ‘house’ made of 25 mysterious ‘elements’? (v) A ‘Swan’ who speaks in a mysterious tongue? (vi) A self-rotating ‘wheel’ which has sharp serrated edges like that of a saw, which is as strong as the Vajra, the formidably hard material used to make the weapon of the king of gods known as Indra? (vii) A ‘woman’ who can assume countless forms? (viii) A ‘Purush’ (male) who is the ‘husband of Punchaleek’? (ix) The ‘end of the earth’? (x) And do you really know the ‘meaning of your father’s instructions’? If you do not know the correct answers of these questions, you are not competent to do Tapa.’

The sons of Daksha were taken aback. They huddled around the sage and contemplated upon the answers. After a lot of deliberations and discussions, the answer that came to their minds opened a flood-gate of true spiritual wisdom for them, filling them with renunciation and propelling them towards seeking spiritual liberation and deliverance by dropping off the desire to do Tapa to procreate and expand their families. Instead, they became renunciate mendicants who spent the rest of their lives in preaching and seeking self-realisation which led to their ultimate emancipation and salvation.

The answers to Narad’s ten questions that dawned upon their mind and intellect after due diligent contemplation and concerted deliberations are summarised as follows—

(i) The ‘ling-deha’ (the gross physical body) is the country in which the only Purush (Authority) who resides to rule it as its sovereign is known as the ‘Atma’, the pure consciousness that is also called the individual’s ‘soul’.

The only ‘Purush’ or sovereign Authority in this creation is the Supreme Being known as “Ishwar” or Lord God. The rest of this creation is the city under his control.

(ii) The gross physical body of the creature is the symbolic ‘hole’ in which the Atma remains trapped for eternity if it does not make efforts to leave it and become free. It is easy for the Atma to enter a body, but once it does enter the latter it gets so entangled with the body that it forgets about its true independent identity, and instead

begins to treat this body as its 'self'. Hence, it never sees an end to this hole as it remains perpetually 'holed' in it.

(iii) Ishwar is supreme and a witness to all. He is the most exalted and almighty. He is self-sustaining and a sustainer of the rest of this creation. The Atma is a miniscule form of this Ishwar who lives inside each individual as the individual's "self". Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 117.

Once this enlightenment dawns on a person, he enters a state of internal bliss and obtains spiritual liberation from where there is no re-entering into the hole created by ignorance and delusions.

(iv) The 'woman' is the person's own "Buddhi" (intellect) which can direct him in any direction it wishes. A man is subject to the whims of his intellect just like a man who is under the control of a woman.

(v) The "Maya" (delusions and its attendant ignorance, worldly attachments and desires) is the so-called 'woman who changes colours and assumes many forms'. It is hard to recognise the true intentions of such a deceitful woman known as Maya. It is like a dancer who assumes so many postures and changes them so frequently that a man loses his bearings. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand—(i) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 116; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 117.

(vi) The 'river with two banks and flowing both ways' is the world of birth and death, the world that has two banks symbolised by a beginning and an end, the world that gives happiness as well as sorrows. On the one hand it gives the creature an opportunity to attain higher goals in life that provide him with happiness and bliss if he is careful, and on the other hand it can push him into the slush of miseries and pain and make him slide further down to the pit of hell. The river flowing upwards and well as downwards is a metaphor for this world having opposite characteristics.

(vii) The creature's body made up of 25 elements is that mysterious 'house' in which the Purush (i.e. the pure consciousness known as the Atma representing the 'self' and the Supreme Being) lives. These 25 subtle elements are the building-blocks used to create this house. They are enumerated in the Upanishads as follows—

The *Maha Upanishad* of Sam Veda, in its Canto 1, verse nos. 4-6 gives a list of the twenty-five Tattvas in the specific sequence as follows—the five sense organs of perception (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin) [these are the 1st five Tattvas] + the five sense organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and reproductive) [these are the 2nd five Tattvas] + one Mana (mind) [this is the 11th Tattva] + one Ahankar (pride and ego) [this is the 12th Tattva] + one Pran (vital airs or life-giving winds) [this is the 13th Tattva] + one Atma (consciousness) [this is the 14th Tattva] + one Buddhi (intellect) [this is the 15th Tattva] + the five Tanmatras (the five subtle senses of perception such as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) [these are the 16th to 20th Tattvas] + the five primary elements called the Panch Bhuts (earth, water, fire, air and sky) [these form the 21st to 25th Tattvas] = total twenty five Tattvas. [5 + 5 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 5 + 5 = 25.]

Atharva Veda's *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 2, stanza no. 6 enumerates the twenty-five Tattwas as follows—"The subtle body has twenty-five components or parts or organs called the Tattwas (elements), and they are the following—the five perceptions (of smell, sight, hearing, taste and touch), the five faculties of action (accepting, going, speaking, sensual or sexual awareness and the desire to excrete or eliminate waste), the five Prans (i.e. the vital winds or airs that sustain life inside the body—Pran or breath, Apan, Samaan, Vyan and Udaan), the five objects of perception (things seen, things heard, things smelt, things tasted and things felt), the four Antahakarans (i.e. the four aspects of the inner self which are Mana or mind, Buddhi or intellect, Chitta or sub-conscious, and Ahankar or ego), and one un-manifest Prakriti (or the latent, hidden but inherent nature and temperament of a creature). [Refer also to Mahopanishad, 1/4 – 6 of Sam Veda tradition.]"

The *Shaarirako-panishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 18-20, describes the twenty five elements of creation at the macro level of creation. To quote—“The five gross organs of perception present in the body such as the ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose make up the five gross units or elements of creation at the micro level of the body of the creature. [Total 5 organs of perception.]

Then there are the five organs of action such as the anus, genital, hand, leg and speech (mouth). These are the five gross organs which add their count to the number of elements or units or dimensions that exist in this creation at the micro level. [Total 5 organs of action.]

Besides these, there are the five subtle sense perceptions such as the perceptions of hearing (relevant to the ear), feeling or touching (relevant to the skin), seeing various forms and shapes (relevant to the eye and the faculty of sight), taste (relevant to the tongue) and smell (relevant to the nose). [Total 5 senses of perception.]

Thus the tally comes to twenty three elements of creation as follows—8 Vikaars¹ + 5 organs of perceptions² + 5 organs of action³ + 5 senses of perceptions⁴ = total 23 (18-19).

The twenty fourth element or unit or dimension of creation is said to be the invisible and un-manifest cosmic Nature. [This brings the tally to 23 + 1 =24.]

And finally, there is the ultimate chief Authority of creation, called the supreme Purush, the Supreme Being, who forms the last unit of creation. This entity is immutable and indivisible, it is non-dual and eternal, it is infinite and imperishable, and it is all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing. Therefore there is nothing beyond it to count; it is the final frontier; there is nothing that exists beyond it that can be counted as an independent entity superseding the Chief Purush.

Thus we come to the total tally of twenty five elements. [The tally is arrived as follows—23 elements + 1 invisible and un-manifest cosmic Nature called Prakriti + 1 Supreme Being called Brahm or the Viraat Purush = total 25 elements.]

In this way, the entire universe or cosmos is made up of twenty five elements.”

{¹The eight Vikaars according to verse no. 17 of the Shaarirak Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, they are the following— They are the following—one Mana (mind) + one Buddhi (intellect) + one Ahankar (pride and arrogance) + one Akash element + one air element + one fire element + one water element + one earth element = total of eight elements that cast their shadow on the purity of Nature (just like the shadow of the earth casts its shadow on the bright moon to result in the lunar eclipse).

²The five organs of perception are the following—ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin.

³The five organs of action are the following—hand, leg, mouth, genitals and excretory.

⁴The five perceptions are the following—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching.}

According to *Sankhya Shastra*, there are twenty-five fundamental Elements or Tattvas as follows—one Avyakta (the un-manifest entity known as Prakriti or cosmic Nature) + one Buddhi (intellect, wisdom, discrimination) + one Ahankar (the inherent ego and pride that is integral to all the creatures) + five Tanmatras (senses—sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste) + eleven organs (five organs of perception—eye, ear, nose, skin and tongue respectively + five organs of action—hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genital) + one Purush (the macrocosmic Consciousness; the cosmic Self or Atma or Soul; the Male aspect of creation; the Viraat Purush who is all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, eternal, infinite, un-manifest and almighty Lord of creation; the macrocosmic gross body of creation).

There is another version as to what constitutes the twenty-five Tattvas. They are the following—Purush (the primal cosmic Male; the Viraat Purush), Prakriti (primal Nature), Mahtattva (the powerful Buddhi or intellect), Ahankar (ego, pride), the five organs of perception (i.e. the eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin), the five organs of action (i.e. the hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genitals), the Mana (mind), the five

perceptions (such as the spoken word or speech, sight, smell, touch and taste), the five Bhuts (i.e. the five primary elements, the earth, water, fire, air and space or sky) = 25.

(viii) The 'Swan' that speaks in a mystical and mysterious language is the scripture that teaches a creature to become free from worldly delusions and see the path of truth and reality. The scriptures are compared to the Swan because this bird is believed to pick up only the best and the purest things to eat, lives in clean water, and is coloured white which is the colour of purity and holiness. The language the scriptures speak is 'mystical and mysterious' because it is difficult to understand them and their true intent. More often than not they are misinterpreted. And their teaching is also unconventional as they tend to pull the creature away from the entanglements of the material world that look so enticing and attractive on their face that anyone who says that the charms of the world would lead to pain and misery is deemed to be out of his senses.

(ix) The 'self-rotating wheel' is the "Kaal Chakra", the wheel of time and destiny. This wheel keeps on rotating endlessly and sucks in everything that comes within its grasp, sparing none and compromising on nothing.

(x) The 'father' is the selfless scripture, and the 'real meaning or the real intent of the orders' of this father is to attain eternal peace, happiness and bliss. This is possible by self-realisation that comes by meditating upon 'self' and contemplating upon the truth and reality of creation and its various components. This will help the 'son', the creature, to attain eternal peace, happiness and bliss. Doing Tapa is one of the ways to attain this objective in life. It teaches the creature to practice exemplary self-restraint and austerity; it inculcates in him the desire to atone for his past sins by doing penance that purifies his inner-self and enables him to attain the higher state of existence at a transcendental plane of Consciousness.

Just as no loving father would want that his son should suffer and no father would give his son a wrong advice, the scriptures also do not misguide anyone.

In other words, Narad advised the sons of Daksha that they should use the energy derived from Tapa for their spiritual well-being and upliftment because it would benefit them in every way, and they should not fritter away this opportunity by wasting their energy in gross activities as procreation and indulgence in worldly affairs.

The effect of this confabulation with Narad was so profound that these thousand sons of Daksha did Tapa but utilised its rewards for their spiritual upliftment. They renounced the material world and decided to become mendicants. They never went back to their homes and forgot about raising families and populating the world.

Now when their father Daksha came to know about all this, he became angry. But the creator Brahma, the father of Narad as well as of Daksha, intervened to pacify him. Brahma requested Daksha to try all over again.

Hence, Daksha once again produced another batch of a thousand sons named 'Sablaashva' from his wife, the daughter of Panchajanya. Like his earlier sons, Daksha advised these sons to go and do Tapa to get themselves empowered to populate the earth. These sons were also preached by Narad in the same way as he had done to the first batch of Daksha's sons. The 'Sablaashva' sons too renounced the world and became mendicants.

This time Daksha was furious. He cursed Narad that he would never be able to marry and settle down to raise a family and enjoy its comforts and pleasures, and that he would always remain wondering from place to place in the 3 Lokas (worlds) like a friar or mendicant or hermit. {Refer: Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 6, Canto 5, verse no. 43.}

The second part of the story is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 6, Canto 6. In its verse nos. 1-3 it is narrated that Daksha Prajapati begot sixty

daughters from his wife named 'Asikni'. These daughters were married off to different Rishis (ancient sages), and their children then populated the world.

Out of the sixty daughters, ten were married to Dharma, thirteen to sage Kashyap, twenty-seven to the Moon God, two each to Bhut, Angiraa and Krishaashva, and the remaining four daughters to Taaksharya (serpent).

The rest of this Canto no. 6, verse nos. 4-45 then goes on to describe in detail the names of these sixty daughters of Daksha Prajapati and the huge families they produced which finally populated the entire earth.]

चित्रकेतु कर घरु उन घाला । कनककसिपु कर पुनि अस हाला ॥ २ ॥

citrakētu kara gharu una ghālā. kanakakasipu kara puni asa hālā. 2.

Similarly, Narad had ruined the household of Chitraketu¹, and the fate of Kanakakshipu was no better². (2)

[Note—The Sapt-rishis cite two more instances to persuade Parvati to not follow Narad's advice. One was related to the story of king 'Chitraketu', and the other to Prahalad, the son of Hiranayakashipu who was also known as 'Kanakakshipu'.

¹The story of "Chitraketu" appears in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 6, Canto nos. 15-17. The relevant part of this story is as follows—

Chitraketu was the sovereign of the country called Shursen. It is believed that he had 1 crore [1 crore = 10 million] queens, but no children. One day sage Angiraa came to his court. The king reverentially welcomed the sage. After formalities were over, the sage asked the king why he looked so worried and gloomy. The king replied that he has no sons (heirs) and it is causing him immense distress. He asked the sage if there is a solution for it.

Sage Angiraa organised a son-begetting fire sacrifice, and at the end of the rituals he told the eldest and the best queen of Chitraketu, named Krit-duti, to eat the remaining part of the sacrificial pudding as sanctified food that was especially empowered by relevant Mantras of the deity known as 'Twastaa', the deity which fulfils all desires and gives contentedness to the worshipper. The sage told the king that with this empowered food, he will beget a son, but this son will be the cause of his happiness as well as sorrows. Then the sage went away.

When the son was born, the king donated liberally. Since Krit-duti, his eldest queen, had borne a son, the king began to give her preferential treatment which created jealousy among his other queens. Once when the child was asleep and the mother was engaged in some household affair, the jealous step-mothers put some kind of poison on his lips because of which the boy died.

For quite some time, the child's mother was unaware of his death. When she sent an attendant to bring the child to her, the latter fainted when she saw the boy dead on his couch. Both the parents, the king and the queen, were overcome with grief.

Just at that moment, sages Angiraa and Narad came there disguised as mendicants. They consoled the king by saying—'Why do you grieve? Think who this boy was for whom you lament so much. Think: what relationship this boy has with you; who were you of this boy in his previous life, and would be in his next life. Even as grains of sand flow in a river and collect to form big mounds at remote places from the place of their origin, a creature trapped in the endlessly rotating wheel of Kaal and Karma (time and deeds) is born and reborn in the endless cycle of birth and death as this wheel turns. This naturally causes a continuous cycle of union and separation.

Just as some of the seeds produce fruits (trees) and some don't, the influence of Maya (delusions) creates a sense of a happy union and a sorrowful separation between two independent individuals. Just like the grains of dust or sand coming together or parting away as they flow with the current of water in a river, the

individuals come together or move away as they flow in the current of the river of Kaal (time and circumstance) and Karma (deeds and their effects).

All such relationships are transitory and illusionary; nothing is permanent. Why do you grieve; why and for whom do you lament? I, you and the rest of the creatures of this world were not in their previous birth as they are now, and nor will they be after their death at the end of this life.’ {Refer: Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 6, Canto 15, verse no. 108.}

The king was consoled and enlightenment dawned on his mental horizon. He wiped his tears and asked the mendicants who they were. Indeed you are highly enlightened and wise, and it is so fortunate that great souls like you wonder in this world to console ordinary people like us when they are submerged in a dark ocean of grief and sorrows, and provide them mental peace, succour and solace.’

Then sage Angiraa revealed the true identity of himself and Narad, and told king Chitraketu—‘You are a devotee of the Lord and wise, therefore it is not proper for you to feel as sorrowful as it seems you are for such mundane worldly affairs as losing a son with whom your soul has no relationship. When I visited you last time I found that it was fruitless to preach you the profound philosophy of spiritualism and metaphysics because you had still not tasted the bitter fruit of worldly attachments and involvements. So I agreed to give you a son so that you can have a first-hand experience of how miserable is this world and how miserable life becomes once one gets entangled in its affairs—such as first raising a family, then spending the entire rest of the life caring for it, and even at the final moments just before death worrying about it and the things left undone. That is, once you allow yourself to get entangled in worldly relations and developing a fallacious notion that such and such person is my son, my daughter or my family, you get sucked in a vortex of eternal misery and grief. Whatever happiness and comfort you do get are all transitory as well as illusionary by their inherent nature because in the long run they only give pain, grief and unhappiness.

A home, a family, a wife and a son, wealth and worldly prosperity—all are transient, imaginary, and give nothing but misery and grief in the long run. All things related to this material world are as transient and hollow as the world, which forms their basis, is.

Hence, be at peace with yourself; don’t allow yourself to be trapped in a mirage.’

After this, Narad preached the Mantro-panishad to the king, and advised him to faithfully recite it (i.e. contemplate upon its meaning and try to understand its subtle spiritual implications; not just read it mechanically) for seven days at the end of which Lord Sankarshan would reveal himself before him.

Then Narad decided to further enlighten the king about what sage Angiraa spoke above. So he told the Spirit of the son whose body was lying on the ground, ‘Oh Jivatma (the pure conscious Soul of the living being)! Look at the way the king, the queen and others are grieving for you. Re-enter your body which is lying on the ground to provide them mental peace; live upto your duties and expectations in this world. Provide comfort to your so-called father, and sit on the throne as ordered by him because once you have entered the body which the world recognises as being that of the king’s son, you must live to fulfil your moral obligations as ordained by the Creator.’

The son woke up as from a deep sleep. He said—‘I have been wondering in countless lives in different worlds, assuming countless forms and having as many relationships, according to the deeds I had done in my previous births. Who is anybody’s parent or child? In some birth these people may have been my children, and in others I was their child. I had been a child of so many faceless and unknown creatures in my previous lives on the one hand, and had parented so many of them in my other lives on the other hand. Everyone is someone’s parent, child, friend, foe, partner, servant or lord in one or the other birth.

So, how do these people think that I am their child and grieve for me; it is not possible that I was their greatest enemy in my previous life where they simply loathed me?

Just as gold, silver and other commodities keep changing hands amongst the traders, the Jivatma keeps on changing relationships in every new birth depending upon the obligations it had incurred during the course of its previous life just like an accountant carries forward the credit or the debit balances from the previous accounting year to the next. Till the time two individual Jivatmas are together, they have some relationship with each other. Once they separate, this relationship vanishes like a bubble of water.

[The gold or silver remains the same, only the person who holds control over them for a certain period of time changes. For a given period of time, the gold belongs to a certain person named “A”, and then it changes hand to belong to another person named “B”. As long as “A” has this gold, he loves it as his asset and cares for it. Once the same piece of gold goes to “B”, the first person loses interest in it.]

The Atma (Soul; the pure Consciousness that is the real ‘self’ of all living beings as opposed to their gross body) is eternal and independent; it is subtle and sublime; it is self-illuminated and without any relationships.’ {Refer: Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 6, Cantos. 14-15; Canto 16, verse nos. 1-11.}

After this initial enlightening discourse, the Jivatma said—‘Listen, I will tell you about my previous life. I was a king of a country called Paanchaal. I had developed a sense of profound detachment and renunciation. I had once gone to a village. This lady who has become my ‘mother’ in this birth had given me some dry cakes made from cowdung to light up a fire to cook my meal because I was feeling hungry. These cakes had a large colony of black ants. I did not pay much attention and set these cakes on fire to cook my meal, as a result of which all the ants died. I cooked my frugal meal and after offering it to Shaligram (a pebble-like stone worshipped as a symbol of Lord Vishnu), I ate the food. The ants which died have become my step-mothers in this life. They wished to take revenge upon me, and therefore they killed me by poisoning. Since the food cooked by burning the cowdung cake infested with ants was duly offered to Lord Vishnu before I ate it, and since I had done it without any knowledge of killing of the ants, my sin was not so serious and its after-effects were reduced substantially. Hence, all those ants got together as my step-mothers to kill me in one go (i.e. only once) in this life. Otherwise, I would have had to suffer in thousands of more births.

I have fulfilled my obligations; I have repaid for my sins. I have nothing to do with these people any more. [My ‘mother’ gave me happiness by providing the cowdung cakes so that I could cook and satisfy my hunger. So I repaid my debts to her by giving her the joys a mother yearns for by becoming her child. Similarly, I repaid my debts to the ants by giving pleasures to these step-mothers who avenged my past mistake of killing them all in their previous life as ants.]

Saying this, the Jivatma left the body permanently. King Chitraketu was stunned and enlightened at the same time. He renounced the world and left home. Sage Narad gave him the Mantra of Lord Sankarshan (Vishnu), and advised him to pray to the Lord by offering hymns to him. When the king did Japa with this Mantra (i.e. repeated the Mantra) for seven days with devotion, he had a vision of Lord Seshnath, the celestial serpent on whose coiled back Lord Vishnu reclines on the ocean of milk in the heaven. King Chitraketu was given an air-vehicle on which he used to roam in the sky. Once he was cursed by Parvati, as a result of which he became the demon named Vrittasur. {Refer: Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 6, Canto nos. 9-12.}

²The reference to “Kanakashipu”—This is the story of Prahalad, the son of the demon Hiranyakashapu. The entire episode is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 7, Cantos 3—9.

When Prahalad was still in his mother's womb, sage Narad had taught her about the principles of spiritualism and devotion for Lord Vishnu. {Refer: Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 7, Canto 7, verse nos. 15-55.}

Prahalad's father was a demon and a sworn enemy of Vishnu. This led to bitterness between the son and the father. Hiranyakashapu never derived any pleasure and peace one expects from having a son. On the contrary, his son was a source of perpetual pain for him. It was his son Prahalad that ultimately led to Hiranyakashapu's death when Lord Vishnu revealed himself as half-man and half-lion, an incarnation known as "Narsingh", to slay Prahalad's father because the latter was tormenting his son, a devotee of Lord Vishnu, and had even tried to kill him with a sword.

The idea behind the Sapta-rishis citing these two instances was to persuade Parvati not to heed Narad's advice as it always led to family discord. Remember: The Sapta-rishis were tasked by Lord Shiva to test the level of devotion that Parvati had for the Lord, to see if she is fickle minded or has firm determination. So, the Sapta-rishis hit at the very root of Parvati's conviction in order to test her determination by telling her that if she followed Narad's advice she is bound to suffer like Chitraketu and Hiranyakashapu.]

नारद सिख जे सुनहिं नर नारी । अवसि होहिं तजि भवनु भिखारी ॥ ३ ॥

मन कपटी तन सज्जन चीन्हा । आपु सरिस सबही चह कीन्हा ॥ ४ ॥

nārada sikha jē sunahim nara nārī. avasi hōhim taji bhavanu bhikhārī. 3.

mana kapaṭī tana sajjana cīnhā. āpu sarisa sabahī caha kīnhā. 4.

[The Sapta-rishis continued to admonish Parvati and tried to sway her decision of firmly following the path advised by sage Narad—'that she should do Tapa to request the Supreme Lord to grant her the boon of marrying Shiva as the latter was her eternal husband'. To achieve this aim, the Sapta-rishis derided Narad and told Parvati that anyone who had believed him and followed the path showed by him had been deprived of his home and hearth; they had to leave the comfort of their homes to spend the rest of their lives begging for food like wondering mendicants. So, what happiness does she expect by following Narad's advice? It's insane to do so.]

'Any man or woman who pays attention to the advice of Narad is sure to leave his or her home to become a begger (i.e. a mendicant who begs for food). [In other words, it is insane for you to believe that if you do as Narad had advised you, you will get happiness in life. You want to marry and settle down with your husband in a home. This is not possible if you do as Narad has told you for the simple reason that whosoever followed his advice had become homeless. They had become mendicants and hermits who had to beg even for the basic requirement of food to feed themselves, let alone derive comfort of a happy married life which you aim to achieve.] (3)

His (Narad's) Mana (heart and mind) is full of deceit though he looks so saintly from his external appearances. Indeed, he wishes everyone to become one like him¹. (4)

[Note—¹This statement has two connotations—(i) On the face of it this means that Narad is so wicked that he wants everyone to become wondering mendicants as he himself is. He does not want others to enjoy the comforts of a homely life; he is jealous of others. (ii) But the other meaning is the real substance of this statement: it means that Narad wants the creature to find liberation for his soul from the entangling web of this world. Narad is not jealous of anyone's happiness and comfort, but he wants that the creature's happiness and peace is not limited to being superficial and transient but that it should be permanent and real. This is possible only when the

creature frees himself from the entanglement of this material world of countless contradictions, and instead of pursuing this world the creature pursues the path of spiritual enlightenment and self-realisation that leads to liberation and deliverance for his soul, his Atma. Whereas pursuing the world would give him only transient happiness and illusive peace, pursuing the path of self-realisation and enlightenment would bestow upon him eternal happiness and peace of the highest kind.

It's such an irony that a great and pious sage of an immaculate character and noble intentions as Narad is accused repeatedly of being deceitful and wicked. Even Parvati's mother has vehemently accused Narad of spoiling the life of her daughter by advising her to do Tapa for such an odd husband as Lord Shiva—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precedes Doha no. 97.

Even in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 6, Canto 5, verse no. 36 we read that Daksha has also accused Narad of the same things as the Sapta-rishis have alleged here—that “Narad assumes the external form of a holy man but is wicked internally, wishing bad of everyone.”]

तेहि कें बचन मानि बिस्वासा । तुम्ह चाहहु पति सहज उदासा ॥ ५ ॥
 निर्गुन निलज कुबेष कपाली । अकुल अगेह दिगंबर ब्याली ॥ ६ ॥
 कहहु कवन सुखु अस बरु पाएँ । भल भूलिहु ठग के बौराएँ ॥ ७ ॥
 पंच कहें सिवँ सती बिबाही । पुनि अवडेरि मराएन्हि ताही ॥ ८ ॥

tēhi kēm bacana māni bisvāsā. tumha cāhahu pati sahaja udāsā. 5.
 nirguna nilaja kubēṣa kapālī. akula agēha digambara byālī. 6.
 kahahu kavana sukhu asa baru pā'ēṁ. bhala bhūlihu ṭhaga kē baurā'ēṁ. 7.
 pañca kahēm sivaṁ satī bibāhī. puni avaḍēri marā'ēnhi tāhī. 8.

It is such an irony that you have believed such a (dubious) sage and have relied upon his words to wish to have a husband who is by nature dispassionate and disinterested in worldly affairs (such as marrying and raising a family, or seeking comforts and pleasures associated with a householder's life)¹. (5)

[Now, the Sapta-rishis sort of exaggerate the perceived negativities in the character of Lord Shiva in an attempt to see if this sways Parvati's resolve to devote her life to the Lord, and to examine whether she demurs and gives a second thought to her decision to marry Shiva after learning about his superficial drawbacks².]

He is 'Nirguna' (i.e. has no worthwhile quality)³, he is 'Nirlajja' (has no shame or does not feel guilty for the way of life he leads)⁴, he has a weird appearance and wears a garland of skulls, he has no family line (“Akul”; has no parents and ancestors)⁵, he has no home and therefore no designated place where he could be found for sure (“Ageha”)⁶, he remains naked (“Digambar”)⁷, and has serpents wrapped around his body (“Vyaali”)⁸. (6)

Tell us, what comfort or happiness does one expect to get by marrying such a groom? It is such a foolish thing for you to be misled by the advice of an imposter (Narad)⁹! (7)

Lord Shiva had first married Sati at the instance of some friends (i.e. his compatriots, the gods)¹⁰, but later on he had manouvered things in such a way that Sati had to kill herself. [This refers to Parvati's earlier life in which she had died by burning in the fire of Yoga at her father's place.]¹¹ (8)

[Note—¹This is a reference to Lord Shiva who is a renunciate God not interested in mundane affairs of life, who lives like a mendicant or an ascetic who prefers to remain submerged in deep meditation for most of the time, who remains aloof from all

material pleasures and indifferent to all worldly attachments, who has no home per-se and lives on the snow-covered peaks of Mt.Kailash, who wonders alone in cremation grounds trying to provide liberation and deliverance to the soul of the dead by uttering the holy and divine name of Lord Ram in the latter's ears, and so on and so forth. In short, Lord Shiva whom Parvati wants to marry is not at all fit to become a husband of a lady who wishes to establish a home and live a peaceful life as a householder.

²For a self-realised and enlightened person who has tasted the nectar of eternal bliss and peace obtained by maintaining a safe distance from the turbulent world, whether he is an immortal god or an ordinary mortal creature, remaining aloof from involvement with the world and renouncing any links with it comes naturally—because such renunciation and detachment gives him his peace of mind and bliss of heart. Since getting tied in the bond of marriage sucks a person in the whirlpool of worldly responsibilities and obligations from which, once accepted, it is difficult to get out, a self-realised and spiritually enlightened person would always strive to avoid this shackle and would prefer to remain free as a sky-borne bird.

The Atma is like a free bird that wishes to remain free from any bondage, whilst the bond of marriage is like the same bird being caged for life.

The character traits that are considered as negative or shortcomings in Shiva's character appear to be so when one views them from the perspective of the world and how it judges someone. The gross world regards possession of material things and enjoying them as positive signs of success and a healthy mind that thinks of material growth, development, enhancement and expansion. But the world forgets that all things that are related to the sense organs of the gross body are as transient and perishable as the body and the world itself in which the body lives. The world and its physical charms are like the mirage of a dry desert that pulls a thirsty person toward itself only to lead him to his death because there is no water in that mirage.

Similarly, imagining peace, happiness, joy, pleasure and comfort in the world and its material things is as foolish as trying to find water in the desert mirage. Only a few who are self-realised and exceptionally wise and enlightened strive to rise above the grossness of the world and attain a level of exalted existence, but for this to happen, for this noble aim to be realised they have to distance themselves from the world, become detached from it and renounce its illusionary charms and comforts.

Lord Shiva is one such god. Being the Lord in-charge of death, he has witnessed the pain associated with life in this world, and how a creature feels unfulfilled at the end of his life inspite of his having gained every possible successes in life. Shiva sees that even those who claimed the highest degree of achievement and success in this world do not find peace at the time of death. They have to take a new birth because they are trapped in the wheel of Karma, the wheel that traps a creature's Atma or soul in an endless cycle of birth and death depending on the deeds he or she does in previous life. On the other hand, those who had realised the futility of worldly pursuit and had spent their time in introspection and self-realisation find peace at the time of death; they have no desires left to be fulfilled and they die peacefully and happily.

Having realised that there is no pith in this world, that the gross physical world of material sense objects does not give any kind of sustainable happiness, joy, comfort, peace and bliss, Lord Shiva had decided to keep a safe distance from it. Rather he prefers to remain submerged in the ocean of ernal bliss that comes by meditaton and contemplation, by remaining aloof from the turmoil of the surrounding world and maintaining internal calm and poise. This is possible only when one voluntarily abstains from getting sucked in the quagmire known as the world. And for this freedom to be maintained it is necessary to avoid all kinds of shackles and bonds that come on their own, even uninvited, once one marries and allows himself to be involved in the affairs of the gross world that is engaged in an endless cycle of procreation and death, a world where needs and desires have no end, and where one success, achievement or acquisition stokes the fire for newer and more of such things.

³The word “Nirguna” means without any attributes. The supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being, is said to be “Nirguna” by the scriptures such as the Upanishads because he possesses all the attributes that exist in this creation, which nullify or neutralise each other to render Brahm a neutral entity. It is like the case of an “Atom” which is neutral from the outside because its negatively and positively charged particles, the electrons and the protons, cancel each other out to produce a neutral Atom.

But does this neutrality of the Atom mean that it is powerless and impotent? Who in this modern world not knows the stupendous power of ‘Atomic energy’ and its astounding potentials? Similarly, though Brahm is a neutral entity, its powers are so immense that not only has Brahm unleashed the genie known as this creation but expertly handles its affairs and exercises full control over it.

Lord Shiva is not an ordinary god, but Brahm personified; he is a “Maha-Deva”, the ‘Great God’.

The word itself briefly means the eclectic, glorious and beautiful virtues of truthfulness, purity, auspiciousness, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition, sagacity, blissfulness, dispassion, detachment, holiness and divinity. These are accompanied by a high degree of peace, tranquility, serenity and their attendant happiness, joy and bliss. Since ‘truthfulness and auspiciousness’ are qualities that are beautiful, this word also means something that is beautiful and beyond reproach.

Briefly therefore, the word ‘Shiva’ means ‘one who is auspicious, always pure, holy, divine, truthful, beautiful and blissful’. Shiva is the Lord who is self-realised and a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth.

The *Maho-panishad* of Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 7 describes that Shiva was born from the forehead of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, invisible and all-inclusive gross body of Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 41 espouses that Shiva lives in the heart of the creature as an embodiment of ‘Sat-Chit-Anand’, i.e. as his Atma—“Shiva, as Sat-Chit-Anand personified, always lives in the heart. He is a constant witness of all that is happening. That is why the heart is regarded as the doorway to liberation and deliverance from the traps that have been laid out by this delusory and cunning world of artificiality to ensnare the creature in its tentacles.”

The *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition was preached by Lord Shiva himself to sage Jabal Bhusund, and it highlights the fact that Lord Shiva is no ordinary God, or even a senior one being a member of the Trinity of Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder, but is the supreme transcendental Brahm himself personified. Shiva is the Supreme Being himself. Refer *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph no. 1; Canto 2, paragraph no. 3, 6-8.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse nos. 10, 14 assert that Shiva is the creator of everything in this creation, and Canto 1, verse no. 13 says that Shiva represents the creation itself much like Brahm, the *Supreme Being* who is also treated as being an embodiment of the entire creation.

⁴Lord Shiva is not at all ashamed of the way he lives because he knows that he is following the Truth and the call of his inner-self that gives him eternal peace, happiness and bliss, and that he is fortunate not to have been misled by the illusive charms of the material world. He is proud of his renunciate way of life instead of feeling guilty and ashamed of it.

⁵Only a living being who has a gross physical body has a parent. One who has no physical body does not have a parent. The parent is the one who gives shape to the gross physical body of the living organism, while the Atma or the soul that lives inside this body of the organism is independent of the parent.

Shiva is not a god with a physical body, but the eternal and pure cosmic Consciousness that is known variously as the Atma or the Soul, or even as Brahm. The Atma is pure Consciousness that has no beginning or end. That is Lord Shiva,

who is a personified form of cosmic Consciousness, is also eternal and imperishable. The entire creation has its origin in Brahm represented by Shiva, and it is not vice versa. This being the case, Shiva has no parent from whom his origin can be traced in the conventional sense. Only mortal beings who have a gross body can trace their origin to a parent who gives birth to the body that the world recognises as a particular creature. But the Atma or the pure conscious soul of the living being that lives in his gross body is not created by any of the parents. Shiva represents this element known as the 'Atma' which is not related to anyone, and is not created by anyone for the simple reason that it is an eternal and imperishable entity that was present before this creation came into being, and will be there after this creation.

⁶Lord Shiva is said to be "Ageha"—i.e. he has no known or certain home, and there it is difficult to know where he is or how to access him.

It will be very easy to understand this aspect of Shiva if one understands that "Shiva" represents the essential element known as the "Consciousness" of this creation. This element is subtle and sublime; it is uniformly distributed throughout the creation, and there is no place where it is not present. So it is very difficult to say that Shiva ("Consciousness") is present or not present here or there in any certain term. Remember: The scriptures have unanimously declared that Brahm (Shiva) is 'Neti-Neti', i.e. 'not this not that'. Therefore, it is unwise to delineate any specific place as the habitat of Shiva. He lives in the form of the 'Truth' everywhere; he lives as the 'Atma' everywhere.

The elements of 'Truth' and the 'Atma' are so unique by their inherent nature that while for some they are easily accessible, for others they defy understanding. That is, they are "Ageha"—not known, understandable or accessible easily.

⁷The *Yogtattva Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 98-102 says that Shiva is the patron deity and personification of the sky element. Since Shiva represents Brahm who is attributeless, all-pervading and all-encompassing, an entity that is uniformly present in this creation, enclosing the entire creation from the outside and at the same time permeating in each of its pore, the only element that is the nearest analogue to it is the 'sky element'.

Remaining "naked" is a metaphoric way of saying that Shiva has nothing to conceal, that he wears the sky as his garment. A true ascetic also lives in this way as he has nothing to hide from the world and he has no possession to conceal from theft.

⁸Refer also to "Parvati Mangal", verse nos. 49, 51, 53-56 which says exactly a similar thing.

The *Yogtattva Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 92-94 says that Lord Shiva, in his form as Rudra, is the patron deity and personification of the fire element, and it is no wonder then that he is surrounded by 'fire-spitting' serpents as a symbolism of this fact.

The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 8, 10, 13, 15 and 19 affirms that Shiva is invariably wrapped by serpents.

The significance of the *serpents* wrapped around his body—The *snakes* that are wrapped around Lord Shiva show that he is beyond the power of death and poison.

These coiled serpents around his body indicate the fact that he constantly reminds himself of imminent death, because serpents are very poisonous and symbolise immediate death. They also remind him about the unholy and poisonous nature of the gross world. This helps him to remain focused on his spiritual aim of self-realisation instead of being attracted by the material charms of this material world of sense objects and getting deluded by them.

The serpents also signify that Shiva is the Lord of death; he is death personified. Since he is able to wrap the serpents around his body and they cannot harm him, it indicates the fact that he has conquered death. That is why he is called 'Mrityunjay', the conqueror of death.

Again, the coiled serpents represent the Kundalini, the coiled subtle cosmic energy center at the base of the spine which when activated can entitle the spiritual

aspirant to experience a burst of stupendous spiritual energy which provides him a glimpse of his own divine powers as well as the powers of the cosmic Consciousness present inside his bosom as his Atma. This Kundalini is activated by doing numerous Yoga exercises as described in the Upanishads on the subject of Yoga.

The coiled serpents may also represent cycles of time in the macrocosm and the basic energy of life in the microcosm in the form of sexual energy.

These reptiles are very ferocious, dangerous, poisonous, and a symbol of male potency. The symbolism is that Shiva is a very potent God who can be extremely ruthless and unforgiving towards sinful creatures. He has exercised extreme self control and has 'girdled' or readied himself in preparation for enduring the greatest of hardships and sufferance for self-realisation as well as to provide the world with liberation and deliverance. The serpents warn his enemies not to fool around with him. That is also why he has fire in one of his hands. This fire signifies his ability to reduce to ashes the entire physical world consisting of falsehood and sins as well as eliminate all impurities, imperfections, faults and shortcomings that cripple the creature's spiritual well being.

⁹Narad has been called an 'imposter'—a "Thug"—by the Sapta-rishis to impress upon Parvati that she thinks he is a saint because of his external features and clothes, but she is not aware how he acts as a spoil-sport for all who want to fall in the trap of worldly affairs. Parvati has done severe Tapa, and instead of seeking spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation, she seeks to get entangled in relationships by getting married. Marriage is certainly a shackle for the creature as it forces him or her into a bond and its associated obligations and responsibilities that later on it becomes virtually impossible to break free. It is like bartering eternal freedom and its inherent peace and happiness for imaginary comfort and pleasure that comes with marriage.

This statement has a double meaning—on the face of it the statement seems to be highly derogatory for Narad and scorns at him, but when looked deeply it means that Narad is so holy, pious and noble that inspite of inviting ridicule and scorn he continues to do his moral duty of pulling away the creature from falling into the vicious whirlpool of worldly entanglements, and instead showing him the path that would give eternal peace and happiness that comes by having devotion for Lord God and by renouncing all attachments with this gross material world.

¹⁰Shiva was not at all interested in marrying. It was on the insistence of Brahma the creator and other gods that he had consented to marry Sati, the daughter of Daksha Prajapati. This story is narrated in Padma Puran, Sristi Khanda, Canto 24. It was narrated by sage Pulastya to Bhisma as follows—

In some ancient time, the entire creation consisting of different worlds such as the Bhuloka (earth), the Bhurvaloka (the sky), the Swargaloka (the heaven), and Maharloka (the nether world) came to an end by being burnt. At that time, the essential life-forces of all living beings, i.e. their individual Atma or soul, got together into a single entity known as the cosmic Atma and went to take rest in the heart of Lord Vishnu who was none but the "Viraat Purush", the cosmic form of the Supreme Being who is the final resting place for all the creatures.

After the 'cooling-off period' when the time came for reactivating the process of creation (because creation and destruction is an endless cycle for the simple reason that the energy of one creation does not vanish but re-emerges in another form and at another time according to the principle that "energy can change form but never vanish"; the 'energy' here refers to the cosmic Consciousness that is an eternal non-perishable power-house of all life in this universe), two primary entities first emerged—(i) one was the "Purush" (the positive charge or aspect of the cosmic energy that was represented by the 'cosmic Male'), and (ii) the other was the "Prakriti" (the negative charge or aspect of the cosmic energy that was represented by the 'cosmic Female').

The "Purush" and the "Prakriti" were two faces of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness from which the creation would emerge.

These two opposing factors neutralized each other when they were in the form of their primary aspect of Brahm, but when they were separated as “Purush” and “Prakriti” and brought together, a third element emerged. This was known as “Ahankar” (pride in one’s ability to do something). That is, now they (Purush + Prakriti) thought they could together ‘do’ something that was extraordinary, and ‘achieve’ something stupendous and astounding.

Thus, the primarily neutral Brahm now had become tainted with ‘Ahankar’, leading him to fall in the quagmire known as “Sristi” or creation which was nothing but the ‘creation’ of his own mind that thought that it ‘can do this and that’.

If something is created, it must be sustained and looked after. This cosmic need translated into the formation of Brahma the creator, and Vishnu the sustainer. [In other words, these two primary and senior gods were actually the same Brahm assuming two functions of creation in two distinct forms—one was to ‘create’ in the form of Brahma, and the other was to ‘sustain’ what has been created in the form of Vishnu.]

These two entities developed competitive attitude and were jealous of each other. They competed with each other—‘let’s see who produces a creation first and who would successfully populate the world below, i.e. the earth’. [Remember: This is how and why the world that would eventually come into being had these attributes firmly ingrained in its psyche—having pride, competition and envy.]

Since Vishnu is regarded as the first and foremost form of Brahm (the Supreme Being; the cosmic Soul) in his cosmic form known as the “Viraat Purush” (literally meaning a vast and colossus form of the Supreme Being that encompasses everything in creation), all these developments created a lot of agitation in his heart. This agitation literally heated his heart where the ‘souls of all the creatures of the previous creation, which had joined together to form one composite mass, had come to take rest’. In other words, the souls of all these creatures had merged with the soul of Vishnu to become one with it and indistinguishable from it. In fact, this is the metaphysical philosophy of the destiny of the individual soul of all living beings—that they would ultimately find rest when they merge with the primary Soul of creation.

The heat generated in the agitated Vishnu’s heart caused the ignition of a fire with bright yellow flames like the raging fire of a furnace. This resulted in the melting of the combined souls of the creatures of the previous creation. This melted matter began to flow downwards towards the earth and was about to land on it (in order to ‘seed’ the earth with the first elements of life represented by the ‘soul’) when Brahma’s son known as Daksha held the flowing liquid in the sky itself before it could actually touch the surface of the earth, and then drank it.

Since this divine liquid which Daksha drank was empowered to ‘create life’, he begot a daughter with a body as beautiful and charming as a blue lotus. The reason was that Vishnu, from whom this liquid emerged, too had a body as charming as a blue-coloured lotus flower. In other words, the daughter of Daksha bore the genes of Lord Vishnu and had inherited the latter’s character. This daughter was known as “Lalita”.

[The ‘blue colour’ represented the sky element, and indicated that Lord Vishnu is indeed the Viraat Purush who not only pervades the entire creation but also harbours this creation in his body like the ‘sky’ which not only fills the entire space of this creation, but the creation itself is lodged in the bosom of the sky.]

Daksha then married Lalita, who had a body like a ‘blue-lotus’, to Lord Neel-Kantha (Shiva) because his features—‘blue throat’—matched with the bride. This marriage was formalized on the day of Chaitra Shukla Tritiyaa (i.e. the 3rd day of the bright half of the 1st lunar month of the Hindu calendar, which is roughly March-April).

According to ‘Kalika-Puran’, when the time of creation arrived, both Brahma (creator) and Vishnu (sustainer) started making efforts in this direction by

coordinating their efforts and invoking their own 'Shaktis' (dynamic powers). But the third god of the Trinity, i.e. Lord Shiva, took no interest and continued to remain submerged in the bliss obtained by meditation. Seeing that Shiva is disinterested, Brahma motivated his son Daksha to pray to Lord Vishnu so that the latter gives his "Maya" (delusion creating powers) personified as a maiden to him (Daksha) as his daughter.

As the name suggests, this daughter, who was a personified form of "Maya" (delusions), was successful in casting a spell of magical charm on Shiva's mind and heart that for once the Lord fell for the trap and gave his consent to marry her when he saw her outstanding beauty, and also because she had done Tapa to have him as her husband.

The fact that it was on the insistence of Brahma and others that Daksha married his daughter Sati to Shiva is reiterated by Daksha himself in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 2, verse no. 17.

This facet of the story is also reiterated in Skanda Puran, Maheshwar Khanda, Canto 1.

¹¹This entire episode of Sati killing herself and the reason for it has already been narrated earlier in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 50—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 64.

This is very interesting. In a subtle way, the Sapta-rishis are reminding Parvati about her previous life and the fact that she had asked Lord Hari at the time of her death to grant her a boon that she remains devoted to Lord Shiva even in her new life—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65. Therefore, she is being warned not to deviate from her chosen path inspite of all the nonsense the Sapta-rishis are saying. It was also to give her a hint that whatever they are saying is wrong because she was well aware that the cause of her death as Sati was not due to any machinations of Shiva but her own fault. She had realised her mistake even as Sati, and wished to atone for it—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 54; (ii) Doha no. 57 along with its following Chaupai line nos. 1-4; and (iii) from Doha no. 58—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 60.

Well, as we read on we shall discover that Parvati had caught this hint, and so she remained steadfast on her vows of marrying Shiva inspite of these seven sages trying their best to dilute her determination. She rejects all their contentions and arguments and tells them to scoot from there.]

दो०. अब सुख सोवत सोचु नहिं भीख मागि भव खाहिं ।

सहज एकाकिन्ह के भवन कबहुँ कि नारि खटाहिं ॥ ७९ ॥

dōhā.

aba sukha sōvata sōcu nahim̃ bhīkha māgi bhava khāhim̃.

sahaja ēkākinha kē bhavana kabahuṃ ki nāri khaṭāhim̃. 79.

Now he (Lord Shiva) sleeps peacefully without any regrets or worries (with reference to what has been said in verse no. 8 herein above). He begs for food and eats the whole mortal world as his meal (a reference to the fact that Lord Shiva is the God of the Trinity who is responsible for conclusion of creation, being the patron god of death).

Say, can a woman ever find a right place to live in the home of someone who is inherently single and prefers to live alone, shunning all company? (Doha no. 79)

[Note—A similar narration is given in Shiva Puran, 2/3/25/50-51.

Refer also to "Parvati Mangal", verse no. 50.

In Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes this Doha, the Sapta-rishis have told blatant lies to Parvati about Shiva manoeuvring Sati's death. Now they compound the lie by saying that Shiva 'sleeps peacefully without a worry in the world', i.e. lives happily once he has got rid of Sati. This is not the case at all as is clear when we read the text from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 76—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 76 that clearly tell us that ever since Sati had died Shiva's mind and heart were uneasy because the Lord was tormented due to the sufferings of his devotee. Here this 'devotee' is Sati and no one else. This is also proved when we read how Sati had deeply regretted her mistake of assuming the form of Sita, the consort of Lord Ram, a misdeed for which her husband Shiva had decided to leave her. Her mind and heart were on the boil and she wished to die because living without having respect and affection from her husband was unbearable for her, and life for her had become a constant torment (refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 58). She decided to die (refer: Doha no. 59 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8).

At the time of death, she had prayed to Lord Ram, the Supreme Being whom her husband adored and worshipped, to let her serve Shiva even in her next birth, and it is for this reason that she was born as Uma or Parvati, the daughter of the king of mountains (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65).

Earlier we have also read that it was she who had been stubborn to test the integrity of Lord Ram inspite of her husband's insistence not to do so (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 51 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8). In the process she had committed two grave sins—one was to disbelieve her husband (refer: Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 54), and the other was to tell him lies (refer: Chaupai line nos. 1, 5 that precede Doha no. 56).

In other words, all the sufferings of Sati were her own doing, and Lord Shiva was not the cause of any of them. There is no question therefore of Shiva being the cause of Sati's death as alleged by the Sapta-rishis.

In this new birth, Parvati had done severe Tapa out of her own free will to marry Shiva; no one had forced her to do it, and when she had left her home to do Tapa she was very happy and cheerful about it (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 72—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 73).

She was also aware that Shiva was the Lord who had always lived like an ascetic, and he was indeed the patron deity of ascetics. She was also aware that Shiva was the third God of the Trinity who was responsible for bringing about the conclusion or end of whatever that is born or created. She was, after all, Shiva's consort in her past life as Sati, and therefore these facts were not hidden from her. But this does not mean that Shiva was a fiend who would first get his wife killed by machinations, then go around like a mad person begging for food and feeding his stomach with non-eatables as implied by the Sapta-rishis when they derided Shiva by saying he "begs for food and eats the whole world after having first gotten rid of his wife Sati". It was utterly nonsense!

As far as Shiva not being the proper companion for a woman because he prefers to live like an ascetic or sage engrossed in deep meditation and contemplation, this is a wrong surmising because there were numerous great sages and seers who lived a life of exemplary self-restraint like an ascetic or hermit but at the same time had wives. Some of these examples in Ram Charit Manas itself are the following—(i) sage Vasistha, the royal priest of Ayodhya and the guru of Lord Ram, who had a wife named Arundhati, (ii) another is sage Atri who had a wife named Anusuyia, (iii) and then we have sage Gautam whose chaste wife was Ahilya. So to say that a woman has no place in the home (hermitage) of a learned ascetic is wrong.

The one-sided monologue of the Sapta-rishis was causing immense irritation to Parvati as will be clear when she sternly ridicules and admonishes them, and tells them to mind their own business, to shut up and leave her alone as she will not

abandon the advice given by Narad nor her decision to marry Shiva (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 81 herein below).]

चौ०. अजहूँ मानहु कहा हमारा । हम तुम्ह कहूँ बरु नीक बिचारा ॥ १ ॥
 अति सुंदर सुचि सुखद सुसीला । गावहिं बेद जासु जस लीला ॥ २ ॥
 दूषन रहित सकल गुन रासी । श्रीपति पुर बैकुंठ निवासी ॥ ३ ॥
 अस बरु तुम्हहि मिलाउब आनी । सुनत बिहसि कह बचन भवानी ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

ajahūṁ mānahu kahā hamārā. hama tumha kahūṁ baru nīka bicārā. 1.
 atī sundara suci sukhada susīlā. gāvahim bēda jāsu jasa līlā. 2.
 dūṣana rahita sakala guna rāsī. śrīpati pura baikunṭha nivāsī. 3.
 asa baru tumhahi milā'uba ānī. sunata bihasi kaha bacana bhavānī. 4.

It is still not too late (to make amends). Listen to our advice—we have thoroughly thought over the matter and have arrived at the choice of a wonderful groom who is most suitable for you. (1)

This groom whom we advice for you is very handsome, most holy and divine, one who provides happiness and joy, and one who is most polite and civilised (as opposed to the one whom you wish to marry, i.e. Lord Shiva). Even the Vedas (the scriptures) sing and praise glories and virtues of the groom we are suggesting for you. (2)

He is free from all the faults (which we have enumerated above in preceding verses), and instead he is a treasury of all the good qualities and virtues. He is the Lord of 'Sri' ("Sripati"; husband of Laxmi)¹, and lives in the exalted heaven known as "Vaikuntha". [This is a clear reference to Lord Vishnu as he is the Lord of Laxmi and resides in Vaikutha too.] (3)

We shall bring such a magnificent groom to meet you².

When Bhavani³ (Parvati) heard them out, she smiled (sarcastically and annoyingly) and said—(4)

[Note—The naughty Sapta-rishis continued to tease Parvati in their attempt to test her devotion for Lord Shiva, and whether or not she was sincere about it. First they tried to sway her determination by criticising Shiva and her decision to marry him, and then presuming that she had developed some doubts in her mind and was thus open to having second thoughts, they advocated an alternative to her. They did not realise that their effort was infuriating Parvati, and she was losing her cool with them—as will be clear in the following verses.

¹Any alert observer will note that the Sapta-rishis are giving enough hints to Parvati that she must be very careful and take their advice with a lot of salt, not a pinch of salt but a spoonful as it were. They propose a groom for her who is already 'married', as he is a husband of Laxmi—is "Sri-Pati". Then they say that he is immaculate and his glories are sung by the scriptures. How would the scripture favour someone who keeps 'two wives', symbolising that he is polygamous, passionate and lustful, who is not contented by having one devoted wife but wants to satisfy his passions by having two wives?

They were criticising Lord Shiva who was highly enlightened and practiced exemplary self-restraint, and now praise someone who seems to be a passionate fellow who would like to have two wives. Even a casual attention would have alerted

Parvati that these so-called saintly people standing before her were cunning and deceitful, and so she would be wise to be careful and not fall in their trap.

After all, the way the Sapta-rishis talked and used disparaging language to criticise Lord Shiva (refer: Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 79), sage Narad (refer: Chaupai line nos. 4, 7 that precede Doha no. 79), Parvati herself and her father (calling the two dumb and stupid like the mountains—refer: Doha no. 78) must have been enough to make Parvati angry at them.

She surely must have realised by now that these fellows who had been trying to persuade her to abandon her decision to marry Shiva were not holy men at all, as holy men never talk the way they were talking. Holy men would never pour scorn on Lord Shiva who is an exalted God and one of the Trinity Gods. Holy men never criticise any other sage or saint as these fellows were doing for Narad. Any civilised person would not tell a daughter that she is as stupid as her father who is dumb like the mountains where he and his daughter live.

And to add salt to injury, these fellows give her the advice that she marries a god who is already married!

²What nonsense, thought Parvati. These Sapta-rishis seem to have some vested interest. Why are they so much in a hurry that they would 'bring the groom here' in the forest? Don't they know anything about good behaviour and ethical conduct? Parvati's parents live; they aren't dead. How can she say 'yes' to someone else other than Lord Shiva to become her husband without the approval of her parents, especially when her parents had given her permission to do Tapa with the express condition that she would accept Shiva as her husband if the Tapa is successful and she is asked to chose a boon? Don't they know that their proposal is extremely unrighteous and unethical? How can they even gather the guts to say such a nasty thing to her?

³The use of the word "Bhavaani" for Parvati is very significant here as it paves the way for her stern reply that follows. One of the name of Lord Shiva is "Bhava", and therefore by calling Parvati as "Bhavaani" it is clearly meant that she is already a wife of Lord Shiva. Hence, trying to cheat her and poison her mind to become disloyal to her husband is a very sinful act that the Sapta-rishis are committing.

If this is the case, then why weren't they punished? The answer is that they were merely 'testing Parvati's devotion for Shiva and her sincerity', and they had no malafide intentions. They had not come out of their own will to tease her or insult her or anyone else, but were doing so to test her. They had been expressly sent by Shiva himself to test Parvati—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 77 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8.

We shall read below that finally the Sapta-rishis have bowed before Parvati and paid their obeisance to her by lauding her and hailing her devotion for Shiva—refer: Doha no. 81 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it.]

सत्य कहेहु गिरिभव तनु एहा । हठ न छूट छूटै बरु देहा ॥ ५ ॥

कनकउ पुनि पषान तें होई । जारेहुँ सहजु न परिहर सोई ॥ ६ ॥

satya kahēhu giribhava tanu ēhā. haṭha na chūṭa chūṭai baru dēhā. 5.
kanaka'u puni paṣāna tēm hōī. jārehuṁ sahaju na parihara sōī. 6.

[*Parvati had tried her best to hear out the Sapta-rishis patiently, but her patience was progressively wearing out in the light of the way the seven sages had tried to deride Lord Shiva, her object of adoration and devotion, in addition to defaming sage Narad, her father and even herself by proposing to marry her to Vishnu who was already married to Laxmi, and even that by doing it secretly without the knowledge and

consent of her parents. This was surely incredulous and unethical act on their part, and it hugely embarrassed and infuriated Parvati.

So now we find that when she had had enough of this nonsense, she finally decided to cut it short. Hence, she curtly told the Sapta-rishis—]

‘Yes, you are truthful when you say that I am stubborn because I am born in the land of the mountains (and therefore inherit the dumbness and stubbornness of the mountains)¹.

This being the case, I will not abandon my vows or rescind on my decision (to marry Lord Shiva) even if I have to leave this body (or die for my stubbornness and stupidity). (5)

See, gold is also produced from a rock (i.e. from the gold mines found in the earth, and is as hard and lifeless as the rock of a mountain). But when this gold is put in fire (in a symbolic gesture to punish it so that it can change its rocky, hard and gross nature), it does not yield but remains as stubborn as before².

[The gold is not afraid of being punished by being put in fire, but continues to remain hard, rocky and lifeless. But tell me oh sages, can anyone say a piece of gold is the same as a piece of ordinary rock? Fire only enhances its value and purifies it further; the stubbornness of gold pays it rich dividends in the sense that it becomes more valuable. My Tapa and my firm determination to remain steadfast in my vows to marry Shiva will come in good stead for me. You need not worry about me or my future. Thank you!!] (6)

[Note—*Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, verse nos. 58—65 which are very explicit in the way Parvati has defended her position and her decision to marry Lord Shiva.

Refer also to Shiva Puran, 2/3/25/57.

¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 78.

²A similar idea is expressed elsewhere also—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 205. It is in the context of Bharat who says that the unique quality of gold is that the more you heat it in fire the more purified and valuable it becomes instead of evaporating like water or getting reduced to ashes like wood, or even cracking and getting dark by heat and soot as in the case of rock or stone.]

नारद बचन न मैं परिहरऊँ । बसउ भवनु उजरउ नहिं डरऊँ ॥ ७ ॥

गुर केँ बचन प्रतीति न जेही । सपनेहुँ सुगम न सुख सिधि तेही ॥ ८ ॥

nārada bacana na maim̐ parihara'ūṁ. basa'u bhavanu ujara'u nahim̐ ḍara'ūṁ. 7.

gura kēm̐ bacana pratīti na jēhī. sapanēhuṁ sugama na sukha sidhi tēhī. 8.

I am not going to overlook the advice given by sage Narad; I am not going to disregard his words¹. I am not afraid if by doing so my home is established or it is ruined and demolished for good. (7)

A person who doubts the words of his or her Guru (teacher, preceptor and guide) can never find happiness or any success even in his or her dream. (8)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 81.

This is one important lesson we learn here—that one should rely upon one’s guru and have faith in him. If one does so, one is sure to end up happy and satisfied as it happened with Parvati. Suppose she had been distracted by the proddings and allurements of the Sapta-rishis, and had doubted Narad’s sage advice to her father.

What would have been her fate then? She would have lost the chance to atone for the sins she had committed in her previous life as Sati for disobeying Lord Shiva by committing herself to loyally serve the Lord in her new birth. She would have fallen in the eyes of the world as an indecisive and fickle-minded lady who had first disobeyed her husband Lord Shiva in her previous life as Sati, and once again she had disobeyed Narad in her present life as Parvati. It would be an ignominious way to live with these scars on her character. Who will marry her then?

In the event as it happened, we shall read that being loyal to her guru's words paid rich dividends to her: she was profusely praised by her tormentor sages, the Sapta-rishis (in Doha no. 81 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8), and later on lived a happy and contented life as a consort of Lord Shiva. This was a rare honour because her marriage with Lord Shiva bestowed upon her the privilege of being called the "Mother of the world" (refer: 1st half of Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 103.)

दो०. महादेव अवगुण भवन बिष्णु सकल गुण धाम ।

जेहि कर मनु रम जाहि सन तेहि तेही सन काम ॥ ८० ॥

dōhā.

mahādēva avaguna bhavana biṣṇu sakala guna dhāma.
jēhi kara manu rama jāhi sana tēhi tēhī sana kāma. 80.

It's alright (what you say) that Mahadeva¹ (the Great God; Lord Shiva) is an abode of all vices and faults, and Vishnu is an abode of all good virtues.

But the point is that one is concerned with and attracted to him alone who gives comfort, happiness and peace to one's Mana (mind and heart)².

[Therefore, may be it is true that Vishnu is an excellent god who possesses all the fine virtues that exist in this creation, but sorry Sirs, I am not at all interested in him. I admire Lord Shiva and have fallen for him whom you say is a den of faults, but what can I do? Love is such a bad thing that once it gets hold of you, your mind and heart becomes as dumb as you yourself have told me I am in Doha no. 78 herein above. So please don't insist because I won't mend my ways.] (Doha no. 80)

[Note—¹The use of the word "Mahadeva" is very significant here. The word means "a Great God", someone who is superior to others. Here, Parvati has not used any honourable title for Vishnu, she has just called him by his name, whereas for Shiva she uses an honourable title of a "Mahadeva". In other words, she wants to tell the Sapta-rishis that as far as she is concerned, Vishnu is one of the other so many gods of the pantheon, while Shiva is the 'greatest of them all', being a 'Maha (great) Deva (god)'].

²Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 81 where Parvati is very explicit in her proclamation that this is her firm determination that she would either marry Shiva or remain unmarried for thousand of births.

Parvati rebukes the Sapta-rishis by saying that what they had said about Vishnu as being full of excellent virtues may be correct, but she isn't bothered. She has fallen in love with Shiva, the Maha-Deva, and love being a blinding force, she can't see anything else.

Further, she told the Sapta-rishis that they have already proclaimed her to be as dumb and stupid as the mountains where she was born (Doha no. 78), so what's the use of preaching wisdom to a dumb-witted blockhead in any case? Therefore, it will

be good if they please shut-up and go away—refer: Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 81.]

चौ०. जौं तुम्ह मिलतेहु प्रथम मुनीसा । सुनतिउँ सिख तुम्हारि धरि सीसा ॥ १ ॥
अब मैं जन्मु संभु हित हारा । को गुन दूषन करै बिचारा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

jaum̐ tumha milatēhu prathama munīsā. sunati'um̐ sikha tumhāri dhari sīsā. 1.
aba maim̐ janmu sambhu hita hārā. kō guna dūṣana karai bicārā. 2.

[Parvati did not wish to look insulting to the Sapta-rishis in order to avoid any unpleasant situation when they could find an excuse to curse her for not obeying them. So she played it cool and acted in a diplomatic manner.]

‘If you had met me first (i.e. prior to Narad), I would have put my head at your feet and would have listened to your advice and accepted it with due respect. (1)

But (it is too late now because) I have sacrificed my life in favour of Shambhu (Lord Shiva), and once this is done there is no use in thinking of the virtues and faults at this late stage. (2)

[Note—This statement of Parvati was clearly intended to pacify the Sapta-rishis. Parvati has told them that she would not defy the words of Narad no matter how much they entreat her to do so—refer: (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 80, and (ii) once again in Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 81.

She feared that these seven sages would treat her decision not to overlook Narad’s words as an affront to themselves, especially when they were so critical of Narad (refer: Baal Kand, 2nd line of Doha no. 78 and its following Chaupai line nos. 1-5 herein above).

So she acted wisely by saying that if they had come to her first, she would have “put her head at their feet, and obeyed their advice”. But they must realise, being sages themselves, that it is unrighteous and unethical to disobey one’s Guru as a matter of principle (refer: Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 80 herein above).

This logical and intelligent handling of a sticky situation pleased the Sapta-rishis as they could not counter it.

Putting one’s head at the feet of elders and obeying them is an honourable thing to do. There are many references in Ram Charit Manas where this tradition is upheld. Some of the instances are the following—(i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 77; (ii) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 174; (iii) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 177; (iv) Ayodhya Kand, 2nd line of Doha no. 269; and (v) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 318.]

जौं तुम्हरे हठ हृदयँ बिसेषी । रहि न जाइ बिनु किँ बरेषी ॥ ३ ॥

तौ कौतुकिअन्ह आलसु नाहीं । बर कन्या अनेक जग माहीं ॥ ४ ॥

जन्म कोटि लागि रगर हमारी । बरउँ संभु न त रहउँ कुआरी ॥ ५ ॥

jaum̐ tumharē haṭha hṛdayaṁ bisēṣī. rahi na jā'i binu ki'ēṁ barēṣī. 3.

tau kautuki'anha ālasu nāhīm̐. barā kan'yā anēka jaga māhīm̐. 4.

janma kōṭi lagi ragara hamārī. bara'um̐ sambhu na ta raha'um̐ ku'ārī. 5.

If your heart is so determined that you can't refrain yourself from match-making (and perhaps finding a suitable partner for Vishnu for whom you act like a marriage agent)--(3)

---Then for active and diligent persons who do not know what is laziness as they are very energetic in whatever they decide to do, there is no dearth of either a groom or a bride in this vast world because they are plenty of them there.¹ (4)

Now listen to me. It is my firm vow that I will marry only Shiva and no one else even if I have to remain unmarried for thousands of births. (5)

[Note—¹Parvati must have told the Sapta-rishis—“You can find so many eligible bachelors to become a groom, and equal numbers of girls to become a bride for them. Why do you insist and poke me unnecessarily when I am unwilling and not interested in playing ball with you! This world is a vast place, and you can surely find greener pastures elsewhere. You have already said that I belong to the mountains which are un-inhabitable places. Please go to greener pastures where you will find wonderful maidens eagerly wanting to line-up for an interview with you so that you can help them find a suitable match. Or else, you would find a suitable maiden for Vishnu who has commissioned you to find a girl for him!

Forget about me, and also forget about finding a suitable bride for Vishnu in the hostile mountainous terrain. Go to the world where I am sure you will meet not one, not two, but countless girls suitable for your purpose. Please don't waste your precious time here.]

तजउँ न नारद कर उपदेसू । आपु कहहिं सत बार महेसू ॥ ६ ॥

मैं पा परउँ कहइ जगदंबा । तुम्ह गृह गवनहु भयउ बिलंबा ॥ ७ ॥

taja'uṁ na nārada kara upadēsū. āpu kahahim̐ sata bāra mahēsū. 6.
mair̐m̐ pā para'uṁ kaha'i jagadambā. tumha gṛha gavanahu bhaya'u bilambā.
7.

I will not abandon or disregard Narad's words (advice) even if Lord Shiva (for whom I have done such a severe Tapa, who is the Lord of my life, and to whom I am fully devoted and committed) himself tells me to do so.¹ (6)

[Parvati was very exasperated by now, so she bluntly told the sages—] I fall at your feet and most politely ask you to go home as it is getting too late. [I am fed-up with you. Please go away from here and leave me alone. Thank you for all your time and advice which, however, I don't need.]' (7)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 80. The reason is implied in these two verses: “One should not disobey one's guru. If one does so, he can never hope to have happiness and success anywhere in the world. Since Narad is my guru in the sense that he was the first sage who had shown me the light at the end of the dark tunnel represented by bad fate, I must not and would not disobey him no matter what happens.”

We have read in Doha no. 67 and its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 that Parvati's groom was destined to have certain peculiar characters which are like those of a hermit or an ascetic, and certainly not like a householder. When her parents were shell-shocked to hear this prophesy, they had requested Narad to advice a way out of this logjam (refer: Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 68). It was then the noble sage had advised them that if Parvati does Tapa and manages to please Lord Shiva to accept her, then it is possible that the miseries in her fate could be mitigated to a great extent because Lord Shiva has that power which can mitigate sufferings of

his devotees (refer: Chaupai line nos. 1, 4 that precede Doha no. 69; and Chaupai line nos. 3, 5-8 that precede Doha no. 70).

Narad was not trying to push her downstream to drown in the river of her fate, but he was being helpful by showing a way out from the whirlpool in which she was bound to fall and get sucked if no remedial measures were devised now. And this remedy that could change her fortune was doing Tapa and pleasing Lord Shiva, which she followed diligently. She had succeeded in her endeavour as is clear when the heavenly voice endorsed her efforts (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 74 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8).]

देखि प्रेमु बोले मुनि ग्यानी । जय जय जगदंबिके भवानी ॥ ८ ॥

dēkhi prēmu bōlē muni gyānī. jaya jaya jagadambikē bhavānī. 8.

When the wise sages (i.e. the Sapta-rishis) observed the high level of devotion and affection that Parvati had for Lord Shiva, they exclaimed in joy—‘Glory to you oh Jagdama (Mother of the world)! All glory to you oh Bhavaani (the divine consort of Lord Bhava, one of the many names of Lord Shiva)!¹ We hail you and glorify you. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 88 where the same words have been used and the same idea expressed by sage Narad later on in the story when he comes with these Sapta-rishis and Parvati’s father to reassure her wailing mother and the rest of the family who were utterly confused about the glory of Lord Shiva by merely watching the Lord’s external features and physical appearance which were most unconventional and on the face belied everything about his divinity and mystical powers.]

दो०. तुम्ह माया भगवान सिव सकल जगत पितु मातु ।

नाइ चरन सिर मुनि चले पुनि पुनि हरषत गातु ॥ ८१ ॥

dōhā.

tumha māyā bhagavāna siva sakala jagata pitu mātu.
nā’i carana sira muni calē puni puni haraṣata gātu. 81.

You are indeed a personified form of “Maya” (the dynamic power of the Lord God which is responsible for the creation coming into being), and Shiva is indeed the “Bhagwaan” (the Lord God, the Supreme Being).

Indeed you two are the Father and the Mother of the entire world¹.

Saying this and bowing their heads at the holy feet of Parvati, the seven sages went away from there, their bodies getting thrilled repeatedly. (81)

[Note—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 98.

The sages were feeling highly privileged and glad that they had the rare opportunity to have such a close interaction with Parvati that they would cherish for the rest of their lives. They were happy that they would be remembered in history as being the ones who were instrumental in bringing about the union of Parvati and Shiva. This is because Shiva would depend upon their report, and since they had decided that they will give a brilliant report card for Parvati, it was sure that Shiva would marry her, making them and their role immortal in the annals of history.

They knew that after the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, no one would ever get another chance to interact so closely with Parvati and question her. So, this was a rare privilege that they had had.

Parvati must have given a huge sigh of relief when her tormentors, the Sapta-rishis, had gone their way.

This fulfilled the first prophesy of the heavenly voice which had said that the Sapta-rishis would be visiting Parvati. So now she prepared herself for the second prophesy which was that her father would come soon to her with a request to go home. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 75.]

चौ०. जाइ मुनिन्ह हिमवंतु पठाए । करि बिनती गिरजहिं गृह ल्याए ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

jā'i muninha himavantu paṭhā'ē. kari binatī girajahim gṛha lyā'ē. 1.

The sages went away from there, and sent Himwant (the father of Parvati and the king of the snow-covered mountains) to where she was doing Tapa. He prayed to Girija (the daughter of the mountains) and persuaded her to return home. (1)

[Note—The sages are following the instructions of Lord Shiva as narrated in Doha no. 77 where they were ordered to “test Uma first to remove all doubts, and then motivate her father to bring her home”.

The place where Parvati did her Tapa was away from the capital of the kingdom of the mountains. The place of her Tapa was situated in the ‘Gandhamaardhan mountain’, while the capital was located at ‘Aushadhi-Prastha’ (literally a place rich in medicinal plants and herbs)—refer: Kalidas’ epic poem “Kumar-Sambhav”, Sarga (Canto) 6, verse no. 33, 36-46.]

बहुरि सप्तारिषि सिव पहिं जाई । कथा उमा कै सकल सुनाई ॥ २ ॥

भाए मगन सिव सुनत सनेहा । हरषि सप्तारिषि गवने गेहा ॥ ३ ॥

bahuri saptariṣi siva pahim jā'ī. kathā umā kai sakala sunā'ī. 2.

bha'ē magana siva sunata sanēhā. haraṣi saptariṣi gavanē gēhā. 3.

After that, the Sapta-rishis went back to Lord Shiva to report on the developments. They told him the entire episode related to Uma as it happened. (2)

Lord Shiva listened to it attentively and with immense satisfaction. He became delighted to learn about Parvati’s affection and devotion for him.

Having finished their mission, the exhilarated Sapta-rishis went back to their own abode. (3)

मनु थिर करि तब संभु सुजाना । लगे करन रघुनायक ध्याना ॥ ४ ॥

manu thira kari taba sambhu sujānā. lagē karana raghunāyaka dhyānā. 4.

Then, the wise Lord Shiva exercised self-restraint over him Mana (mind and heart) and began to meditate upon Lord Ram (who was his revered deity). (4)

[Note—Shiva is a highly exalted ascetic who practices meditation and contemplation as a routine matter. He is invariably depicted in all iconography as

being seated in a meditative Mudra (posture) with half-closed eyes and lost in contemplation and deep thought. He closed his eyes and remembered the image of his beloved Lord Ram. This helped him to stabilise his mind and heart (Mana) and prevent himself to become excited and lose self-control. Being an ascetic he was fully aware of the importance of maintaining internal calm and poise so that the perpetual bliss that he enjoyed is not at all disturbed by any of the mundane affairs related to the many activities and processes of this creation from which he wished to remain aloof.

Shiva had always taken recourse to this method of meditating upon Lord Ram as a means to calm down and find internal peace for himself—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 52; Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 57; Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 58; Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 52; Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 75; and Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83. In each of these cases we find that Shiva draws peace by meditating upon Lord Ram.

The lesson that one draws from these verses is that in order to maintain internal calm and blissful state one should rely upon meditation and contemplation as an infallible instrument.]

तारकु असुर भयउ तेहि काला । भुज प्रताप बल तेज बिसाला ॥ ५ ॥
तेहिं सब लोक लोकपति जीते । भए देव सुख संपति रीते ॥ ६ ॥

tāraku asura bhaya'u tēhi kālā. bhuja pratāpa bala tēja bisālā. 5.
tēhim saba lōka lōkapati jītē. bha'e dēva sukha sampati rītē. 6.

It so happened that around that time, a demon named Tarkaasur¹ was born. He was very strong-armed, majestic and powerful. (5)

He conquered all the three worlds², resulting in the gods being deprived of their peace and prosperity. (6)

[Note—¹“Tarkaasur”—Tarakasur was the son of Vajraanga and his consort Varaangi. He had done severe Tapa (austerity and penance) as a result of which the creator Brahma had granted him several boons which had made him invincible. He was killed by Lord Subramanya, the son of Shiva and Parvati. He had three sons—Taaraaksha, Kamlaaksha and Vindiyumaali. They had also pleased Brahma and by his blessings built three great cities, collectively called ‘Tripura’. These cities were made of gold, silver and iron. These three demon brothers were collectively called Tripurasur—the demons of the three cities. When they became a nuisance for the Gods, Shiva destroyed these three cities and the demons with one arrow. Therefore he got the name of Tripurari—one who destroyed the three enemy cities.

The story of Tripurasur with a slight variation is narrated in Bhagwat Mahapurān, 7/10/53-58. According to it, once when the demons were defeated by the gods, they went to take refuge with the greatest demon of them all, the mighty demon named ‘Maya Daanav’. He was the one who had created the golden city of Lanka for Ravana.

Maya Danav created three huge planes made of gold, silver and iron. These planes were so huge that they resembled entire cities and were well provided for with all the things necessary for comfortable living. Maya Daanav handed them to the three chief demons named Taaraaksha, Kamlaaksha and Vindiyumaali who were said to be the son of Tarkasur. The special quality of these planes was that they were hidden from view and flew stealthily. Emboldened by being invisible, the demons went on the rampage, plundering and laying to waste the three worlds, viz. the heaven, the earth and the sky. The gods could not fight them as these demons were

invisible. Besides this, these three city-like planes had a pond of nectar each, the contents of which made the demons invincible and beyond the reach of death.

Frustrated and flabbergasted, the gods approached Lord Shiva to get rid of the demons. Lord Shiva invoked his specially empowered arrow known as the 'Pashupataastra'. When shot, it produced countless arrows spewing fierce tongues of flame. Though these arrows burnt the three cities or planes ("Tripurs"), the demons however managed to survive by taking a dip in the pond of nectar that was present in each of the three places.

Confused, Lord Shiva invoked Lord Vishnu, the maverick Lord who knows every trick in creation as he is the Supreme Being, to find some solution. Vishnu disguised himself as a cow and made the Creator Brahma a calf. They went to these ponds and drank the nectar. The demons were so dazed by the Lord's Maya (delusion creating powers) that they could not respond and react. After that, Vishnu prepared for the great war—creating the chariot from Dharma (righteousness), the charioteer from Gyan (knowledge), the war standard from Vairagya (renunciation), the horses from Aishwarya (fame and might), bow from Tapa (penance), the body armour from Vidya (skills), arrows from Kriya (deeds and dynamism), and all other paraphernalia of war by employing other mystical powers he had.

Then, on an auspicious moment of the asterism of "Abhijit" (conquer now), Lord Shiva rode this chariot and burnt the three cities by a single arrow.

According to the Ramayana of Valmiki, Baal Kand, Canto 75, two great bows were made from the bones of Dadhichi. One was known as "Sarang" and the other was known as "Pinak". The former was held by Lord Vishnu, and the latter by Lord Shiva. Vishnu killed the demons with his Sarang bow, while Shiva used his Pinak to destroy the three cities.

Another version of who the demon "Tripurasur" was appears in Skanda Puran, Aawantya Reva-Khand. It says that the son of the demon king Bali was known as 'Baana-sur'. He had thousand arms. He worshipped Lord Shiva for a thousand years. Pleased with him, Lord Shiva asked him to seek a boon, upon which Baanasur requested the Lord to provide him with a city that is so invincible that none of the gods can ever conquer it, except of course by Lord Shiva whom he had worshipped as his deity. Shiva granted him his wish.

The cunning Baanasur then decided to please the other three gods of the Trinity, i.e. Lords Vishnu and Brahma. So he worshipped them one by one and extracted similar boons from them as he had done from Shiva. Once done, he now had three invincible cities that symbolized his sway and domain covering the three dimensions of creation—viz. the heaven, the earth and the nether world. Then he went mad with recklessness, plundering and pillaging at will. Terrified, the gods approached Lord Shiva as he was the one who had initially blessed Baanasur, and also because the demon had himself exempted Shiva from the boon of immunity from destruction. Then, Shiva stringed his bow called Pinak, mounted an arrow called Aghor, and angrily shot it at the three cities ruled by Baanasur. This arrow instantly burnt and reduced the three cities to ashes. Their residue fell in the holy river Narmada. Then Baanasur fervently prayed to Lord Shiva to be pleased with him and give him abode in his own divine Loka known as the 'Shiva-Loka', the divine abode of Shiva in the heaven.

The Sharav Upanishad of Atharva Veda, verse no. 14 describes that Lord Shiva is also known as the slayer of the demon Tirpurasur. Hence, Shiva or Rudra is also called Tripurari. The three cities ruled by Tripurasur symbolised the three worlds, viz. the heaven, the earth and the nether world.

The story of the birth of Tarkaasur in 'Padma Puran, Sristi Khanda' is as follows—By the blessings of sage Kashyap, mother Diti gave birth to a son named 'Vajraanga' because his body was as strong as Vajra, the hardest and the strongest material in existence. [Vajra + Anga (body)]

As soon as he was born he became an expert in the knowledge of all the scriptures. On the instructions of his mother he went to the heaven and ensnared Indra (the king of gods) and brought him captive before his mother. At the intervention of Brahma (the creator) and sage Kashyap (his father), Vajraanga freed Indra. He then requested Brahma that he may be inspired to do Tapa and succeed in it.

Brahma created a girl named 'Varaangi' and gave her to him as his bride. Then, both the husband and the wife, i.e. Vajraanga and Varaangi, began doing severe Tapa (penance). Brahma was pleased and blessed Vajrranga that demonic tendencies would not emerge in his heart.

After successfully completing his Tapa, Vajraanga returned home but did not find his wife Varaangi there. When he went out to search for her, he saw her crying in the forest. On enquiry she told him that Indra had not only tormented her and made her miserable but had even compelled her to leave home. She wished to have retribution, and therefore asked her husband (Vajraanga) to provide her with a son who would punish Indra and avenge her insult at his hands.

Vajraanga did Tapa once again, and Brahma blessed him with a son as desired. This son was "Taarak" as he liberated his mother from her torments by severely punishing Indra: he captured Indra and put him in shackles. [A similar narration of doing Tapa and receiving a son as a boon is narrated in 'Matsya Puran', Chapter 147, verse no. 17.]

Varaangi had borne the child in her womb for a thousand years before he was born. Taarak, her son, was a brave and invincible warrior. To avenge his mother's insult at the hands of Indra (king of gods), he went to Mt. Paariyaatra and did so severe Tapa that the gods and the rest of the world began to get scorched by the heat generated by it. [Refer: (i) 'Matsya Puran', Chapter 148, and (ii) Kalidas' 'Kumar Sambhav', Sarga 1, verse no. 56.]

According to 'Matsya Puran', Chapter 148, verse no. 18 onwards, Taarak prayed to Brahma as follows—'Oh Lord! You live in the heart of all living beings, and as such nothing is hidden from you. Everyone wants to treat others the way the latter treat him. The gods have an eternal jealousy with us (the Asurs, the non-gods, the sons of Diti) and do not want us to live peacefully and prosper. I want to liberate the demon race. Hence, please grant me the boon that no warrior can kill me with any weapon. This is all I want.'

According to 'Padma Puran', Taarak asked Brahma for the grant of a boon that he is not killed by any living being.

In both the cases Brahma told him that this is impossible because all those who are born must die, without exception. So it is better if he re-phrases his request and specifies the person or entity from which he seeks immunity. Taarak then asked that he may not die at the hands of anyone except an infant of seven days of age or younger—in the hope that it would be impossible for such a small child, who is not even eight days old, to kill him, thereby making him invincible and immune to be killed by anyone who is old enough to confront him.

After the granting of the desired boon, both Brahma and Taarak went back to their respective homes. When the news spread that Taarak has successfully acquired a unique boon which would make him virtually immune from defeat and death, all the known famous demons of the time, viz. Mahish, Kaalnemi, Jambha, Grasan, Shumbha etc., came and joined forces with him, vowing their allegiance to him and declaring him as their chief. [Refer: 'Matsya Puran', Chapter 148, and Chapter 154, verse nos. 20-26, 47-49.]

Thus emboldened, Tarkaasur unleashed mayhem and terror in the heaven: rampaging and plundering, imprisoning the gods and terrorizing them. The entire composite army of the gods failed to dent his strength and stop his seeking revenge from the gods. The gods approached their patriarch Brahma to help them. Brahma told them about the boon he had to grant Taarak, and advised them that since only a child below the age of seven days could kill the demon, they should make an effort in

this direction and see how Shiva can be motivated to marry and beget a son. Brahma then told them (the gods) about Parvati's Tapa with the intention of marrying Shiva, and that he has already granted her wish alongside Lord Ram requesting Shiva to forgive her for her past sins in her previous life as Sati (when she had defied Shiva and had assumed the form of Lord Ram's wife Sita in order to test the integrity of Lord Ram) and marry her.

Meanwhile, Shiva is submerged in doing meditation, so the gods must try to devise a method whereby Shiva would marry Parvati. Their son would then kill Tarkaasur. [Refer—(i) 'Matsya Puran', Chapters 146 and 154; and (ii) Kalidas' 'Kumar Sambhav', Canto 2, verse nos. 57, 59, 61.]

In Goswami Tulsidas' epic story of Lord Ram by the name of 'Ram Charit Manas', this entire episode of Tarkaasur is narrated in Baal Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 89; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede Doha no. 103.

The Tapa done by Parvati and the reason for it is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 65—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 75.

The sin of Parvati in her previous life as Sati is also narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 65.

²“The three worlds”—The three worlds are the three divisions of creation consisting of the heaven, the earth and the nether world.

Each world has its patron gods and presiding deities. When the demons conquered any part of the world, the gods and the deities were the first to be chased away or imprisoned by them so that they could rule over the inhabitants of that world ruthlessly and cruelly in the manner that suited them. Later on in the narration of Ram Charit Manas we learn that when the demon Ravana successfully did Tapa and succeeded in getting boons from Brahma, the creator, he had also went on the rampage, pillaging, killing and causing general mayhem so much so that the gods and all the living beings on earth were tormented beyond measure. The Gods and the Mother Earth had then prayed to Lord Vishnu to help them and salvage the creation from complete annihilation. It was then that the Lord promised them that he would come down to earth as Lord Ram to eliminate this scourge of the demons.

Similarly, in the case of Tarkaasur, the son of Lord Shiva was destined to eliminate him, but Shiva lived alone after the death of Sati. Hence, it became imperative that Shiva marries once again and begets a son (Kartikeya) who would then kill Tarkaasur.]

अजर अमर सो जीति न जाई । हारे सुर करि बिबिध लराई ॥ ७ ॥

तब बिरंचि सन जाइ पुकारे । देखे बिधि सब देव दुखारे ॥ ८ ॥

ajara amara sō jīti na jā'ī. hārē sura kari bibidha larā'ī. 7.

taba birañci sana jā'i pukārē. dēkhē bidhi saba dēva dukhārē. 8.

This fellow Tarkaasur was imperishable and immortal because he could not be conquered by anyone, including 'Death'. The gods tried hard to defeat him but were frustrated even after waging countless wars with him. (7)

At last, they went to the creator 'Biranchi' ("Brahma") and pleaded with him to help them. 'Vidhi' (the creator Brahma) saw that all the gods were extremely distressed. (8)

[Note—Refer an elaborate note on Tarkaasur appended to verse no. 7 herein above.]

दो०. सब सन कहा बुझाइ बिधि दनुज निधन तब होइ ।
संभु सुक्र संभूत सुत एहि जीतइ रन सोइ ॥ ८२ ॥

dōhā.

saba sana kahā bujhā'i bidhi danuja nidhana taba hō'i.
sambhu sukra sambhūta suta ēhi jīta'i rana sō'i. 82.

Vidhi (the creator) explained to all the gods how their misery could come to an end. He advised them—‘The death of the demon (Tarkaasur) would be possible only when a son is born out of the sperms of Lord Sambhu (Shiva). Only such a son would have the ability to win this demon in the battle-field. (Doha no. 82)

[Note—Refer an elaborate note on Tarkaasur appended to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes this Doha no. 82 herein above.]

चौ०. मोर कहा सुनि करहु उपाई । होइहि ईस्वर करिहि सहाई ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

mōra kahā suni karahu upāī. hō'ihī īsvara karihi sahāī. 1.

Listen to what I say, and work accordingly. You will attain success, and may the Lord God help you. (1)

सतीं जो तजी दच्छ मख देहा । जनमी जाइ हिमाचल गेहा ॥ २ ॥

तेहिं तपु कीन्ह संभु पति लागी । सिव समाधि बैठे सबु त्यागी ॥ ३ ॥

satīṁ jō tajī daccha makha dēhā. janamī jā'i himācala gēhā. 2.

tēhiṁ tapu kīnha sambhu pati lāgī. siva samādhi baiṭhē sabu tyāgī. 3.

[Now, what should you do?] Sati has left her body during the fire sacrifice of Daksha¹, and has taken a birth in the household of the king of the mountains known as Himaachal². (2)

She has done severe Tapa with the express desire to have Lord Shiva as her husband³. But here arises the main problem: Lord Shiva has renounced everything and has sat down to do deep meditation known as ‘Samadhi’⁴. (3)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 64.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 74.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 82.]

जदपि अहइ असमंजस भारी । तदपि बात एक सुनहु हमारी ॥ ४ ॥

पठवहु कामु जाइ सिव पाहीं । करै छोभु संकर मन माहीं ॥ ५ ॥

तब हम जाइ सिवहि सिर नाई । करवाउब बिबाहु बरिआई ॥ ६ ॥

jadapi aha'i asamañjasa bhārī. tadapi bāta ēka sunahu hamārī. 4.
paṭhavahu kāmu jā'i siva pāhīm. karai chōbhhu sañkara mana māhīm. 5.
taba hama jā'i sivahi sira nā'ī. karavā'uba bibāhu bari'ā'ī. 6.

Although this is an extremely piquant situation (because on the one hand Parvati has successfully done Tapa to marry Shiva, and on the other hand Shiva has renounced everything and sat down to do meditation and has lost awareness of his surroundings because he has entered in the transcendental state of Samadhi), still I will tell you a way out it. Listen to my words. (4)

Send 'Kaam-deo' (cupid) to Shiva so that he creates distraction in the mind and heart ("Mana") of the latter by his cunning manoeuvring and machinations. (5)

When he (Kaamdeo) succeeds in distracting Lord Shiva from his Samadhi (deep meditation) and wakes up the Lord, then I will go and bow my head before him and insist that he marry. (6)

एहि बिधि भलेहिं देवहित होई । मत अति नीक कहइ सबु कोई ॥ ७ ॥

अस्तुति सुरन्ह कीन्हि अति हेतू । प्रगटेउ बिषमबान झषकेतू ॥ ८ ॥

ēhi bidhi bhalēhīm dēvahita hō'ī. mata ati nīka kaha'i sabu kō'ī. 7.
astuti suranha kīnhi ati hētū. pragaṭē'u biṣamabāna jhaṣakētū. 8.

This is the only way I can think of by which the good of the gods can be achieved. [There is no other way out.]

All the assembled gods endorsed this advice unanimously, saying that it was excellent. (7)

To implement Brahma's advice, the gods prayed to "Jhakha-ketu"¹ (Kaamdeo) who revealed himself holding a very sharp and formidable ("Visham") arrow in his hand². (8)

[Note—¹"Jhakha-ketu"—The word "Jhakha" means a fish, and "ketu" means a flag. So, the flag of Kaamdeo has the sign of a fish on it.

²Kaamdeo is said to hold a symbolic arrow consisting of five types of flowers. The 'flower' is however misleading as it implies that this god, who is the patron god of passion, yearning, lust, emotions and love, uses quiet, polite and subtle methods to conquer his enemies by secretly hitting them hard at their heart and forcing them to be subdued with his quality of generating passion, yearning, lust and desire for sensual gratification.

His arrow is not like the conventional arrow used in a battle-field that produces a bleeding wound. He uses 'flowers' symbolic of softness and pleasing demeanours that have a malafide intention to trap the victim in a snare, forcing the trapped creature to obey what Kaamdeo orders. A creature ensnared by Kaamdeo would not listen to the advice of his or her intellect and wisdom, but would be driven by emotions and sentiments having their seat in the heart that has already been conquered by Kaamdeo and injected with the poison of passion, lust, yearning, love and a desire for sensual gratification.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 84 which clearly states that Kaamdeo holds a bow and arrows made of flowers. .

Kaamdeo is so powerful and clever in his tactics that he has succeeded to distract even Lord Shiva who is a renowned god of ascetics and one who has exemplary self-

control over his sense organs. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 87.

It is another matter that Lord Shiva became so angry at Kaamdeo's temerity, impertinence and irreverence that the Lord opened his 'third eye' of wisdom located on his forehead to burn Kaamdeo to ashes (refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 87). But inspite of this, the fact cannot be denied that Kaamdeo did succeed in waking Shiva from his transcendental state of Samadhi and mellowed enough to accept the proposal to marry Parvati (refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 88—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 89).]

दो०. सुरन्ह कही निज बिपति सब सुनि मन कीन्ह बिचार ।

संभु बिरोध न कुसल मोहि बिहसि कहेउ अस मार ॥ ८३ ॥

dōhā.

suranha kahī nija bipati saba suni mana kīnha bicāra.
sambhu birōdha na kusala mōhi bihasi kahē'u asa māra. 83.

The gods told Kaamdeo about their entire problem¹. He thought over the matter in his Mana (mind and heart) and came to the conclusion that by opposing Lord Shiva, no good would come to him (and he will have to suffer its consequences).

Therefore, "Maar²" (the one who hurts or kills; Kaamdeo) smiled wryly and said to the gods, 'By opposing Lord Shiva I cannot expect any sort of welfare. --- (Doha no. 83)

[Note—¹The gods explained how the demon Tarkaasur was tormenting the entire heaven and that he can be killed only by the son of Shiva. But Shiva was submerged in deep meditation. It was necessary to distract him and ignite a desire to marry inside his heart so that he could be married to Parvati, who has already done successful Tapa to get him as he husband. The son produced as the result of this union would kill the demon and free the gods from his constant terror.

Kaamdeo was in a dilemma. If he refused it would mean betraying his brother gods who might declare him an outcaste and force him out of the kingdom of heaven. If that happens, he would lose protection of the combined might of the gods and would become an easy target for the demons who are sure to capture and kill him.

On the other hand, it is sure that if he disturbs the meditation of Lord Shiva he cannot escape the Lord's wrath.

He found himself in a logjam. He thought over the matter and decided that he is held in a piquant situation and forced to choose between the ocean and the deep sea. This being the case and death being a certainty, it is far better to die serving the cause of the brother-gods and while having a divine view of Lord Shiva from close quarters (known as having "Darshan") and dying at the hands of the Lord than being tortured and killed by a demon (Tarkaasur) and having the ignominy of betraying his brother gods and not being selfless in his service to creation.

Therefore, Kaamdeo "smiled wryly" as he knew he was trapped and there was no way out for him.

²He is addressed with the word "Maar", meaning to kill or hurt or harm, because his deeds would harm Lord Shiva by robbing the Lord of the perpetual peace and bliss that he was getting while involved in Samadhi (deep meditation).

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 84 herein below where Kaamdeo has been addressed as "Maar". Surely, the word fits in properly here because Kaamdeo is on a mission to 'kill the state of

eternal peace in which Shiva was submerged while meditating'. It also means that Kaamdeo was on a mission to wage war on Lord Shiva, and in a war it is 'either kill or get killed'. In fact, both happened in this case: Kaamdeo successfully eliminated ("killed") Shiva's peace of mind on the one hand, and got himself eliminated ("killed") in the process on the other hand.]

चौ०. तदपि करब मैं काजु तुम्हारा । श्रुति कह परम धरम उपकारा ॥ १ ॥
पर हित लागि तजइ जो देही । संतत संत प्रसंसहिं तेही ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

tadapi karaba mairṁ kāju tumhārā. śruti kaha parama dharama upakārā. 1.
para hita lāgi taja'i jō dēhī. santata santa prasansahim tēhī. 2.

---In spite of this (i.e. in spite of all the dangers and uncertainties involved in attempting to disturb the meditation of Lord Shiva, and despite the fear I have of being killed in this endeavour), I will still do the work for you¹. The 'Srutis' (the Vedas)² say the best meritorious thing for a person to do is to do something that helps or benefits others (in a selfless manner, which is the opposite of being selfish)³. (1)

Indeed, if a man leaves his body (dies) to serve others, he is always praised by saintly people⁴. (2)

[Note—¹What was the work that was to be done? It is outlined in Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 83.

²Kaamdeo was apprehensive of death by playing dirty tricks with Shiva as is clearly written in line no. 2 of Doha no. 83, and in verse no. 4 herein below. And what was the apprehension? It was certain that disturbing Shiva would invite his wrath, and there were fair chances that this would mean death. This is exactly what had happened—extremely exasperated by Kaamdeo's insistent impertinence and causing nuisance for him, Shiva had opened his 'third eye' that spewed fire and burnt Kaamdeo to death. This is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 87.

³The word "Sruti" means 'that which is heard' as opposed to that which is read. The ancient texts of the Vedas were first revealed to the meditating seers and sages while their minds were submerged in deep meditation and contemplation upon the Absolute Truth of creation. Meditation helped them concentrate the various faculties of their bodies so as to synchronise the vibrations caused by the flow of consciousness inside their own bodies with the cosmic vibrations created in the ether by the supreme Consciousness. The net effect was that they could virtually hear the Consciousness 'speak' to them in a voice and tone that only they could understand and decipher. It is much like the case of a radio receiver: only when the receiver is tuned to the broadcasting station's frequency do we hear the radio 'speak' to us. And then when we have heard the radio 'say' something, we immediately become aware of this bit of information that others aren't even aware of.

What the first sage or seer heard, he transmitted it to his followers or disciples, and they in turn passed it down the line to others just like when we hear some news for the first time on the radio we tell others about it, and soon the news spreads.

In ancient times there was no method to keep a written record of what was heard by the first sage or seer. The method of transmission was oral, from generation to generation, from the 'guru' (the teacher) to the disciple (the student).

Such body of knowledge is called the 'Veda'. The Veda encapsulates all the knowledge that the creator deemed fit to pass down to the inhabitants of his creation so that they can know what to and what not to do. Thus, the Vedas are the primary

and the most ancient body of knowledge on which the rest of the codes and laws governing the conduct of the society were built.

Now, since the method of transmission of knowledge that was ‘first heard’ (Sruti) was oral (instead of being written), the teacher had to rely on his memory and the power of recollection. Therefore, the knowledge that was transmitted from the ‘hearer’ to the ‘listener’ was known as “Smriti”—simply because it was based on memory and recollection.

⁴A similar idea of altruism (i.e. selfless concern for the welfare of others) is expressed in Ram Charit Manas at two other places, viz. (i) Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 31; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 14 that precedes Doha no. 121.]

अस कहि चलेउ सबहि सिरु नाई । सुमन धनुष कर सहित सहाई ॥ ३ ॥

चलत मार अस हृदयँ बिचारा । सिव बिरोध ध्रुव मरनु हमारा ॥ ४ ॥

asa kahi calē'u sabahi siru nā'ī. sumana dhanuṣa kara sahita sahā'ī. 3.

calata māra asa hr̥dayaṁ bicārā. siva birōdha dhruva maranu hamārā. 4.

Saying this (i.e. assuring the gods that inspite of the dangers involved in the mission and its incredulity, he will still go ahead as it involves larger good of the community of gods who were all his brethren), Kaamdeo bowed before all of them to take his leave, and departed from there on his mission. For help, he took along his bow and arrows made of flowers¹. (3)

When “Maar” (Kaamdeo)² was on his way to accomplish his mission, he thought to himself—‘By opposing Lord Shiva it is certain that I will die.’ (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 83 and its accompanying note no. 2 where this concept of Kaamdeo holding a bow and arrows made of flowers has been explained.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 83 where Kaamdeo is referred to as ‘Maar’. The implication of this word, which literally means to kill or one who kills, is explained as a note appended to this Doha.

A similar situation has arisen in Aranya Kand when Marich was forced by the demon king Ravana to come along with him and disguise himself as a golden deer so that Sita, the wife of Lord Ram, could be kidnapped. Marich had decided that now his death was near, but it is good to die while serving his Lord (Ravana) on the one hand, and seeing Lord Ram at close quarters as the Lord pursues him from behind. ‘Serving his lord’ may have a different meaning here—it may not mean ‘serving Ravana’ but ‘serving Lord Ram’, because the mission of the Lord was to eliminate Ravana whose cruelty was unbearable for the world, and this would be possible only when a war is waged where Ravana is killed. For this war to be waged, it was necessary that a reason is created, and Sita’s abduction by Ravana was to be that ‘reason’. So in effect, Marich was serving Lord Ram and helping the Lord in his divine mission. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 25—to Doha no. 26.]

तब आपन प्रभाउ बिस्तारा । निज बस कीन्ह सकल संसारा ॥ ५ ॥

taba āpana prabhā'u bistārā. nija basa kīnha sakala sansārā. 5.

Then, to successfully accomplish his mission, Kaamdeo expanded his influence in world so much so that he brought the entire world under his magical spell. (5)

[Note—The way Kaamdeo spread his tentacles in the world and sucked even the wise and the dispassionate in the whirlpool of passions and lust have been graphically described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Doha no. 85.

Hitherto the influence of passion, lust and desire to enjoy the world and its material sense objects was limited to worldly men and women who had no interest in spiritual matters or worried for the welfare of their souls. Ascetics, hermits and other holy men were exempt from such temptations. But the mischief of Kaamdeo entangled them all in its knotty web of delusions leading to passions, lust, yearnings and other forms of worldly attachments.

This answers a very important but rarely asked question: why did Shiva burn Kaamdeo to death (as narrated in Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 87)? On the face of it, the apparent and obvious answer is: because Kaamdeo disturbed Shiva in his meditation (refer: Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precedes Doha no. 87).

But when we delve deeper into this episode we deduce that Shiva was angry because Kaamdeo was forcing creatures of the whole world to relinquish the path of Dharma (righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, nobility and modesty) and move towards the path of gross indulgences and a life of immoderation. The whole edifice of Dharma was crumbling under the evil eye of Kaamdeo. Even those who were respected by the society and regarded as holy men became pervert and morally corrupt. The grand virtue of 'Vivek' (meaning wisdom, and the ability to determine what is righteous and noble and what is not) took the greatest beating; it vanished from society when passions, lust, desires and indulgences became dominant features. The same people who had hitherto paid respect to such virtues as dispassion and detachment not began to loathe them and became excessively indulgent and promiscuous. The degeneration and degradation of society reached its pinnacle when Kaamdeo took hold of the people's Mana (mind and heart). Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Doha no. 85.

Being the senior-most God and the most enlightened one, this outrageous development was unacceptable to Shiva. Had Kaamdeo limited his mischief to Shiva alone and would not have encircled the rest of the world in its lusty tentacles, Shiva would not have become so angry with him so as to completely eliminate him. Shiva had other ways of punishing Kaamdeo if his nuisance was limited to the Lord, but Shiva thought that if he spares Kaamdeo then the whole world would lose the strength of its moral fibre and fall apart in tatters.

Even the holy men and those who were called ascetics and hermits fell in the trap laid by Kaamdeo. Since Lord Shiva is their patron deity, he decided to end this scourge inflicting the society by eliminating the root of the evil—which was Kaamdeo. So the Lord burnt Kaamdeo to death.

The statement that "Kaamdeo extended or spread his influence over the whole world" implies that he was preparing a background to launch his final attack on Shiva. Shiva is the 'Lord of the world', which means that Shiva is like a 'king-emperor' in the context of the mortal world, and like a 'king-emperor' he is also responsible for the conduct of his subjects, the creatures of the world. To bring a king-emperor down and defeat him, a clever enemy first corrupts the subjects of his kingdom and brings them under his influence so that when he launches his attack on the sovereign there would be no support from his own subjects, which would demoralise the king-emperor and bring about his downfall. A lord who cannot exert control over his subjects and in whose realm anarchy prevails has no moral right to rule. Such a lord is isolated and easy to defeat.

This was in essence the plan of Kaamdeo—he would first corrupt the world and bring it under his own influence by showing the world the pleasures that are synonymous with Kaamdeo, and then telling them to abandon the path shown by Shiva which robs them of all these worldly pleasures. This would ensure that when he launches his attack on Shiva, the latter would find no support even from his own devotees and followers. Thus isolated, it would be easy to trap Shiva and enforce passion and desire on him so that he may agree to enjoy the life of worldly indulgences like the rest of the world over which he rules.

Kaamdeo thought that when Shiva realises that the whole world has started following the path shown by the former, it would be prudent on the latter's part to adapt to the changed scenario and toe the line of Kaamdeo out of apprehension of mass revolt by the subjects of the world over which Shiva rules if both of them, Shiva and Kaamdeo, confront each other.]

कोपेउ जबहिं बारिचरकेतू । छन महुँ मिटे सकल श्रुति सेतू ॥ ६ ॥

kōpē'u jabahim bāricarakētū. chana mahum̐ miṭē sakala śruti sētū. 6.

[The following narration tells us how Kaamdeo influenced the world.]

As soon as Kaamdeo, whose flag bears the emblem of a fish, unleashed his angry outburst upon the world, all the bridges established by the Vedas (that took a creature across the whirlpool of worldly delusions and entanglements, and helped in maintaining self-restraint) were swept away in an instant. (6)

[Note—The “bridge” is a metaphor for all the laws and codes of conduct established by the scriptures that help to regulate the society and maintain the path of Dharma. They are called a ‘bridge’ because by following the path of self-restraint and detachment from worldly indulgences as shown by the Vedas it becomes easy for the creature to cross over this world of miseries and a constant cycle of birth and death to find eternal freedom and peace much like a man easily crossing a turbulent river with the help of a bridge. Just like an enemy first destroys the bridge, Kaamdeo's first move was to sweep away the laws as envisioned by the Vedas for regulation of society and helping its members to lead a life of morality and nobility. This means, the people no longer followed the path of Dharma as pronounced by the Vedas, and instead they became fallen and sinful, and there was widespread moral anarchy, chaos and spiritual degradation.]

ब्रह्मचर्ज ब्रत संजम नाना । धीरज धरम ग्यान बिग्याना ॥ ७ ॥

सदाचार जप जोग बिरागा । सभय बिबेक कटकु सबु भागा ॥ ८ ॥

brahmacarja brata sañjama nānā. dhīraja dharama gyāna bigyānā. 7.

sadācāra japa jōga birāgā. sabhaya bibēka kaṭaku sabu bhāgā. 8.

[What did this mean? Here is the answer in the following verses:--]

The grand virtues of ‘Brahmacharya’ (continance; self-restraint over one's natural instincts), ‘Vrat’ (steadfastness in following a righteous path and observing religious vows), different types of ‘Sanjam’ (observing self-restraint of all kinds in ever matter of life), ‘Dhiraj’ (patience, courage, resilience, fortitude), ‘Dharma’ (righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, noble way of life), ‘Gyan and Vigyan’ (knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment, especially in spiritual matters), (7)--

---‘Sadaachaar’ (righteous behaviour; morality; modesty), ‘Japa’ (repetition of the holy name of the Lord God as a means of doing meditation and focusing the mind on holiness and divinity), ‘Yoga’ (meditation), ‘Vairagya’ (renunciation, detachment and dispassion from all things pertaining to the gross material world of sense objects), ‘Vivek’ (wisdom and discrimination between the right and the wrong)—all these virtues fled en-masse in terror (when Kaamdeo attacked the moral fibre of the world, shredding it into pieces). (8)

छं०. भागेउ बिबेकु सहाय सहित सो सुभट संजुग महि मुरे । १ ।
 सदग्रंथ पर्वत कंदरन्हि महुँ जाइ तेहि अवसर दुरे ॥ २ ॥
 होनिहार का करतार को रखवार जग खरभरु परा । ३ ।
 दुइ माथ केहि रतिनाथ जेहि कहुँ कोपि कर धनु सरु धरा ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

bhāgē'u bibēku sahāya sahita sō subhaṭa sañjuga mahi murē. 1.
 sadagrantha parbata kandaranhi mahum̐ jā'i tēhi avasara durē. 2.
 hōnihāra kā karatāra kō rakhavāra jaga kharabharu parā. 3.
 du'i mātha kēhi ratinātha jēhi kahum̐ kōpi kara dhanu saru dharā. 4.

The grand virtue of ‘Vivek’ ran away with all its associates; all the renowned warriors of this virtue could not stand their ground in the battle field (when Kaamdeo attacked them) and turned their back to run away. (Chanda line no. 1)

All of them went away and hid themselves in the caves of mountains symbolised by sacred books¹. (Chanda line no. 2)

There was a huge tumult in the world. All the righteous people (who relied on Vivek in their daily lives) were dismayed and distressed, wondering who would now give them protection and who would now show them the way (once Vivek was eclipsed under the dark shadow of Kaamdeo). (Chanda line no. 3)

They wondered—‘Lord of Rati (i.e. Kaamdeo who is the husband of Rati) has already conquered all the creatures that have a single head. Who is that abnormal creature or a super-human person with two heads for whom Kaamdeo carries a bow and arrows so that he can use this weapon to defeat him?’² (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹This verse has two meanings: One is a literal meaning, and the other is the allegorical meaning. Now let us examine them.

The literal meaning is this: Unable to cope with the ferocity of attack by the army of Kaamdeo, the virtue of ‘Vivek’ (in a personified form) thought it prudent to escape from being annihilated completely by withdrawing itself and confining its principles to the pages of good books so that when evil times ended and good times came again, these principles could be resurrected and made to live again. The generation that survived the onslaught of evil and sins perpetuated by Kaamdeo, would be able to revive the ancient principles of ‘Vivek’ (wisdom) and once again lead a life in accordance with the path shown by the sacred books. The virtue of ‘Vivek’, i.e. the fundamental principles that help the world to decide what is good for it and what is not, would once again be available to the world if it reads the sacred or good books when the bad times are over.

It is just like the case of a wise king who does not show false daredevilry in the battle-field and gets killed, but rather shows prudence by escaping from there and hiding in a cave along with his close associates to wait for an opportune time to come out alive to reclaim his kingdom when the time is right and the enemy is gone.

The allegorical meaning is that all the virtues associated with the term 'Vivek' (wisdom; the principles upon which one relies to discriminate between the right and the wrong) vanished from the world when it was overcome by Kaamdeo. In other words, when one is overcome with passions, lust, yearnings and desires to gratify the sense organs of the body and its natural urges to enjoy the material world and its comforts and pleasures, one's wisdom fails him. Under the onslaught of the negative virtues symbolised by Kaamdeo, a person becomes blind and loses the foresight to see what is good for his well-being and what is harmful for him. All his good virtues go for a big toss.

The "associates of Vivek" mean the different aspects and components of the virtue of wisdom that together help a person to decide what is righteous and what is not when he is given a choice between two situations or things or deeds. When Kaamdeo became dominant, this ability vanished.

Let us examine this phenomenon from the metaphysical perspective of the Upanishads. The body of a living being consists of three basic components: viz. the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body. The 'gross body' consists of the external organs of perception (ears, nose, eyes, tongue, skin) and action (hands, legs, mouth, genital and excretory). The gross organs are under the control and command of the subtle body consisting of the Mana—i.e. the heart and the mind. Kaamdeo (which term refers to the emotions of passion, lust, love, desires and yearnings, and sentiments attached to them) has his seat in the heart, while the mind is the seat of wisdom (Vivek) and intelligence (Buddhi). As long as the mind remains in charge, everything runs fine. When, on the other hand, the emotions symbolising Kaamdeo take over and force the mind (wisdom and intellect) to retreat, the things take a bad turn for the creature and his well-being. A creature under the influence of Kaamdeo is tempted towards the comfort and pleasure of the sense organs and their respective objects in the material world, desiring self gratification and indulgences with no holds.

A life without the active control of wisdom and intellect becomes animal-like and degenerated. Kaamdeo forces the creature to barter his long term spiritual welfare for short term sensual pleasures and comforts that come from the world and its sense objects.

Another interesting point to note is that the principles that governed Vivek are said to have hidden themselves in "pages of sacred or good books". This means that at the point of time when Kaamdeo unleashed his reign of moral terror and turpitude, the codes of conduct for the society and principles of Dharma had already been 'codified in writing, in the form of books'. This is why these principles and glorious traditions survived without distortion—because they had been written. Had they been still in the oral tradition of remaining as "Srutis", we would have perhaps lost knowledge of all the good virtues that the scriptures originally contained; they would have been lost for good.

²All ordinary living beings have one head. Since the whole world had begun to toe the line of Kaamdeo by becoming passionate, lustful, immodest and indulgent, those who were elderly in the society and still managed to retain their sense of thought and wisdom began to ponder as to why Kaamdeo was still so angry, and why was he carrying a raised bow with a mounted arrow when he has already conquered the entire world? It meant that some formidable enemy of Kaamdeo was still to be conquered by him. The "two heads" is simply a metaphoric way of saying that the still-unconquered enemy of Kaamdeo is certainly not an ordinary member of the world; he must be an 'extra-ordinary person like someone having two heads'.

Subtly this points fingers to Lord Shiva because till this point of time, Kaamdeo has not conquered Shiva, and sure enough Lord Shiva is definitely super-human and extra-ordinary even amongst the pantheon of gods.]

दो०. जे सजीव जग अचर चर नारि पुरुष अस नाम ।

ते निज निज मरजाद तजि भए सकल बस काम ॥ ८४ ॥

dōhā.

jē saḷīva jaga acara cara nāri puruṣa asa nāma.
tē nija nija marajāda taji bha'e sakala basa kāma. 84.

All the inhabitants of this living world—where they could move or could not move (such as the animals and the plants respectively), and who could be categorised as the ones who were ‘males’ and ones who were ‘females’—all of them came under the grip of Kaamdeo. As a result, they abandoned self-restraint and propriety, became immodest and indulgent in sensual pleasures and comforts. (Doha no. 84)

[Note—Kaamdeo, in Indian literary tradition, refers to a personification of such negative traits in a person’s character as being passionate, lustful, lascivious and promiscuous. The whole living world, whether it is the plant kingdom or the animal kingdom, is divided into two primary segments—the male and the female. In the scheme of things devised by the Creator, a union between the male and the female helps to keep the wheel of creation rolling forward without intervention of the Creator every now and then. This device freed the Creator from unnecessarily worrying about creating newer members to fill the gap in the world when its older members died. The Creator, in other words, made this gigantic machine of creation ‘self sustaining’.

In order to give effect to his grand plan to perpetuate his creation, the Creator created “Kaamdeo”, i.e. a mutual attraction between the male and the female, which resulted in their union or conjunction, which in turn helped in procreation.

In order to keep things under control and maintain the ecological balance of Mother Nature, this Kaamdeo was also subject to certain rules and laws as applied to other gods created by the supreme Creator. Till this point everything ran in an orderly fashion in accordance to the laws established by the creator Brahma to regulate and govern life in this world.

But the situation drastically changed when the same creator Brahma and all other gods needed the help of Kaamdeo to enforce marriage upon Shiva who was steadfast in his vows of remaining a reclusive hermit submerged in meditation instead of marrying and raising a family. As we have read, this need arose due to the ascendance of the demon Taarkaasur who was making life hell for the gods (refer: Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precedes Doha no. 82).

Special occasions require special actions and provisions of law. So, the gods and the creator Brahma were forced to give extra special powers and authority to Kaamdeo so that this difficult task—of making Shiva marry and produce an offspring who would kill the demon Taarkaasur—could be successfully accomplished.

If an unscrupulous and pervert man gets special powers, they go to his head, and he becomes tyrannical. This has happened with the demons (Taarkaasur and Ravana), and this happened with Kaamdeo. And what was the result? It led to their ultimate downfall and elimination. The demons had all died, and so did Kaamdeo (refer: Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 87).]

चौ०. सब के हृदयँ मदन अभिलाषा । लता निहारि नवहिं तरु साखा ॥ १ ॥
नदीं उमगि अंबुधि कहँ धाई । संगम करहिं तलाव तलाई ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

saba kē hr̥dayaṁ madana abhilāṣā. latā nihāri navahim̐ taru sākḥā. 1.
nadīm̐ umagi ambudhi kahuṁ dhāīm̐. saṅgama karahim̐ talāva talāīm̐. 2.

[The following verses describe the situation that prevailed in this world when Kaamdeo, the god who personifies lust, passion, desires and yearning for sensual gratification, spread his tentacles to embrace every form of life. Not only the members of the animal kingdom who are less likely to hide their innate desire for sensual gratification and longing for sex, but even the plants and other entities such as the rivers and lakes that usually do not show any visual signs of such desires too began to exhibit these traits in an immoral manner.]

Everyone (the animate creatures as well as the inanimate constituents of the world) were overcome with lust and passions. All desired sensual gratification and yearned for sexual pleasures. For instance, the branches of trees (considered to be a male gender) bowed to reach and touch the creepers (considered to be a female gender) as soon as they sighted the latter¹. (1)

Rivers (considered to be a female gender) could not contain their passion, and therefore heaved in spate as they rushed towards the ocean (considered to be a male gender).

Even the lakes and ponds² broke all rules of Nature and overran their banks to meet each other to unite. (2)

[Note—¹Usually the creeper moves up the trunk of a tree and wraps itself around the branches. But under the influence of Kaamdeo, the branches lost their patience, and instead of waiting for the creepers to come up and wrap themselves around these branches, the latter bent down as soon as they saw the creepers so that they can touch them and caress them even while the creepers were still on the trunk of the tree.

²The lakes are larger water bodies as compared to the ponds. But both are of the same gender as primarily both exhibit the same basic characteristic feature of being static water bodies as compared to the river and the ocean which are flowing water bodies. Therefore, the lake and the pond are metaphors for the transgender or transsexual component of the world. Even these components of creation could not exercise restraint, and broke all norms of Nature to engage in union and embrace. This is indicated by the statement that the lakes and ponds broke the barrier of their banks and united.]

जहँ असि दसा जड़न्ह कै बरनी । को कहि सकइ सचेतन करनी ॥ ३ ॥

पसु पच्छी नभ जल थलचारी । भए कामबस समय बिसारी ॥ ४ ॥

jahaṁ asi dasā jaṛanḥa kai baranī. kō kahi saka'i sacētana karanī. 3.
pasu pacchī nabḥa jala thalacārī. bha'ē kāmabasa samaya bisārī. 4.

When this was the lustful condition of the inanimate component of this world, who can say (i.e. who can describe in words) what could have been the condition of the animate component (consisting of the living beings)? [That is, when even the inanimate things such as the plants and trees, the rivers and the oceans, as well as the ponds and the lakes had shown such tendency towards lust and sensuousness, one can well imagine how promiscuous and lascivious the animate creatures would have been when Kaamdeo had unleashed his rein of passion and lust and desire for sensual gratification in this world.] (3)

Every form of living being, whether they be animals or birds—those who lived and moved in the sky (such as the birds and insects), those who lived and moved on the earth (animals of all species) or in the water (aquatic animals and birds)—all of them were overcome with lustfulness and sensuousness, all became victims of passion

and lust, all the time yearning for sensual pleasures irrespective of the time and the place. (4)

[Note—All living beings were so overwhelmed with a desire for sensual gratification and sexual pleasures that they lost all sense of propriety and morality, not bothering about whether or not it was the proper time to indulge in sexual activity, or if the place was suitable for such activities. Lust and passion had blinded everyone, both the animate as well as the inanimate components of this world.

It will be interesting to note that the sort of lustfulness and sensuousness that has been depicted here is also found later on in Ram Charit Manas when we read about the evil characters of Kaliyug in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 99, and once again in Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 100.]

मदन अंध व्याकुल सब लोका । निसि दिनु नहिं अवलोकहिं कोका ॥ ५ ॥

madana andha byākula saba lōkā. nisi dinu nahim̐ avalōkahim̐ kōkā. 5.

Blinded under the influence of Madan (Kaamdeo), all the parts (components; segments; aspects; divisions; societies and races; all the living beings of every denomination as would be elaborated herein below) of the world had become restless and agitated due to the onslaught of desires, passions and lust.

Even the bird (“Kokaa”) paid no heed to the time of the day or night in its desire to unite with each other¹. (5)

[Note—¹The “bird” cited here is the male bird known as “Chakva” and its female counterpart known as “Chakvi”. They are the ruddy geese. The male and the female birds usually unite only during the day time, and they separate from each other as soon as night falls, though there is no physical barrier to separate them during the night. This is the law of Nature. But at the point of time when Kaamdeo spread his vicious tentacles, even these bird-couples overran the laws of Nature and sought each other even during the night-time.

Another significant point is the use of the word “Koka”—which also means the womb, or the female genital organs. The science of sexual intercourse and child-bearing comes under the purview of the term “Koka”. This science is called the “Koka-Shastra”, the intricate knowledge pertaining to sexual intercourse and pregnancy. Hence, the word “Kokaa” itself is self-explanatory in the context of the subject matter being discussed here.

In short, these birds not only wanted to be together merely in physical terms but indulged in sexual intercourse and other types of sexual behaviour for most of the time while they were together, and in their lust they did not bother whether it was day or night.]

देव दनुज नर किंनर ब्याला । प्रेत पिसाच भूत बेताला ॥ ६ ॥

इन्ह कै दसा न कहेउँ बखानी । सदा काम के चरे जानी ॥ ७ ॥

सिद्ध बिरक्त महामुनि जोगी । तेपि कामबस भए बियोगी ॥ ८ ॥

dēva danuja nara kinnara byālā. prēta pisāca bhūta bētālā. 6.
inha kai dasā na kahē'uṁ bakhānī. sadā kāma kē cērē jānī. 7.
sid'dha birakta mahāmuni jōgī. tēpi kāmabasa bha'e biyōgī. 8.

The gods, the demons, the ordinary human beings, the Kinnars (dancers of the heaven), the serpents (representing the reptiles), the evil spirits, the ghosts, the phantoms, the ogres and the vampires (6)---

---I (Yagyawalkya¹) will refrain from narrating their condition because they are eternal slaves of passion and lust (and therefore they had a field day during the reign of Kaamdeo). (7)

What can I say about these above-mentioned creatures (who are naturally sensuous and prone to be passionate and lustful) when even the 'Siddhas' (mystics), the 'Viraktas' (those who had renounced the world and had taken the vow of leading a dispassionate life like that of a hermit or a monk), the 'Maha-Munis' (great and acclaimed hermits and sages) as well as the 'Jogis' (ascetics) had given up their vows of self-restraint and dispassion, and had instead felt sad and miserable at being separated from partners². (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 75.

²The mystics, the sages, the hermits, the mendicants, the monks, the ascetics and other such highly respected members of the society who had taken the vow of self-restraint, who were supposed to have voluntarily renounced the physical charms and temptations of the material world and had willingly overcome the desire for gratification of the sense organs, who had been held in high esteem by the world for their virtuous way of life and exemplary lifestyles—they too fell victim of lust and passion. If this was the condition of such exalted and respected people as listed in verse no. 8, one can imagine the state of moral degradation, social degeneration and mental turpitude that prevailed amongst those who were inherently passionate and lustful like the entities listed in verse no. 6 herein above.]

छं०. भए कामबस जोगीस तापस पावँरन्हि की को कहै । १ ।
देखहिं चराचर नारिमय जे ब्रह्ममय देखत रहे ॥ २ ॥
अबला बिलोकहिं पुरुषमय जगु पुरुष सब अबलामयं । ३ ।
दुइ दंड भरि ब्रह्मांड भीतर कामकृत कौतुक अयं ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

bha'e kāmabasa jōgīsa tāpasa pāvāṁranhi kī kō kahai. 1.
dēkhahim carācara nārimaya jē brahmamaya dēkhata rahē. 2.
abalā bilōkahim puruṣamaya jagu puruṣa saba abalāmayaṁ. 3.
du'i daṇḍa bhari brahmāṇḍa bhītara kāmakṛta kautuka ayaṁ. 4.

When even Yogis (ascetics) and Tapas (those who were practicing austerities and penance) had become a victim of Kaam (lust, passion and desire for sensual gratification) and were virtually possessed by these negative traits, what can be said of those who were naturally low-minded and inherently lustful and wicked. [When those who were highly self-restrained and observed continence in their lives had fallen victims of lust and passions, it is natural that those who were already lustful and passionate would slide further down and fall head-on in the chasm of lasciviousness and promiscuity.] (Chanda line no. 1)

Those who had been as highly wise and enlightened as to have seen the supreme Brahm (the all-pervading Lord of creation and the cosmic Consciousness) in

every creature and aspect of this world had now begun to see the world as being full of females¹. (Chanda line no. 2)

Women perceived the whole world as being full of men, and men saw the world as being full of women². (Chanda line no. 3)

The magic played by Kaamdeo lasted in the entire length and breath of the universe (world; creation) for a time period of approximately “two Dandas”³. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1, and Chanda line no. 1 that precede Doha no. 99; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1 and 10 that precede Doha no. 100; and the general description of the era of Kaliyug as described from Doha no. 97—to Doha no. 102 Ka.

²The implied meaning is this: women and men had become so blind in their drive for seeking sensual pleasures, had become so extremely sensuousness, lustful and passionate that they did not distinguish between a legitimate relationship and illegitimate liaison. Sexual perversion and promiscuity ruled the land, and the people failed to distinguish between a mother and a father, a brother and a sister, a wife and a casual friend. No morality existed, and one felt free to have a sexual relationship with anyone with whom he or she took fancy.

³1 “Danda” = 1 hour. Hence, 2 Dandas = 2 hours. It ought to be noted here that these “2 Dandas” are only symbolic representation of time, with ‘1 Danda’ standing for ‘1 day’. Therefore, 2 Dandas refer to approximately 2 days.

In Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 86 herein below, it is said that the time during which this miracle happened was “two Gharis”. Now, 1 Ghari is technically equivalent to 24 minutes, but when used in poetry it can stand for a period of time that can be measured in minutes and has a component of 24 attached to it. Hence, 1 Ghari can mean a period of time that is equivalent to 24 hours (instead of 24 minutes), or ‘1 day’. Hence, “2 Gharis” would be roughly “2 days”.

It is said that the influence of Kaamdeo extended throughout the whole universe or the entire creation. This means it was not limited to the earth, but extended to the heaven and the nether worlds also. Measurement of time on earth is different than in heaven. For instance, 1 day in the life of Brahma the creator who lives in heaven is equivalent to 1 Kalpa. In human years, 1 Kalpa is equivalent to 4.32 billion (4.32 x 10⁹) years.

Thus, the main idea behind the time period mentioned in these verses is that the bad effect of Kaamdeo’s intervention lasted for quite some time, but it was only a short duration when measuring it against the scale of creation which runs into millions and trillions of years. It may also mean that the promiscuity and lasciviousness propagated by Kaamdeo was limited to one generation of creatures represented by a period of one day (i.e. one lifetime). That ended soon because Lord Shiva would burn Kaamdeo to death, thus bringing the curtain down on the drama that Kaamdeo had stage-managed to camouflage his attack on Shiva.]

सो०. धरी न काहूँ धीर सब के मन मनसिज हरे ।

जे राखे रघुबीर ते उबरे तेहि काल महुँ ॥ ८५ ॥

sōraṭhā.

dharī na kāhūṁ dhīra saba kē mana manasija harē.
jē rākhē raghubīra tē ubarē tēhi kāla mahūṁ. 85.

No one was able to exercise self-restraint and practice vigilance upon one’s sense organs because Kaamdeo had usurped (or stolen) their power of wisdom and discrimination. [Under the onslaught of passion and lust unleashed by Kaamdeo, all

the creatures of the world forgot to exercise caution in their actions and deeds, throwing all prudence and propriety to the wind as they indulged in sexual perversion, lustfulness and promiscuity.]

Verily, only those who enshrined Lord Ram in their hearts, and upon whom the brave Lord of the Raghus (“Raghubir”) was benevolent, were able to successfully tide over these bad times and emerged unscathed and unharmed. [That is, only those people who had thoroughly cleansed their innerself and had enshrined Lord Ram, the Supreme Being, in their hearts were able to stand against the moral storm created by Kaamdeo. Such people successfully maintained their inner calm and got protection from the Lord God. Rest of the people fell in the vicious trap laid by Kaamdeo.] (Sortha/Doha no. 85)

[Note—Refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 126 that asserts the same idea that when Lord Ram is a protector of someone, no power in this creation can harm even a single hair of such a person.

Refer also to “Geetawali”, Ayodhya Kand, line no. 11 of verse no. 49.]

चौ०. उभय घरी अस कौतुक भयऊ । जौ लगि कामु संभु पहिं गयऊ ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

ubhaya gharī asa kautuka bhaya'ū. jau lagi kāmu sambhu pahim gaya'ū. 1.

*This wonderful miracle (of the entire world becoming lustful and promiscuous without any sort of reservation) lasted for roughly two Gharis¹, the time it took Kaamdeo to reach Shambhu (Lord Shiva).

[*This verse can be interpreted as follows also: The wonder that struck the world under the influence of Kaamdeo lasted for two Gharis while he (Kaamdeo) prepared his strategy for approaching Lord Shambhu to achieve his objective of disturbing the latter's meditation.] (1)

[Note—¹Technically, the word “Ghari” means an hour, and hence “two Gharis” mean ‘two hours’. But it is a metaphoric way of saying that the wild influence of Kaamdeo lasted for a length of time that is equivalent to two hours on earth in a relative way. That is, it could mean two days, or a period of time that was equivalent to two hours when measured according to the scale used in the heaven—which may mean a long time on earth. For clarification, please see a note appended to Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 85.

*Kaamdeo had to plan his attack on Lord Shiva properly so that he succeeds in disturbing the Lord's meditation so that he wakes up. Then the gods would go and request him to marry. Kaamdeo could not afford to fail in this venture, because no one else would be able to inject in the heart of Lord Shiva a desire to marry other than Kaamdeo. As has been explained earlier, Kaamdeo had to prepare a background that would be conducive to his campaign just like a clever strategist prepares a comprehensive plan to succeed. The time that elapsed between Kaamdeo taking his leave from the gods and going on his mission, and his actually reaching Lord Shiva was approximately two Gharis as cited here. This was the time when lasciviousness and promiscuity spread like a moral contagious disease throughout the length and breadth of the world.]

सिवहि बिलोकि ससंकेउ मारू । भयउ जथाथिति सबु संसारू ॥ २ ॥
भाए तुरत सब जीव सुखारे । जिमि मद उतरि गएँ मतवारे ॥ ३ ॥

sivahi bilōki sasankē'u mārū. bhaya'u jathāthiti sabu sansārū. 2.
bha'ē turata saba jīva sukhārē. jimi mada utari ga'ēm̃ matavārē. 3.

As soon as Kaamdeo saw Lord Shiva, he was so scared that all his enthusiasm vanished, his zeal ebbed, and he felt crestfallen and limp (like a deflated balloon or a flaccid and shrunken flower)¹. And as soon as this happened, the world regained its earlier composure and stability of the mind and heart². (2)

As soon as stability returned and the restlessness caused by the fire of lust and passion that was aroused by Kaamdeo doused itself, all the Jivas (living beings) became calm and happy just like a drunken person who feels relieved when his intoxicated feeling subsides and his severe hangover ends³. (3)

[Note—¹Kaamdeo had a premonition of death when the gods had asked him to go and disturb Lord Shiva's meditation—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 84.

Remember: It is very dangerous to disturb an ascetic's meditation, and it a sure way of inviting his wrath. When Kaamdeo saw Lord Shiva sitting in deep meditation, a chill ran down his spine, and he was sure that he is playing with fire. Just as fire is unforgiving, Shiva's wrath would certainly be ruinous for Kaamdeo. The Lord's formidable personality and his awe-inspiring posture adopted during meditation were chilling like ice.

²The negative quality of lust, passion, lasciviousness, promiscuity and sexual perversion makes a man weak in his heart, anxious in his mind, and wobbly in his knees. He loses his strength that comes with morality and good character, and instead of being bold, straightforward and outgoing he becomes sly, deceitful, surreptitious and scheming, suspicious of all around him and losing faith in his own self as well as others. It is just like a thief who wishes to hide his real intentions when interacting with the world, and is always suspicious of everyone around him. Surely, one cannot expect to have mental peace and calmness of the heart in this condition. Immoral conduct keeps pricking at the sub-conscious mind of all the creatures, robbing them of their happiness and peace. They are filled with unending anxiety and restlessness.

So, as soon as Kaamdeo, who is the patron god ruling over these negative trait of lust and passion and their attendant problems which make a creature overactive and fidgety, felt terrified on seeing Lord Shiva's majestic form while the Lord was submerged in deep meditation, the dare-devilry in his heart subsided and he felt flaccid and limp like a shrunken flower or a deflated balloon. This effect cascaded down to all the creatures, affecting their behaviour: all their enthusiasm and zeal towards sexual inclinations immediately ebbed and abated like a river whose source of water has suddenly gone dry, or a balloon from which the air suddenly escapes.

³If a man, who has not drunk wine in his life, is made to gulp down a glass of the intoxicating liquid, he feels very uneasy till the time the drink remains inside his system. As soon as the after-effects of wine ends, or if the drunken man is able to vomit the alcohol out and take some rest to recover himself, he feels light, fresh and rejuvenated. He vows never to fall in the trap again, or ever try to taste an unknown liquid out of fear.

The same thing happened here. As soon as Kaamdeo felt scared, the negative traits he represented, such as passion and lust, suddenly became limp and lustre-less throughout the world. All the creatures who were intoxicated with this 'drug' suddenly found its effect neutralised. Their zeal and dare-devilry towards sexual behaviour and sensuousness caused by the arousing effects of Kaamdeo suddenly subsided. This brought peace and calm to their restless mind and heart. Then the creatures realised that they had been virtually taken for a ride by Kaamdeo, and they thanked Lord Shiva for restoring their peace and happiness once again.]

रुद्रहि देखि मदन भय माना । दुराधरष दुर्गम भगवाना ॥ ४ ॥

फिरत लाज कछु करि नहिं जाई । मरनु ठानि मन रचेसि उपाई ॥ ५ ॥

rudrahi dēkhi madana bhaya mānā. durādharāṣa durgama bhagavānā. 4.
phirata lāja kachu kari nahim jā'ī. maranu ṭhāni mana racēsi upā'ī. 5.

When Madan (Kaamdeo) saw Rudra (the angry form of Shiva)¹, he was terrified. He realised that the Lord God (i.e. Lord Shiva) was too formidable and majestic to be overcome (conquered and swayed from his posture of meditation). (4)

Kaamdeo was in a quandary, uncertain of what to do: To return empty-handed (i.e. to fail in his mission of disturbing Shiva's meditation) was a shameful act, and it was a virtually impossible task to wake Shiva from his meditative trance (without inviting the Lord's wrath).

Deciding that death was now a foregone conclusion (because returning without accomplishing the assigned task was humiliating, and it was not possible to disturb Shiva without inviting his anger), Kaamdeo contemplated in his Mana (mind and heart) and decided upon a course of action. (5)

[Note—¹The use of the word “Rudra” here is significant. Lord Shiva has many names, and “Rudra” is one of them. “Rudra” is a synonym for anger and wrathfulness. So here it means Kaamdeo was terrified to his bare bone because he was facing a formidable Lord who was a personified form of anger. To make matters worse for Kaamdeo, going back without waking Lord Shiva was a humiliating option as the gods would laugh at his failure. Disturbing Shiva was like playing with fire of anger, and it was sure to invite the Lord's wrath with a vengeance.]

प्रगटेसि तुरत रुचिर रितुराजा । कुसुमित नव तरु राजि बिराजा ॥ ६ ॥

बन उपबन बापिका तड़ागा । परम सुभग सब दिसा बिभागा ॥ ७ ॥

जहँ तहँ जनु उमगत अनुरागा । देखि मुएहुँ मन मनसिज जागा ॥ ८ ॥

pragaṭēsi turata rucira riturājā. kusumita nava taru rāji birājā. 6.
bana upabana bāpikā tarāgā. parama subhaga saba disā bibhāgā. 7.
jahaṁ tahaṁ janu umagata anurāgā. dēkhi mu'ēhuṁ mana manasija jāgā. 8.

[Lord Shiva was meditating in the serene and barren part of the snow-covered mountains where there was complete silence and no form of disturbance. Now we shall read that Kaamdeo converted that area into a vibrant and lush-green forest having flowering trees bearing colourful and scented flowers, complete with chirping birds and humming insects, a fragrant breeze blowing softly, and gurgling brooks singing their own melody. He did this in order to create disturbance to Shiva, but failed in his endeavour.]

Kaamdeo immediately created the pleasant spring season which is regarded as the king of seasons. Rows of young trees that were laden with fragrant flowers of varying colours and shapes sprouted everywhere¹. (6)

There were lush-green forests and gardens, water-filled ponds and lakes everywhere, in every direction so much so that all the parts and divisions of the world became exceptionally charming and enthralling for the senses. (7)

The Nature appeared to be overflowing with the emotions of love and passion. It looks so delightful and tempting that it aroused passion and longing even in the heart of dead souls (i.e. lifeless entities). (8)

[Note—Being a poet, Tulsidas was an expert describer of the beauty of Nature. His expertise comes to the fore when we read Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 13—to Doha no. 17 where he describes the tempting beauty of the mountain where Lord Ram had stayed for four months in Kishkindha in his wait for the rainy season to end so that efforts can be launched to search for Sita, his wife who was abducted by the demon king Ravana.

Another sterling example is Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 39—to Doha no. 40 where he describes the tempting beauty of lake Pampaa where Lord Ram stayed for a while after meeting the old woman devotee called Sabari.

¹More specifically, refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, 2nd half of Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 40.]

छं०. जागइ मनोभव मुएहुँ मन बन सुभगता न परै कही । १ ।
 सीतल सुगंध सुमंद मारुत मदन अनल सखा सही ॥ २ ॥
 बिकसे सरन्हि बहु कंज गुंजत पुंज मंजुल मधुकरा । ३ ।
 कलहंस पिक सुक सरस रव करि गान नाचहिं अपछरा ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

jāga'i manōbhava mu'ēhuṁ mana bana subhagatā na parai kahī. 1.
 sītala sugandha sumanda māruta madana anala sakhā sahī. 2.
 bikasē saranhi bahu kañja guñjata puñja mañjula madhukarā. 3.
 kalahansa pika suka sarasa rava kari gāna nācahim apacharā. 4.

*Even those who were lifeless and gross by nature (i.e. the inanimate entities of creation) were aroused by passion. The stunning beauty and temptation of the surroundings were so immense that they cannot be narrated in words.

[*This verse can also be read as follows: The forest and its surroundings were so beautiful and charming that it tempted the mind and heart of all those residing there so much so that even the lifeless entities were aroused and showed signs of passionate life.] (Chanda line no. 1)

The breeze that blew was cool, fragrant and soft¹. It stoked the fire of passion and lust like a true companion of Kaamdeo. [The breeze helped Kaamdeo ignite passion and lust in all the creatures by caressing them and kissing them with its soft touch, arousing them by its sweet fragrance, and easing their tension with its cool flow.] (Chanda line no. 2)

Many varieties of lotus flowers sprouted in the countless ponds and lakes; they were abuzz with the hum of bees hovering over them in search of nectar². (Chanda line no. 3)

Swans, cuckoos and parrots sang in merry abundance³, while the Apsaras (celestial damsels) sang and danced alongside to add charm to the composite scene⁴. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—A similar description is found in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 39—to Doha no. 40.

¹More specifically, refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 40.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 40.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 40.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 61.]

दो०. सकल कला करि कोटि बिधि हारेउ सेन समेत ।

चली न अचल समाधि सिव कोपेउ हृदयनिकेत ॥ ८६ ॥

dōhā.

sakala kalā kari kōṭi bidhi hārē'u sēna samēta.

calī na acala samādhi siva kōpē'u hṛdayanikēta. 86.

No matter how hard Kaamdeo and his army of followers¹ tried to disturb Shiva's meditative trance with all the nasty tricks they were aware of, they failed miserably in their nefarious designs.

This utter defeat infuriated the god of passion who lives in a subtle manner in the hearts of all living beings². (Doha no. 86)

[Note—¹Kaamdeo's followers are the tempting features of Nature listed in the above verses—viz. fragrant and colourful flowers, breeze that is cool, sweet-scented and soft, lush-green gardens and forests laden with trees bearing flowers and succulent fruits, dancing and singing birds, insects and damsels, water bodies that lure a person with their cool and crystal clear nectar-like water, and so on and so forth.

These verses tell us how difficult it is to be able to remain dispassionate and detached when one is surrounded by a world of immense physical charm. These countless charms of the world are like the symbolic army of Kaamdeo.

These verses also tell us that when an ascetic is submerged in meditation he is unconcerned about his surroundings, and the bliss and peace that he gets when he reaches higher stages of transcendental existence during meditation are more robust and sustainable as compared to the pleasures and comforts obtained from the objects of this material world. Therefore, an ascetic is unmoved by the temptations of the world just like Lord Shiva remaining steadfast in his meditation inspite of all the tricks that Kaamdeo played to disturb him.

²This is a very important point: It tells us that Kaamdeo resides in our own selves, inside our own hearts, and not somewhere in the imaginary heaven. It is a warning to all of us to be wary of negative traits as lust and passions that may lead to ruin and rob a person's peace and calm if the person falls in their trap and fails to exercise self-restraint. Kaamdeo is an integral part of every living being's nature just like the virtues of wisdom and the ability to discriminate between the good and the bad is. So long as Kaamdeo is kept under check he will not attack a person and leave him in peace. But should one become careless, Kaamdeo will attack with viciousness. He is like a resident enemy who hits from within.]

चौ०. देखि रसाल बिटप बर साखा । तेहि पर चढ़ेउ मदनु मन माखा ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

dēkhi rasāla biṭapa bara sākhā. tēhi para caṛhē'u madanu mana mākhā. 1.

Madan (Kaamdeo) saw a thick green branch of a mango tree¹. He climbed it angrily² (because he was determined to wreak vengeance upon Lord Shiva for spurning all his efforts to be lured and fall in his trap, and remaining steady in his meditation). (1)

[Note—¹Kaamdeo had climbed the branch of a mango tree for three reasons: One was that he wished to hide himself and shoot his arrow at Lord Shiva from a secure place where the chances of his getting located or traced were remote. So he hid himself behind thick foliage of the mango tree. The other reason is that Kaamdeo wanted a vantage point from where he could properly see and aim at Shiva who was meditating quietly at some place. And the third reason is that the mango fruit is very sweet and succulent, and it is a metaphor that fits in well with the enticing lure of passion and lust which Kaamdeo stood for in a symbolic way.

²Kaamdeo was angry because this was the first time that he faced the humiliating prospect of failure. The gods had assigned him the task of waking up Lord Shiva from his meditative trance, and in spite of all his best of efforts Kaamdeo had failed to move Shiva. Kaamdeo had prided himself as being invincible when it came to luring a creature into the honey-trap of passions and lust as is proved by the fact that even the wisest of sages and hermits had fallen victims to his schemes as is clearly narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 and Chanda line no. 1 that precede Doha no. 85.

Now, he would have to face scorn and ridicule at the hands of his peers if he went back and told the gods that he accepts defeat. The gentleman who has defeated him for the first time in his life was Shiva, and it was too much for Kaamdeo to bear this failure. This filled him with enmity for Shiva.

From a broader perspective the message in this verse is clear that passions and lust are so great an evil thing that if their intentions are not met they turn hostile towards the person harbouring them, making him or her frustrated and agitated to such an extent that all sense of propriety and wisdom abandon him or her, and this leads to the ruin of the person as was the case with Kaamdeo who lost control over himself and was ultimately punished by Lord Shiva who killed him by burning him to death.]

सुमन चाप निज सर संधाने । अति रिस ताकि श्रवन लागि ताने ॥ २ ॥

छाड़े बिषम बिसिख उर लागे । छूटि समाधि संभु तब जागे ॥ ३ ॥

sumana cāpa nija sara sandhānē. ati risa tāki śravana lagi tānē. 2.
chārē biṣama bisikha ura lāgē. chūṭi samādhi sambhu taba jāgē. 3.

Kaamdeo mounted his arrow on the bow made of flowers¹, and angrily looking towards Shiva he pulled the string back to his ears². (2)

Then he shot his formidable sharp arrow which went and slammed at the heart of Lord Shiva. Being thus hit, Lord Shiva woke up from his meditative trance. (3)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 83 and its accompanying note.

²During the epic war at Lanka between Lord Ram and the demon king Ravana, when Lord Ram had become very angry he too had shot fierce arrows at Ravana by pulling the string of his bow right back to his ears to give stronger thrust to the arrow so that it moved ahead with great speed and struck at the object with intense force—refer: Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 91.

And to be angry at one's enemy and adversary is a common feature in any war-like situation. Even Lord Ram had lost his patience with Ravana during the heat of battle and had become very angry and wrathful—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chanda line no. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 91.]

भयउ ईस मन छोभु बिसेषी । नयन उघारि सकल दिसि देखी ॥ ४ ॥

bhaya'u īsa mana chōbhū bisēṣī. nayana ughāri sakala disi dēkhī. 4.

Lord Shiva's heart was filled with extreme annoyance at being so rudely disturbed from his meditation. Angrily he opened his eyes and looked in all the direction to locate the person who had dared to interfere with his meditation and agitate his eternally calm and peaceful mind. (4)

सौरभ पल्लव मदनु बिलोका । भयउ कोपु कंपेउ त्रैलोका ॥ ५ ॥

तब सिवँ तीसर नयन उघारा । चितवत कामु भयउ जरि छारा ॥ ६ ॥

saurabha pallava madanu bilōkā. bhaya'u kōpu kampē'u trailōkā. 5.

taba sivaṁ tīsara nayana ughārā. citavata kāmu bhaya'u jari chārā. 6.

When he (Shiva) saw Kaamdeo hiding behind the leaves of the mango tree, the Lord flew into a ferocious rage¹ so much so that the entire world consisting of three divisions (viz. the earth, the heaven and the nether world) trembled with fear. (5)

Then Shiva wrathfully opened his legendary 'third eye'² (located in his forehead) and sternly looked towards Kaamdeo. This third eye spewed a tongue of fire which immediately reduced Kaamdeo to ashes. (6)

[Note—¹Lord Shiva is an ascetic, and an ascetic has the unique character of being as calm, cool and tranquil as the surface of a placid lake. But at the same time, an ascetic should not be taken for granted and played fools with, because his nature is like the fire element which may remain dormant and is always beneficial for the living world, but it erupts in a fierce rage if stoked and prodded to rise up, unleashing its anger by reducing everything to ashes.

In spite of this observation, Shiva is renowned to be calm and peaceful Lord, the very embodiment of the virtues of mercy and compassion. Then why did he become furious at Kaamdeo? Shiva was repaying Kaamdeo with the same currency the latter had used to trap the former; Shiva was paying Kaamdeo with the same coin which the latter had used against the Lord. Shiva was merely reciprocating Kaamdeo's attitude or behaviour towards him.

And what was this attitude or behaviour? It was 'anger'. Kaamdeo was 'angry' at Shiva at the time of shooting his arrow at the Lord—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 87. So Shiva also hit back with 'anger'. Kaamdeo had used the best weapon he had in his arsenal—the arrow. Therefore, Shiva too used the best weapon he had in his possession—and it was the fire spewing from his third eye. It is another matter that in such a duel it is the warrior with the stronger weapon who wins: hence, Shiva won the battle of wits with Kaamdeo!

²Lord Shiva's two conventional eyes represent the Sun and the Moon, while the 'third eye' represents the fire element that burns all forms of corruptions and perversions prevalent in this world and purifies it from its impurities. That is why it is called the 'eye of wisdom'—the eye that helps a creature to eliminate all forms of delusions and its attendant moral corruption and evil tendencies so that his mind and heart becomes holy and pure.

The possession of the third eye has entitled Lord Shiva to be called 'Trinetrum', the Lord with three eyes.]

हाहाकार भयउ जग भारी । डरपे सुर भए असुर सुखारी ॥ ७ ॥

समुझि कामसुखु सोचहिं भोगी । भए अकंटक साधक जोगी ॥ ८ ॥

hāhākāra bhaya'u jaga bhārī. ḍarapē sura bha'ē asura sukhārī. 7.
samujhi kāmasukhu sōcahiṁ bhōgī. bha'ē akaṅṭaka sādḥaka jōgī. 8.

As soon as Kaamdeo was reduced to ashes, a wail of lamentation resounded through the world which instilled fear in the heart of gods (i.e. they were alarmed) while the demons felt happy and gratified¹. (7)

The thought of having to lose the pleasure derived from sensual gratification and sexual fulfilment made those who were passionate and lustful by their nature sad, whereas spiritual aspirants and ascetics for whom such temptations were causing a lot of misery and headache were relieved because this tormenting thorn was removed from their way². (8)

[Note—¹Why were the gods alarmed and scared, while the demons felt happy? Here's the answer: The gods had sent Kaamdeo to wake Shiva up from his meditation so that the latter could be married and produce a son who would kill the demon Taarkaasur (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 83). But unfortunately Shiva has burnt Kaamdeo who was the patron deity of love and passion. This being the case, it became very difficult to make Shiva fall in love with Parvati and be passionate enough to produce a son from her.

Another reason for the gods feeling afraid is that they apprehended that when Shiva comes to realise, sooner or later, that it was at the behest of the gods that Kaamdeo had disturbed him, he would surely punish the entire pantheon of gods as he had once done earlier when he (Shiva) had sent his disciple Virbhadrā to punish the gods because they had tacitly supported Dakṣha Prajapati by participating in the fire sacrifice organised by him though Dakṣha had insulted Shiva. Virbhadrā had beaten the gods mercilessly without exception, and had chased them away (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 65). So now, the gods feared that the same fate awaits them once again when Shiva comes to know the facts.

The reason for the demons feeling glad is now they were sure that Shiva would not fall in the honey-trap of marriage and loving a woman, and without these preconditions being fulfilled there was no chance of him ever producing a son who would kill them (the demons) as prophesied by Brahma (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 82).

²The innate desires for physical comfort and pleasure, for self gratification and seeking happiness from the gross sense objects of this material world that are present in every human being are very strong and too difficult to resist and overcome. Ascetics and hermits are supposed to lead an austere life marked by renunciation, detachment and dispassion; they are supposed to exercise exemplary self-control over all their instincts and impulses. Kaamdeo constantly plays spoil-sport with them. Since Kaamdeo resides in the heart of all living beings, he keeps nudging at the ascetics and hermits, instigating these ascetics and hermits to waver from their vows of austerity and penance, and instead swerve towards the basic pleasures and comforts that are sought after by their sense organs. Once Kaamdeo, their greatest hidden enemy, was destroyed, the ascetics, hermits and other spiritual aspirants felt that the greatest 'thorn' or hurdle was removed from their path.

On the other hand, those creatures who were not spiritually inclined but preferred to wallow in the slushy world of lust and passion felt miserably because their protector and patron Kaamdeo was no more. Who will now support them; how will they now enjoy sensuous pleasures of the world once their hearts had become bereft of passions and lust and their driving force, the god of love and passion known as Kaamdeo? This worried such creatures a lot.]

छं०. जोगी अकंटक भए पति गति सुनत रति मुरुछित भई । १ ।
 रोदति बदति बहु भाँति करुना करति संकर पहिं गई ॥ २ ॥
 अति प्रेम करि बिनती बिबिध बिधि जोरि कर सन्मुख रही । ३ ।
 प्रभु आसुतोष कृपाल सिव अबला निरखि बोले सही ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

jōgī akaṅṭaka bha'e pati gati sunata rati muruchita bhāī. 1.
 rōdati badati bahu bhāṁti karunā karati saṅkara pahim gaī. 2.
 ati prēma kari binatī bibidha bidhi jōri kara sanmukha rahī. 3.
 prabhu āsutōṣa kṛpāla siva abalā nirakhi bōlē sahī. 4.

[The first line of this Chanda picks up the thread from the last line no. 8 of the previous set of Chaupais by citing the ascetics who felt glad that Kaamdeo had been destroyed by their patron deity, Lord Shiva, because the former had been constantly disturbing them during their meditation sessions.]

The ascetics (“Yogis”) felt that a great thorn had been removed from their way. When Rati¹, the consort of Kaamdeo, heard or learnt of the ill fate of her husband (that he had died when Shiva burnt him to ashes)², she fainted. (Chanda line no. 1)

Wailing loudly and lamenting in various ways, she approached Lord Shiva. (Chanda line no. 2)

She joined her hands in prayerful supplication and most humbly stood before the Lord (in a silent gesture asking the Lord to show mercy, compassion, kindness and grace upon her as well as her husband). (Chanda line no. 3)

The merciful and gracious Lord Ashutosh Shiva (i.e. Lord Shiva who is easy to please and eternally contented)³ observed the lady standing before him helplessly and in abject despair. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹Rati is said to be a daughter of Daksha Prajapati because she was born from the sweat of his body. She was believed to be the most beautiful damsel in creation. She aroused passion and lust even in the hearts of gods, and hence she got the name “Rati” which means sensual arousal.]

²It is said here that Rati ‘heard or learnt of the ill fate of Kaamdeo’. This means she was not present at the site where her husband, Kaamdeo, was causing nuisance to Shiva. The question is: how did Rati come to know that her husband has died? The first sign is given in Chanda line no. 1 itself—she learnt of it when she saw or heard that the ascetics had become happy because a thorn from their way was removed. These ascetics must have applauded Lord Shiva for having killed Kaamdeo so that the latter would no more disturb them.

Then there was another reason also: as soon as Kaamdeo was reduced to ashes, there was uproar in the world—especially amongst the gods: refer—Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 87 herein above. Rati lived in the heaven, and surely this news could not have remained hidden from her.

³Lord Shiva is an ascetic par excellence. He is a patron deity of ascetics. Therefore he possesses all the eclectic virtues that an ascetic is supposed to possess, and being eternally contented and easy to be pleased are some of Shiva’s wonderful qualities. Though he had burnt Kaamdeo for the mischief the latter committed, Shiva harboured no personal enmity with him—as a true hermit and ascetic who harbours

no personal ill-will against anyone in this world. Kaamdeo had invited trouble himself, and Shiva immediately regained his composure after punishing him.

The gracious, kind, merciful and compassionate nature of the Lord is evident from the very fact that Rati had no fear while approaching him directly immediately after the Lord had burnt her husband to death in a fit of anger. Rati was not terrified that the same fate would await her if she dared to come close to Shiva in the immediate aftermath of his angrily burning her husband to death—because she was aware of Shiva’s merciful and compassionate nature. She knew full well that his anger vanished as quickly as it came. She also was certain that the Lord would not punish her for the misdemeanours of her husband, and on the contrary he would surely bless her if she gathered courage to go and plead with him.

Rati was not to be let down in her confidence as she is fully rewarded for her humility and courage. It so transpired that Shiva blessed her that she would be reunited with her dear husband during the incarnation of Lord Vishnu as Lord Krishna—refer: Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow Doha no. 87 herein below.

Another significant point to note here is that Rati has not uttered a word, but has simply bowed before the Lord and stood silently in prayerful submission. Shiva learnt what was in her heart even without her saying anything. In the context of recent developments, Shiva needed no words to understand why Rati had come. Another important message here is that one need not express his wishes to the Lord God in explicit terms because the Lord knows every thought and every emotion that arises in the mind and heart of all the creatures.

In other words, ‘silence is the best form of prayer one can say to the Lord God’.]

दो०. अब तें रति तव नाथ कर होइहि नामु अनंगु ।

बिनु बपु व्यापिहि सबहि पुनि सुनु निज मिलन प्रसंगु ॥ ८७ ॥

dōhā.

aba tēm rati tava nātha kara hō'ihī nāmu anaṅgu.

binu bapu byāpihi sabahi puni sunu nija milana prasaṅgu. 87.

Lord Shiva told her—‘Rati, from now onwards your husband shall live without a physical body. He will be known as “Ananga”—one without any physical organs. He will dominate all the creatures in this subtle form (without a physical body)¹.

Now listen to the way you will meet and be united with him once again. (Doha no. 87)

[Note—¹That is why, Kaamdeo is said to reside in the heart of all living beings in an invisible form by way of the emotions of love, passion and desire for gratification. In this form, Kaamdeo became all-pervading and omnipresent throughout the length and breadth of creation.

The way Rati would meet her husband once again is narrated in detail in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 10, Canto 55. A brief outline is summarised in the following verse nos. 1-2 herein below.]

चौ०. जब जदुबंस कृष्ण अवतारा । होइहि हरन महा महिभारा ॥ १ ॥

कृष्ण तनय होइहि पति तोरा । बचनु अन्यथा होइ न मोरा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

jaba jadubansa kṛṣṇa avatārā. hō'ihī harana mahā mahibhārā. 1.
kṛṣṇa tanaya hō'ihī pati tōrā. bacanu an'yathā hō'i na mōrā. 2.

Lord Shiva told Rati—‘When the Lord (Vishnu) will manifest himself as Lord Krishna in the clan (family) of Yadus (of Vrindavan) for the purpose of removing (eliminating) the burden of the earth (just like the case of Lord Ram’s incarnation in the race of king Raghu of Ayodhya) (1)---

---Your husband would be born as Krishna’s son (named “Pradumna”). [In other words, Krishna’s son would be your husband.]¹

My words don’t go in vain². [Therefore, please have patience and wait till that time, and be assured that you will be reunited with your husband Kaamdeo at that time.] (2)

[Note—¹The story of Pradumna and his marriage with Rati is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 10, Uttaraardha, Canto 55. This story in brief is this:

Krishna’s son named ‘Pradumna’ was stolen by the demon named ‘Shambraasur’ from his parent’s home while still he was an infant of 10 days. Shambraasur threw the infant in the ocean to kill him. Luckily, one huge fish gulped him down. This fish was caught by fishermen who were surprised at its huge size. So they decided to gift it to their king Shambraasur to please him. When his cook cut the abdomen of this fish in order to cook it, he saw the child cocooned inside it. He gave the child to the head of the royal kitchen, a lady named ‘Mayawati’. This lady was actually Rati who was waiting to be reunited with her husband Kaamdeo.

At that moment, the celestial sage Narad arrived and informed her about this child being Kaamdeo. Mayawati took proper care of Pradumna till he grew up. She enlightened him about everything—his past life and who she was. She taught him the secret way of killing Shambraasur by using Maya (delusions and deceit).

After freeing themselves from the clutches of this demon, both Mayawati and Pradumna went to Rukmani, the consort of Lord Krishna and narrated the entire episode to her. Pradumna’s parents, Lord Krishna and Rukmani, were very happy on seeing their son once again. In due course of time, Pradumna was married to Mayawati who had saved his life.

²When Manu and Satrupa had done Tapa to have the rare privilege of seeing Lord Vishnu as their son, the Lord had revealed himself before them and had assured them that he will become their son as desired by them. The Lord had told them that there is no doubt that this will happen as he is true to his words just like Shiva telling Rati that what he has told her would really come true. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 152.]

रति गवनी सुनि संकर बानी । कथा अपर अब कहउँ बखानी ॥ ३ ॥

rati gavanī suni saṅkara bānī. kathā apara aba kaha'uṁ bakhānī. 3.

Reassured by the words of Lord Shiva, Rati went away satisfied.

Now, let me narrate the story after this episode. (3)

देवन्ह समाचार सब पाए । ब्रह्मादिक बैकुंठ सिधाए ॥ ४ ॥

सब सुर बिष्णु बिरंचि समेता । गए जहाँ सिव कृपानिकेता ॥ ५ ॥

dēvanha samācāra saba pā'ē. brahmādika baikunṭha sidhā'ē. 4.
saba sura biṣnu birañci samētā. ga'ē jahāṃ siva kṛpānikētā. 5.

The gods heard all the news. [In fact, they were anxiously waiting for the news of Shiva waking up from his meditative trance.] All of them, including Brahma the creator, went to Vaikuntha (which is the abode of Lord Vishnu). (40)

Then, all of them, including Brahma and Vishnu, went to the place where Lord Shiva, who is an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness, was present. (5)

पृथक पृथक तिन्ह कीन्हि प्रसंसा । भए प्रसन्न चंद्र अवतंसा ॥ ६ ॥

pr̥thaka pr̥thaka tinha kīnhi prasansā. bha'ē prasanna candra avatansā. 6.

All these gods honoured and glorified him (Shiva) separately. Their independent prayers pleased the Lord (Shiva) who bears the crescent moon on his forehead. (6)

बोले कृपासिंधु बृषकेतू । कहहु अमर आए केहि हेतू ॥ ७ ॥

कह बिधि तुह प्रभु अंतरजामी । तदपि भगति बस बिनवउँ स्वामी ॥ ८ ॥

bōlē kṛpāsindhu bṛṣakētū. kahahu amara ā'ē kēhi hētū. 7.

kaha bidhi tumha prabhu antarajāmī. tadapi bhagati basa binava'uṃ svāmī. 8.

The Lord who is like an ocean of mercy, compassion, grace and kindness, and whose standard (flag) has the emblem of a Bull, asked the gods—‘Say, why have you all immortal beings (a reference to the assembled gods) come here?’

Bidhi (the creator Brahma) spoke on the behalf of all the gods¹, ‘Oh Lord, you are all-knowing and well aware of the inner thoughts of everyone because you reside in the inner-self of all (i.e. you are “Antar-yaami”; one who lives in the inner-self of all living beings). So, though you know what is in our heart, I shall still pray to you to express our ‘Bhakti’ (devotion and respect) for you. (8)

[Note—¹Brahma was the senior-most amongst the gods. He was old and wise. So the gods had made him their spokesman.

Vishnu did not say anything. Why? It is because Vishnu, in his manifested form of Lord Ram, had already requested Shiva to marry Parvati who had done severe Tapa to be accepted by the Shiva as his consort—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 76 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 5-8. So, Lord Vishnu preferred to be discreet and kept quiet. When the gods’ spokesman Brahma was pleading their case with Shiva, it was civil to let him present the case of the gods without unnecessary interference.

Another reason why Brahma chose to act as the spokesman for the gods is given in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 83. It is said here that Brahma assured the gods that once Kaamdeo successfully wakes Shiva from his meditation, he will go and pray to Shiva to get married.]

दो०. सकल सुरन्ह के हृदयँ अस संकर परम उछाहु ।

निज नयनन्हि देखा चहहिं नाथ तुम्हार बिबाहु ॥ ८८ ॥

dōhā.

sakala suranha kē hṛdayaṁ asa saṅkara parama uchāhu.
nija nayanahi dēkhā cahahim nātha tumhāra bibāhu. 88.

‘Oh Lord Shankar (Shiva)! All the gods have a strong desire in their hearts that they wish to see the auspicious celebration of your marriage with their own eyes. [That is, the gods want to enjoy the spectacle of seeing you married. They want to witness this auspicious and happy occasion and participate in your marriage ceremony.] (Doha no. 88)

चौ०. यह उत्सव देखिअ भरि लोचन । सोइ कछु करहु मदन मद मोचन ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

yaha utsava dēkhi'a bhari lōcana. sō'i kachu karahu madana mada mōcana. 1.

Oh Lord who has trounced the pride of Madan (Kaamdeo)¹! Please let our eyes feast on the wonderful spectacle of your marriage. Please do whatever is appropriate so that we can have the privilege of seeing the ceremony of your marriage till our eyes feel contented (and we can fully enjoy the spectacle by witnessing the ceremony ourselves). (1)

[Note—¹Lord Shiva had vanquished Kaamdeo's pride of being able to detract everyone in this creation without exception from their vow of self-restraint over their natural instincts of passion and lust. Kaamdeo had failed to arouse lust and passion in Shiva as he had successfully done with even the sages, seers, hermits and ascetics on the one hand, and gods etc. on the other hand. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Doha no. 85.

No one had dared to confront Kaamdeo, and all became an easy victim of his nefarious design, except Shiva. Shiva had burnt Kaamdeo because the latter was breaking all barriers and had become reckless and uncontrolled. If Kaamdeo was not punished, the moral fabric of the entire creation would lie in tatters. The moral decline had already started, and the downward slide was rapid. But it was still not too late and a break had to be applied. Though the current generation had become depraved and pervert, but the future generations could be saved. Lord Shiva thought that it was his moral obligation to eliminate Kaamdeo whose behaviour was no different from the demons. The system established by the scriptures for the regulation of the society and proper conduct of its members had crumbled under the onslaught of Kaamdeo just like it was under the rule of the demons. This will be clear when we compare the events that unfolded in the world under the influence of Kaamdeo as narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 84 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4, with the developments under the rule of the demons led by their king Ravana as narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 183—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 184.

In this context, it will be interesting to read note no. 1 appended to Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 87 herein above.]

कामु जारि रति कहँ बरु दीन्हा । कृपासिंधु यह अति भल कीन्हा ॥ २ ॥
सासति करि पुनि करहिं पसाऊ । नाथ प्रभुन्ह कर सहज सुभाऊ ॥ ३ ॥

kāmu jāri rati kahum̃ baru dīnhā. kṛpāsindhu yaha ati bhala kīnhā. 2.
sāsati kari puni karahim̃ pasā'ū. nātha prabhunha kara sahaja subhā'ū. 3.

Oh Lord who is like an ocean of mercy and kindness! You had done a very good thing by blessing Rati (that she would be reunited with her husband once again) after having burnt Kaamdeo¹. (2)

Oh Lord, it is natural habit for you to first punish the guilty and the culprit, and then show mercy and compassion upon him². [We, the gods, honestly appreciate this virtue in you; it shows that you are worthy to be honoured by the title of a 'Maha-Deva', the 'Great God' of creation. You are like an Emperor, punishing the guilty but harbouring no personal enmity or ill-will against anyone whatsoever. It also shows your inherent nature of being eternally forgiving and merciful.] (3)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 88.

²It shows that you have followed the established doctrine of judicious governance, administration and polity that the guilty should first be punished and then mercy and compassion should be shown towards him. You are a senior God, the 'Maha-Dev', and therefore you are like an Emperor of the entire world. Hence it was necessary for you to punish Kaamdeo because he had exceeded our brief to him—which was merely to ensure that you woke up from your meditation so that we can arrange for your marriage. And oh Lord, we did not wish to play fools with you by disturbing you in your meditation, but were forced to do so because a demon named Taarkaasur has wreaked havoc on the world and it is so destined that he can only be killed by your son. How was this to be realised if you didn't marry and remained all the time immersed in meditation and contemplation? That's why we had no option but to make you get married, and for this waking you up from your meditation was obligatory.

But in any case, we hadn't asked Kaamdeo to insult you by becoming angry at you and shooting an arrow at you as if you were his enemy. If he had failed in his mission, he could have come back to us and told us that it was not possible for him to wake you up. Then we, the gods, would have devised some other means. Instead of adopting a straightforward approach, Kaamdeo felt that his pride and ego were hurt, and he trespassed all laws and regulations by shooting an arrow angrily at a meditating ascetic. This is surely not acceptable and needed to be punished.

Not limiting himself to playing mischief with you and becoming angry at you, which in itself was a despicable deed, this fellow Kaamdeo had violated all norms of proper behaviour by unnecessarily disturbing the entire world by becoming angry at even the innocent creatures of the world (refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 84), and had pushed the whole world on the brink of moral degradation by unleashing lust, passions, lasciviousness and promiscuity in every entity of this creation, whether it was a mortal living being or an inanimate thing on earth, or the immortal gods in heaven (refer: Baal Kand, Doha no. 84—to Doha no. 85). It was absolutely necessary to punish him for otherwise the edifice of Dharma (proper and ethical behaviour) that I, the creator Brahma, had so assiduously established, would have crumbled and fallen apart.

Therefore, you have done nothing wrong by burning Kaamdeo. It is to your immense credit and a measure of your compassionate and merciful nature that in spite of showing anger at Kaamdeo, you had immediately calmed down and blessed his wife Rati that her husband would be restored to her in his next life as the son of Lord Krishna (refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 88). This is really wonderful and highly laudable.]

पारबतीं तपु कीन्ह अपारा । करहु तासु अब अंगीकारा ॥ ४ ॥

pārabatīṃ tapu kīnha apārā. karahu tāsu aba aṅgīkāra. 4.

[Now let all of us, the gods, inform you that—] Parvati has done severe Tapa (to have you as her husband, and I, Brahma, have already blessed her that her wishes would be fulfilled)¹. So, please accept her by your side (as your consort)².’ (4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 74.

²Brahma had earlier advised the gods that when Kaamdeo is successful in waking Shiva up from his Samadhi (meditative trance), he (Brahma) would accompany the other gods to request Shiva to marry Parvati and beget a son who would kill the demon Taarkaasur—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 83.]

सुनि बिधि बिनय समुझि प्रभु बानी । ऐसेइ होउ कहा सुखु मानी ॥ ५ ॥

suni bidhi binaya samujhi prabhu bānī. aisē'i hō'u kahā sukhu mānī. 5.

Hearing the words (request) of Bidhi (Brahma, the god who determines the destiny of all living beings in this creation) and recalling the words of the Lord (i.e. of Lord Ram who had also asked Shiva to marry Parvati¹), Shiva agreed and said—‘Alright, so be it. It shall happen as you wish (or say).’ (5)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 76—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 77.]

तब देवन्ह दुंदुभीं बजाई । बरषि सुमन जय जय सुर साई ॥ ६ ॥

अवसरु जानि सप्तरीषि आए । तुरतहिं बिधि गिरिभवन पठाए ॥ ७ ॥

प्रथम गए जहँ रहीं भवानी । बोले मधुर बचन छल सानी ॥ ८ ॥

taba dēvanha dundubhīm bajā'īm. baraṣi sumana jaya jaya sura sā'īm. 6.

avasaru jāni saptariṣi ā'ē. turatahiṃ bidhi giribhavana paṭhā'ē. 7.

prathama ga'ē jaham̐ rahīm bhavānī. bōlē madhura bacana chala sānī. 8.

Cheer rang out in the rank and file of the gods. Excited and exhilarated, they sounded their kettle-drums enthusiastically, showering flowers and applauding in a loud chorus—‘Hail the Lord of the gods. Glory be to you!’ (6)

Realising that it was the proper time, the seven celestial sages known as the Sapta-rishis came there. Bidhi (Brahma) immediately sent them to the home of Giri, the father of Parvati (to convey the good news and ask him to prepare for the marriage of Shiva with Parvati). (7)

The Sapta-rishis first went to the place where Bhavaani (Parvati) was (instead of going to her father’s place as asked by Brahma)¹. When they reached there, they spoke to her sweetly but with cunning in their words². (8)

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that Parvati was living at her parent’s home at the time Sapta-rishis met her for the second time to test her faith and devotion for Lord Shiva as will be narrated in the verses that follow below. She was brought home by her father after he was instructed to do so by the same Sapta-rishis when they had tested her at the end of her successful Tapa—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 82.

The question is: why did the Sapta-rishis not go straight to Giri, Parvati's father, as asked by Brahma, but instead went to Parvati? Well, they wished to be absolutely certain about Parvati's devotion, faith and steadfastness in her vows of marrying Shiva. Perhaps it is also possible that Shiva had quietly, by a wink of his eyes, hinted to them to go and test Parvati's loyalty once again, to be doubly sure and counter-check the facts.

This being so, the next question is: why would Shiva still wish to test her integrity though this testing had already been done before—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 77—to Doha no. 81. The answer is this—Shiva had had a bitter experience of Parvati when she was his consort in her previous life as Sati. Though her physical body had changed, but the essential element, the Atma or the soul, of Parvati was the same as that of Sati. So, Shiva was very sceptical of her.

Another reason is that at the time of disowning Sati, he had taken a vow that he will have nothing to do with her any longer in this life—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand (i) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 56; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1, 4 that precede Doha no. 57; (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 58.

That is why when Lord Ram requested Shiva to marry Parvati, the latter had first expressed his strong reservations against it but had accepted the orders of the Lord because it would be improper to disobey one's revered deity, in Shiva's case Lord Ram (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 77).

So Shiva wanted to be doubly sure if Parvati had amended her nature and ways, and if she would not give him more trouble once again after marriage. If even a minute fault could be found with her, Shiva would get an excuse to avoid marrying her; he would have told both Lord Ram and Brahma that it is not possible to follow their requests because of the faults discovered in Parvati's character or nature.

²The Sapta-rishis had done the same thing on the earlier occasion also when they had gone to test Parvati—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 78—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 80. Especial attention should be given to Doha no. 78 that says that when Parvati had tried to stop them from disturbing her, they had smiled cunningly and gone ahead with their testing.]

दो०. कहा हमार न सुनेहु तब नारद केँ उपदेस ।

अब भा झूठ तुम्हार पन जारेउ कामु महेस ॥ ८९ ॥

dōhā.

kahā hamāra na sunēhu taba nārada kēm upadēsa.

aba bhā jhūṭha tumhāra pana jāre'u kāmu mahēsa. 89.

The Sapta-rishis told Parvati—'You did not listen to our advice the last time we came to you. You insisted that you will follow the advice given by Narad¹.

Now your vow (of marrying Shiva) has become false and unrealisable because Mahesh (Shiva) has burnt Kaamdeo, the god of love². (Doha no. 89)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 81.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 87.

What the sages meant is that Shiva has burnt whatever vestiges of love and passion that had remained in his heart by symbolically burning the patron god of such emotions, i.e. the god named Kaamdeo. Shiva has now become a stern ascetic, and therefore how can Parvati expect to marry him now?

Parvati immediately recognised the Sapta-rishis. She recalled how they had tried to derail her determination to marry Shiva on the earlier occasion. Therefore as soon as she saw them she was on her guard, guessing that these fellows will surely create more mischief for her once again. In fact, the Sapta-rishis should have thought of it, and should have not gone to test her in their original form as 'Satpa-rishis', but rather should have disguised themselves as some other group sages or saints to throw Parvati off her guard so that the reality emerged.]

मासपारायण, तीसरा विश्राम (māsapārāyaṇa, tīsarā viśrāma)

[The third pause in the 30-day recitation of Ram Charit Manas.]

चौ०. सुनि बोलीं मुसुकाइ भवानी । उचित कहेहु मुनिबर बिग्यानी ॥ १ ॥
तुम्हरेँ जान कामु अब जारा । अब लगि संभु रहे सबिकारा ॥ २ ॥
हमरेँ जान सदा सिव जोगी । अज अनवद्य अकाम अभोगी ॥ ३ ॥

caupāī.

sunī bōlīm musukā'i bhavānī. ucita kahēhu munibara bigyānī. 1.
tumharēm jāna kāmū aba jārā. aba lagi sambhu rahē sabikārā. 2.
hamarēm jāna sadā siva jōgī. aja anavadya akāma abhōgī. 3.

Hearing the words of the Sapta-rishis, Bhavaani (Parvati) smiled and replied to them—'Oh learned sages, whatever you have said is correct according to your wisdom. [But my respected sages, your judgement is erroneous. I will tell you why you are wrong.] (1)

You believe that Lord Shiva has burnt Kaam (representing emotions of love, passion and desire) only now¹, but till this day he had harboured some kind of emotional, moral or spiritual faults or shortcomings that are universally associated with Kaamdeo. [This is what 'you' think. You believe that till now Shiva had been a victim of such negative traits as passion, lust and love—traits that are synonymous with Kaamdeo. That is why you have given this event of Lord Shiva burning Kaamdeo so great an importance that you have come running to me in order to convey some great news as if I was under the delusion that Shiva had Kaam in his psyche till now. You think that you are doing me a great favour by telling me that all my efforts to be a companion of Lord Shiva were based on a wrong premise that Shiva had 'Kaam' in his mind and heart till now, and that I was longing to marry him because I believed that he would satisfy my desire for sensual fulfilment. But my dear sages, I was not under any sort of delusion when I decided to do Tapa for Shiva.] (2)

But as far as I am concerned, I am fully aware that Shiva is eternally an exemplarily renunciate ascetic, totally detached from all the grossness associated with this world. I know that Shiva is eternal in the sense that he does not take a birth like other creatures including me. I know he is irreproachable²: he has no Kaam (desires,

lust, passion) in him; he is not interested in enjoying the pleasures of the sense organs or the sense objects of the world. (3)

[Note—¹Parvati addresses this issue of Shiva burning Kaamdeo in Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 90 herein below.

²This observation that Shiva is beyond reproach and is free from any taints is significant in the context of what the sages have said and intended to mean. They have said that Shiva has burnt Kaamdeo (refer: Doha no. 89)—that means he has a lot of anger inside him and is short-tempered. Would he also not show this anger towards Parvati for all the misdeeds she had committed in her previous life as Sati, or for daring to propose marriage to him especially when he has already declared his intention to discard her for life (refer: Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 57) and she was fully aware of this determination of Shiva (refer: Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 58)?

By burning Kaamdeo, Shiva gave a clear hint that he abhors love and passion. So would he not pour his wrath on Parvati if she dares to show that she loves him and wishes to marry him? Would Shiva not sternly punish Parvati for her stubborn attitude like he has done with Kaamdeo by burning him when the latter had obstinately acted in a manner that disturbed the Lord's meditation?

So, Parvati addresses this issue by saying that Shiva is irreproachable; that he cannot be accused of harbouring any kind of fault—whether it be lust and passion, or anger and being short-tempered. It was Kaamdeo's own fault that Shiva punished him. After all, being the Lord God of creation, is it not one of the responsibilities of Shiva to protect the norms of Dharma in this world? Kaamdeo had spread nuisance in this world; the world had lost all sense of propriety and ethical behaviour under his influence (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Doha no. 85). So, should Shiva not punish the perpetrator of this mischief? So what wrong did Shiva do by punishing Kaamdeo by burning him to death? After all, the good and well-being of the world at large was a greater priority for Shiva than overlooking the misdemeanours of one single individual who was wreaking havoc by sparing his life.

As far as 'lust and passion' are concerned, everyone knows that Shiva remains deeply submerged in meditation and its accompanying Samadhi (a trance-like state of transcendental existence when the practitioner is totally oblivious of the surrounding world)—a state of existence that necessitates complete self-restraint of all the sense organs. This precludes indulgences in lust and passion.

And as for 'anger' etc., Parvati knew that Shiva was calm and patient as one can ever be. Shiva had not shown any visible sign of anger towards Sati even though she had done grave wrong to him—by disobeying him and showing lack of faith in his advice. This will be amply evident when we read the sequence of events as narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 50—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 52; and (ii) from Doha no. 55—to Doha no. 62.

In fact, Shiva was concerned that Parvati was suffering due to separation from him and that she had done severe Tapa (penance) to atone for her past sins so that she can be reunited with her beloved Lord once again (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 75—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 76).]

जौं मैं सिव सेये अस जानी । प्रीति समेत कर्म मन बानी ॥ ४ ॥

तौ हमार पन सुनहु मुनीसा । करिहहिं सत्य कृपानिधि ईसा ॥ ५ ॥

jaum̄ mair̄ siva sēyē asa jānī. prīti samēta karma mana bānī. 4.
tau hamāra pana sunahu munisā. karihahim̄ satya kṛpānidhi īsā. 5.

If I have served Lord Shiva with full knowledge of these facts, if I have served Lord Shiva with affection and devotion using all my faculties such as my deeds, heart and mind, as well as words¹ (4)---

---Then listen sages, Isha (Lord God; Shiva), who is an ocean of mercy and compassion, will surely make my vows fruitful and oblige me². (5)

[Note—¹Sati had expressed this same confidence when she had prayed to Lord Ram while asking the latter to relieve her of the agony of separation from Shiva: refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 59 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 4-8.

Even Shiva had acknowledged Sati's love and devotion for himself: refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 56.

²Parvati's devotion for Shiva was unquestioned because even at the time of her death in her previous life as Sati, she had asked Lord God to be able to serve Lord Shiva in her next life: refer—Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65.]

तुम्ह जो कहा हर जारेउ मारा । सोइ अति बड़ अबिबेकु तुम्हारा ॥ ६ ॥
तात अनल कर सहज सुभाऊ । हिम तेहि निकट जाइ नहिं काऊ ॥ ७ ॥
गाँ समीप सो अवसि नसाई । असि मन्मथ महेस की नाई ॥ ८ ॥

tumha jō kahā hara jārē'u mārā. sō'i ati baṛa abibēku tumhārā. 6.
tāta anala kara sahaja subhā'ū. hima tēhi nikaṭa jā'i nahim̄ kā'ū. 7.
ga'eṁ̄ samīpa sō avasi nasā'ī. asi manmatha mahēsa kī nā'ī. 8.

Now let me (Parvati) come to your statement that 'Har (Shiva) has burnt Kaamdeo to death' (refer: Doha no. 89). This shows that you are very ignorant of facts. [You look as if you are a group of seven wise sages, but in fact it appears to me that you are foolish beyond imagination. Your statement that Shiva burnt Kaamdeo is a proof of this. Do you realise why I am saying this? Well, listen to me—] (6)

Dear sages, it is a fact of Nature that snow never goes near 'fire'. [Don't you know why? Well, I will tell you—] (7)

It is certain that if snow goes near fire then it is definitely going to be annihilated. [The heat of the fire would surely melt snow even if the former does not wish to do so, or the latter had involuntarily come near the fire. It is the inherent character of fire that it does not allow snow to survive in its vicinity.]

The same principle applies to Mahesh (Shiva) and Manmath (Kaamdeo)². [That is, just like snow cannot survive in the presence of fire, the negative trait of passion and lust cannot exist within the jurisdiction of Shiva. Therefore, what is surprising in Shiva burning Kaamdeo? You can't play fools with fire; it is surely going to scorch you. I had thought that seven were elderly wise sages, but your intellect seems inadequate.] (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 92 where Laxman tells Nishad, the chief of the boatmen community, that "no one is responsible for one's sorrows or happiness except one's own self and the deeds one does in his life".

In the present context this means (i) Parvati had to suffer so much due to her own misdeeds in her previous life as Sati; and similarly (ii) Kaamdeo had to suffer death due to his own misdeeds.

²The word “Manmath” means ‘one that churns the mind and heart’. It is a metaphor for Kaamdeo because the emotional traits he represents, i.e. passion, lust and desire for sensual gratification, are so strong that a person’s mind and heart are churned vigorously if Kaamdeo manages to get its hold on them. A person under the spell of Kaamdeo would be restless, anxious and agitated like a leaf that is tossed around in a gust of wind or swirls vigorously in a whirlpool in water.]

दो०. हियँ हरषे मुनि बचन सुनि देखि प्रीति बिस्वास ।
चले भवानिहि नाइ सिर गए हिमाचल पास ॥ ९० ॥

dōhā.

hiyaṁ haraṣē muni bacana suni dēkhi prīti bisvāsa.
calē bhavānihi nā'i sira ga'ē himācala pāsa. 90.

The sages felt exhilarated in their hearts when they heard the words of such confidence, faith and devotion from Bhavaani (Parvati). Then they reverentially bowed their heads to her and went to Himaachal (the king of mountains, Parvati’s father) to meet him (and advice him of the latest developments with a request to start preparations for the divine marriage)¹. (Doha no. 90)

[Note—¹A similar narrative is given when the sages had met and tested Parvati for the first time at the end of her Tapa—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 81 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8.]

चौ०. सबु प्रसंगु गिरिपतिहि सुनावा । मदन दहन सुनि अति दुखु पावा ॥ १ ॥
बहुरि कहेउ रति कर बरदाना । सुनि हिमवंत बहुत सुखु माना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sabu prasaṅgu giripatihi sunāvā. madana dahana suni ati dukhu pāvā. 1.
bahuri kahē'u rati kara baradānā. suni himavanta bahuta sukhu mānā. 2.

The Sapta-rishis then went to the king of mountains, Giripati, and narrated all the events to him. He was very sad when he heard about the burning of Kaamdeo¹. (1)

Soon after this narration, the sages told him about the boon that was granted by Shiva to Rati, the wife of Kaamdeo. When Himwant, the king of the snow-covered mountains, heard of this, he felt very glad². (2)

[Note—¹Parvati’s father was sad when he heard that Shiva had burnt Kaamdeo because it indicated three possible things—one: that Shiva was given to becoming angry quickly, two: that he had vented his ire on Kaamdeo to signal that he is no longer interested in love and establishing any kind of affectionate relationships, and three: he had killed Kaamdeo because the latter was trying to persuade Shiva to abandon his lonely life as an ascetic who is constantly doing mediation and instead marry Parvati and start a homely life.

These reasons, or any other reason that implied that Shiva is not interested in marrying and establishing any family relationships based on affection and love, and that he is of a quick temper, naturally worried Parvati’s father because it will directly affect his daughter’s future. No father would want his daughter to be married to

someone who is so angry and unforgiving by nature, and who has no desire to welcome emotions of love and affection, one who is not passionate about his relationships and responsibilities.

²But as soon as he heard that Shiva had blessed Rati immediately after having burnt her husband Kaamdeo, that she will be reunited with him, he felt reassured, because this meant that Shiva's anger was superficial and transient, that he was very merciful, compassionate and considerate by his nature inspite of showing apparent anger, and that he did not despise a union between a faithful and loving wife and her husband. Therefore, if his daughter Parvati has true love for Shiva then she can expect consideration and compassionate treatment from him though he is an ascetic who has renounced all family ties.]

हृदयं बिचारि संभु प्रभुताई । सादर मुनिबर लिए बोलाई ॥ ३ ॥

सुदिनु सुनखतु सुघरी सोचाई । बेगि बेदबिधि लगन धराई ॥ ४ ॥

पत्री सप्तारिषिन्ह सोइ दीन्ही । गहि पद बिनय हिमाचल कीन्ही ॥ ५ ॥

hr̥dayaṃ bicāri sambhu prabhutāī. sādara munibara li'ē bōlāī. 3.

sudinu sunakhatu sugharī sōcāī. bēgi bēdabidhi lagana dharāī. 4.

patri saptariṣinha sō'i dīnhī. gahi pada binaya himācala kīnhī. 5.

Himwaan thought over the matter and glorified Lord Shiva's virtues in his heart. After that, he respectfully summoned the sages¹ (who had been residing in his realm to consult them and seek their blessings so that the marriage process could be taken forward). (3)

The king consulted them and got an auspicious day, asterism and time fixed for the marriage ceremony in accordance with the procedure and principles fixed by the Vedas (primary scriptures) for this purpose². (4)

Then Himaachal got this written in the form of a formal proposal-letter known as a "Patri" that made this announcement, and handed it over to the Sapta-rishis after paying his due respects to them by clasping their feet as a token gesture to express his gratitude towards them³. (5)

[Note—¹It was an established custom that all elders and wise people living in a king's kingdom were called by him on special occasions. This was done to discuss the situation with them and seek their overall guidance and blessings. The seven celestial sages known as the Sapta-rishis were already present, and so the king summoned other sages who had been living in the mountains to pursue their spiritual objectives in life. There were a lot many sages, saints, seers and hermits living in the peaceful environs of the mountains where Parvati's father ruled—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 65. All of them were invited.

²We find a parallel to this sequence of events when Sita was married to Lord Ram. Sita's father, king Janak, too had sent a "Patri" to king Dasrath, the father of Lord Ram, inviting the latter to attend the marriage. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 287; Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 290; and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 295.

³King Himwaan was highly grateful towards the Sapta-rishis because they had been instrumental in removing any iota of doubt relating to mutual trust and faith between his daughter Parvati and her future husband Shiva. They had put themselves at grave risk by teasing Parvati inspite of knowing that she is destined to be a divine and powerful consort of Lord Shiva, the mighty Lord God who controls death. What if she decided to take revenge upon them after she marries Lord Shiva and acquires her powerful position as a great goddess in the hierarchy of heaven?

Also, what would have happened if they had tweaked the result of their tests and given a wrong impression about Parvati to Shiva, or about Shiva to Himwaan?

Therefore, Parvati's father wished to thank the Sapta-rishis for their courage and their effort to bring about a union between Parvati and Lord Shiva (who is the 3rd God of the Trinity and responsible for conclusion of creation), thereby entitling his daughter to acquire the exalted position of a great goddess that would be equivalent to the position occupied by Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and the divine consort of Lord Vishnu (the sustainer of creation), and Brahmaani, the consort of Brahma (the creator of creation).]

जाइ बिधिहि तिन्ह दीन्हि सो पाती । बाचत प्रीति न हृदयँ समाती ॥ ६ ॥

लगन बाचि अज सबहि सुनाई । हरषे मुनि सब सुर समुदाई ॥ ७ ॥

सुमन बृष्टि नभ बाजन बाजे । मंगल कलस दसहुँ दिसि साजे ॥ ८ ॥

jā'i bidhihi tinha dīnhi sō pātī. bācata prīti na hṛdayaṁ samātī. 6.

lagana bāci aja sabahi sunāī. haraṣē muni saba sura samudāī. 7.

sumana brṣṭi nabha bājana bājē. maṅgala kalasa dasahuṁ disi sājē. 8.

The Sapta-rishis went away and gave the 'Patri' to Bidhi (Brahma, the creator, who was waiting for it along with other gods who had assembled near Shiva). When he read it, there was so much delight in his heart that it failed to contain his exhilaration. [Brahma was very happy and delighted to learn that Parvati's family has accepted the proposal, and there is no last minute hitch to the marriage.] (6)

He read aloud the auspicious time and date as contained in the 'Patri' so that everyone can hear it. Sages and gods who were present on the occasion were exhilarated when they heard it¹. (7)

As soon as this auspicious news was announced, there was celebration all around: flowers rained down from the sky and musical instruments began playing in the heaven. Pitchers and jars that are exhibited on such auspicious occasion were put up everywhere², in all the ten directions³ of the compass. (8)

[Note—¹A similar scene is observed in Ayodhya when the "Patri" containing the news of Lord Ram's marriage with Sita arrived. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 287; Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 290; Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 291; Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 295; and from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 296—to Doha no. 297.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1, 7-8 that precede Doha no. 296.

³The 'ten directions' are the following—north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, zenith and nadir.]

दो०. लगे सँवारन सकल सुर बाहन बिबिध बिमान ।

होहिं सगुन मंगल सुभद करहिं अपछरा गान ॥ ९१ ॥

dōhā.

lagē saṁvārana sakala sura bāhana bibidha bimāna.

hōhim saguna maṅgala subhada karahim apacharā gāna. 91.

All the gods began decorating their different types of vehicles¹ in many ways in preparation to accompany the marriage procession.

Meanwhile, auspicious omens began to happen, and celestial damsels known as the 'Apsaras' sang and danced in merry abandon². (Doha no. 91)

[Note—¹The different gods had different types of personal means of transport. Some of them are the following—Vishnu (the sustainer) has Garud (the celestial heron), Brahma (the creator) has Hansa (a swan-shaped airplane), Indra (the king of gods) has Erawaat (the elephant), Yam (the god of death and hell) has a male buffalo, Kubera (the treasurer of gods) has the Pushpak (a self-driven air-plane), Varun (the Water-God) has Magar (alligator), Agni (the Fire-God) has a he-goat, Pawan (the Wind-God) has a deer, Ishaan (one of Shiva's various forms) has Brishava (the bull), and Nairitta has phantom.

When Lord Ram was married to Sita at Janakpur, all the gods had decorated their mounts and joined the marriage procession as it headed towards the venue of the marriage ceremony—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precedes Doha no. 314.

²A similar situation is narrated while describing the marriage of Lord Ram with Sita. When the marriage party was ready for departure from Ayodhya, the auspicious omens which revealed themselves are narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 303 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 2-8, and Chaupai line no. 3 that follows this Doha.]

चौ०. सिवहि संभु गन करहिं सिंगारा । जटा मुकुट अहि मौरु सँवारा ॥ १ ॥

कुंडल कंकन पहिरे ब्याला । तन बिभूति पट केहरि छाला ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sivahi sambhu gana karahim singārā. jaṭā mukuṭa ahi mauru saṁvārā. 1.
kuṇḍala kaṅkana pahirē byālā. tana bibhūti paṭa kēhari chālā. 2.

The attendants of Lord Shiva began grooming and adorning their Lord (to prepare him as a groom). [Shiva had never bothered about his appearances. He was an excellent ascetic, and like all ascetics he was never concerned about his external features, whether he looked attractive and charming to others or not. But this was a different situation. Now he was to be married, and a groom is not expected to look like a hermit or an ascetic. Therefore, the close attendants of the Lord began adorning him so that he looks attractive in his role as a groom.]

They cleaned and tied his thick lock of usually unkempt hairs into a decent-looking plait that was turned around in a spiral to form a wonderful crown that adorned the Lord's head. Then they decked it up with a crest of serpents. (1)

The ear-rings and bracelets that he (Shiva) wore also consisted of serpents. His body was smeared with ash¹ (from the fire sacrifice), and skin of a lion was used as his wrap-around garment. (2)

[Note—¹Shiva's natural complexion is blue like that of Lord Vishnu. But when ash was smeared on his body, he looked fair-complexioned.]

ससि ललाट सुंदर सिर गंगा । नयन तीनि उपबीत भुजंगा ॥ ३ ॥

गरल कंठ उर नर सिर माला । असिव बेष सिवधाम कृपाला ॥ ४ ॥

sasi lalāṭa sundara sira gaṅgā. nayana tīni upabīta bhujāṅgā. 3.
garala kaṅṭha ura nara sira māḷā. asiva bēṣa sivadhāma kṛpālā. 4.

His head looked beautiful with a crescent moon on his forehead, and river Ganges swirling in the matted hairs adorning the crown of his head. He sported three eyes (two conventional eyes and one in the center of his forehead). A huge serpent dangled across his chest to represent the sacred thread worn by other gods. (3)

His neck was darkened by the poison he had swallowed (at the time of the churning of the ocean by the gods and demons), and he wore a garland of human skulls around his neck.

Though Shiva was attired in an inauspicious manner and looked very ghastly, he nevertheless was a merciful Lord who was an abode of all virtues associated with auspiciousness and compassion¹. (4)

[Note—¹Lord Shiva wore human skulls as a garland; he wore a serpent like a sacred thread; he kept poison in his throat; he looked very odd with three eyes. In brief, Shiva's external appearance was very unconventional and fearful. No holy person, let alone a 'god', would like to sport this ghastly appearance. But this was very misleading; it was perhaps a guise adopted by Shiva so that the world leaves him alone, thinking that he is a mad god or a patron deity of phantoms and ghosts, so that he can concentrate upon his meditation and contemplation.

But the fact is that Shiva is not what he appears to be, but is true to his name—because the word "Shiva" means one who is truthful, immaculate, pure and holy. Shiva is a 'merciful' god, and therefore he does not enjoy killing humans as indicated by his wearing a garland of skulls. On the contrary it means that he wishes to remind himself constantly that this world is going to perish one day, and the beautiful physical body of which the humans are so proud of is actually nothing but a cover for bones and skulls. Shiva has witnessed death and grief at close quarters because he is the god responsible for concluding this creation, the god who observes death and its accompanying pain and horrors from up close.

The garland of skulls around his neck constantly reminds him of the mortal nature of this physical world and the futility of pursuing its material pleasures and comforts—because death is certain to come one day. This realisation helps Shiva to remain detached from the world and overcome all temptations for gratification of the senses.]

कर त्रिसूल अरु डमरु बिराजा । चले बसहँ चढ़ि बाजहिं बाजा ॥ ५ ॥

देखि सिवहि सुरत्रिय मुसुकाहीं । बर लायक दुलहिनि जग नाहीं ॥ ६ ॥

kara trisūla aru ḍamaru birājā. calē basahaṁ caḍhi bājahim bājā. 5.
dēkhi sivahi suratriya musukāhīm. bara lāyaka dulahini jaga nāhīm. 6.

He (Shiva) held a trident and a tabor (drum shaped like an hour-glass) in his hands.

Thus attired, he rode a bull and moved ahead to go the bride's place even as various musical instruments were being played. (5)

Seeing the most unconventional form of Shiva donned in the attire of a groom, the consorts of different gods could not restrain themselves from smiling. They said amongst themselves in jest—'There is not a single bride fit for such a groom in this world!' (6)

बिष्णु बिरंचि आदि सुरब्राता । चढ़ि चढ़ि बाहन चले बराता ॥ ७ ॥

सुर समाज सब भाँति अनूपा । नहिं बरात दूलह अनुरूपा ॥ ८ ॥

biṣṇu birañci ādi surabrātā. caḍhi caḍhi bāhana calē barātā. 7.

sura samāja saba bhāṁti anūpā. nahim barāta dūlaha anurūpā. 8.

Lord Vishnu, Biranchi (i.e. Brahma) and a host of other gods rode their respective vehicles and proceeded to join the marriage procession. (7)

The society of gods that constituted the marriage party looked exceptionally marvellous in every possible way, but this marriage procession did not match the type of groom for whom it was meant¹. (8)

[Note—¹All the gods had magnificent forms, looked divine, and were well decorated.

Their vehicles and attendants were also wonderful to behold. But the main hero of this gathering, the ‘groom’, i.e. Lord Shiva, was at odds with this grand setup.

We shall soon read about the attendants and followers of Shiva who were accompanying him as his close friends and confidantes: they were fear-inspiring ghosts, phantoms, ogres and spirits of all denominations and descriptions (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Sortha/Doha no. 93 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4). This group was obviously at odds with the group that consisted of gods and their attendants who were all divine-looking and charming in their appearance.]

दो०. बिष्णु कहा अस बिहसि तब बोलि सकल दिसिराज ।

बिलग बिलग होइ चलहु सब निज निज सहित समाज ॥ ९२ ॥

dōhā.

biṣṇu kahā asa bihasi taba bōli sakala disirāja.

bilaga bilaga hō'i calahu saba nija nija sahita samāja. 92.

Lord Vishnu then summoned all the different guardians of the world (i.e. the different gods) and advised them with a smile—‘Look, every one of you should march separately with your own retinue (group of companions).’ (Doha no. 92)

[Note—Till this point no attendant of Shiva has joined the marriage procession. All of them longed to do so; all of them wished to join in the celebration of the marriage of their Lord, Shiva. But they were hesitant to do so; they were feeling shy and reluctant to step forward because of the presence of a large number of magnificent looking gods and their divine attendants.

Vishnu realised this. After all, this was Shiva’s marriage procession, and not of any one of other gods. So therefore, the marriage procession should represent the groom, i.e. Lord Shiva, and this would be possible only when Shiva’s close attendants took the lead and joined the celebrations. The marriage party as of now looked like it was the procession of gods, with none of Shiva’s attendants in sight.

Vishnu is a wise and intelligent god. So he devised a method to help Shiva’s attendants join the procession. It would be possible only when he directs all the gods to move in separate groups, surrounded by their companions. For instance, the Water-God would move ahead with his companions, such as all the aquatic creatures. Shiva will find himself alone, and so he will be constrained to call his own attendants to mill around and form a distinct group around him.

When the rest of the gods would have moved away from Shiva to form their own groups, sufficient space would be created around Shiva so that his personal group of attendants can join him.]

चौ०. बर अनुहारि बरात न भाई । हँसी करैहहु पर पुर जाई ॥ १ ॥

बिष्णु बचन सुनि सुर मुसुकाने । निज निज सेन सहित बिलगाने ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bara anuhāri barāta na bhāī. haṁsī karaihahu para pura jāī. 1.

biṣṇu bacana suni sura musukānē. nija nija sēna sahita bilagānē. 2.

Lord Vishnu told the gods—‘Oh brothers! The marriage procession does not match the groom; it does not seem to be worthy of the groom¹. Do you all want to make yourselves a butt of ridicule, become laughing stocks, and invite jeers and cat-calls in someone else’s city²?’

The gods smiled³ at the words of Vishnu (because they understood what he meant). So they collected their own armies (companions, friends and attendants) and formed independent groups as they moved ahead in the marriage procession. (2)

[Note—¹The gods looked splendid in their best of attire and surrounded by heavenly paraphernalia. But a groom is the focal point of a ‘marriage procession’, and not the guests. In the present case, the groom was Shiva, and he was dressed in the most unconventional form, almost like a hermit (refer: Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 92 herein above). So it was obvious that the marriage procession did not match the groom; it was exactly the opposite of what it ought to ideally be. Had it been a marriage procession of some god it would have been a perfect party, but in the present situation it was at odds with the groom.

When the bride’s people would see such a procession, it is natural that they would laugh and jeer at it. And when this happens, Vishnu feared that these gods would immediately take offence because he knew about their nature of being very proud and egoist. There were chances that some amongst these gods would lose his cool and begin a ruckus in the bride’s place. This scenario would obviously most unsavoury, especially when it is the occasion of the marriage of one of their senior members, Lord Shiva.

There were also grave chances that Shiva himself would lose his cool and curse the gods for creating a situation that puts him in a precarious and hilarious position because it was on their behest that he had agreed to marry Parvati in the first place after being highly reluctant to do so initially.

²The gods live in the heaven, while Parvati’s father is the king of mountains on earth. Lord Shiva has two abodes—one is in the heaven like all other gods, and the other in on earth, on Mt. Kailash. He was doing meditation in the vicinity of Kailash. The marriage party of the bridegroom goes from the city of his residence to the city where the bride lives. This is what Vishnu meant—the gods had assembled from the heaven, ‘their city or place of residence’, and they were going to the bride’s place on earth, in the realm of the lofty snow-covered mountains of the mighty Himalayan range, i.e. ‘someone else’s city’.

The family of the bride, i.e. Parvati, and all the residents of that place were well aware that the groom, i.e. Shiva, is an ascetic, and that his attendants consist of ghosts and phantoms. Shiva is sure to call his faithful followers, the ghosts and the phantoms, to accompany him as his companions, friends and attendants. Obviously, the gods mingling with Shiva’s followers would be such a horrifying sight. The residents of Parvati’s place will laugh at the gods.

So it’s better that they segregate themselves from Shiva’s followers and move in independent groups.

³We shall read below that even Shiva has ‘smiled’ at Vishnu’s words. No one took offence of his words which were spoken in a light-hearted manner without any prejudice and intent to offend anyone.]

मनहीं मन महेसु मुसुकाहीं । हरि के बिंग्य बचन नहिं जाहीं ॥ ३ ॥

अति प्रिय बचन सुनत प्रिय केरे । भृंगिहि प्रेरि सकल गन टेरे ॥ ४ ॥

manahīm mana mahēsu musukāhīm. hari kē bingya bacana nahīm jāhīm. 3.
ati priya bacana sunata priya kērē. bhṛṅgihi prēri sakala gana tērē. 4.

Lord Mahesh (Shiva) smiled subtly in his Mana (mind and heart; without any outwardly expression to indicate how he felt at Vishnu's comments). He thought to himself that Hari (Vishnu) does not desist from his innate habit of cracking jokes and being humorous.¹

[Instead of taking Vishnu's word in the wrong light as being taunting, Shiva liked them and felt that his friend Vishnu is cracking a joke on the occasion of his marriage as friends often do. Shiva and Vishnu are of the same stature, and people of the same standing in society do not insult each other in public as a matter of principle. So, Shiva understood that the words of Vishnu are to be taken in the correct spirit and no wrong intention is to be construed in them.] (3)

Hearing these affectionate words from his dearest Lord² (Vishnu), Shiva summoned Bhṛngi (his constant companion and mount called Nandi or the Bull)³ and asked him to call all his (Shiva's) attendants. (4)

[Note—¹We draw an interesting conclusion if we examine the sequence of events here. Shiva's attendants, the ghosts and phantoms, were feeling shy to join the marriage procession of their Lord, Shiva, because of the huge gathering of gods in their splendid attires and paraphernalia. Shiva too did not wish to make his friends, the gods, feel ill-at-ease and odd by having to walk alongside such horrifying creatures, so Shiva kept quiet. Vishnu was watching everything closely. Since he was confident that Shiva will not take him wrong in any way, he decided to take the initiative and asked the other gods to move away and make space for Shiva's attendants.

Shiva realised what Vishnu meant, and that is why the former did not take umbrage at the latter's comments about the marriage party not being worthy of the groom and therefore the gods should move away.

Shiva was rather thankful to Vishnu that he enabled him to call his attendants without causing any discomfiture to other members of the marriage party, the gods. That is why Shiva 'smiled' thanfully at Vishnu's words, and immediately asked his mount, the Nandi or Bhṛngi, to call other followers to join the procession.

Shiva understood what Vishnu meant. He understood that Vishnu is hinting at his (Shiva's) followers who were ghosts and phantoms. But he did not feel offended at Vishnu's implied remarks—because though these words seemed to be taunting on their face value and would have angered any other god in Shiva's place, but they did not affect Shiva because they were a statement of facts, and were correct. It goes to the credit of Lord Shiva that he does not take offence when the truth is spoken, and he is unaffected by any comments made for him by anyone. This is the true way an ascetic and hermit should act in this world—he is expected to be above all emotions; he is expected to have full control over his sentiments; he is expected to be calm and poised in the face of the gravest provocation; he is expected to be unmindful of what the world says of him, good or bad, for the simple reason that he is detached from and dispassionate towards everything related to the gross world. 'Marriage' and 'phantoms as followers' as well as the physical description of Shiva with serpents wrapped around his body, garland of skulls dangling from his neck, ash smeared on the body etc., pertain to Shiva's that form which relates to the physical world of birth

and death. They do not describe Shiva's eternal, invisible, all-pervading and cosmic form as the 'Great Lord of Gods', the 'Maha-Deva'.

²The fact is, both Vishnu and Shiva are the same Supreme Being's two manifested forms with which the latter carries out two functions in creation—that of sustenance as Vishnu, and of conclusion as Shiva. Primarily therefore, Shiva and Vishnu are the same Supreme Being known as "Brahm". Hence, it does not matter what Vishnu says about Shiva, and vice versa.

Remember: Shiva is an ardent devotee of Lord Ram, and it is well known that Lord Ram is none but Lord Vishnu in his manifested form as a human. Shiva has Lord Ram firmly enthroned in the sanctum of his heart as his revered deity and Lord. He constantly repeats this holy name of Lord Ram and uses it not only to do meditation himself (refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 60) but also as a means of providing liberation and deliverance to a dying man by uttering this holy name in the latter's ears (refer: Baal Kand—Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19; Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 51).

The fact is that the divine story of Lord Ram's activities on earth were first conceptualised in the heart of Lord Shiva before they came to be known to the world as the epic known as "Ramayan" (refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 35).

In a similar vein, Lord Ram—who was a visible form Lord Vishnu who is primarily invisible—had explicitly said that no one is as dear to him as Lord Shiva (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, 2nd half of Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 2). The Lord has gone further to clearly assert that if one wishes to attain him then he must first worship Lord Shiva, thereby unequivocally establishing the mutual respect Ram and Shiva have for each other (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 3)

The idea is that one should not think that Vishnu had insulted Shiva in anyway whatsoever. That is why Shiva smiled and accepted Vishnu's advice as is evident here—Shiva has immediately called his Bull and asked him to summon all the attendants so that they can accompany him in the marriage procession.

If the gods will move with their own armies of followers and attendants, why should the main hero, the 'groom', be left behind from following suit?

³Shiva's Bull is his nearest and constant companion. He is also known by the name of "Brhingi"—refer: Amarkosha, 1/1/43.

Nandi is also Shiva's mount, guard and gate-keeper—refer: Kalidas' "Kumar Sambhava", 3/41.

So, when the need arose to call others, Shiva asked Nandi, or "Bhringi", to call out aloud and summon all the other attendants who were eagerly awaiting orders from their Lord to join his marriage procession.]

सिव अनुसासन सुनि सब आए । प्रभु पद जलज सीस तिन्ह नाए ॥ ५ ॥

नाना बाहन नाना बेषा । बिहसे सिव समाज निज देखा ॥ ६ ॥

कोउ मुखहीन बिपुल मुख काहू । बिनु पद कर कोउ बहु पद बाहू ॥ ७ ॥

बिपुल नयन कोउ नयन बिहीना । रिष्टपुष्ट कोउ अति तनखीना ॥ ८ ॥

siva anusāsana suni saba ā'ē. prabhu pada jalaja sīsa tinha nā'ē. 5.

nānā bāhana nānā bēṣā. bihasē siva samāja nija dēkhā. 6.

kō'u mukhahīna bipula mukha kāhū. binu pada kara kō'u bahu pada bāhū. 7.

bipula nayana kō'u nayana bihīnā. riṣṭapuṣṭa kō'u ati tanakhīnā. 8.

Hearing the command of Lord Shiva, their Master and Lord, all his attendants came there and bowed their heads in respect at the holy feet of the Lord (Shiva). (5)

They had varying kinds of vehicles, and were in different forms and attires. Even Lord Shiva could not resist at smiling at his own entourage! (6)

*¹Some of them had no mouths, while others had countless mouths.

Some of them had no legs or hands, while others had numerous limbs. (7)

Some had many eyes, while other had no eyes at all.

Some were well-fed and muscular, while others were emaciated and skinny.

(8)

[Note—*Remember: It is an army of Lord Shiva who is the Lord responsible for bringing to an end the life cycle of a creature who was created by Brahma (the creator), and was sustained by Vishnu (the sustainer) till the time the creature lived in this world.

The wise Supreme Being had to maintain some sort of ecological balance in his creation—so he devised a method to ensure this. He decided that all who were born would die one day. Otherwise, the earth will be overflowing with living beings and there would be neither space left for the new generation nor would the earth be able to sustain the increasing population which would be crowding its surface. Eventually, when the surface of the earth would be full and no space left on it, its inhabitants would be tumbling over to fill the space of the sky. If there was no such thing as ‘death’ then millions of years from the beginning of creation a time will come when the entire universe would be chock-a-block with creatures who would be baying for each other’s blood and grabbing each other’s throats to find place to make a foothold and stand!

Therefore, Shiva, the ‘god of death’, is a necessity of creation. Being the patron deity of death, Shiva is ‘surrounded by death’ at all times of his existence. Phantoms and ghosts represent this aspect of creation—death and the period of time when the dead creature lives as a ‘spirit’ till the opportunity comes to take a new birth once again. This is an endless cycle constituting of birth and death.

Hence, Shiva’s companions have been depicted in the scriptures as consisting of symbols of death—viz. spirits, ghosts and phantoms.

¹Some ate by absorbing nutrition through their bodies because they had no mouths, while others had countless little holes in their bodies to represent mouths.

Similarly, some simply rolled along like an amoeba because they had no limbs, while others were like octopuses with many tentacles representing as many limbs.

This basic idea applies to all the oddities in the attendants of Lord Shiva.]

छं०. तन खीन कोउ अति पीन पावन कोउ अपावन गति धरें । १ ।

भूषन कराल कपाल कर सब सद्य सोनित तन भरें ॥ २ ॥

खर स्वान सुअर सूकाल मुख गन बेष अगनित को गनै । ३ ।

बहु जिनस प्रेत पिसाच जोगि जमात बरनत नहिं बनै ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

tana khīna kō'u ati pīna pāvana kō'u apāvana gati dharēm. 1.

bhūṣana karāla kapāla kara saba sadya sōnita tana bharēm. 2.

khara svāna su'ara ṣṛkāla mukha gana bēṣa aganita kō ganai. 3.

bahu jinasa prēta pisāca jōgi jamāta baranata nahim banai. 4.

Some of Shiva's attendants had an emaciated and skinny body, while others were stout and muscular. Some were clean in their appearance, while others were dirty and had bad habits. (Chanda line no. 1)

The ornaments they wore were fearsome, and they held skulls in their hands. Their bodies were smeared with fresh blood. (Chanda line no. 2)

Their faces were like that of donkeys, dogs, pigs and jackals. In fact, they were so many variations in their forms and attire that it is not possible for one to count or enumerate them. (Chanda line no. 3)

There were rows after rows of hobgoblins, spirits, ghosts and ascetics¹ which no one can describe. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹The spirits and ghosts represented Shiva's association with 'death' as explained in a note appended to Chaupai line nos. 7-8 herein above.

The 'ascetics' who accompanied Lord Shiva represented the community of sages, ascetics and hermits for whom Lord is the patron deity.]

सो०. नाचहिं गावहिं गीत परम तरंगी भूत सब ।

देखत अति बिपरीत बोलहिं बचन बिचित्र बिधि ॥ ९३ ॥

sōraṭhā.

nācahiṃ gāvahiṃ gīta parama taraṅgī bhūta saba.
dēkhata ati biparīta bōlahiṃ bacana bicitra bidhi. 93.

All the ghosts merrily sang and danced to melodious tunes. They spoke funny languages and said words which were as absurd as their appearances.

Taken all in all, this sight was most ridiculous and absurd to behold¹. (Sortha/Doha no. 93)

[Note—¹Why was the 'sight so ridiculous to behold'? Well, it was a 'marriage party', and not a 'funeral procession'! It's so absurd and incredulous that ghosts and phantoms would accompany a bridegroom and his party of marriage guests. He is not going to attend his funeral but to the venue of his marriage, and ghosts and phantoms have their place in a cremation or burial ground, not at a marriage venue!]

चौ०. जस दूलहु तसि बनी बराता । कौतुक बिबिध होहिं मग जाता ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

jasa dūlahu tasi banī barātā. kautuka bibidha hōhiṃ maga jātā. 1.

[Sage Yagyawalkya observes—] The marriage procession finally took a shape that matched the groom¹.

As the party moved ahead (towards the bride's place), there was a lot of fun and gaiety on the way². (1)

[Note—¹This verse answers the objection raised by Vishnu that the marriage party was not in sync with the personality of the groom—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 92 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it.

²A parallel can be drawn with the events associated with Lord Ram's marriage. When his marriage procession headed by his father was on its way from Ayodhya, the capital city of Lord Ram, to Janakpur, the city of his bride Sita, similar gaiety and

merry-making is observed—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 302 and its preceding Chaupai line no. 8.]

इहाँ हिमाचल रचेउ बिताना । अति बिचित्र नहिं जाइ बखाना ॥ २ ॥

ihāṁ himācala racē'u bitānā. ati bicitra nahim jā'i bakhānā. 2.

Meanwhile, Himaachal (the king of the mountains and the father of Parvati) began preparations for the marriage ceremony of his daughter.

He got a wonderful marriage pavilion erected. It was so fantastic that it defies description¹. (2)

[Note—¹Refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 287—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 289 that describe the pavilion that was prepared for the marriage ceremony of Lord Ram with Sita. Though it is not described elaborately here, it is certain that Himaachal would have got a similar pavilion constructed for the marriage ceremony of his daughter Parvati with Lord Shiva.

Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, verse no. 86.]

सैल सकल जहँ लगि जग माहीं । लघु बिसाल नहिं बरनि सिराहीं ॥ ३ ॥

बन सागर सब नदीं तलावा । हिमगिरि सब कहँ नेवत पठावा ॥ ४ ॥

saila sakala jaham̃ lagi jaga māhīm. laghu bisāla nahim barani sirāhīm. 3.
bana sāgara saba nadīm talāvā. himagiri saba kahuṁ nēvata paṭhāvā. 4.

All the mountains and hills that were in existence anywhere in this world, whether they were small or huge but were nonetheless beyond description or counting (3)---

---All the different forests, oceans, rivers and ponds—Himgiri (or “Himaachal”, the king of snow-covered mountains) sent invitations to all of them to come and attend the marriage ceremony of his daughter. (4)

[Note—‘Himaachal’, the personified form of the mighty Himalayan mountain range, was the emperor amongst all the primary inhabitants of earth since the time the latter came into existence. Other primary inhabitants of earth were the countless mountains, hills, forests, rivers, lakes and ponds that covered the surface of the earth before other living beings began to make it their home.

The world is divided into two major categories—viz. the inanimate world and the animate world. The mountains, forests and rivers constitute the first category. However, for the purpose of our narration, these entities have been personified into virtual living entities.

Since “Himaachal” represented the mighty Himalayan mountain range which is the greatest mountain on earth, ‘he’ (personified Himalayas in the form of ‘Himaachal’) was like an emperor in the society of mountains and hills, and their cousins represented by the countless forests, rivers and ponds all of which were part of earth ever since its origin. So when his daughter was to be married he naturally invited all the members of his society consisting of other mountains, hills, rivers and ponds to participate in the ceremony.

Therefore, all these aspects of Nature and primary inhabitants of Mother Earth took the form of attractive males and females to join in the celebration marking the union of Lord Shiva with Parvati as narrated in verse no. 5 herein below.

Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, verse nos. 84—85.]

कामरूप सुंदर तन धारी । सहित समाज सहित बर नारी ॥ ५ ॥

गए सकल तुहिनाचल गेहा । गावहिं मंगल सहित सनेहा ॥ ६ ॥

kāmarūpa sundara tana dhārī. sahita samāja sahita bara nārī. 5.
ga'e sakala tuhinācala gēhā. gāvahim maṅgala sahita sanēhā. 6.

They (mountains, hills, forests, rivers, ponds and lakes) assumed beautiful physical forms, and formed groups of attractive males and charming ladies (5)---

---who then went to the abode of Himaachal, all the while affectionately singing auspicious songs befitting the occasion¹. (6)

[Note—This scene is reminiscent of the one which was witnessed at the time of Lord Ram's marriage. At that time, the gods and goddesses had assumed human forms and joined the celebrations.

¹Refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 318; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 321; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precede Doha no. 322.]

प्रथमहिं गिरि बहु गृह सँवराए । जथाजोगु तहँ तहँ सब छाए ॥ ७ ॥

पुर सोभा अवलोकि सुहाई । लागइ लघु बिरंचि निपुनाई ॥ ८ ॥

prathamahim giri bahu gr̥ha saṁvarā'e. jathājōgu tahaṁ tahaṁ saba chā'e. 7.
pura sōbhā avalōki suhā'ī. lāga'i laghu birañci nipunā'ī. 8.

Giri (the king of mountains) had already got a number of guest-houses readied for the invited guests. So these guests (who had come to attend the marriage ceremony) lodged themselves in suitable accommodations according to their liking¹. (7)

The city was beautifully decked up and it looked so exceptionally charming and fascinating to the beholder that even the wonderful abode of Brahma, the creator, faded in comparison to it². (8)

[Note—¹Refer to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 306 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 6, as well as Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it that describe how the guests of Lord Ram's marriage party were lodged in pleasant guest-houses.

²A similar idea is expressed when the city of Janakpur, the place where Sita, the wife of Lord Ram, lived, is being described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 213—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 214; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 314.]

छं०. लघु लाग बिधि की निपुनता अवलोकि पुर सोभा सही । १ ।

बन बाग कूप तड़ाग सरिता सुभग सब सक को कही ॥ २ ॥

मंगल बिपुल तोरन पताका केतु गृह गृह सोहहीं । ३ ।

बनिता पुरुष सुंदर चतुर छबि देखि मुनि मन मोहहीं ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

laghu lāga bidhi kī nipunatā avalōki pura sōbhā sahī. 1.

bana bāga kūpa tarāga saritā subhaga saba saka kō kahī. 2.

maṅgala bipula tōrana patākā kētu gr̥ha gr̥ha sōhahim. 3.

banitā puruṣa sundara catura chabi dēkhi muni mana mōhahīm. 4.

[This Chanda continues with the description of the majesty and prosperity of the city of Parvati's father Himwaan. Compare its magnificence with (i) the city of Janakpur, the capital of king Janak, the father of Sita and the father-in-law of Lord Ram as described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 212—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 214; and (ii) the city of Ayodhya, the capital of Lord Ram, as described in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 27—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 31.]

When one beheld the beauty and the majesty of the city of Himwaan, it appeared to him that the expertise of Bidhi, the creator of the world, was no comparison when his product, the rest of the world, was compared to the city of Himwaan¹. [In other words, the city of Himwaan was so grand and wonderful to behold that it did not appear that the creator has erected it. It appeared to be heavenly and out-of-the world in its beauty, grandeur and majesty.] (Chanda line no. 1)

Who can describe the beauty and charm of the (many) forests, gardens, wells and ponds as well as rivers and streams that were present there?² [That is, the wonderful city was well endowed with the elements of exceptional natural beauty in their best of finery.] (Chanda line no. 2)

Auspicious festoons, hangings, flags and banners in countless numbers adorned every household of the grand city³. (Chanda line no. 3)

The citizens of the city, all the ladies and the gents, had excellent personalities and were so ingenious that they captivated the mind and heart of wise sages⁴. [The sages were attracted by their good manners and behaviour. The citizens were well-cultured and educated; they led an exemplarily honourable life in a manner advised by the scriptures.] (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 314.

²Refer also to Ram Charit Manas—(i) Baal Kand, Doha no. 212 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that describes the beauty of Janakpur, the capital city of Sita, the wife of Lord Ram; (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos.1-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 29 that describes the city of Ayodhya, the capital of Lord Ram.

³Refer also to Ram Charit Manas—(i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 194; Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 296, and (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 9.

Refer also to Tulsidas' book "Parvati Mangal", verse nos. 86-87.

⁴Refer also to Ram Charit Manas—(i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 213 which describes the citizens of Janakpur, the city of Sita; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 26 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 that praises the citizens of Ayodhya, the capital of Lord Ram.]

दो०. जगदंबा जहँ अवतरी सो पुरु बरनि कि जाइ ।

रिद्धि सिद्धि संपत्ति सुख नित नूतन अधिकाइ ॥ ९४ ॥

dōhā.

jagadambā jaham̐ avatārī sō puru barani ki jā'i.

rid'dhi sid'dhi sampaniā sukha nita nūтана adhikā'i. 94.

How can one describe the grandeur, the majesty, the charm and the splendour of the city where the Mother of the World (i.e. Parvati, the cosmic Mother) has chosen to reveal herself (literally, has “taken birth” as the daughter of Himwaan named Parvati).

All the Riddhis and Siddhis (prosperities, successes and well-beings) as well as all sorts of wealth, happiness and joy overflowed in that city with renewed vigour and colour with the dawn of ever new day.¹ [That is, each day appeared to be better than its previous one. Happiness, joy, prosperity and wealth increased day-by-day in the city of Himwaan. There is no surprise in it—because the Goddess of the World, the Mother of the World, who controls all such virtues that grant happiness, joy, well-being, prosperity and successes in all spheres of life, had herself decided to come and take up a residence at that place.]² (Doha no. 94)

[Note—¹When Lord Ram’s marriage procession arrived at Janakpur, Sita had summoned all the Siddhis and Riddhis and had ordered them to serve the marriage party. Her orders were carried out immediately and the marriage party was hosted to the grandness that put to shame even the comfort and pleasure of heaven—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 306 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.

²Refer also to Ram Charit Manas—(i) Baal Kand, Doha no. 289 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that describe the city of Janakpur, the capital city of Janak, the father of Sita, and (ii) Baal Kand, Doha no. 297 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 that asserts that it is not possible to describe the beauty and grandeur of Ayodhya where the supreme Lord of creation has himself revealed in a human form as Lord Ram.

The idea of happiness and cheer spreading everywhere, in all the directions, and increasing day-by-day in the context of the birth of Lord Ram at Ayodhya—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 195 along with Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede it and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 26, and Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29 it is stated that the beauty and grandeur of Ayodhya was so great that it defied description even by experts.

The central idea in these narrations is that not only skilled humans like bards, poets and sages who were experts in narrating events as they happened, but even super-humans such as gods and celestial bards such as Narad were not able to describe the magical effect of the supreme Lord’s sport in this world.

Firstly, there are not enough words that can truly describe the grandeur of the Lord’s creation, and secondly, even if there were sufficient words to do so, those who think themselves to be experts in this job fail miserably in this endeavour because the greatness, the grandness and the magnificence of the Lord’s creation is so huge and unimaginable that their mind and its faculty simply cannot grasp it let, alone describe it.]

चौ०. नगर निकट बरात सुनि आई । पुर खरभरु सोभा अधिकाई ॥ १ ॥

करि बनाव सजि बाहन नाना । चले लेन सादर अगवाना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nagara nikaṭa barāta suni āī. pura kharabharu sōbhā adhikāī. 1.

kari banāva saji bāhana nānā. calē lēna sādara agavānā. 2.

When the news arrived that the marriage procession (of Lord Shiva) has arrived, there was a cheerful commotion in the city as it erupted in spontaneous joy that added to its charms¹. (1)

The reception party assigned the task of welcoming the guests adorned itself in all its finery and assembled all the paraphernalia needed to usher-in the honourable guests with all the grandeur and majesty suitable for the occasion². (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 302 and Doha no. 304 that describe the cheerful commotion at the time of the departure of the marriage part of Lord Ram from Ayodhya and its arrival at Janakpur respectively.

The “commotion and tumult” can be due to a pleasant news as in the present case, or it can be due to some mischief created by a powerful force as was the case when Kaamdeo created a huge tumult in the world as specifically mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 84. The reason for this tumult has been described in the verses that precede and follow this Chanda.

Another reason for a huge commotion in a city is when dark clouds of war hover over the horizon and a powerful army is poised for attack. This will be evident upon reading Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-10 and Chanda line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 35 that describe the assembly of the huge army of monkeys and bears that Lord Ram gathered together to launch an assault on Lanka, and when the Lord’s army actually attacked Lanka as described in Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 40.

We also read that when Lord Ram sent Angad as his emissary to Ravana in a last-minute attempt to avoid the war, there was a huge tumult in Lanka as soon as Angad arrived there—refer: Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 18.

Yet another reason when there is a tumult and commotion in any city is when some bad news breaks—as was the case in Ayodhya when the citizens learnt that their beloved prince, Lord Ram, was being sent to forest exile due to some whim of his step-mother Kaikeyi. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 49.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 304—to Doha no. 305 that describe how the reception party went out to welcome the marriage procession of Lord Ram at Janakpur.]

हियँ हरषे सुर सेन निहारी । हरिहि देखि अति भए सुखारी ॥ ३ ॥

सिव समाज जब देखन लागे । बिडरि चले बाहन सब भागे ॥ ४ ॥

hiyaṁ haraṣē sura sēna nihārī. harihi dēkhi ati bha'ē sukhārī. 3.

siva samāja jaba dēkhana lāgē. biḍari calē bāhana saba bhāgē. 4.

When the members of the reception team saw that section of the marriage party which consisted of the gods and their accompanying retinue, all of them felt delighted in their hearts. When they saw Lord Hari (Vishnu), their joy increased manifold and they felt very happy¹. (3)

But their enthusiasm ebbed and was replaced by horror when they saw Lord Shiva and his companions². Virtually all of them³ were so scared and terrified that they fled from there along with their vehicles. [That is, the majority of the members of the reception party sent by king Himwaan to receive the incoming guests were horrified at the sight of ghosts and phantoms who accompanied Lord Shiva as part of the marriage procession that they mounted their vehicles and fled from the site.] (4)

[Note—¹Lord Vishnu or Hari was the most charming in the entire procession. The stunning beauty and fabulous charm of the Lord has been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 146—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 148 when the Lord had revealed himself before Manu and Satrupa to bless them upon

successful completion of their Tapa (penance and austerity) that they did with the wish to see the Lord.

Again, we read about the Lord heavenly charm when his physical form as Lord Ram is described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 219 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 3-8; (ii) Doha no. 233 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8; and (iii) Doha no. 327 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-10, and Chanda line nos. 1-4.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 93 along with its Chaupai line nos. 6-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 herein above that describe the unconventional members of the retinue that accompanied Lord Shiva in the marriage procession.

³But, not all fled; only the weak-hearted ran away. This will be clear in the next verse which says that some of the courageous and wise had patience, and they stayed put there. Those who ran away were generally the youngsters who had accompanied the elders to enjoy the novel spectacle of receiving a marriage party and its accompanying gaiety and merriment.]

धरि धीरजु तहँ रहे सयाने । बालक सब लै जीव पराने ॥ ५ ॥
 गाँ भवन पूछहिं पितु माता । कहहिं बचन भय कंपित गाता ॥ ६ ॥
 कहिअ काह कहि जाइ न बाता । जम कर धार किधौं बरिआता ॥ ७ ॥
 बरु बौराह बसहँ असवारा । ब्याल कपाल बिभूषन छारा ॥ ८ ॥

dhari dhīraju tahaṁ rahē sayānē. bālaka saba lai jīva parānē. 5.
 ga'eṁ bhavana pūchahiṁ pitu mātā. kahaḥiṁ bacana bhaya kampaṭa gātā. 6.
 kahi'a kāha kahi jā'i na bātā. jama kara dhāra kidhaurṁ bari'ātā. 7.
 baru baurāha basahaṁ asavārā. byāla kapāla bibhūṣana chārā. 8.

Those who were wise and sensible (a reference to the elderly members of the reception party) maintained their cool and showed patience. But children and youngsters (who had no knowledge of the reality of the situation) fled for their lives in terror¹. (5)

When they ran to their homes, their parents were aghast at their condition, and enquired from them the reason for their fear. The children trembled in fear as they answered their parents as follows—(6)

'What can we say; there is nothing worthy of narrating (about the marriage party). The sight we saw is incredulous: is it an army of Yam (the god of hell and death) or a marriage procession? [With ghosts and phantoms dancing merrily, it looks as an army of the god of death has come to invade our city. It is not believable that a marriage party can consist of ghosts and phantoms and be such absurdly horrifying!] (7)

Listen—the bridegroom is sitting on a bull and is covered with snakes, skulls and ash²! [What kind of a groom is he? It's a nightmarish scene.]³ (8)

[Note—¹Those who were elderly and wise knew all about Parvati's Tapa and the reason for which she did it—i.e. that she wanted to marry Shiva. These elderly people knew who Lord Shiva was and about his companions. They were well aware that these ghosts and phantoms don't mean any harm, and that their master, Lord Shiva, is the most compassionate and kind Lord in creation. How can he ever cause harm to the city as well as its inhabitants when he has come to marry its princess, Parvati, the daughter of king Himwaan? Refer: Doha no. 95 herein below which precisely addresses this point, along with the note that accompanies it.

But the ‘children’—a metaphor used to include all those who were ignorant of the reality like young and inexperienced children—became horrified at the sight of Lord Shiva’s companions. They did not know the significance of Parvati’s Tapa, and who Lord Shiva actually was whom she wanted to marry.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 92 herein above, and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 95 herein below.

³It is a scene straight out of a comedy. Where has anyone seen a groom as described in these lines, and furthermore where has anyone seen a marriage party of ghosts and phantoms?]

छं०. तन छार ब्याल कपाल भूषन नगन जटिल भयंकरा । १ ।
 संग भूत प्रेत पिसाच जोगिनि बिकट मुख रजनीचरा ॥ २ ॥
 जो जिअत रहिहि बरात देखत पुन्य बड़ तेहि कर सही । ३ ।
 देखिहि सो उमा बिबाहु घर घर बात असि लरिकन्ह कही ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

tana chāra byāla kapāla bhūṣana nagana jaṭila bhayaṅkarā. 1.
 saṅga bhūta prēta pisāca jōgini bikāṭa mukha rajanīcarā. 2.
 jō ji'ata rahihi barāta dēkhata pun'ya baṛa tēhi kara sahī. 3.
 dēkhihi sō umā bibāhu ghara ghara bāta asi larikanha kahī. 4.

[The terrified children reported to their parents—] ‘The groom has his body smeared in ash, and he wears serpents and skulls by way of ornaments. Except these coverings, he is otherwise naked, sports a thick lock of knotted hairs on his head, and generally looks very fearful¹. (Chanda line no. 1)

He is accompanied by horrifying ghosts, phantoms, ogres and female spirits who have strange faces and mouths, and who move out only during the night (“Rajnichar”)². (Chanda line no. 2)

Anyone who survives even after seeing this sort of a marriage procession is very lucky and fortunate (because the sight of ghosts, phantoms, ogres and spirits is so horrifying that it is sufficient to make an ordinary person faint out of fear and die due to shock that accompanies it). (Chanda line no. 3)

---Only such a person who survive this shock and awe would be able to see (witness) the marriage (of Shiva with Parvati) (because the rest would be already dead by the time the ceremony actually starts)³.

Children said these kinds of things in each household of the city (when they rushed-in terrified to report to their parents about what they had seen on the outskirts of the city where the marriage procession of Lord Shiva had arrived). (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 and 4 that precede Doha no. 92.

²The entities mentioned here are called “Rajnichar” because they move out and wander in the world only during the dark hours of the night. The word “Rajnichar” has two parts—viz. “Rajni” = night, “Char” = to move about.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 93.

³In other words, only those persons who do not die out of shock when they see such a wild-looking groom and his horrifying companions in the marriage party

would be able to actually witness the marriage ceremony, because the rest of the people would die out of shock at this sight.]

दो०. समुझि महेस समाज सब जननि जनक मुसुकाहिं ।
बाल बुझाए बिबिध बिधि निडर होहु डरु नाहिं ॥ ९५ ॥

dōhā.

samujhi mahēsa samāja saba janani janaka musukāhim.
bāla bujhā'ē bibidha bidhi niḍara hōhu ḍaru nāhim. 95.

When the parents realised that the children meant the marriage procession of Lord Shiva, they smiled and reassured their wards in a variety of ways that they have nothing to fear about, and so they must cheer up. (Doha no. 95)

[Note—We have read in Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 95 herein above that while the children had run away in terror at the sight of Lord Shiva's marriage procession, those who were wise and knowledgeable, i.e. the elderly citizens, maintained their calm and poise. The reason is obvious—the children did not know anything about the groom, i.e. Lord Shiva, and being ignorant of the Lord's cosmic form as the Lord who is one of the mighty Trinity Gods who is responsible for conclusion of creation, the children became terror-stricken just because they saw the ghosts, phantoms, ogres and spirits. The ignorant children did not know that these entities simply represented the third element of creation, i.e. 'death', over which Lord Shiva presides. They did not know that contrary to this visually horrifying spectacle, the Lord himself is quite the opposite of it as he is an embodiment of the grandest virtues of benediction, benevolence, mercy, compassion, kind and grace.

But the elders in the society were aware of these facts. So the parents remained calm and smiled at the ignorance of the children as well as the way their wards trembled in fear just like parents would react when they see their children getting unnecessarily scared at the sight of the most harmful of things such as a rope or a hopping balloon thinking them to be snakes or hobgoblins respectively.]

चौ०. लै अगवान बरातहि आए । दिए सबहि जनवास सुहाए ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

lai agavāna barātahi ā'ē. di'ē sabahi janavāsa suhā'ē. 1.

The receiving party welcomed the marriage procession (on the outskirts of the city) and escorted it to the city where the members of the marriage party were given beautiful lodging places that were comfortable and pleasant¹. (1)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4, 6 that precede Doha no. 306, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows this Doha where it is narrated how the marriage party of Lord Ram was welcomed by the advance reception party that was sent to welcome it, and then brought inside the city of Janakpur and lodged at pleasant places especially earmarked for them that had all the things of comfort one could expect.

Refer also to Baal Kand, Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 99 herein below that says that after the feast organised to welcome the marriage party was over, all its members went back to their respective lodges.

This means that each important member of the marriage party was provided an independent residential unit where he and his companions stayed. There were countless gods, some senior and other juniors, and they were all given appropriate lodges. Lord Shiva was given a wonderful place to stay that must have been different from those of others for two reasons—one reason is obvious, and it is that he was the ‘bridegroom’, and the second reason is that he was a senior god being the third god of the Trinity who is responsible for the conclusion of creation, and occupies an honourable place in the hierarchy of the heaven just like Lord Vishnu who is the sustainer of creation and is the second god of the Trinity, and Lord Brahma who is the creator and is the first god of the Trinity.]

मैनाँ सुभ आरती सँवारी । संग सुमंगल गावहिं नारी ॥ २ ॥

कंचन थार सोह बर पानी । परिछन चली हरहि हरषानी ॥ ३ ॥

maināṁ subha āratī saṁvārī. saṅga sumaṅgala gāvahiṁ nārī. 2.
kañcana thāra sōha bara pānī. parichana calī harahi haraṣānī. 3.

Maina, the mother of Parvati, arranged auspicious items needed to perform an “Aarti”¹ of the groom, and was accompanied by honourable women who sang auspicious, melodious songs befitting the occasion². (2)

She had arranged the items of the Aarti on a golden plate which looked beautiful as she held it in her well adorned hands³. Then she proceeded to welcome the bridegroom and wave lighted lamps before him in an auspicious gesture that is traditionally employed to welcome and show great respect to honourable guests⁴. [And in this particular case, it’s not only a gesture to welcome and show honour to the bridegroom but also marks the beginning of the marriage celebrations.] (3)

[Note—¹The “Aarti” is a formal gesture wherein lighted earthen lamps filled with oil are waved before an honourable guest as a sign of welcome and respect. The plate in which these earthen lamps are arranged also contains other items that are regarded as auspicious, such as rice grains, turmeric, blades of ‘Durba grass’, which is a special class of grass that is dark in shade, and other such items.

In the present case however, this Aarti marks the beginning of the marriage ceremony with the formal welcoming of the bridegroom.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 346 that describes the same scene when Sita’s mother had arranged the Aarti to welcome the bridegroom, Lord Ram.

³Maina’s hands were adorned with bangles and garlands etc. Her palms were coloured with “Mehandi”, or a paste made from leaves of the myrtle plant.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 346 where we read about Sita’s mother going to welcome her Lord Ram, the bridegroom, with Aarti arranged on a golden plate which was full of other items needed for such auspicious occasions.]

बिकट बेष रुद्रहि जब देखा । अबलन्ह उर भय भयउ बिसेषा ॥ ४ ॥

भागि भवन पैठीं अति त्रासा । गए महेसु जहाँ जनवासा ॥ ५ ॥

bikaṭa bēṣa rudrahi jaba dēkhā. abalanha ura bhaya bhaya'u bisēṣā. 4.
bhāgi bhavana paiṭhīm ati trāsā. ga'e mahēsu jahāṁ janavāsā. 5.

[A repeat of the events that occurred on the outskirts of the city, where the children were so terrified when they saw Lord Shiva for the first time that they ran away from

there in fear, is witnessed once again here when Maina and her companions saw Lord Shiva, also known as “Rudra”, for the first time.]

When they (Maina and her companions) saw the strange form of Rudra¹ (another name of Lord Shiva) and his accoutrements (snakes wrapped around his near naked body, skulls worn as a garland, ash smeared on the entire body, huge lock of matted hairs on the head etc.), the women were overcome with great fear in their hearts². (4)

They were so terrorised at this scary sight that they ran away in fear to their respective homes (like the children had done earlier)³.

Meanwhile, Lord Mahesh (Shiva) went away to his own place of residence where the marriage party was lodged⁴. (5)

[Note—¹Lord Rudra is that form of Shiva that concludes this creation. The word “Rudra” itself means ‘anger’. It implies that when this creation becomes highly sinful and pervert, when moral turpitude and degeneration is at its zenith, Lord Rudra who represents that aspect of the Supreme Being which is responsible for maintaining discipline in this creation, becomes angry. He then decides to severely punish the offenders by unleashing death and destruction, but at the same time ensuring that the noble and the wise creatures of this creation do not suffer for no fault of theirs. However, since “Rudra” represents the angry form of the Supreme Being that unleashes death and destruction on the wayward world, he is iconographically depicted to be accompanied by elements that represent ugly faces of this creation and its result in the form of death and destruction—viz. the ghosts, the phantoms and the spirits.

The use of the word “Rudra” here is significant—because it indicates clearly that the groom is none else but the almighty ‘Third God of the Trinity’.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 16 where it is said that it is a nature of women to be easily frightened.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 95 that describe how the children were so scared when they saw Shiva and his fearful companions that they ran away from the site out of fear.

⁴When we closely read the sequence of events it will be clear that Maina and her companions had went out to welcome Lord Shiva at the time the marriage party had entered the city and was heading to the place where they were to be lodged. Since Shiva was the bridegroom, he occupied a pride-of-place in the long procession and could be easily located.

Another thing to note is that Shiva remained unaffected by such a reception on two occasions—once on the outskirts of the city when the children raised a hue and cry and ran away screaming, and now once again inside the city when the terrified women did not even perform the Aarti, which is customary and essential, but ran away from the place. Imagine how bad one would feel if he is shown such a reception by the host? Not doing the Aarti and running away is an insult of the guest.

But Lord Shiva is so forgiving and compassionate that he did not mind anything. He is so detached from the world and so unconcerned with its formalities that nothing mattered to him as long as he fulfils the desire of his devotee who in this case was Parvati who had done Tapa to access the Lord has her companion for life. Being a true ascetic, worldly expression of honour and respect was meaningless for Shiva.]

मैना हृदयँ भयउ दुखु भारी । लीन्ही बोलि गिरीसकुमारी ॥ ६ ॥

अधिक सनेहँ गोद बैठारी । स्याम सरोज नयन भरे बारी ॥ ७ ॥

जेहिं बिधि तुम्हहि रूपु अस दीन्हा । तेहिं जड़ बरु बाउर कस कीन्हा ॥ ८ ॥

mainā hr̥dayaṁ bhaya'u dukhu bhārī. līnhī bōli girīsakumārī. 6.
adhika sanēhaṁ gōda baiṭhārī. syāma sarōja nayana bharē bārī. 7.
jēhiṁ bidhi tumhahi rūpu asa dīnhā. tēhiṁ jaṛa baru bā'ura kasa kīnhā. 8.

Maina was especially very sad in her heart and full of remorse. She called her daughter (Parvati)---(6)

---and made her sit on her lap with great affection¹. Her dark eyes were full of tears (of regret, remorse, pain and sorrowfulness at the fate of her daughter, and the uncertainty that now bares its tongue)².

She spoke to her daughter in an affectionate tone that was tinged with sadness and remorse—‘It’s such an irony that the creator who has bestowed upon you such grace and beauty is the same one who has made the groom so fearful and ugly.

[What an irony it is really. Couldn’t the creator, who is supposed to be wise and who is supposed to be the one who decides the fate of every single creature of his creation, select a suitable groom for you when such a choice is in his discretionary powers? Couldn’t he see that there is no match between you and the groom? What grave error of judgement has he made?]³ (8)

[Note—¹The mother felt very sorry for her daughter’s fate. Though she loved Parvati very much and was concerned for her welfare as is evident from reading Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 71, but her love for her daughter had now overwhelmed her and aggravated her emotional condition because she had never expected that her beloved daughter is to be married to such a groom as Shiva appeared to be in physical terms.

Earlier when her husband had tried to assuage her feelings and get over her fears and apprehensions by convincing her that the best line of action for Parvati would be to do Tapa to be able to marry Shiva as prophesised by sage Narad (refer: Doha no. 71 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that follow it), she had thought that her fears were groundless as the father of Parvati too loved his daughter as much as she does, and therefore he cannot think ill of her.

But now when Maina saw her future son-in-law, she was horrified. Love and affection for her daughter heaved inside her sad heart as she became remorseful and regretted her decision to allow Parvati to do Tapa to have Shiva as her husband. She regretted that had she been aware of the type of groom Parvati is fated to have, she would have not allowed her to do Tapa under any circumstance. This will be clear below when we read Doha no. 96 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4, as well as Chaupai line nos. 1-4.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 255—to Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 256 which describe a similar situation when Sita’s mother was very sad that after no one had been successful in lifting the bow upon which the marriage of her daughter hinged, the delicate prince of Ayodhya, i.e. Lord Ram, has now been asked to accomplish this almost impossible task. Now what would happen if he too fails?

³There are other instances in Ram Charit Manas where the creator is accused of acting irrationally and unwisely. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 49; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 119; (iii) Chanda line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 201; (iv) Chanda line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 276.]

छं०. कस कीन्ह बरु बौराह बिधि जेहिं तुम्हहि सुंदरता दई । १ ।
जो फलु चहिअ सुरतरुहिं सो बरबस बबूरहिं लागई ॥ २ ॥

तुम्ह सहित गिरि तें गिरौं पावक जरौं जलनिधि महुँ परौं । ३ ।
घरु जाउ अपजसु होउ जग जीवत बिबाहु न हौं करौं ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

kasa kīnha baru baurāha bidhi jēhim tumhahi sundaratā da'ī. 1.
jō phalu cahi'a surataruhim sō barabasa babūrahim lāga'ī. 2.
tumha sahita giri tēm giraurm pāvaka jaraurm jalanidhi mahum paraum. 3.
gharu jā'u apajasu hō'u jaga jīvata bibāhu na haum karaurm. 4.

'How strange it is that the creator who has made you so lovely has chosen to make your groom so ugly and unconventional! (Chanda line no. 1)

The wonderful fruit that is supposed to adorn the tree of gods is forced to appear, against its will, on the acacia tree¹. (Chanda line no. 2)

I will jump off this mountain, or burn myself, or fall into an ocean with you (i.e. commit suicide with you)--- (Chanda line no. 3)

---But I will not allow this marriage to happen as long as I am alive, irrespective of whatever bad name it gives to the family.² (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹Here, Parvati's beauty is compared to the wonderful 'fruit', and her marriage to a handsome groom is compared to the association of this fruit with the evergreen 'tree of gods'. Instead of this, the foolish creator had chosen to marry Parvati with the odd-looking Shiva which is likened to forcing the wonderful fruit to appear on the acacia tree much against its wishes and contrary to natural justice. But what can one do if the creator goes off his mind and creates nuisance because he is so powerful, and he lords over the fate of all in this creation, with no one to challenge his authority?

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 251—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 252 where Sita's father king Janak has also expressed similar distress when none of the invited kings and princes could lift and break the bow to qualify to marry Sita. At that time he has declared that inspite of the ignominy attached to his daughter remaining unmarried, he will not break his vows.]

दो०. भई बिकल अबला सकल दुखित देखि गिरिनारि ।
करि बिलापु रोदति बदति सुता सनेहु सँभारि ॥ ९६ ॥

dōhā.

bha'im bikala abalā sakala dukhita dēkhi girināri.
kari bilāpu rōdati badati sutā sanēhu saṁbhāri. 96.

All the women-folk became restless when they observed that the wife of the king of the mountains (i.e. Maina) had become exceedingly sad and remorseful.

Maina was lamenting and wailing in a woeful manner when her love for her daughter heaved in her heart, forcing her to be overwhelmed with emotions of regret, remorse and sorrow (at the misfortune that has befallen her beloved daughter who stared at the prospect of having a bleak future if she was forced to marry a groom who was not suitable for her)¹. (Doha no. 96)

[Note—¹Even Sita's mother lamented woefully, felt very distressed and sad when no one could break the bow to qualify to marry her daughter—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 255.]

चौ०. नारद कर में काह बिगारा । भवनु मोर जिन्ह बसत उजारा ॥ १ ॥

अस उपदेसु उमहि जिन्ह दीन्हा । बौरै बरहि लागि तपु कीन्हा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nārada kara mair̥m kāha bigārā. bhavanu mōra jinha basata ujārā. 1.
asa upadēsu umahi jinha dīnhā. baurē barahi lāgi tapu kīnhā. 2.

[Maina, the mother of Parvati, continued to lament—] ‘What offence did I do to Narad that he sought vengeance upon me by throwing a spanner in the happiness of my home and ruining it¹--- (1)

---by giving such an advice to my daughter Uma that she would do severe Tapa (penance) to secure a crazy husband for herself*²? (2)

[In other words, why has Narad created this mischief? What wrong did I do to him that he became so angry with me that he decided to punish me by undermining the peace and happiness of my family by brain-washing my innocent daughter to undergo severe hardships associated with doing Tapa just to request for a absurd boon that would make it possible for her to marry the craziest of husbands one can ever imagine in this world? Narad behaved as if he is our well-wisher and a saintly person, but I could not imagine that he had some ulterior motives in his heart. I could not imagine that my beloved daughter's groom would be so odd and repugnant that one would even tremble by simply looking at him.]

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 78 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that follow it.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 74 that describe the sort of Tapa Parvati did; (ii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 75 where Brahma, the creator, has acknowledged the severity of Parvati's Tapa, saying that no one had ever done such a severe Tapa in the past; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 78 where the Sapta-rishis too have acknowledged this fact that Parvati had done a very severe Tapa.

Even the Sapta-rishis had accused Narad of ruining the life of Parvati by giving her a wrong and misleading advice—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precedes Doha no. 80.

Though Narad has been accused by Maina here and by the Sapta-rishis earlier of misleading Parvati to do Tapa for having Shiva, who looked most crazy and unconventional from his external appearances, as her husband, but when we examine the story closely we come to the conclusion that the great celestial sage Narad had no intentions whatsoever of harming the interests of Parvati or her family at all. It was her father Himwaan who had asked Narad to prophesise about her future as the great sage was a “Trikaalagya”, i.e. one who could see the events that occur in a creature's life, in the present, in the past as well as the future.

Now, since it was written in Parvati's destiny that she would be married to someone who matched the crazy appearance of Lord Shiva, what would one expect Narad to say—tell lies to please Parvati's parents that everything was rosy and honey in her life, or tell them the truth? Well, being a sage, it was not expected that Narad would tell the parents of Parvati any sort of lie, and therefore he divulged the truth. Then, Parvati's anxious father had himself asked Narad to advice some way out. The sage had clearly told him that though it is not possible to change one's destiny that

has been already decided by the Creator, but efforts can be made to select the best possible choice from the available options. In the present set of circumstances, the best line of action for Parvati was to marry Lord Shiva because the Lord is all-powerful and almighty, and therefore his majestic presence by the side of Parvati would neutralise all the negative effects that her bad stars portend for her future. So what wrong was he doing? All these events are narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 65—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 71.

*A girl of a marriageable age and her parents try their best to get a good groom for her. After all, the girl has to spend the rest of her life with the chosen man. If the girl is pretty like Parvati was, it is natural to expect that her future husband would be smart and handsome, and not as odd as Lord Shiva is. This was the precise point that the Spata-rishis had raised when they tried to prevail upon Parvati to abandon the idea of having Shiva as her husband because he would not fit to be by her side, and instead opt for Lord Vishnu who is fabulous to behold and is praised even by the Vedas, the holy scriptures. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 80.]

साचेहुँ उन्ह केँ मोह न माया । उदासीन धनु धामु न जाया ॥ ३ ॥

पर घर घालक लाज न भीरा । बाँझ कि जान प्रसव कै पीरा ॥ ४ ॥

sācēhuṁ unha kēṁ mōha na māyā. udāsīna dhanu dhāmu na jāyā. 3.
para ghara ghālaka lāja na bhīrā. bāṁjha ki jāna prasava kai pīrā. 4.

Indeed it is true that he (Shiva, the groom) has no worldly attachments and attractions of any kind (because neither does he long for respect and expect honour, nor does he show-off his powers and majesty by external pomp and pageantry like the other gods were doing)¹. He is dispassionate and detached so much so that he has no (yearning for) wealth, a home, or an off-spring. (3)

[Now, turning her ire on Narad, Maina pours scorn at him—] Really, he (Narad) has no shame or any fear worth the name in ruining the home of others². Say, what does a barren woman know about the pain of childbirth?³ (4)

[Note—¹Shiva's external appearances and demeanours clearly showed that the Lord had no attractions for worldly things and materials of comfort and glamour. He appeared to be an incarnate ascetic who is not at all concerned about what to wear and how the world treats him. Shiva showed his true nature and life-style by coming to the bride's place dressed in his usual attire, and surrounded by his usual companions. There was no trace of pretension or glamour with Shiva. This in itself is a wonderful character and shows honesty and trustworthiness.

When Maina went to perform Shiva's "Aarti", her companions ran away in terror at the Lord's sight—because he was half-naked, had ash and serpents all over his body, wore a garland around his neck. Obviously, no one would expect a 'bridegroom' to be dressed like this. Even Maina did not perform the Aarti to welcome Lord Shiva. Let alone the Lord being her daughter's future husband, not doing Aarti is an insult to a guest; it is highly uncivil and un-courteous not to do Aarti of a guest. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 96.

The remarkable thing to note here is that Lord Shiva did not mind and take offence at this apparent rude reception that he received at Himwaan's place. Earlier also, when the marriage party had arrived on the outskirts of the city, the children had run away screaming when they saw Lord Shiva, an action that would normally be deemed as being highly rude and insulting for the guest and his companions. Refer:

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 95.

But Shiva had not taken affront at all, and had remained calm and neutral. He had cheerfully entered the city and gone to the place assigned to lodge in before the marriage ceremony—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1 and 5 that precede Doha no. 96.

All these events clearly hint that the great Lord Shiva had no concern for such worldly gestures and formalities. He was merely fulfilling the wish of his dearest of Lord, Sri Ram, who has asked him to marry Parvati, as well as to fulfil the wish of his devotee in the form of Parvati who had done severe Tapa to have him as her husband. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 76—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 77 where the conversation between Lord Ram and Shiva is narrated; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 75—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 76 that clearly say that Lord Shiva was anguished by the mental sufferings of his devotee, who in this case is quite obviously Parvati.

So we come to the incontrovertible conclusion that all the observations of Maina here are correct. Shiva is dispassionate and detached from the affairs of this mundane world so much that he was not at all affected and ruffled by such a rude reception; he is semi-naked and wears no ornaments to mean that he has no attraction for worldly wealth and a desire to show-off his majesty, and no amount of temptations would lure him to get distracted from his path of renunciation; he is accompanied by ghosts and phantoms implying he has no home but prefers a cremation ground instead; he has ash smeared over his body to clearly indicate that he is an ascetic, and so on and so forth.

²That is, Narad is not afraid of the sin he is committing by robbing the peace and happiness of others by giving them such advice as he has given my husband Himwaan, and my daughter Parvati due to which I have had to face such an unsavoury situation of having to have a wild person as my daughter's future husband, something I had never imagined would happen.

³The woman who gives birth to a child has to suffer immense pain at that moment which is beyond imagination of a woman who has never borne a child. This is a figure of speech to mean that since Narad is a wondering mendicant, he cannot understand the pain and agony a householder suffers from when the girl of the family is married to a crazy groom who is absolutely not suitable for her. This mental agony and emotional suffering is experienced by only those who have a family and have to face constant ridicule and scornful remarks from the world, from their kith and kin, if one of the members of the family gets an unsuitable spouse, and that too, willingly, and not out of ignorance. In this case, Parvati had done voluntary Tapa to get Shiva as her husband, and had the permission of her parents. The latter cannot feign ignorance or say that Parvati did not pay heed to their advice and blame her bad luck that she got a crazy husband. The world would ask them—“Then, why did you allow your daughter to do Tapa to get such a wild husband when you were aware of her fate? Couldn't you, as parents, find a better groom for her?” What answer will they give to the world?

Maina means that since Narad is a wondering mendicant who has no family or home, he does not understand the pain and suffering parents have to undergo if their child's future is jeopardised.]

जननिहि बिकल बिलोकि भवानी । बोली जुत बिबेक मृदु बानी ॥ ५ ॥

अस बिचारि सोचहि मति माता । सो न टरइ जो रचइ बिधाता ॥ ६ ॥

करम लिखा जौं बाउर नाहू । तौ कत दोसु लगाइअ काहू ॥ ७ ॥

तुम्ह सन मिटहिं कि बिधि के अंका । मातु व्यर्थ जनि लेहु कलंका ॥ ८ ॥

jananihi bikala bilōki bhavānī. bōlī juta bibēka mṛdu bānī. 5.
asa bicāri sōcahi mati mātā. sō na ṭara'i jō raca'i bidhātā. 6.
karama likhā jaum̄ bā'ura nāhū. tau kata dōsu lagā'i'a kāhū. 7.
tumha sana miṭahim̄ ki bidhi kē ankā. mātu byartha jani lēhu kalaṅkā. 8.

When Bhavani (Parvati) saw the immense emotional turmoil through which her mother was passing, she spoke to her in pleasant, calm and reassuring voice. Her words were mature and laced with great wisdom. (5)

She said, 'Mother, realise that whatever the Creator has written in one's destiny cannot be changed by anyone; it is irrevocable¹. (6)

If it is written in my fate that I will get a crazy groom, why should anyone blame others (in this case Narad)². (7)

Is it possible for you to change what the Creator ("Bidhi") has written (in my destiny)³? [Since the answer is a definite "no", then—] Oh Mother, why do you unnecessary invite infamy and taint (to the name of our honourable family by throwing tantrums and creating an unsavoury scene when the eyes of the whole world is upon our family and when the marriage party and the groom have already arrived; do you think that it is possible and wise to call-off the marriage now at this late stage without inviting scorn and ridicule for the rest of my life?)' (8)

[Note—¹The same idea was conveyed by sage Narad to Parvati's father, Himwaan, in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 68.

²Parvati had defended Narad even in the front of her detractors, the Sapta-rishis as narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 80; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 81.

The sort of groom that Parvati was destined to have is described earlier in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 67 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8.

³A similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 282 where Kaushalya, the mother of Lord Ram, says that one has to either suffer from pain or enjoy things in one's life depending on one's own actions and deeds, and no one should be either blamed or credited for any of the eventualities.]

छं०. जनि लेहु मातु कलंकु करुना परिहरहु अवसर नहीं । १ ।
दुखु सुखु जो लिखा लिलार हमरें जाब जहँ पाउब तहीं ॥ २ ॥
सुनि उमा बचन बिनीत कोमल सकल अबला सोचहीं । ३ ।
बहु भाँति बिधिहि लगाइ दूषन नयन बारि बिमोचहीं ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

jani lēhu mātu kalaṅku karunā pariharahu avasara nahim̄. 1.
dukhu sukhu jō likhā lilāra hamarēm̄ jāba jahaṁ̄ pā'uba tahim̄. 2.
suni umā bacana binīta kōmala sakala abalā sōcahim̄. 3.
bahu bhāṁti bidhihi lagā'i dūṣana nayana bāri bimōcahim̄. 4.

'Oh Mother! Don't do anything that will scar the great reputation of our honourable family and create a situation that will give nothing but ignominy. Keep aside

emotions, stop wailing and being sentimental for this is not the time for these things. (Chanda line no. 1)

Whatever is written in my fate, sorrow or happiness, I will get it wherever I go. [Even if you become stubborn and force me to retract from my vows of marrying Shiva in the hope that you will marry me to someone else where I will find happiness, you are sadly mistaken because if my destiny ordains sorrows and sufferings for me I will have to face them and endure them no matter where I go. Even if you keep me unmarried, I will still have to suffer. So please act wisely and abandon this childishness that you are showing now.]¹ (Chanda line no. 2)

When all the assembled women heard these polite and pleasant words of Uma (Parvati)--- (Chanda line no. 3)

---all of them blamed the Creator in various ways (that he is accustomed to creating confusing by making the world full of oddities, ironies and paradoxes)² even as tears (of grief and sympathy for her) flowed from their eyes. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹A similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 150.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 119 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 2-8, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it where such ironies and paradoxes are described.]

दो०. तेहि अवसर नारद सहित अरु रिषि सप्त समेत ।

समाचार सुनि तुहिनगिरि गवने तुरत निकेत ॥ ९७ ॥

dōhā.

tēhi avasara nārada sahita aru riṣi sapta samēta.
samācāra suni tuhinagiri gavanē turata nikēta. 97.

At that time, the king known as “Tuhin-giri” (i.e. Himwaan) went to his home (where Parvati was trying to pacify her agitated mother) along with sage Narad and the Sapta-rishis. (Doha no. 97)

[Note—The king was very wise. He brought along with him all the sages who were involved in this episode: (i) Narad because he was the one who had been instrumental in motivating Parvati to do Tapa for Shiva, and because he was accused both by the Sapta-rishis as well as by Parvati’s mother of ruining her future, and (ii) the Sapta-rishis because they had tried to detract Parvati on two occasions by trying to persuade her to abandon her vows of marrying Lord Shiva, and giving the general impression that Narad always throws a spanner in the future happiness of a person by giving a wrong advice.

He did this to clear the air and remove all traces of doubts in the mind of his daughter as well as her mother. When Narad and the Sapta-rishis would stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a friendly manner and explain things up front, all confusions and consternations would be dispelled. It is necessary to do it because otherwise both Parvati and her mother would harbour ill-will towards these great and holy sages who were honourable and had no ill-intention to run the future of Parvati. They were just doing their duties as best as they could.

Narad would get a chance to explain why he had suggested Lord Shiva as the possible groom for Parvati (refer: Doha no. 98 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4).

The Sapta-rishis would get a chance to signal that whatever they had said about Narad was part of a strategy to test Parvati’s devotion for Shiva and her sincerity, and

they had not actually meant to decry Narad or deride Narad's character. It was just a part of the test that they were asked to conduct by Lord Shiva himself.]

चौ०. तब नारद सबही समुझावा । पूरुब कथाप्रसंगु सुनावा ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

taba nārada sabahī samujhāvā. pūruba kathāprasaṅgu sunāvā. 1.

Then Narad reassured everyone (that there was no wrong-doing on his part by advising Parvati to do Tapa to have Lord Shiva as her husband, and that everything will be okay) by telling them the story of the previous life of Parvati¹. (1)

[Note—¹This story has been narrated earlier in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 48—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 75.

Narad told the entire story to defend himself before everyone and to tell them the reason why he had given Parvati the advice which he did, because it was he who had motivated her to do Tapa to obtain Lord Shiva as her husband in the first place, and in the second place because the Sapta-rishis as well as Parvati's mother Maina have openly accused him of malfeasance and misusing his stature as a great sage on whom every one relies by giving a wrong advice to Parvati and her parents which has resulted in so much consternation and turmoil in their lives.]

मयना सत्य सुनहु मम बानी । जगदंबा तव सुता भवानी ॥ २ ॥

अजा अनादि सक्ति अबिनासिनि । सदा संभु अरधंग निवासिनि ॥ ३ ॥

जग संभव पालन लय कारिनि । निज इच्छा लीला बपु धारिनि ॥ ४ ॥

mayanā satya sunahu mama bānī. jagadambā tava sutā bhavānī. 2.

ajā anādi sakti abināsini. sadā sambhu aradhaṅga nivāsini. 3.

jaga sambhava pālana laya kārini. nija icchā līlā bapu dhārini. 4.

Extolling the divine nature of Parvati, Narad said to Maina, her mother—‘Listen to my truthful words¹ Maina. Your daughter is no ordinary girl; she is the Mother of the Universe or the living world (“Jagdamba”) and is universally known as “Bhavaani”, the eternal consort of Lord Bhava (which is one of the many names of Lord Shiva)².

(2)

She is the ‘Shakti’ (cosmic Energy, Power and Authority) that is ‘Aja’ (an entity that is without a birth; an entity that simply ‘reveals or manifests’ without undergoing the usual process of coming into being or getting born like ordinary living beings), that is ‘Anaadi’ (an entity without a beginning and an end; an entity that is eternal), and is ‘Avinaashi’ (that which is imperishable and not subject to decay)³.

She occupies an eternal place by the side of Lord Shiva as his divine consort, and is an inseparable half of the Lord⁴. (3)

It is she, as the cosmic Mother of creation, who has made it possible for the world to come into being. She is originator, the sustainer and care-taker, and the final concluder of this creation. She takes a form as she wishes (and no one is responsible for it)⁵. (4)

[Note—¹Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 68 that also reiterates the fact that Narad never speaks a lie.

²Even the Sapta-rishis have praised Parvati by honouring her with this title of being a “Jagdamba”, as well as the fact that she is the eternal companion of Lord Shiva in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 81 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 8.

³Even modern science has proved that “cosmic energy” of the creation possesses these virtues—it is unborn, it is everlasting, and it is imperishable. Energy can be converted from one form to another, but it does not decay and vanish into oblivion. For example, energy of friction converts into heat, sound and light energies; the kinetic energy converts into electric energy in an electric generator, and electric energy converts into light and heat energies in an electric bulb. But energy never vanishes for good.

The word “Shakti” here alludes to the metaphysical conception of creation and its regulation by Brahm, the Supreme Being, who uses his cosmic dynamic powers to control it. Brahm himself does not physically involve in any activity, but employs his power and authority to carry out his wishes just like an emperor who does not do anything personally, physically, but employs his powers and authority as an emperor to get things done as he wishes them to be done.

⁴The power and authority of Brahm, and the dynamic energy needed to carry out his wishes are represented by Brahm’s “Shakti”. Shakti is as indispensable for Brahm as an emperor’s power and authority is for him. This fact is metaphorically and iconographically depicted in the form of Shakti being the consort of Brahm, or Parvati being the inseparable half of Shiva.

Here, the cosmic “Shakti” (dynamism, power, energy and authority) of “Brahm” (the Supreme Being and the cosmic Lord of creation), and “Brahm” himself have been personified in the form of ‘Parvati’ and ‘Shiva’ respectively.

⁵This is because of what has been said in Chaupai line no. 3—viz. she is ‘without a birth’, she is ‘eternal’, she is ‘imperishable’. These virtues preclude her taking a physical birth with a gross body in the usual manner in which ordinary mortal creatures are born by the process of conception in a mother’s womb. She just ‘reveals or manifests’ herself like fire and wind elements.]

जनमीं प्रथम दच्छ गृह जाई । नामु सती सुंदर तनु पाई ॥ ५ ॥

तहँहुँ सती संकरहि बिबाहीं । कथा प्रसिद्ध सकल जग माहीं ॥ ६ ॥

janamīm prathama daccha gr̥ha jāī. nāmu satī sundara tanu pāī. 5.

tahañhuñ satī sañkarahi bibāhīñ. kathā prasid'dha sakala jaga māhīñ. 6.

[Now, Narad tells the assembly the story of Parvati’s previous life in brief.]

In her previous life she went and took birth¹ in the household of Daksha as his daughter named “Sati” who had a beautiful form. (5)

Even in that birth as Sati, she was married to Lord Shiva. This story is world-famous (and therefore I am not cooking-up any cock-and-bull imaginary story to justify my actions or to mislead you). (6)

[Note—¹The wording is perfect; it endorses what has already been said in verse nos. 3-4 herein above. The cosmic Shakti went and revealed it’s self in a physical form which the world recognised as the ‘birth of a daughter of Daksha Prajaapti’. In that manifestation of Shakti, her father named her Sati in accordance with the convention amongst all the living beings who assign a name to their sons and daughters. Like in the present case where revelation of Shakti as “Parvati” has not been recognised by anyone around her, “Sati’s” true form was also unknown to her father Daksha in the previous case.]

एक बार आवत सिव संगी । देखेउ रघुकुल कमल पतंगी ॥ ७ ॥

भयउ मोहु सिव कहा न कीन्हा । भ्रम बस बेषु सीय कर लीन्हा ॥ ८ ॥

ēka bāra āvata siva saṅgā. dēkhē'u raghukula kamala pataṅgā. 7.

bhaya'u mōhu siva kahā na kīnhā. bhrama basa bēṣu sīya kara līnhā. 8.

*Once upon a time, she was coming alongside (i.e. accompanying) Lord Shiva to his abode¹ when they saw Lord Ram² who is like a sun for the lotus-like race of kings tracing their lineage to Raghu³. (7)

Unfortunately, Sati was overcome with delusions (and thought that Lord Ram was an ordinary human prince)⁴. Lord Shiva tried his best to overcome Sati's doubts and delusions about Lord Ram (by trying to convince her that what she thinks of Lord Ram is not correct, and that she should banish such irreverent and impertinent thoughts from her mind)⁵, but she wouldn't listen to his advice⁶.

She was so overcome with delusions and its accompanying doubts that she (did not believe what Shiva had said and therefore) assumed the form of Sita (Lord Ram's wife) (in order to verify Shiva's assertions about Lord Ram and to ascertain the Lord's divinity by testing him personally)⁷. (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 48.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 49.

³This is a metaphoric way of saying that just like the sun makes the lotus flower open its petal and reveal its magnificent beauty, the birth of Lord Ram (who was Lord Vishnu in a human form) in the family of kings descending from the ancient king Raghu of Ayodhya added glory and honour to the entire race of these kings.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 50 along with Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that follow it.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 51.

⁶Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 51.

⁷Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 52.

*This entire episode of Sati's delusion, her assuming the form of Sita, and being abandoned by Lord Shiva has been narrated elsewhere also—(i) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga 7; and (ii) Shiva Puran, Rudra Samhita, Sati-Khanda, Canto nos. 24—26.]

छं०. सिय बेषु सतीं जो कीन्हा तेहिं अपराध संकर परिहरीं । १ ।

हर बिरहँ जाइ बहोरि पितु कें जग्य जोगानल जरीं ॥ २ ॥

अब जनमि तुम्हरे भवन निज पति लागि दारुन तपु किया । ३ ।

अस जानि संसय तजहु गिरिजा सर्बदा संकर प्रिया ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

siya bēṣu satīm jō kīnhā tēhim aparādha saṅkara pariharīm. 1.

hara birahaṅ jā'i bahōri pitu kēm jagya jōgānala jarīm. 2.

aba janami tumharē bhavana nija pati lāgi dārūna tapu kiyā. 3.

asa jāni sansaya tajahu girijā sarbadā saṅkara priyā. 4.

Lord Shankar (Shiva) had then discarded Sati for the sin she had committed by assuming the form of Sita (because Lord Shiva worshipped Sita's husband Lord Ram as his revered deity and honourable Lord God, and Sati had violated all norms of ethical behaviour, known as "Dharma", by assuming the form of another person's wife, and that too of Lord Ram in order to test his integrity)¹. (Chanda line no. 1)

Sati was overcome with immense sorrow and grief arising out of Shiva abandoning her, and she then went and burnt herself in the fire during the religious sacrifice of her father (Daksha)². (Chanda line no. 2)

Now she has taken a birth in your (Maina's) home, and she has done a severe Tapa for her own husband³. (Chanda line no. 3)

Understand this situation, and realising the fact of the matter you must abandon doubts of every kind, and harbour no consternations of any kind whatsoever. Understand the fact that "Girijaa" (literally, the daughter of Giri, the king of the mountains) is eternally dear to Lord Shankar (Shiva) and is the Lord's eternal beloved consort.' (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 56; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 57.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 58; (ii) Doha no. 59 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it; and (iii) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 61—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 64.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65.]

दो०. सुनि नारद के बचन तब सब कर मिटा बिषाद ।

छन महँ ब्यापेउ सकल पुर घर घर यह संबाद ॥ ९८ ॥

dōhā.

sunī nārada kē bacana taba saba kara miṭā biṣāda.

chana mahūṁ byāpē'u sakala pura ghara ghara yaha sambāda. 98.

*Hearing the reassuring words of sage Narad, all the grief and sorrow that had been overwhelming everyone till now were dispelled (immediately)¹.

In a moment this news spread like a wild-fire throughout the city, and every household became aware of it. (Doha no. 98)

[Note—¹The family members of Parvati as well as the citizens of the kingdom of the mountains had thought that Narad had misled Parvati and given her a wrong advice—that she should do Tapa to get a crazy husband like Shiva appeared to be when one limited his vision to the Lord's external form and features. But now they became aware of Parvati's true identity as being the cosmic "Shakti" and the eternal consort of Shiva. Hence, it will be actually wrong on her part to marry someone else, especially when she had asked the Lord God, at the time of her death, to grant her the boon that in whatever life-form she is born she should have unwavering devotion and love for Lord Shiva and be able to serve the Lord—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 65.

An important observation is to be made here. Till now everyone doubted Narad; even the seven Sapta-rishis had openly accused him of giving a wrong advice to Parvati to do Tapa for Shiva—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 78—to Doha no. 79. Then how come suddenly they all began to trust him now?

The answer is obvious: Narad has now revealed the past of Parvati in the presence of the Sapta-rishis, which means they are upholding the truth of what he says, they stand witness to his statement. He hadn't done it earlier, which was the reason why doubts existed in everyone's mind. No one knew who Parvati actually was, that she had herself chosen to be eternally devoted to Lord Shiva even before she took birth in the present form as the daughter of Himwaan and Maina. So this clarification by Narad settled the dust and made everyone happy.

*According to "Shiva Puran", 2/3/8/29-48, Narad had explained these things to Himaachal, the father of Parvati, in the very beginning, which is perhaps the reason why he was calm and convinced throughout.]

चौ०. तब मयना हिमवंतु अनंदे । पुनि पुनि पारबती पद बंदे ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

taba mayanā himavantu anandē. puni puni pārabatī pada bandē. 1.

[The revelations of Narad had a profound and stunning affect on everyone so much so that besides erupting in joy at the thought that they are lucky to have the cosmic Shakti of the Supreme Being amongst them in a living form as their beloved princess and loving daughter by the name of Parvati, the parents felt obliged to worship Parvati's feet as a token of showing respect to the 'living goddess' and thanking her for choosing them to be her parents.]

Then, Maina and Himwant were overjoyed with delight. They repeatedly worshipped the holy feet of Parvati (because they now realised that she is not their daughter in the conventional sense, but was the cosmic Shakti who has given them the rarest of rare privilege to become her 'parents' when she decided to reveal herself in their household as the living goddess by the name of Parvati). (1)

नारि पुरुष सिसु जुबा सयाने । नगर लोग सब अति हरषाने ॥ २ ॥

लगे होन पुर मंगलगाना । सजे सबहिं हाटक घट नाना ॥ ३ ॥

nāri puruṣa sisu jubā sayānē. nagara lōga saba ati haraṣānē. 2.

lagē hōna pura maṅgalagānā. sajē sabahiṁ hāṭaka ghaṭa nānā. 3.

[Not only Parvati's parents, but the entire city erupted in joy.]

All the citizens of the city, whether they were women, men, children or adults, all of them were very jubilant and exhilarated. (2)

Auspicious songs were sung, and their accompanying music began playing in the entire city. Everyone decorated their homes and home-fronts by putting up decorated golden pitchers (or vases) and other paraphernalia. (3)

[Note—A moment ago there was all-encompassing gloom, dejection and despair. But the tide turned all of a sudden, and cheer rang out through the length and the breath of the city as soon as the news spread of what Narad had said.

We observe a similar development unravelling itself in relation to Lord Ram's marriage with Sita. Sita's marriage was centered on a vow made by her father, king Janak, that anyone who would break a bow known as "Pinak" would marry her. A huge congregation was arranged where all the mighty kings and princes of the time had assembled to try their luck. But no one could as much as move the bow, let alone lifting it and breaking it. Even Janak had declared that Sita will have to remain

unmarried for life. Obviously this was bad news for all, and a thick pall of gloom and despair descended upon the city of Janakpur. Then as it happened, Lord Ram broke the bow, and as soon as the bow broke the city erupted in a thunder of cheer and joy. These developments have been elaborately narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 249—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 265.]

भाँति अनेक भई जेवनारा । सूपसाज जस कछु व्यवहारा ॥ ४ ॥

सो जेवनार कि जाइ बखानी । बसहिं भवन जेहिं मातु भवानी ॥ ५ ॥

bhāṁti anēka bhaī jēvanārā. sūpasāstra jasa kachu byavahārā. 4.
sō jēvanāra ki jāi bakhānī. basahim bhavana jehim mātu bhavānī. 5.

On this occasion, a grand feast was organised for the marriage party in which delectable food of so many different varieties and having all hues of tastes were served that no one could count them. (4)

How can one be able to describe the variety and taste of the dishes that were served at this feast at a place where Mother goddess known as “Bhavaani” herself lived? (5)

[Note—A similar grand feast was organised for the marriage party of Lord Ram at Janakpur—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 328 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it, and Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that follow it.]

सादर बोले सकल बराती । बिष्नु बिरंछि देव सब जाती ॥ ६ ॥

बिबिध पाँति बैठी जेवनारा । लागे परुसन निपुन सुआरा ॥ ७ ॥

नारिबृंद सुर जेवँत जानी । लगीं देन गारीं मृदु बानी ॥ ८ ॥

sādara bōlē sakala barātī. biṣnu birañci dēva saba jātī. 6.
bibidha pāṁti baiṭhī jēvanārā. lāgē parusana nipuna su'ārā. 7.
nāribṛnda sura jēvaṁta jānī. lagim dēna gārim mṛdu bānī. 8.

When the meal was ready, Himwaan respectfully invited for all the members of the marriage party to come and partake of the meal¹. He invited everyone, such as Lord Vishnu, Biranchi (the creator Brahma), and all other gods of all denominations. (6)

All of them sat down in many rows to eat the meal which was then served by rows and rows of cooks and their helpers². (7)

When the women-folk came to know that the guests have starting eating their meals, they began singing melodious songs befitting the occasion. These songs were full of jest and contained taunting or teasing lyrics. [This was done to entertain the guests as they ate their meals.]³. (8)

[Note—¹Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 328 which tells us that king Janak, the father of Sita, had invited the members of the marriage party of Lord Ram at the time when a feast was held to celebrate the Lord's marriage at Janakpur.

²Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3 and 7 that precede Doha no. 328 which tell us that every guest was given an appropriate seat by Janak when they came to partake of the meal served during the feast organised to celebrate the marriage of Lord Ram with Sita.

³During this meal too, the women sang songs with teasing lyrics as this was the custom in those days. It was done to entertain the guests. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1, 6-7 that precede Doha no. 329.]

छं०. गारीं मधुर स्वर देहिं सुंदरि बिंज्य बचन सुनावहीं । १ ।
 भोजनु करहिं सुर अति बिलंबु बिनोदु सुनि सचु पावहीं ॥ २ ॥
 जेवँत जो बढ्यो अनंदु सो मुख कोटिहूँ न परै कह्यो । ३ ।
 अचवाँइ दीन्हे पान गवने बास जहँ जाको रह्यो ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

gārīm madhura svara dēhīm sundari bingya bacana sunāvahīm. 1.
 bhōjanu karahīm sura ati bilambu binōdu suni sacu pāvahīm. 2.
 jēvaṁta jō barhyō anandu sō mukha kōṭihūṁ na parai kahyō. 3.
 acavāṁi dīnhē pāna gavanē bāsa jahaṁ jākō rahyō. 4.

Pretty women sang sweet and melodious songs that had teasing lyrics. (Chanda line no. 1)

The gods enjoyed these songs and felt very amused¹ so much so that they prolonged their meals and ate for an unduly long time. (Chanda line no. 2)

The atmosphere of joy and happiness that prevailed on that occasion when the guests were enjoying their meals was so exhilarating that it is not possible for one to either measure it or narrate it. (Chanda line no. 3)

At the end of the meal, the guests were offered water to rinse their mouth. After that, betel leaves were served as mouth-freshners. Then, all the invited guests went back to their respective places where they had been lodged². (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 329 where it is described that the guests enjoyed the meal as such songs were sung during the marriage feast organised to mark the marriage of Lord Ram with Sita at Janakpur.

²Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 329 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it.]

दो०. बहुरि मुनिन्ह हिमवंत कहँ लगन सुनाई आइ ।
 समय बिलोकि बिबाह कर पठए देव बोलाइ ॥ ९९ ॥

dōhā.

bahuri muninha himavanta kahuṁ lagana sunā'ī ā'i.
 samaya bilōki bibāha kara paṭha'ē dēva bōlā'i. 99.

The sages (here referring to the Sapta-rishis) once again¹ called Himwant (the father of Parvati) and told him the auspicious time that was fixed for the marriage rituals.

When the right time arrived for the marriage rituals arrived, he (Himwant) sent an invitation to the gods to come². (Doha no. 99)

[Note—¹The sages had told Himwaan the time of marriage earlier also—refer: Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 91

²Refer: “Parvati Mangal”, verse no. 115.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 312—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 313 with respect to the invitation that was sent by king Janak, the father of Sita, to king Dasrath, the father of Lord Ram, to come and participate in the marriage rituals when the right time arrived.

In the case of Lord Ram's marriage with Sita, it was Narad who had brought the time-table outlining the auspicious moments as determined by Brahma, the creator, and gave it to Sita's father Janak (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 312). In Shiva's case, the auspicious moment was determined by savants whom Himwaan consulted, and this time-table was then taken by the Sapta-rishis and handed over to Brahma (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 91).]

चौ०. बोलि सकल सुर सादर लीन्हे । सबहि जथोचित आसन दीन्हे ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

bōli sakala sura sādara līnhē. sabahi jathōcita āsana dīnhē. 1.

He (Himwaan) respectfully invited all the gods to the venue of the marriage rituals, and escorted each of them to their respective seats. (1)

[Note—King Janak had also done the same thing during the marriage of his daughter Sita with Lord Ram—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 321.

Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, Chanda no. 14.]

बेदी बेद बिधान सँवारी । सुभग सुमंगल गावहिं नारी ॥ २ ॥

bēdī bēda bidhāna saṁvārī. subhaga sumāṅgala gāvahiṁ nārī. 2.

A beautiful altar (where the religious rituals related to marriage, such as worship of gods etc., were to be conducted) was consecrated in accordance with the directions given in the Vedas (the ancient scriptures) by the ladies even as they sang with a melodious voice auspicious songs befitting the occasion. (2)

सिंघासनु अति दिव्य सुहावा । जाइ न बरनि बिरंचि बनावा ॥ ३ ॥

बैठे सिव बिप्रन्ह सिरु नाई । हृदयँ सुमिरि निज प्रभु रघुराई ॥ ४ ॥

siṅghāsanu ati dibya suhāvā. jā'i na barani birañci banāvā. 3.

baiṭhē siva bipranha siru nāī. ḥṛdayaṁ sumiri nija prabhu raghurāī. 4.

There was a magnificent and divinely beautiful throne which was so fabulous and wonderful to look at that it is not possible to describe its majestic sight, its glamour and its charm. It appeared to have been made by 'Biranchi' (the creator Brahma) himself (especially for this occasion).[That is, the throne on which the groom was to be seated was exceptionally fabulous and grand so much so that it appeared that the creator had designed and moulded it himself with his expert hands and employing his skills as an expert craftsman.] (3)

On this remarkable throne sat Lord Shiva after he had customarily bowed his head before the Brahmins and other elders of the society (“Vipra”)¹, and had remembered (his dear and revered) Lord Ram in his heart². (4)

[Note—¹Paying one's respects to elders and the learned Brahmins is a tradition from ancient times. It is observed at the beginning and the end of any function. If the Brahmins and other elders are present personally, then one actually lowers one's head before them as a gesture of respect, and if they are not physically there then this is done mentally.

²Lord Ram is the Lord God and the most beloved deity of Lord Shiva. It is Lord Ram's holy name "RAM" that Shiva uses as a tool during meditation, employing it as a sacred Mantra or spiritual formula.

So, when he stepped on the throne kept reserved for him, he paid his respects to the elders represented by the Brahmins by bowing before them, and to his beloved deity and Lord, Sri Ram, by remembering him in his heart.

When Lord Ram had arrived at the marriage pavilion, he was also seated on a specially earmarked throne—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 319.]

बहुरि मुनीसन्ह उमा बोलाई । करि सिंगारु सखीं लै आई ॥ ५ ॥

देखत रूपु सकल सुर मोहे । बरनै छबि अस जग कबि को है ॥ ६ ॥

bahuri munīsanha umā bōlā'īm. kari singāru sakhīm lai ā'īm. 5.

dēkhata rūpu sakala sura mōhē. baranai chabi asa jaga kabi kō hai. 6.

Once Shiva (the bridegroom) was seated, the sages (who were conducting the marriage rituals) called for Uma (the bride) to be brought in. Uma's companions adorned her in the finest of ornaments in the best of finery and brought her (to the marriage pavilion)¹. (5)

She looked so pretty, glamorous and majestic that the gods were overwhelmed by her charm and majesty. Indeed, who is so competent in this world so as to be able to describe the fabulous image of Uma (who was the Mother of the Universe or the entire living world; a personified form of Mother Nature whose beauty is beyond the abilities of humans to describe in words that have limited scope)². (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-8 that precede Doha no. 322 where it is described how Sita was adorned and brought inside the marriage pavilion by her friends.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 322 along with Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precedes it, and Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that follow it where we read almost the same happenings in relation to Sita when she came to the pavilion.

Refer also to "Parvati Mangal", verse no. 126.]

जगदंबिका जानि भव भामा । सुरन्ह मनहिं मन कीन्ह प्रनामा ॥ ७ ॥

सुंदरता मरजाद भवानी । जाइ न कोटिहुँ बदन बखानी ॥ ८ ॥

jagadambikā jāni bhava bhāmā. suranha manahim mana kīnha pranāmā. 7.

sundaratā marajāda bhavānī. jā'i na kōṭiḥuṁ badana bakhānī. 8.

Realising that she was the Mother of the Universe or the entire living world ("jagadambikā")¹, and the eternal divine consort of Lord Bhava (i.e. Lord Shiva, who was a "Mahadeva": the Great God who was senior to all the gods taken together)², all the assembled gods paid their obeisance to her by mentally bowing their heads before her³. (7)

Bhavaani (the consort of Bhava) was so beautiful and charming to behold that she represented the bench-mark by which one measures the virtues of beauty, prettiness and loveliness. There was no one who was more pretty and lovely than her in this world. It is not possible even by millions of tongues attempting to describe her glamorous appearance and her charming image to be ever able to do so.⁴ (8)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 98 herein above.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 98 herein above.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 323 with respect to Sita.

Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, verse no. 127.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 323 where the same thing is asserted with respect to Sita’s beauty.

Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, verse no. 126.]

छं०. कोटिहुँ बदन नहिं बनै बरनत जग जननि सोभा महा । १ ।
 सकुचहिं कहत श्रुति सेष सारद मंदमति तुलसी कहा ॥ २ ॥
 छबिखानि मातु भवानि गवनीं मध्य मंडप सिव जहाँ । ३ ।
 अवलोकि सकहिं न सकुच पति पद कमल मनु मधुकरु तहाँ ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

kōṭihūṁ badana nahim banai baranata jaga janani sōbhā mahā. 1.
 sakucahim kahata śruti sēṣa sārada mandamati tulasī kahā. 2.
 chabikhāni mātu bhavāni gavanīm madhya maṇḍapa siva jahāṁ. 3.
 avalōki sakahim na sakuca pati pada kamala manu madhukaru tahāṁ. 4.

*Even by millions of tongues it is not at all possible to describe the great beauty and exceptional charm of the form of the Mother of the Universe or the entire living world. (Chanda line no. 1)

Who is the dim-witted Tulsidas (the narrator of this epic story called Ram Charit Manas) when even such great orators as the Sruti (the Vedas), the Sesh (the legendary serpent with a thousand head and equal number of tongues) and goddess Saarda (goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of speech, language and learning) are unable to do so. [In other words, when such experts with words and languages as the (a) ‘scriptures’ who were able to put into words all that could be said and explained, (b) the ‘Sesh’ who has thousands of tongues, and (c) even the patron goddess of speech, learning and languages, goddess Saraswati, fail to even give an idea of how glamorous and magnificent Uma looked during that time, how is it therefore possible for Tulsidas, who is a mere mortal human being, to ever scratch even the surface of such description?]¹ (Chanda line no. 2)

Mother Bhavaani, who was an embodiment of beauty, majesty and glamour, went to the center of the pavilion where Lord Shiva was already seated. (Chanda line no. 3)

She was hesitant to look directly at her eternal husband, so her mind was fixed on the lotus-like feet of Lord Shiva² just like a bee fixes its attention on the lotus flower. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—*Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, verse nos. 123—126.

¹This is a standard method and a figure of speech adopted by Tulsidas when he wishes to restrain himself from describing some scene because he feels that his description would never do justice to the actual sight because of the limitations that a language and its words inherently have.

A typical example is found in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 318 where Tulsidas says that no attempt to describe the delight that was felt by Sita's mother when she saw Lord Ram as a bridegroom can be successful even if thousands of Saarda and Sesh try to do it in seven Kalpas—or virtually countless numbers of years.

Besides this, Tulsidas has clearly stated in Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 103 that “he will refrain from narrating or describing the glamour of Lord Shiva and his divine consort Bhavaani because they are the Father and the Mother of this entire creation or the whole living world (and hence it would be indecent, rude, imprudent and impertinent for him to do so).”

²A similar situation is described on different occasion with respect to Lord Ram and Sita in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand where we read that Sita too had felt shy from looking directly at her beloved Lord, Sri Ram. Some of the instances are the following: (i) Chanda line no. 13 that precedes Doha no. 325; (ii) Doha no. 326; (iii) Chanda line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 327; and (iv) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 264.

The reason for such hesitation on part of Sita is explained by Tulsidas in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 248 which essentially mean that though Sita longed to look unblinkingly at Lord Ram yet she refrained from doing so because it would look very indecent and impolite for her to do so in the midst of an assembly where all the elders of the society were present and closely watching her every move.]

दो०. मुनि अनुसासन गनपतिहि पूजेउ संभु भवानि ।

कोउ सुनि संसय करै जनि सुर अनादि जियँ जानि ॥ १०० ॥

dōhā.

muni anusāsana ganapatihi pūjē'u sambhu bhavāni.

kō'u suni sansaya karai jani sura anādi jiyāñ jāni. 100.

Receiving instructions from the sages who were conducting the rituals, Lord Shambhu (Shiva) and Bhavaani (Parvati or Uma) together worshipped Lord Ganpati (Ganesh).

Let no one express incredulity at this (i.e. at Shiva and Parvati worshipping Ganesh) because the Gods are immortal and eternal¹. (Doha no. 100)

[Note—¹Lord Ganesh is worshipped in the beginning of any religious event; his worship is obligatory for success in any endeavour. Now the paradox is that Ganesh is a son of Shiva and Parvati, and therefore it looks absurd and unbelievable that he is worshipped by his own parents.

This apparent paradox and unconventional thing is answered in the 2nd line of this Doha which asserts that the gods are eternal and immortal, and therefore they do not take a birth again to become a son or daughter of someone. They are always present, the only thing is that at some point of time they become visible and at another point of time they are not.

Besides this, they have to conform to the law of Nature which says that everything that has a physical existence must come to an end. So therefore, these eternal and immortal gods exist in a subtle and sublime form as the ‘Soul’ that has no physical form or a gross body till the time they are required to assume one such form

according to the exigencies of the situation. So is the case with Lord Ganesh. He is an eternal God who took the physical form as the son of Shiva and Parvati when it was required of him to do so.

Shiva and Parvati were not worshipping their son here, but that eternal God who is revered by all the gods and is worshipped at the beginning of any religious ceremony as one of the divine forms of Brahm, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being.

It is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 323 that Lord Ganesh was worshipped at the beginning of the marriage rituals of Lord Ram and Sita.

चौ०. जसि बिबाह कै बिधि श्रुति गाई । महामुनिन्ह सो सब करवाई ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

jasi bibāha kai bidhi śruti gāī. mahāmuninha sō saba karavāī. 1.

The great sages who were conducting the rituals of marriage had all the nuptial ceremonies and rites associated with marriage that are mentioned in the Srutis (Vedas) performed in great detail¹. (1)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 323 where we read that during the marriage ceremony of Lord Ram with Sita, the priests had performed similar rites in accordance to established tradition.

Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, verse nos. 130-132 where Tulsidas has narrated the different steps of the marriage ritual in detail. These steps are narrated herein below also in Chaupai line nos. 2-3 in brief.]

गहि गिरीस कुस कन्या पानी । भवहि समरपीं जानि भवानी ॥ २ ॥

पानिग्रहन जब कीन्ह महेसा । हियँ हरषे तब सकल सुरेसा ॥ ३ ॥

gahi girīsa kusa kan'yā pānī. bhavahi samarapīm jāni bhavānī. 2.

pānigrahana jaba kīnha mahēsā. hiyaṁ haraṣē taba sakala surēsā. 3.

Girish (the king of the mountains and the father of the bride) held in his hands some blades of the Kush grass (which is dark in colour, thin, quite hard, straight and pointed at the end, and is used in all religious ceremonies), a little water, and the hands of his daughter Bhavaani, and then formally handed her over to Lord Bhava with the realisation that she was the eternal consort of the Lord¹. (2)

When Lord Mahesh (Shiva) formally accepted the hand of the bride by virtue of the ritual known as “Paani-Grahan²”, all the gods felt exhilarated in their hearts³. (3)

[Note—¹The word “Bhavaani” itself means the consort of “Bhava” which is one of the many names of Lord Shiva. Narad has already told him this fact earlier in Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 98 herein above.

²The word “Paan-Grahan” has two parts—viz. (i) “Paani” which means ‘water’, and “Grahan” which means ‘to accept’. It’s a ritual whereby the bride’s father formally transfers the responsibility of his daughter to the groom, and the latter accepts it. The finer meaning of this ritual is that the father of the girl who had been taking care of her till now, formally transfers this responsibility of her safety, happiness and well-being to the groom who pledges to carry out his duty faithfully and diligently for the rest of his life. This promise is made in front of the sacred fire

as witness as well as the assembly of guests who attend the ceremony. Going back on this pledge is regarded as a great sin.

³Refer: “Parvati Mangal”, verse no. 130 which precisely describes this ritual.

When the marriage rituals of Lord Ram were being performed, a similar process of Paani Grahan was done, and a similar exhilaration amongst the gods is observed—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 324 along with Chanda line nos. 10-12 that precede it.]

बेदमंत्र मुनिबर उच्चरहीं । जय जय जय संकर सुर करहीं ॥ ४ ॥

बाजहिं बाजन बिबिध बिधाना । सुमनबृष्टि नभ भै बिधि नाना ॥ ५ ॥

bēdamantra munibara uccarahīm. jaya jaya jaya saṅkara sura karahīm. 4.
bājahīm bājana bibidha bidhānā. sumanabrṣṭi nabha bhāi bidhi nānā. 5.

The sages chanted the Mantras (sacred verses) from the Vedas even as the gods applauded in chorus, repeatedly hailing Lord Shiva and his glories by loudly exclaiming—‘Glory to Lord Shiva; Glory to him; Hail him and his glories!’ (4)

Different kinds of musical instruments were played in a variety of ways; flowers were showered from the sky (heaven) (to celebrate the occasion)¹. (5)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 324 along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 7 where we read a similar chanting of the Vedas, playing of musical instruments, and showering of the flowers during the marriage rituals of Lord Ram.

Refer also to “Parvati Mangal”, Chanda no. 15 which also describes this celebration.]

हर गिरिजा कर भयउ बिबाहू । सकल भुवन भरि रहा उछाहू ॥ ६ ॥

hara girijā kara bhaya'u bibāhū. sakala bhuvana bhari rahā uchāhū. 6.

*In this way, the marriage of Lord Har (Shiva) with Girija (the daughter of the king of the mountains; or “the daughter of the mountains”¹) was formalised. There was celebration throughout the “Bhuvans”² (on this happy occasion). (6)

[Note—*Refer: “Parvati Mangal”, verse nos. 132, 147.

¹The word “Girija” has two meanings. It means (i) “the one who was born to the king of the mountains”; and (ii) “the one who was born in the lap of the mountains”. When we look at this story from worldly perspective where a man understands everything only from a gross physical angle, the first meaning applies. When we broaden our view to look at it from a subtler angle that relates to the universe and Nature, the second meaning applies.

Now the question is: which view, which perspective, which understanding is better and appropriate to be applied here? The answer is found in the word “Bhuvan”. This word means the universe as a whole, because the entire living creation is divided into 14 Bhuvans or segments, one of which is the world we live in. This cosmic view of Lord Shiva and his union with the cosmic Shakti fits in well with what Narad has said in Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 98 herein above. It refers to Lord Shiva as the Supreme Lord of creation, the Maha-deva, the ‘Great God’, and Parvati as the Mother of the Universe.

Refer: “Parvati Mangal”, line no. 1 of Chanda no. 15 where it is said that there was joy in all the ‘ten directions’ of the world (“Dasa-Dishaa”).

Though two different terms, viz. “Bhuvan or world” and “Dishaa or directions”, have been employed in these two separate instances, they essentially mean the same

thing. The idea that is being conveyed is that when Lord Shiva and Parvati were united, there was celebration through the length and breadth of this creation. Everyone rejoiced in every corner of the world, whether it was in the heaven or the earth or the nether world, or whether one lived in the north, the east, the south or the west in any of the worlds.]

दासीं दास तुरग रथ नागा । धेनु बसन मनि बस्तु बिभागा ॥ ७ ॥

अन्न कनकभाजन भरि जाना । दाइज दीन्ह न जाइ बखाना ॥ ८ ॥

dāsīm dāsa turaga ratha nāgā. dhēnu basana mani bastu bibhāgā. 7.
anna kanakabhājana bhari jānā. dā'ija dīnha na jā'i bakhānā. 8.

[Parvati's father gave abundant marriage gifts which are briefly outlined here.]

Female and male servants or attendants, horses, chariots, elephants, milch cows, clothes, gems and other valuable things of different kinds---(7)

---Cereals and pulses, as well as golden utensils etc. were given as marriage gift by the cart-load by the father of Parvati. These gifts were so large and of such huge quantity that one is not able to describe them. (8)

[Note—Refer: “Parvati Mangal”, line nos. 3-4 of Chanda no. 15.

Sita's father, king Janak, too had given Lord Ram cart-loads of such marriage gifts as narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 2-7 that precede Doha no. 326; (ii) Doha no. 333 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follow it.]

छं०. दाइज दियो बहु भाँति पुनि कर जोरि हिमभूधर कह्यो । १ ।

का देउँ पूरनकाम संकर चरन पंकज गहि रह्यो ॥ २ ॥

सिवँ कृपासागर ससुर कर संतोषु सब भाँतिहिं कियो । ३ ।

पुनि गहे पद पाथोज मयनाँ प्रेम परिपूरन हियो ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

dā'ija diyō bahu bhāṁti puni kara jōri himabhūdhara kahyō. 1.

kā dē'uṁ pūranakāma saṅkara carana paṅkaja gahi rahyō. 2.

sivaṁ kṛpāsāgara sasura kara santōṣu saba bhāṁtihin kiyō. 3.

puni gahē pada pāthōja mayanāṁ prēma paripūrana hiyō. 4.

Himwaan gave an abundance of marriage gifts. Then he respectfully joined his palms and stood before Lord Shiva. He said—(Chanda line no. 1)

‘Oh Lord Shankar, what can I give you? You have everything at your disposal in this creation, and there is nothing that you want.’ Saying this, and unable to say anything more (as he was overwhelmed with emotions), Himwaan reverentially clasped the holy feet of Lord Shiva*¹. (Chanda line no. 2)

Lord Shiva, who is an ocean of grace, mercy and kindness, reassured and comforted his father-in-law (Himwaan) in every possible way. [The Lord assured Himwaan that he need not worry at all for he understood the latter's emotions as well as his affection for him.]². (Chanda line no. 3)

After Himwaan, Maina (Parvati's mother) went and clasped the holy feet of the Lord with her heart overflowing with love and affection (for her son-in-law, Lord Shiva)³. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—*Himwaan's throat was choked with emotions, and words refused to come out of his mouth. He felt so privileged and honoured to have Lord Shiva as his son-in-law just like king Dasrath felt when his daughter Sita was married to Lord Ram—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 341 along with its Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follow it.

The marriage gifts which Himwaan gave were inconsequential in view of the majesty and lordship of Shiva who was the Lord of the whole world. But these gifts were to be necessarily given because it was an established tradition, and they were therefore a mere formality. They were not intended for showing off Himwaan grandeur or wealth, or to imply that Shiva needs these worldly articles of comfort because everyone knew that Shiva was an ascetic and lives in Mt. Kailash which is covered by snow the whole year round. These marriage gifts were merely a gesture of thanksgiving and gratitude on the part of Himwaan to express his appreciation of the eternal bond of marriage that was now established between Lord Shiva and his daughter Parvati.

By this humble gesture Himwaan requested Lord Shiva to overlook any shortcomings in these gifts because the Lord lacks nothing. These gifts had to be given as much to conform to tradition as to express Himwaan's token of thanksgiving and gratitude towards the Lord for accepting the hands of his daughter Parvati in marriage, but he did not intend to show-off his wealth.

¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 337 where we read that the mother of Sita falls at the feet of Lord Ram in the same way as Himwaan has done here.

Further on we read that king Janak, the father of Sita, has expressed his intense love and gratitude for Lord Ram in the same way as Himwaan has done for Lord Shiva here. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 341—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 342.

Now, the question arises: did Janak touch the holy feet of Lord Ram, who was an incarnate Supreme Being, with the same reverence as Himwaan has done here with respect to Lord Shiva? The answer is "yes", he definitely did. He not only clasped but had worshipped Lord Ram's feet with the greatest of respect at his command—this is evident in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 324.

Thus we observe that the occasions were different, but the essence was the same.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precede Doha no. 343 where Lord Ram has expressed the same sentiments to his father-in-law, king Janak.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 337 where the mother of Sita has fallen at the feet of Lord Ram to express her respect and love for him. Her heart was also overflowing with love and affection at that time like Maina's here.]

दो०. नाथ उमा मम प्रान सम गृहकिंकरी करेहु ।

छमेहु सकल अपराध अब होइ प्रसन्न बरु देहु ॥ १०१ ॥

dōhā.

nātha umā mama prāna sama gṛhakiṅkarī karēhu.

chamēhu sakala aparādha aba hō'i prasanna baru dēhu. 101.

[Parvati's mother Maina paryed to Lord Shiva—] 'Oh Lord! Uma (Parvati) is very dear to me as if she is a part-and-parcel of my own life. Please treat her with the same affection as you accept her as a humble member of your own home.

*As such (i.e. with this view in mind), please overlook and forgive all her faults and shortcomings. Now be pleased and grant me this boon (as desired by me).'

[*This second half of the Doha can also be read as follows: 'I request you that please be kind to me, and realising how Parvati is dear to me, assure me that you will treat her with the greatest of love and affection even as you accept her as an inseparable member of your home.'](Doha no. 101)

[Note—Refer: "Parvati Mangal", verse no. 142.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 336 along with Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede it where Sita's mother has made a similar request to Lord Ram.]

चौ०. बहु बिधि संभु सासु समुझाई । गवनी भवन चरन सिरु नाई ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

bahu bidhi sambhu sāsu samujhāī. gavanī bhavana carana siru nāī. 1.

Lord Shiva comforted his mother-in-law in various ways (just like he had done with his father-in-law in Chanda line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 101)¹. After that, she went back to her home. (1)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 337 where Lord Ram has similarly comforted his mother-in-law.]

जननीं उमा बोलि तब लीन्ही । लै उछंग सुंदर सिख दीन्ही ॥ २ ॥

करेहु सदा संकर पद पूजा । नारिधरमु पति देउ न दूजा ॥ ३ ॥

jananīm umā bōli taba līnhī. lai uchaṅga sundara sikha dīnhī. 2.

karēhu sadā saṅkara pada pūjā. nāridharamu pati dē'u na dūjā. 3.

After Maina returned home, she called Uma and made her sit affectionately on her lap so that she could give some final good advice to her daughter before her departure with her husband. (2)

Maina advised her daughter—'Always worship the feet of (your husband) Lord Shiva. (Remember that—) For a woman, her husband is like a revered god, and no other god is more respectable for her than her husband¹.' (3)

[Note—¹A similar advice was given to Sita, the wife of Lord Ram, on three occasions. (i) The first was by her mother who had made Sita sit on her lap affectionately as she gave her the same advice as Maina has done to Parvati—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 334.

(ii) The second occasion was when her father king Janak had advised her at the time of her departure of the marriage party from Janakpur for Ayodhya—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 339.

(iii) And the third occasion was in the forest where Anusuiya, the wife of sage Atri, has explained the code of conduct for a wise wife—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Sortha/Doha no. 5 and its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-19.]

बचन कहत भरे लोचन बारी । बहुरि लाइ उर लीन्हि कुमारी ॥ ४ ॥
 कत बिधि सृजीं नारि जग माहीं । पराधीन सपनेहुँ सुखु नाहीं ॥ ५ ॥

bacana kahata bhare lōcana bārī. bahuri lā'i ura līnhi kumārī. 4.
 kata bidhi sṛjīm nāri jaga māhīm. parādhīna sapanēhuṁ sukhu nāhīm. 5.

Maina's eyes were filled with tears as she spoke to Parvati. She once again embraced her beloved daughter¹. (4)

Say, why has the Creator written a destiny for a woman whereby she has to remain dependent upon others, and in this situation she can never dream of happiness that comes with freedom?² (5)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 334 where we read a similar narration with respect to Sita's mother showing her love for her daughter and lamenting at the compulsion that a woman has to face just prior to her departure from her parental home for the home of her husband, Lord Ram.

²The woman in a traditional household is supposed to rely on her husband for all her needs. This means she is not independent. Lack of independence robs a woman of her chance to enjoy the world and the life in it like a free person, because she has to take into account the preferences of her husband.

The main thrust of this statement is that after marriage, it is the girl who has to suffer the most as she is compelled to abandon the freedom that she enjoyed in her home where she was born and brought up to go to her husband's home which is alien to her, and where she will be bound by its customs and traditions that are new to her. It is a virtual new life for her. She has to make a lot of sacrifices and adjustments in her personal life in order to fit in the new environment. The boy has no such compulsion because he does not have to leave his home and hearth after marriage.]

भै अति प्रेम बिकल महतारी । धीरजु कीन्ह कुसमय बिचारी ॥ ६ ॥
 पुनि पुनि मिलति परति गहि चरना । परम प्रेमु कछु जाइ न बरना ॥ ७ ॥

bhai ati prēma bikala mahatārī. dhīrajū kīnha kusamaya bicārī. 6.
 puni puni milati parati gahi caranā. parama prēmu kachu jā'i na baranā. 7.

The mother became very agitated due to surging emotions of love and affection for her daughter (because she was soon to be separated from the latter). But she managed to regain her composure as she realised that this was not the proper time to lament and weep¹. (6)

She repeatedly met (i.e. embraced; hugged) Parvati even as the latter fell down at her mother's feet again and again. The intensity of mutual love, affection and respect between them was so intense that it is not possible to describe it. (7)

[Note—¹Maina realised that she was grown-up while her daughter was still young and of an immature age. If Parvati sees her mother in such a pitiful condition at the time of separation, it will haunt her for a very long time to come, adding to her already intense pain of separation from her parents. This was a time to show courage and resilience, and not weakness of the heart. If Parvati is given a farewell with a smile, it will cheer her up; wailing and lamenting will make her sad and sulk in grief. Such a parting is never good. So, after the initial burst of emotions, her mother decided to control herself and show courage.

When Sita was about to bid farewell to her parents at the time of her departure with the marriage party of Lord Ram, a similar description is given in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-7 that precedes Doha no. 337. Sita's mother too had mustered courage to regain self-control even as she embraced her daughter repeatedly just like Maina does here.]

सब नारिन्ह मिलि भेटि भवानी । जाइ जननि उर पुनि लपटानी ॥ ८ ॥

saba nārinha mili bhēṭi bhavānī. jā'i janani ura puni lapaṭānī. 8.

Bhavaani (Parvati) met all the women-folk assembled there, and went once again to her mother, and, falling at her feet, she wrapped herself around it (i.e. she firmly clasped her mother's feet) (8)

[Note—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 337 where we read a similar narration with respect to Sita's final hours with her lady companions and her mother.]

छं०. जननिहि बहुरि मिलि चली उचित असीस सब काहूँ दई । १ ।
फिर फिरि बिलोकति मातु तन तब सखीं लै सिव पहिं गई ॥ २ ॥
जाचक सकल संतोषि संकरु उमा सहित भवन चले । ३ ।
सब अमर हरषे सुमन बरषि निसान नभ बाजे भले ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

jananihi bahuri mili cali ucita asisa saba kāhūṁ da'īm. 1.
phira phiri bilōkati mātu tana taba sakhīṁ lai siva pahīṁ ga'īm. 2.
jācaka sakala santōṣi saṅkaru umā sahita bhavana calē. 3.
saba amara haraṣē sumana baraṣi nisāna nabha bājē bhalē. 4.

Parvati met her mother once again for the last time, and made her departure for her husband's home. All those who were assembled there to bid her farewell uttered appropriate blessings for her. (Chanda line no. 1)

Even as Parvati moved away from her mother, she kept on glancing back repeatedly towards her mother (because she was extremely overwhelmed with love and grief of separation from her loving mother)¹. Her friends insisted that she refrain from being sentimental, and took her forward to where Lord Shiva was. (Chanda line no. 2)

Having satisfied the desires of all the alms-seekers who had gathered there, Lord Shiva started on his journey home (with his consort) Uma². (Chanda line no. 3)

As the marriage procession wend its way back to the home of Lord Shiva, all the gods (who had come to attend the marriage ceremony) became exhilarated and showered flowers. At the same time, musical instruments such as the kettle-drums were played melodiously in the sky (the heaven)³. (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—Compare these lines with the time when Sita took leave of her parents and joined her husband, Lord Ram, as the marriage party of the Lord made its ceremonial departure from Janakpur for Ayodhya, the capital city of Lord Ram.

¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 337 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 340.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 339.]

दो०. चले संग हिमवंतु तब पहुँचावन अति हेतु ।
बिबिध भाँति परितोषु करि बिदा कीन्ह बृषकेतु ॥ १०२ ॥

dōhā.

calē saṅga himavantu taba pahuṁcāvana ati hētu.
bibidha bhāṁti paritōṣu kari bidā kīnha bṛṣakētu. 102.

Himwaan personally accompanied Lord Shiva and escorted the marriage procession for quite some distance to show his affection for the Lord.

When he had come along for a long distance, Lord Brishketu (Shiva) comforted and consoled him in various possible ways, and then sent him back¹. (Doha no. 102)

[Note—¹When Lord Ram's marriage party departed from Janakpur, his father-in-law, king Janak, too was overwhelmed with affection, and he too had escorted the procession for quite a long distance out of the city. Though king Dasrath, Lord Ram's father, tried to persuade him to return, Janak insisted on going ahead. Finally, when he had come a very long way from the city, Dasrath stood on the ground and most humbly and affectionately requested Janak to return home.

All this is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 340—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 343.]

चौ०. तुरत भवन आए गिरिराई । सकल सैल सर लिए बोलाई ॥ १ ॥
आदर दान बिनय बहुमाना । सब कर बिदा कीन्ह हिमवाना ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

turata bhavana ā'ē girirā'ī. sakala saila sara li'ē bōlā'ī. 1.
ādara dāna binaya bahumānā. saba kara bidā kīnha himavānā. 2.

Himwaan returned home immediately and summoned all the mountains and rivers who had assembled at his place (to participate in the marriage ceremony of his daughter Parvati with Lord Shiva)¹. (1)

Then, Himwaan expressed his gratitude to all of them; he duly honoured them and showed his respect to them by giving them gifts, as well politely thanking them with humble words of thanksgiving. After this, he bid them all farewell². (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 94 where we have already read how Himwaan had invited all the mountains and rivers to come and participate in the marriage ceremony of his daughter. They had assumed charming forms and had joined in the celebrations. The Mountains and the rivers have been personified here. Himwaan was like an emperor amongst them.

²In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 326 we learn how king Janak had prayed and showed his respects to the honourable guests who had come to participate in the marriage of his daughter Sita in a very similar fashion.]

जबहिं संभु कैलासहिं आए । सुर सब निज निज लोक सिधाए ॥ ३ ॥

jabahim sambhu kailāsahim ā'ē. sura saba nija nija lōka sidhā'ē. 3.

When Lord Sambhu (Shiva) arrived at Mt. Kailash (his abode), all the gods (who had joined the marriage party of the Lord) returned to their own respective homes¹. (3)

[Note—¹When Lord Ram's marriage party returned home to Ayodhya, king Dasrath, the father of Lord Ram, had expressed his thanks to all the guests who had come to join the marriage celebrations by showing great respect to them and giving them abundant gifts and honours. Then all of them, including the gods in the heaven, went away happily to their respective homes, cheerfully talking about the glorious events of the past days when they had witnessed the joyous events associated with the divine marriage of Lord Ram with Sita, praising their own immense good luck at having been able to witness this divine ceremony, blessing the couple and their father king Dasrath, and in general being ecstatic and exhilarated at the wonderful experience they had had during the entire episode. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 353 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-8.]

जगत मातु पितु संभु भवानी । तेहिं सिंगारु न कहउँ बखानी ॥ ४ ॥

करहिं बिबिध बिधि भोग बिलासा । गनन्ह समेत बसहिं कैलासा ॥ ५ ॥

हर गिरिजा बिहार नित नयऊ । एहि बिधि बिपुल काल चलि गयऊ ॥ ६ ॥

jagata mātu pitu sambhu bhavānī. tēhim singāru na kaha'um̐ bakhānī. 4.
karahim bibidha bidhi bhōga bilāsā. gananha samēta basahim kailāsā. 5.
hara girijā bihāra nita naya'ū. ēhi bidhi bipula kāla cali gaya'ū. 6.

Lord Sambhu and Bhavaani are the Father and the Mother of the entire universe (the “Jagat”, the living world) respectively¹. I will therefore not describe (or I shall refrain from narrating about) their physical charm and their love for each other (because it would be highly indecent, indignified, and violating traditional norms of the society to do so). (4)

While living in Mt. Kailash with their attendants, Lord Shiva and Bhavaani enjoyed their married life in different ways. [And for reasons cited above in verse no. 4, it is absolutely not proper to detail how they lived in their marital home and how they enjoyed their married life.] (5)

Every day they enjoyed themselves, and every day there was a new way by which they jovially entertained each other. In this way, a long time passed cheerfully. (6)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 2-4 that precede Doha no. 98; and (ii) Chuapai line nos. 5-8 and Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 100.]

तब जनमेउ षटबदन कुमारा । तारकु असुरु समर जेहिं मारा ॥ ७ ॥

आगम निगम प्रसिद्ध पुराना । षन्मुख जन्मु सकल जग जाना ॥ ८ ॥

taba janamē'u ṣaṭabadana kumārā. tāraku asuru samara jēhim mārā. 7.
āgama nigama prasid'dha purānā. ṣanmukha janmu sakala jaga jānā. 8.

In due course of time, 'Shatbadan' (i.e. Lord Kartikeya; the deity who has six heads) was born to them, who had later on killed the demon (Tarkaasur) in battle¹. (7)

This story of the birth of Shiva's son with six heads is well known in the world, and is also well documented in the scriptures such as the Aagams (the ancient Vedas), the Nigams (the Tantras; the scriptures that followed the original Vedas), as well as the Purans (ancient mythological history). (8)

[Note—¹Refer notes appended to Baal Kand, Doha no. 82, and Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes it.]

छं०. जगु जान षन्मुख जन्मु कर्मु प्रतापु पुरुषारथु महा । १ ।
तेहि हेतु मैं बृषकेतु सुत कर चरित संछेपहिं कहा ॥ २ ॥
यह उमा संभु बिबाहु जे नर नारि कहहिं जे गावहीं । ३ ।
कल्यान काज बिबाह मंगल सर्बदा सुखु पावहीं ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

jagu jāna ṣanmukha janmu karmu pratāpu puruṣārathu mahā. 1.
tēhi hētu maim bṛṣakētu suta kara carita sañchēpahim kahā. 2.
yaha umā sambhu bibāhu jē nara nāri kahahim jē gāvahim. 3.
kalyāna kāja bibāha maṅgala sarbadā sukhu pāvahim. 4.

The entire world knows about the birth of the deity with six heads, and about his glories deeds, as well as about his immense valour, courage and strength. (Chanda line no. 1)

That is why I¹ have briefly mentioned about the story of the birth and deeds of the son of Lord Brishketu (Shiva). [Since the story related to the birth of Kartikeya and how he slayed the demon Tarkaasur is well documented in the scriptures and well known in the world, I have refrained from detailing it. Another reason for not narrating it in detail is that it would be out of context as the focus of my narration is the marriage of Lord Shiva, and to explain the reason as to why the Lord had married in the first place.] (Chanda line no. 2)

Verily, those men and women who narrate and hear this divine episode of the marriage of Uma with Lord Sambhu---(Chanda line no. 3)

---They would be blessed with auspiciousness and success in all their endeavours related to any activity pertaining to marriage (in their families and the society at large), and at the same time they would always find happiness and peace.² (Chanda line no. 4)

[Note—¹This episode of Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati is being narrated by sage Yagyawalkya to sage Bharadwaj—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Doha no. 47; and Chaupai line no. 1 that follows Doha no. 103.

However, this original narration is cited by the author of our present book "Ram Charit Manas" who is Goswami Tulsidas, and this is clear in Doha no. 103 herein below. So therefore, it can be either sage Yagyawalkya or Goswami Tulsidas who is meant by the pronoun "I" here.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 361 along with its preceding Chanda line nos. 3-4 where the same idea is expressed in relation to the story of Lord Ram's marriage with Sita.]

दो०. चरित सिंधु गिरिजा रमन बेद न पावहिं पारु ।
बरनै तुलसीदासु किमि अति मतिमंद गवाँरु ॥ १०३ ॥

dōhā.

carita sindhu girijā ramana bēda na pāvahirṁ pāru.
baranai tulasīdāsu kimi ati matimanda gavāṁru. 103.

The life and deeds of the dear Lord of Girija (i.e. Lord Shiva, the dear husband of the daughter of the mountains, Parvati) are like an ocean, i.e. so vast and indescribable, that even the Vedas are unable to cross them (or fully narrate them).

Therefore, how can the humble Tulsidas, who has a limited intellect and is very foolish, ever be able to do so¹? (Doha no. 103)

[Note—¹This is merely an expression of Tulsidas' excellent sense of humility and modesty that he does not want to take credit for whatever he has written. The fact remains that Tulsidas' writings have remained unmatched in their beauty and spiritual depth in the annals of devotional literature anywhere in the world, and so this statement of his is simply to express his humility and modesty.

In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 and Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 361, the great poet-saint-savant Tulsidas has made it abundantly clear why he has decided to narrate the divine story which he titled "Ram Charit Manas". He says that he has done it to "purify his own speech".

Further, in the very beginning of this book he has expressed his humility and modesty while laying out the groundwork and outlining the reason why he chose to write this epic. Refer especially to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 12—to Doha no. 15.]

चौ०. संभु चरित सुनि सरस सुहावा । भरद्वाज मुनि अति सुखु पावा ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

sambhu carita suni sarasa suhāvā. bharadvāja muni ati sukhu pāvā. 1.

Hearing this wonderful and auspicious story of Lord Shiva's life and deeds, sage Bharadwaj found much comfort, peace and happiness. (1)

[Note—This verse rounds up the episode of Lord Shiva's marriage which sage Yagyawalkya had narrated to sage Bharadwaj. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 47.]

-----*****-----

The Story Of Lord Shiva's Marriage With Parvati:

(Based entirely on Goswami Tulsidas' classics:
"Ram Charit Manas" & "Parvati Mangal".)

##

Full Original Text, Roman Transliteration &
A detailed English Exposition with elaborate Notes.

Chapter 2

ŚrīRāmaCaritaMānasa

This Chapter describes the way Lord Shiva spent his time listening to the divine story of Lord Ram during the time he was alone because his consort Sati had died by burning herself in the fire during the religious sacrifice at her father's place. Being left alone, Shiva's heart felt lonely and sorrowful. So he found solace and succour in hearing the divine story of his beloved Lord Ram here and there as he wondered like a mendicant (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 56).

Once, when Parvati asked Lord Shiva him from where he had heard the divine story of Lord Ram (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 55), the Lord told her that it was at the place of a saintly crow by the name of "Kaagbhusund" (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 58).

Now, we shall retell the same story in the words of Lord Shiva himself. The verses of Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand that cover our topic are the following: (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 55; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 58.

[Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 55.]—

तुम्ह केहि भाँति सुना मदनारी । कहहु मोहि अति कौतुक भारी ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

tumha kēhi bhānti sunā madanārī. kahahu mōhi ati kautuka bhārī. 2.

Once, Uma (the consort of Lord Shiva) asked the Lord—'Oh the destroyer of the pride and ego of Kaamdeo (cupid)! Under what circumstances did you hear the

divine story of Lord Ram²? I am very eager to learn about it because it has aroused greatest interest and wonder in me. So please do tell me about it.' (Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 55 of Uttar Kand.)

[Note—¹The episode wherein Lord Shiva had slayed Kaamdeo is narrated in great detail in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.

²When Sati, the consort of Lord Shiva and the name of Uma in her previous life, burnt herself to death during the fire sacrifice at her father's place because her father had insulted Lord Shiva, the Lord had become very sad and forlorn. To overcome his grief, he spent his time in meditation, doing Japa (repetition) of Lord Ram's holy name, and listening to Lord Ram's divine story being narrated at various places where saints and sages used to recite it on a regular basis. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 75.

It was during one of those sojourns that he reached the hermitage of the crow-saint Kaagbhusund. The present episode relates to this.]

[Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 58.]—

चौ०. मैं जिमि कथा सुनी भव मोचनि । सो प्रसंग सुनु सुमुखि सुलोचनि ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

mair̥m jimi kathā sunī bhava mōcani. sō prasaṅga sunu sumukhi sulōcani. 1.

Lord Shiva replied—'Oh my dear who has a lovely face and enchanting eyes! Now I shall tell you the episode when I came to hear this story (of Lord Ram), a divine story which has the mystical potential to destroy the trap created by this world of misery and delusions (thereby granting both mental as well as spiritual happiness, peace and bliss to the listener). (1)

प्रथम दच्छ गृह तव अवतारा । सती नाम तब रहा तुम्हारा ॥ २ ॥

दच्छ जग्य तव भा अपमाना । तुम्ह अति क्रोध तजे तब प्राणा ॥ ३ ॥

मम अनुचरन्ह कीन्ह मख भंगा । जानहु तुम्ह सो सकल प्रसंगा ॥ ४ ॥

prathama daccha gr̥ha tava avatārā. satī nāma taba rahā tumhārā. 2.

daccha jagya tava bhā apamānā. tumha ati krōdha tajē taba prānā. 3.

mama anucaranha kīnha makha bhaṅgā. jānahu tumha sō sakala prasaṅgā.

4.

In your previous life (or birth), you had been born as the daughter of Daksha Prajapati. At that time your name was "Sati". (2)

In the religious sacrifice of Daksha, you had been insulted, which made you peeved and very angry. Unable to bear the insult, you had discarded your life (i.e. had died by burning yourself in fire). (3)

(When I came to learn about it, I was infuriated, and—) My followers went and destroyed the sacrifice to punish the perpetrators of your insult. This story is well known to you.1 (4)

[Note—¹This entire episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 63—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 65.]

तब अति सोच भयउ मन मोरें । दुखी भयउँ बियोग प्रिय तोरें ॥ ५ ॥

सुंदर बन गिरि सरित तड़ागा । कौतुक देखत फिरउँ बेरागा ॥ ६ ॥

taba ati sōca bhaya'u mana mōrēm. dukhī bhaya'uṁ biyōga priya tōrēm. 5.
sundara bana giri sarita tarāgā. kautuka dēkhata phira'uṁ bēragā. 6.

I was very sad and remorseful at this unfortunate development. Oh dear, I was miserable due the grief of separation from you¹. (5)

In order to pass my time and find mental peace, I used to wonder here and there like a detached mendicant. I used to roam, watching beautiful forests, mountains, rivers and lakes. (6)

[Note—¹When Sati died, Lord Shiva was overwhelmed with grief. The reason for this sadness of his heart is given in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 77 which says to the effect that “though Lord Shiva is inherently dispassionate and detached, yet he was full of remorse (when Sati died) because one of his devotees, in this case his consort Sati, had suffered due to his separation from her, and had also died due to an insult inflicted on the Lord by her father”.

Shiva had earlier voluntarily decided that he will have nothing to do with Sati, will have no contact with her because she had assumed the form of Sita, the wife of Lord Ram whom Shiva worships. It was an unethical action on the part of Sati, something Shiva could not forgive. So, soon after Sati assumed the form of Sita, Lord Shiva mentally abandoned her. Sati could feel the indifference that her husband Shiva had developed towards her. This pained her much. She thought to herself, ‘I am sincerely sorry for my stupid actions. But that does not mean I do not love Shiva. I can’t live without him. Oh Lord God—please let me die. And if I am honestly devoted to Lord Shiva then please bless me that in my new birth I may serve my dear Lord once again.’ Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Doha no. 59 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it, and Chaupai line no. 1 that follow this Doha; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 65.

So, in the current verses Lord Shiva addresses this secret thought in her mind—whether or not he loved Uma inspite of her sins in the past life. Shiva wished to convey the message to her that in the intervening period from her death and her reunion with him, he had been very sad and had been remembering her all the time. It was to overcome his grief that he wondered from place to place.]

गिरि सुमेर उत्तर दिसि दूरी । नील सैल एक सुंदर भूरी ॥ ७ ॥

तासु कनकमय सिखर सुहाए । चारि चारु मोरे मन भाए ॥ ८ ॥

तिन्ह पर एक एक बिटप बिसाला । बट पीपर पाकरी रसाला ॥ ९ ॥

सैलोपरि सर सुंदर सोहा । मनि सोपान देखि मन मोहा ॥ १० ॥

giri sumēra uttara disi dūrī. nīla saila ēka sundara bhūrī. 7.
tāsu kanakamaya sikhara suhā'ē. cāri cāru mōrē mana bhā'ē. 8.
tinha para ēka ēka biṭapa bisālā. baṭa pīpara pākārī rasālā. 9.
sailōpari sara sundara sōhā. mani sōpāna dēkhi mana mōhā. 10.

During one of those wonderings I reached a beautiful mountain that had a blue hue. It is called “Neel Giri” (the Blue Mountain), and it is situated further north from Mt. Sumeru (which is golden in its hue and is said to be the terrestrial abode of gods). (7)

The Neel Giri had four beautiful and simmering golden summits. It looked very charming and pleased my mind. [Since I was in search of peace, this attractive site lured me and I went there.] (8)

Each of these summits had one huge tree each, viz. a Vat tree (the banyan tree), a Pipar tree (the bo-tree; the long-pepper tree), a Paakar tree (the Indian fig tree), and a Rasaal tree (the mango tree). (9)

A wonderful lake too existed on the top of the mountain. It had gem-studded steps. This composite sight enthralled my mind and heart (and I decided to spend some time there) (10)

दो०. सीतल अमल मधुर जल जलज बिपुल बहुरंग ।

कूजत कल रव हंस गन गुंजत मंजुल भृंग ॥ ५६ ॥

dōhā.

sītala amala madhura jala jalaja bipula bahuraṅga.
kūjata kala rava hansa gana guṅjata mañjula bhṛṅga. 56.

That lake had clean, cool and sweet water. There were plentiful flowers, especially the lotus flower, of different colours that bloomed in and around it.

There was a lot of pleasant noise made by beautiful swans (that floated majestically on its water) murmuring sweetly, as well as by the bees that hummed melodiously over the flowers. (Doha no. 56)

चौ०. तेहिं गिरि रुचिर बसइ खग सोई । तासु नास कल्पांत न होई ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

tēhiṁ giri rucira basa'i khaga sōī. tāsu nāsa kalpānta na hōī. 1.

On (the top of) that charming mountain lived the “Bird” (a reference to the saintly crow named Kaagbhusund) who will not perish (die) even when the Kalpa (i.e. one cycle of creation) comes to an end. [That is, Kaagbhusund is immortal like the gods.] (1)

माया कृत गुन दोष अनेका । मोह मनोज आदि अबिबेका ॥ २ ॥

रहे ब्यापि समस्त जग माहीं । तेहि गिरि निकट कबहुँ नहिं जाहीं ॥ ३ ॥

māyā kṛta guna dōṣa anēkā. mōha manōja ādi abibēkā. 2.

rahē byāpi samasta jaga māhīṁ. tēhi giri nikaṭa kabahuṁ nahīṁ jāhīṁ. 3.

All the countless types of faults, taints and shortcomings that are created by ‘Maya’ (delusions) and are closely associated with this mundane and mortal world, such as

‘Moha’ (attractions and attachments for the world and its material objects), ‘Manoj’ (passions and lust) etc.--- (2)

---All such faults have spread throughout this world, but they never go near this holy mountain. [It is out of bounds for them. So therefore, the atmosphere of the place was exemplarily holy, spiritual and blissful.] (3)

तहँ बसि हरिहि भजइ जिमि कागा । सो सुनु उमा सहित अनुरागा ॥ ४ ॥

पीपर तरु तर ध्यान सो धरई । जाप जग्य पाकरि तर करई ॥ ५ ॥

आँब छाँह कर मानस पूजा । तजि हरि भजनु काजु नहिँ दूजा ॥ ६ ॥

बर तर कह हरि कथा प्रसंगा । आवहिँ सुनहिँ अनेक बिहंगा ॥ ७ ॥

tahaṁ basi harihi bhaja'i jimi kāgā. sō sunu umā sahita anurāgā. 4.

pīpara taru tara dhyāna sō dhara'ī. jāpa jagya pākari tara kara'ī. 5.

āmba chāṁha kara mānasa pūjā. taji hari bhajanu kāju nahim dūjā. 6.

bara tara kaha hari kathā prasaṅgā. āvahim sunahim anēka bihaṅgā. 7.

Now I shall describe to you how the Crow (Kaagbhusund) lived and worshipped Lord Hari (Vishnu) there. Uma, listen to it attentively and with great reverence (because it is about a holy soul and a holy place). (4)

He used to do ‘Dhyān’ (meditation and contemplation) under the shadow of the Pipar tree (the bo-tree; the long-pepper tree). Under the Paakar tree (the Indian fig tree), he used to do Japa (repetition of holy name of the Lord God) and Yagya (fire sacrifices). (5)

In the shadow of the mango tree he used to worship ‘Manas’, the holy book that describes the divine story of Lord Ram (who was an incarnation of the Supreme Lord on earth in the form of a human). Excepting worshipping Lord Hari and spending his time in devotion for the Lord, he had no other thing to do. [That is, Kaagbhusund spent his time entirely on Lord Hari, remembering him and doing his service. He was totally devoted to the remembrance of the Lord.] (6)

Under the shadow of the Vat tree (the banyan tree), he used to regularly tell the divine stories related to Lord Hari¹. Many birds came there to hear him. (7)

[Note—¹The word “Hari” here clearly refers to Lord Ram because it is said in verse no. 6 that Kaagbhusund used to worship the holy book called “Manas” under the mango tree. This “Manas” is the book that describes the life and deeds of Lord Ram. In fact, both the terms “Hari” and “Ram” refer to the same Lord Vishnu because Ram was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and Hari is one of the many names of Vishnu.

This conclusion is endorsed by the next verse no. 8 which explicitly says that Kaagbhusund preached the story of Lord Ram.

Kaagbhusund straddled all the four divisions of the cycle of creation known Sat Yug, Treta Yuga, Dwapar Yuga and Kali Yuga. The entire one cycle of creation is symbolically represented in one day of his life. This is how:-

The characteristics of the four Yugas are written in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 103 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-4. It says that (i) during Sat Yuga, the best way for spiritual evolvment and obtaining religious merit was to do Dhyān (meditation and contemplation); (ii) in Treta Yuga, it was doing Yagya (fire sacrifice); (iii) in Dwapar Yuga one was required to worship the holy feet of Lord Ram; and (iv) in Kali Yuga the only way is to remember the Lord and repeat his holy name.

We find that Kaagbhusund did all these during the course of his day.]

राम चरित बिचित्र बिधि नाना । प्रेम सहित कर सादर गाना ॥ ८ ॥

सुनहिं सकल मति बिमल मराला । बसहिं निरंतर जे तेहिं ताला ॥ ९ ॥

rāma carita bicitra bidhi nānā. prēma sahita kara sādara gānā. 8.

sunahim sakala mati bimala marālā. basahim nirantara jē tēhim tālā. 9.

Lord Ram's story which describes the Lord's deeds and life is very fascinating, strange and wonderful. He (Kaagbhusund, the saintly Crow) sang it soulfully and with the greatest of devotion in different ways. [The story of Lord Ram's divine life is heart-touching and soul-stirring, and it made Kaagbhusund so emotional and sentimental that his narration assumed the form of a devotional song, a hymn that he sang with an ecstatic heart and an overwhelmed mind that god submerged in emotions of love and devotion for the Lord. He sang like a lark, exhilarated and cheerful.] (8)

All those who had a purified mind and intellect listened to it. And those who listened to it had their mind and intellect purified.

In this way, the saintly Crow always lived near that holy lake. [That is, he never went anywhere else.] (9)

जब मैं जाइ सो कौतुक देख्वा । उर उपजा आनंद बिसेषा ॥ १० ॥

jaba mairi jā'i sō kautuka dēkhā. ura upajā ānanda bisēṣā. 10.

When I went there and saw this unique spectacle, my heart was full of intense happiness and bliss; I was overjoyed. [I was searching for such an environment where I can find peace of mind, where I can spend some time living in a pleasant surrounding and hear the divine story of my beloved Lord Ram being narrated with full devotion. I found all these requirements fulfilled there, so I decided to stay there for some time.] (10)

दो०. तब कछु काल मराल तनु धरि तहँ कीन्ह निवास ।

सादर सुनि रघुपति गुन पुनि आयउँ कैलास ॥ ५७ ॥

dōhā.

taba kachu kāla marāla tanu dhari tahañ kīnha nivāsa.

sādara suni raghupati guna puni āya'uṁ kailāsa. 57.

[I did not want to attract attention, so—] I disguised my self as a Swan and lived there for some time, reverentially listening to the divine story of Lord Raghunath (i.e. Lord Ram who was the Lord of the Raghu dynasty of Ayodhya) being narrated there.

After some time, I returned to Mt. Kailash. (Doha no. 57)

चौ०. गिरिजा कहेउँ सो सब इतिहासा । मैं जेहि समय गयउँ खग पासा ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

girijā kahē'uṁ sō saba itihāsā. mairi jēhi samaya gaya'uṁ khaga pāsā. 1.

Oh Girija, I have told you the entire history of the time when I had gone near the Crow. (1)

-----*****-----

The Story Of Lord Shiva's Marriage With Parvati:

(Based entirely on Goswami Tulsidas' classics:
"Ram Charit Manas" & "Parvati Mangal".)

##

Full Original Text, Roman Transliteration &
A detailed English Exposition with elaborate Notes.

Chapter 3

Pārvatī Maṅgala

Goswami Tulsidas' book 'Parvati Mangal' is exclusively dedicated to the theme of Lord Shiva's marriage. Since it deals with the subject matter of this book titled "Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati, I decided to incorporate the full text here. The original verses of Parvati Mangal with their Roman Transliteration and English commentary follows.]

Invocation

बिनइ गुरहि गुनिगनहि गिरिहि गननाथहि ।
हृदयँ आनि सिय राम धरे धनु भाथहि ॥१॥
गावउँ गौरि गिरिस बिबाह सुहावन ।
पाप नसावन पावन मुनि मन भावन ॥२॥

bina'i gurahi guniganahi girihi gananaṭhahi.
hṛdayaṁ āni siya rāma dharē dhanu bhāṭhahi. 1.
gāva'uṁ gauri girīsa bibāha suhāvana.
pāpa nasāvana pāvana muni mana bhāvana. 2.

1-2. At first I (Tulsidas) pray and pay my obeisance to my Guru (moral preceptor; teacher), to the wise ones, to the patron goddess of speech (i.e. goddess Saraswati) and Lord Ganesh (who is the Lord of Shiva's followers and the deity who ensures success in all enterprises).

Having done so, I most reverentially remember and invoke in my heart Lord Sita-Ram who has a bow and arrow in his hands, and a quiver tied around his waist¹.

After paying due respect to these revered deities I shall now begin the narration of the auspicious marriage of Gauri (Parvati) and Lord Shiva (Girish)². Singing, hearing and narrating this auspicious event vanquishes all sins. It is very

purifying for the mind and the heart, and is adored by great sages and saints who love to sing it and hear about it. (1-2)

[Note—¹It must be noted that Tulsidas was a devotee of Lord Ram first and foremost. So he invoked the Lord and enshrined him in his heart before proceeding further. In fact, he decided to sing about the marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati because even Lord Ram had said that if one wants to please him then he must first please Lord Shiva. Having written 'Janki Mangal' which describes the marriage of Lord Ram and Sita, Tulsidas thought it prudent to apply his narrative and poetic skills to describe the holy marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati as an indirect means to please his Lord, Sri Ram.

In Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 47, Tulsidas says—“Only till the time Lord Ram, who holds a bow and an arrow in his hands and has a quiver tied to his waist, is not enshrined in one's heart do all the negative qualities and mischief mongers such as Lobha (greed), Moha (delusions, attachments), Matsarya (jealousy, ill-will, malice), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, false sense of self-importance etc.) are able to live there.”

In other words, if one wishes to start on an auspicious work such as singing the marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati it is absolutely essential to clean one's inner self, and there is no other method better to do so than to invoke and enshrine Lord Ram in one's heart.

The first verse of Janki Mangal is like this present verse of Parvati Mangal inasmuch as the same set of deities is paid respect to in both the books.

²Parvati is called 'Gauri' because she was of a fair complexion. Lord Shiva is called 'Girish' because he is the Lord of the mighty mountains, the Himalayas, where his abode known as Mt. Kailash is situated.]

कुबित रीति नहिं जानउँ कबि न कहावउँ ।
संकर चरित सुसरित मनहि अन्हवावउँ ।।3 ।।
पर अपबाद—बिबाद—बिदूषित बानिहि ।
पावन करौं सो गइ भवेस भवानिहि ।।4 ।।

kubita rīti nahim jāna'uṁ kabi na kahāva'uṁ.
saṅkara carita susarita manahi anhavāva'uṁ. 3.
para apabāda-bibāda-bidūṣita bānihi.
pāvana karaum sō ga'i bhavēsa bhavānihi. 4.

3-4. I do not know the different styles, patterns, rules, manners and customs practiced while writing poetry, nor am I known (famed or renowned) as a poet. I do not harbour any desire to be praised as a poet. I simply intend to bathe my mind and heart in the auspicious and pleasant river represented by the divine stories of Lord Shiva. (3)

By dipping in this holy river (i.e. by singing about the marriage of Lord Shiva with Parvati), I wish to clean and purify my speech which has been tarnished, corrupted and darkened over time by criticizing others as well as by indulging in endless and useless debates, arguments and fruitless chatter about worldly matters. (4)

[Note—The same idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas where Tulsidas says that he is not writing the divine story of Lord Ram to show that he is any great scholar or poet but to purify his speech and give peace to his mind, heart and soul. He says that since he is not an expert at anything, he is scared stiff to attempt to do such a gigantic task, but since it is the divine story of Lord Ram he begs all those who read it to forgive him for the shortcomings, and instead enjoy the nectar that the story contains. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 8—to Doha no. 9.

Regarding the speech become corrupted and polluted by constant criticism of others or indulging in futile talk about worldly matters, Tulsidas' book *Vinai Patrika* has many references to it. For instance, verse no. 82, stanza no. 3; verse no. 237, stanza no. 1; and verse no. 252, stanza no. 2, line no. 2.]

जय संबत फागुन सुदि पाँचें गुरु छिनु।
अस्विनि बिरचेउँ मंगल सुनि सुख छिनु छिनु।।5।।

jaya sambata phāguna sudi pāñcaim guru chinu.
asvini biracē'um̃ maṅgala suni sukha chinu chinu. 5.

5. [In this verse, Tulsidas specifies the exact date when he penned this book narrating the divine marriage of Lord Shiva, the third of the Trinity Gods, with Parvati, the Mother Goddess.]

I have penned this auspicious book in the Samvat (Hindi calendar year) called Jai¹, on the 5th day of the bright lunar fortnight of the month of Phalgun (approximately March), which fell on a Thursday, during the asterism of Ashwini Nakshatra.

This book is a provider of all auspiciousness as well as happiness and well-being to those who recite it, hear it or read it. (5)

[Note—¹This corresponds to Vikram Samvat 1643, and to 1586 A.D.]

गुन निधानु हिमवानु धरनिधर धुर धनि।
मैना तासु घरनि घर त्रिभुवन तियमनि।।6।।

guna nidhānu himavānu dharanidhara dhura dhani.
mainā tāsu gharani ghara tribhuvana tiyamani. 6.

6. Amongst the mountains, the snow-capped mountain called 'Himwan' (the Himalayas) is highly regarded and is the most respected. It is said to possess the best of virtues one can expect from a mountain.

In the household of the king of this mountain, named 'Himwan', was a great queen named 'Maina'. She was the wife of king Himwan, and was a jewel amongst womenfolk of the entire Triloki. [The word 'Triloki' means the three world, and it consists of the heavens, the earth, and the nether or the lower world.] (6)

[Note—The king of the snow-capped Himalayan mountain range got the name of the kingdom he ruled, i.e. 'Himwan', which literally means the 'snow mountain'. Maina was his esteemed wife.]

कहहु सुकृत केहि भाँति सराहिय तिन्ह कर।
लीन्ह जाइ जग जननि जनमु जिन्ह के घर।।7।।
मंगल खानि भवानि प्रगट जब ते भइ।
तब ते रिधि-सिधि संपति गिरि गृह नित नइ।।8।।

kahahu sukṛta kēhi bhāñti sarāhiya tinha kara.
līnha jā'i jaga janani janamu jinha kē ghara. 7.
maṅgala khāni bhavāni pragaṭa jaba tē bha'i.
taba tē ridhi-sidhi sampati giri gr̥ha nita na'i. 8.

7-8. Say, how can one laud the good deeds and the good luck of the king (Himwan) in whose household the mother of the world (Parvati, also known as Bhavani) took birth. (7)

Ever since the day Bhavani (Parvati)—who is a treasury of all auspiciousness, good fortunes and welfare—took birth in the house of ‘Giri’ (the king of mountains), all the ‘Riddhis and Siddhis’, accompanied by all sorts of prosperity and wealth, came to reside in it. [That is, when Parvati took birth in the household of Himwan, there was happiness, cheer and well-being all around; there was no dearth of anything at all.]¹ (8)

[Note—¹A similar idea is expressed by Tulsidas in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 65—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 66.]

नित नव सकल कल्याण मंगल मोदमय मुनि मानहीं ।
ब्रह्मादि सुर नर नाग अति अनुराग भाग बखानहीं ॥
पितु मातु प्रिय परिवारु हरषहिं निरखि पालहिं लाहहीं ।
सित पाख बाढ़ति चंद्रिका जनु चंदभूषण भालहीं ॥१॥

nita nava sakala kalyāna maṅgala mōdamaya muni mānahīm.
brahmādi sura nara nāga ati anurāga bhāga bakhānahīm.
pitu mātu priya parivāru haraṣahīm nirakhi pālahīm lāhahīm.
sita pākha bārhati candrikā janu candabhūṣana bhālahīm. 1.

Chanda 1. At the time Parvati took birth, the sages and seers celebrated the occasion by organizing many religious festivities in a most cheerful manner.

The gods led by the creator Brahma, all of mankind, and the subterreanean creatures led by the serpents also joined in the celebrations, and all of them praised Himwan and lauded his immense good luck (that he was honoured and blessed by having Parvati, the Mother Goddess, as his daughter, which is indeed a rarest of rare boon).

The parents (Maina and Himwan) and other family members, as well as the rest of the kith and kin felt very exhilarated when they watched her (Parvati), and all of them shared the joy and participated enthusiastically in taking care of and bringing up the holy girl child.

As Parvati grew up day-by-day, she appeared to be like the wonderful moon that adorns the forehead of Lord Shiva, who is known as ‘Chandra Bhushan¹’, during its bright fortnight when the moon’s disc goes on increasing daily in its size, radiance and brightness. [That is, just like the moon’s disc and its size goes on increasing every night during the bright fortnight, the beauty and glory of Parvati went on enhancing day after day as she grew up in the household of king Himwan.]

(Chanda no. 1)

[Note—¹Lord Shiva is called ‘Chandra Bhushan’ because the crescent moon adorns his forehead. This moon goes on increasing in its shape and radiance during the bright fortnight.]

कुँअरि सयानि बिलोकि मातु—पितु सोचहिं ।
गिरिजा जोगु जुरिहि बरु अनुदिन लोचहिं ॥९॥
एक समय हिमवान भवन नारद गए ।
गिरिबरु मैना मुदित मुनिहि पूजत भए ॥१०॥

kuṃari sayāni bilōki mātu-pitu sōcahiṃ.
giriḡā jōgu jurihī baru anudina lōcahiṃ. 9.
ēka samaya himavāna bhavana nārada ga'ē.
giribaru mainā mudita munihi pūjata bha'ē. 10.

9-10. When the parents observed that the princess (Parvati) was grown up and has passed the age of adolescence to become an adult, they became worried about finding a suitable groom for her. This worry nagged them day and night. (9)

One day, the celestial sage Narad came to the house of Himwan. The best amongst the mountains, Giribaru, and his consort Maina, cheerfully welcomed and worshipped the sage. (10)

[Note—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 66.]

उमहि बोलि रिषि पगन मातु मेलत भई ।
मुनि मन कीन्ह प्रणाम बचन आसिष दई ॥11॥
कुँअरि लागि पितु काँध ठाढ़ि भइ सोहई ।
रूप न जाइ बखानि जानु जोइ जोहई ॥12॥

umahi bōli riṣi pagana mātu mēlata bha'ī.
muni mana kīnha praṇāma bacana āsiṣa da'īm. 11.
kuṃari lāgi pitu kāṃdha ṭhāḡhi bha'i sōha'ī.
rūpa na jā'i bakhāni jānu jō'i jōha'ī. 12.

11-12. The mother (Maina) summoned Uma (Parvati) and put her at the feet of the sage—i.e. she made her daughter touch the sage's feet and pay her respects to him. The sage, in turn, mentally bowed to her most reverentially (because he realised that she was no ordinary girl, but the Mother Goddess who will marry the Great Lord known as Mahadeva, i.e. Lord Shiva). Outwardly however, he wished her all the best and blessed her for an auspicious future and all round happiness¹. (11)

At that time, Parvati was standing close by the side of her father, shoulder to shoulder, and looked most adorable, elegant and charming. No one can describe her beauty. Only those who had seen her can know about it. [In other words, the beauty and majesty of Parvati were so great that words fail to do justice to them. Those who saw her at that moment were the only fortunate ones to have witnessed the magnificence of the sight.]² (12)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 70.

²Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 100.]

अति सनेहँ सतिभायँ पाय परि पुनि पुनि ।
कह मैना मृदु बचन सुनिअ बिनति मुनि ॥13॥
तुम त्रिभुवन तिहुँ काल बिचार बिसारद ।
पारबती अनुरूप कहिय बरु नारद ॥14॥

ati sanēhaṃ satibhāyaṃ pāya pari puni puni.
kaha mainā mṛdu bacana suni'a binati muni. 13.
tuma tribhuvana tihum kāla bicāra bisārada.

pārabatī anurūpa kahiya baru nārada. 14.

13-14. With immense affection and honest faith, Maina (the mother of Parvati) fell down repeatedly at the sage's feet, and said, 'Oh sage! Please listen to my prayers. (13)

You are a very wise and thoughtful sage not only in all the three worlds (i.e. the heavens, terrestrial world and the nether world) but also in all the three periods of time (i.e. in the past, the present and the future). [That is, no one is wiser than you in this world—no one was, no one is, and no one would ever be.] Hence, oh Narad, do tell me about a suitable groom for Parvati.' (14)

[Note—A variation of this request appears in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 66 where the parents ask Narad to tell them about the good news as well as the bad news regarding their daughter and her future. Here, they do not enquire directly about her would-be groom.]

मुनि कह चौदह भुवन फिरउँ जग जहँ जहँ ।
गिरिबर सुनिय सरहना राउरि तहँ तहँ ॥15॥
भूरि भाग तुम सरिस कतहँ कोउ नाहिन ।
कछु न अगम सब सुगम भयो बिधि दाहिन ॥16॥

muni kaha caudaha bhuvana phira'uṁ jaga jahaṁ jahaṁ.
giribara suniya sarahanā rā'uri tahaṁ tahaṁ. 15.
bhūri bhāga tuma sarisa katahuṁ kō'u nāhina.
kachu na agama saba sugama bhayō bidhi dāhina. 16.

15-16. Narad replied, 'Oh king Himwan! You are the best amongst the mountain kings. Wherever I go in the fourteen Bhuvans of the universe (i.e. all the corners of the celestial globe) during the course of my wanderings, I have always heard your glories being sung and you being greatly praised everywhere. (15)

No one is as lucky and fortunate as you are. Nothing is inaccessible for you in this world; everything is possible because the creator has been very favourable and benignant towards you. (16)

[Note—Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 65—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 66.

According to the Padma Puran, the fourteen Bhuvans are the following—(A) The upper worlds called Urdhva Lokas are seven in number:—(i) Bhu, (ii) Bhuvha, (iii) Swaha (iv) Maha, (v) Janaha, (vi) Tapaha, and (vii) Satyam. (B) The seven nether worlds or lower worlds called Adhaha Loka:—(i) Atal, (ii) Vital, (iii) Satal, (iv) Rasaatal, (v) Talaatal, (vi) Mahaatal, and (vii) Paataal. The total number of Lokas is, therefore, fourteen.]

दाहिन भए बिधि सुगम सब सुनि तजहु चित चिंता नई ।
बरु प्रथम बिरवा बिरचि बिरच्यो मंगला मंगलमई ॥
बिधिलोक चरचा चलति राउरि चतुर चतुरानन कही ।
हिमवानु कन्या जोगु बरु राउर बिबुध बंदित सही ॥2॥

dāhina bha'e bidhi sugama saba suni tajahu cita cintā na'ī.
baru prathama biravā biraci biracyō maṅgalā maṅgalama'ī.
bidhilōka caracā calati rā'uri catura caturānana kahī.

himavānu kan'yā jōgu baru rā'ura bibudha bandita sahī. 2.

Chanda 2. Narad told Himwan, 'The creator is definitely favourably inclined towards you. Hence everything is possible for you, and therefore you need not worry (about the future of your daughter).

Remember, the creator Brahma has first created a tree symbolized by the would-be groom before he created your daughter who is a personified form of all good virtues and auspiciousness. [That is, the Creator is very deligent and careful while determining the destiny of all those who are created by him. When a girl child is born, who would be her future husband is already decided by the Creator, so there is no reason to worry. However, since it is natural for a father to be worried about his daughter's future, here is something secret that I will tell you now. Listen carefully.]

Once when I was in Brahma-loka (the heavenly abode of the creator Brahma), there was some talk about you. At that time, the four-headed Brahma had said that though the groom who is suitable for the daughter of Himwan is crazy, he is nevertheless most auspicious, and will be highly revered and universally worshipped even by the Gods.¹ [This would be groom is Lord Shiva. He is regarded as 'crazy' because of his unconventional lifestyle. For instance, though Shiva is married he prefers to live alone in the mountains, submerged in deep meditation. He never wears proper clothes as he prefers to remain naked like a hermit, never wishes to have any worldly comforts, has serpents wrapped around his body, and in general leads a life of an hermit, unconcerned with the world outside. In spite of this seeming indifference, the Lord is extremely wise and is honoured by the title of 'Mahadeva'—the Great God. He is the most enlightened amongst all the Gods. In fact, Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being, has expressly said that if one wishes to have devotion for him and attain him, then he must first have devotion for Lord Shiva. Refer: Ram Charit Manas—(i) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 45; and (ii) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 3.] (Chanda no. 2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 67 along with Chaupai line no. 2-8 that precede it; and Doha no. 71.

In this Chanda, the groom is likened to a tree and the would-be bride to a creeper. This allusion to a creeper vis-à-vis a woman is indicative of the dependence of the latter on her husband. The husband is the provider of support and all necessary wherewithals needed by a woman for her survival in this world, and this fact is also expressed in verse nos. 29 and 23 below. The creeper can't stand on its own; it needs the support or prop of the tree. Similarly, in tradition-bound cultures and societies such as an Indian household, the woman is dependent on her husband and father for all her needs.

Hence, Parvati is likened to a creeper, and her husband, Lord Shiva, to a tree.]

मोरेहुँ मन अस आव मिलिहि बरु बाउर ।
लखि नारद नारदी उमहि सुख भा उर ॥१७॥
सुनि सहमे परि पाइ कहत भए दंपति ।
गिरिजहि लगे हमार जिवनु सुख संपति ॥१८॥

mōrēhuṁ mana asa āva milihi baru bā'ura.
lakhi nārada nārādī umahi sukha bhā ura. 17.
suni sahamē pari pā'i kahata bha'ē dampati.

girijahi lagē hamāra jivanu sukha sampati. 18.

17-18. Narad continued—‘My heart is also inspired to think on the same line as that of Brahma. That is, I also think that she will get a quirky, eccentric and crazy groom.’ Hearing these words of Narad, Uma (Parvati) felt very glad and happy in her heart.¹ [Why did she feel glad and happy. It was because it is already decided who her husband would be, and that he will not be an ordinary person but one who will be the most exalted amongst the Gods so much so that all of them would worship and revere him. Say, who will not be happy to get such a husband who will be the Lord of the world, and who will command respect even by the Gods?] (17)

But the news shocked the couple (i.e. the parents of Parvati). They were extremely alarmed and dismayed.²

They caught hold of sage Narad’s feet and said most humbly, ‘Our existence and all the wealth and comforts that we have are meant for Girija (our daughter Parvati). If she is not happy, then everything is useless for us. [Sage, what do you mean by what you have just said that her husband would be crazy and eccentric? Say, what will we do with all the wealth we have if we have a groom who is mad, and who lives like a hermit, and who cannot provide our beloved daughter the comforts and pleasures of life? So, please sage, tell us a way out of this dilemma if there is any, and you being the wisest amongst the sages, we do not think anyone else can give us a better advice than you.]’³ (18)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 68.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1, 3, 7 that precede Doha no. 68.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 68.]

नाथ कहिय सोइ जतन मिटइ जेहिं दूषनु ।
दोष दलन मुनि कहेउ बाल बिधु भूषनु ।।19 ।।
अवसि होइ सिधि साहस फलइ सुसाधन ।
कोटि कलप तरु सरिस संभु अवरधन ।।20 ।।

nātha kahiya sō'i jatana miṭa'i jēhim dūṣanu.
dōṣa dalana muni kahē'u bāla bidhu bhūṣanu. 19.
avasi hō'i sidhi sāhasa phala'i susādhana.
kōṭi kalapa taru sarisa sambhu avarādhana. 20.

19-20. Himwan continued to plead with Narad, ‘Hence, oh Lord, tell us a way out of this situation and unfortunate circumstance by which this fault in her (Parvati’s) destiny, according to which she is supposed to get a mad husband, can be rectified, modified or erased.’¹

The sage advised them that ‘Bidhu Bhushan’ (literally, the one whose ornamentation is the moon; here referring to Lord Shiva) is the only Lord who is capable of nullifying all the faults and destroying all the evil circumstances that befalls a creature due to his or her destiny.² (19)

By his (Shiva’s) grace, success can certainly be found. Best of efforts and the best of means chosen by a person to reach his goal bear fruit only if he has courage, faith, resilience and fortitude. Shiva’s worship is equivalent to worshipping millions of Kalpa Trees (i.e. the wishfulfilling trees of the Gods).³

[In other words, it is not a child's play to change one's destiny. I cannot help you if it is written in Parvati's destiny that she will have a crazy husband. However, all hope is not lost because there is one supreme power on earth which can change one's destiny, and it is Lord Shiva. If there is some fault in your daughter's destiny then the only God who can rectify it is Lord Shiva. And fortunately it is destined that he is going to be her husband. So why do you fall in the trap of worries and grief. Rather, you should be happy and encourage your daughter now to take steps in the correct direction—i.e. to do Tapa or penances so that the Lord can be attained. Remember, it is not easy to access the God who is the greatest in this creation—refer Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 70.]

Lamenting and grieving will lead you nowhere. Instead, if you want future welfare of your daughter Parvati, have courage and patience. Do something positive and constructive instead of wailing and beating your chest and head like a fool. It is Lord Shiva alone who can ensure Parvati's happiness and well-being. The creator who has created her will also care for her destiny—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 71.] (20)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 68.]

²Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 70.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 68—to Doha no. 70.]

तुम्हरे आश्रम अबहिँ ईसु तप साधहिँ ।
कहिअ उमहि मनु लाइ जाइ अवरधहिँ ।।21।।
कहि उपाय दंपतिहि मुदित मुनिबर गए ।
अति सनेहँ पितु मातु उमहि सिखवत भए ।।22।।

tumharēm āśrama abahim̄ īsu tapa sādham̄.
kahi'a umahi manu lā'i jā'i avarādhahim̄. 21.
kahi upāya dāmpatihi mudita munibara ga'ē.
ati sanēham̄ pitu mātu umahi sikhavata bha'ē. 22.

21-22. 'Look, in a hermitage located in your kingdom, the 'Ish' (Lord Shiva) is involved in doing severe Tapa (austerities, penances, meditation). [Himwan was the king of mountains. The 'hermitage' referred to here is Mt. Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva in the snow-capped Himalayas.]

Hence, ask Uma (Parvati) to go there and sincerely worship him (Lord Shiva) with due devotion so that the Lord is pleased with her.¹ (21)

Showing this way out of the dilemma and consternation faced by the couple (the parents of Parvati), the exalted sage went away cheerfully².

The father and the mother then lovingly advised Uma according to the suggestion given by the learned sage Narad (which was to go and do severe Tapa to please Lord Shiva)³. [The parents knew that Narad does not tell a lie, and whatever the sage has said is the truth and sure to happen—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 71.] (22)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 70.]

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 71.

³Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1 that precedes Doha no. 72—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 73.]

सजि समाज गिरिराज दीन्ह सबु गिरिजहि ।
 बदति जननि जगदीस जुबति जनि सिरजहि ।।23 ।।
 जननि जनक उपदेस महेसहि सेवहि ।
 अति आदर अनुराग भगति मनु भेवहि ।।24 ।।

saji samāja girirāja dīnha sabu girijahi.
 badati janani jagadīsa jubati jani sirajahi. 23.
 janani janaka upadēsa mahēsahi sēvahi.
 ati ādara anurāga bhagati manu bhēvahi. 24.

23-24. The king of mountains assembled all the necessary paraphernalia required to do Tapa (severe penance and austerity done to attain a desired goal) and gave them to Girija (Parvati). The mother lamented, saying that the creator should not make women (because they are never independent, and that their destiny is invariably linked to her husband). (23)

The mother and the father advised her to worship and serve Lord Mahesh (Shiva) with great respect, affection and devotion in her heart.¹ (24)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 72; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 73—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 74.]

भेवहि भगति मन बचन करम अनन्य गति हर चरन की ।
 गौरव सनेह सकोच सेवा जाइ केहि बिधि बरन की ।।
 गुन रूप जोबन सीव सुंदरि निरखि छोभ न हर हिउँ ।
 ते धीर अछत बिकार हेतु जे रहत मनसिज बस किउँ ।।3 ।।

bhēvahi bhagati mana bacana karama anan'ya gati hara carana kī.
 gaurava sanēha sakōca sēvā jā'i kēhi bidhi barana kī.
 guna rūpa jōbana sīnva sundari nirakhi chōbha na hara hi'ēñ.
 tē dhīra achata bikāra hētu jē rahata manasija basa ki'ēñ. 3.

Chanda 3. [This Chanda describes the intense devotion Parvati had for Shiva, and the fact that Lord Shiva has exemplary control over himself and his natural instincts, because he is a renunciate and a hermit par-excellence. For him, the presence of a young lady so close made no difference. The Lord remained lost in meditation.]

Parvati's mind and heart were soaked with devotion for Lord Shiva. Her thoughts, speech and actions were all directed to please the Lord, and were exclusively dedicated to him. For her, nothing else mattered or existed except Lord Shiva¹.

Parvati was completely submitted at the divine feet of Lord Shiva, and her total submission involved her mind and heart, speech and action. How can one describe her eminence and glory, her love and affection for Lord Shiva, and the resultant honour, prestige and exalted stature that she automatically acquired? Her humility, simplicity and dedication for Lord Shiva, and the way she served the Lord had no parallel. Indeed, she became a virtual benchmark for all things virtuous and noble. Her beauty and charm as well as youthfulness were unmatched in the world. [That is, she was well endowed with all these grand qualities.]

But even after seeing such a wonderful and beautiful lady serving him faithfully and with dedication, there was no agitation in the heart of Har (Shiva). [Usually when a man finds that a young woman is serving him so closely, passion is bound to arise in his heart. But Lord Shiva has full control over his senses and urges, and is a renunciate hermit. So it did not matter to him who is serving him, and whether the server is a woman or a man. If the Lord is pleased by his devotee, it is because of the latter's devotion and service, and not because he is either a girl or a boy!]

Indeed, those who can exercise control or establish a tight leash on Kamdeo-cupid symbolising natural urges such as love, passions, desires, longing, lasciviousness, amorous tendencies, physical attractions etc. towards the other sex even while the cause for such faults exist in the vicinity, are really deemed to be courageous, self-restrained, patient, calm, strong-willed and brave.

[In other words, it is next to impossible to exercise self-control over one's passions and lust when one is in close proximity of the opposite sex. If one is able to actually practice such restraint then he is surely praise-worthy as a man who has self control. The term 'being brave' implies that passion and lust or sexual desires are such a strong force that one who can conquer them is a true warrior. It is easy to win an opponent in battle but it is impossible to overcome these negative urges.

Parvati was serving Lord Shiva at close quarters. She was handsome, young, pretty and attractive. The fact that her presence did not stir Lord Shiva a bit proves that he has exemplary self-restraint.]² (Chanda no. 3)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 74.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 82.]

देव देखि भल समय मनोज बुलायउ ।
कहेउ करिअ सुर काजु साजु सजि आयउ ॥25 ॥
बामदेउ सन कामु बाम होइ बरतेउ ।
जग जय मद निदरेसि फरु पायसि फर तेउ ॥26 ॥

dēva dēkhi bhala samaya manōja bulāya'u.
kahē'u kari'a sura kāju sāju saji āya'u. 25.
bāmadē'u sana kāmu bāma hō'i baratē'u.
jaga jaya mada nidarēsi pharu pāyasi phara tē'u. 26.

25-26. The Gods saw an opportune moment and summoned Kamdeo-cupid (the patron God of love, passions, desire and longing) and asked him to do the job of the Gods. At their instruction (or rather, request), he made all the necessary arrangements and arrived at the site (where Lord Shiva was meditating and was being served by Parvati).¹ (25)

Kamdeo behaved mischievously with Bamdeo (Shiva)—he showed disrespect to the latter with the arrogance of the one who has conquered the world and is proud that no one can ever dare stand his onslaught.

Kamdeo received the fruits of his arrogance that led him to commit unpardonable mischief. He was duly rewarded (i.e. punished) for his misdeeds and misdemeanours.² (26)

[Note—¹What was the 'job of the Gods' that was to be done? This is clearly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes

Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 83. Briefly it is that a demon named Tarakaasur was causing havoc in creation, tormenting the gods as well as all other creatures of creation. It was destined that he could only be killed by the son of Lord Shiva. So obviously Shiva must marry to produce a son who will eliminate this terror. If Shiva continued to do Tapa, remain lost in meditation and contemplation, and continue to be uninterested in having any liaison with a lady, then how will it be possible for him to have a son who will kill the cruel demon Tarkaasur?

So it became necessary to somehow persuade Shiva to have a desire to marry, and what better opportunity can there be if it not done now when Parvati is so close to him and serving him with an intense desire to marry the Lord. It will be like killing two birds with a single arrow—one, it would help to serve the gods as Shiva's son out of this marriage would eliminate the demon, and second, it would help to fulfill what has already been written in the destiny of Parvati—that she would have Shiva as her husband.

Therefore, the creator Brahma advised the Gods to request Kamdeo to go instigate Shiva by inspiring his heart so that the Lord has a desire to marry the beautiful lady who serves him as her husband. Once this desire sprouts in the heart of Lord Shiva, the rest of the things would take care of themselves. Why so? Because Lord Shiva's desires never go in vain, and once he wishes to marry Parvati, then it is done.

But the trouble was that Shiva was lost in meditation, and so somehow his heart was to be tampered with so that instead of remaining submerged in spiritual pursuit and living perpetually in a state of transcendental existence which made Shiva aloof from lowly worldly affairs such as having a desire to marry, the Lord could be persuaded to marry Parvati who had been serving him diligently with a vow to marry him. This can only be achieved if Kamdeo takes up the task—because Kamdeo symbolizes the emotions that govern passions, desires, lust and longings that are inherent and latent in all living beings. The trick was to kindle these virtues that lay dormant in Shiva's heart because the Lord had conquered them as he is an ascetic par-excellence, the Lord who has full control over his impulses and sense organs as he practices exemplary self-restraint.

It was not that Kamdeo did not know what fate holds for him if he goes and acts smart with Shiva by disturbing him in his meditation, but since it was for the welfare for the rest of the creation—as his action would inspire Shiva to marry and beget a son who would kill the demon Tarkaasur—he decided to go ahead nevertheless. This is clearly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line nos. 1-2 and 4 that precedes Doha no. 84.

²This is very interesting. Kamdeo literally means the god who controls one's passions, lust, longing and desires. Kamdeo lives in one's heart in a subtle form by way of these inherent emotions in all living beings. The ascetic is able to keep Kamdeo in tight leash, but an ordinary man succumbs to his pressures. Kamdeo started to nag at Shiva, pinching him here and there, disturbing his meditation and Tapa, making him restless and generally causing him great irritation and uneasiness. A great lesson lies in this single incident—if Kamdeo was able to sway the mighty Lord Shiva, who is the patron God of all ascetics and the greatest ascetic and renunciate in this creation, what chance ordinary mortals have against this him—i.e. it is extremely difficult to overcome desires, longings, passions and lust? Hence, if one is able to successfully exercise self-control over one's sense organs then obviously he is the greatest conqueror of the world!

What was the 'wrong doing', and how was Kamdeo punished for it? The 'wrong doing' was to disturb an ascetic in his meditation and contemplation, and attempting to pull the soul from its state of transcendental existence to a lower level of worldly existence marked by lust, desires, passions and longings. This wrong doing was all the more dangerous and fatal because Kamdeo, in his haughtiness and arrogance that

he will have his way no matter how exalted his target was, had forgotten that he is now playing fools with Lord Shiva known for his anger on the one hand, and his commitment to doing Tapa and Yoga as well lead a life of renunciation as an ascetic. So this temerity of Kamdeo was bound to boomerang upon him—for Lord Shiva became so annoyed and angry that he opened his legendary ‘third eye’ which spewed fire and burnt Kamdeo in an instant.

These developments are elaborately described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 87.]

रति पति हीन मलीन बिलोकि बिसूरति ।
नीलकण्ठ मृदु सील कृपामय मूरति ।।27।।
आसुतोष परितोष कीन्ह बर दीन्हेउ ।
सिव उदास तजि बास अनत गम कीन्हेउ ।।28।।

rati pati hīna malīna bilōki bisūrati.
nīlakaṅṭha mṛdu sīla kṛpāmaya mūrati. 27.
āsutōṣa paritōṣa kīnha bara dīnhē'u.
siva udāsa taji bāsa anata gama kīnhē'u. 28.

27-28. When the Lord with a blue-tinged throat (i.e. Lord Shiva) saw that Rati (the consort of Kamdeo-cupid) was extremely sad and dismayed, grieving, mourning and lamenting at the lose of her dear husband who had been killed by the wrath of the Lord himself, the most merciful and compassionate Lord who is very easy to be pleased was very much moved at her plight and felt sympathy for her (Rati). The gracious Lord regretted the developments and empathized with her, but since nothing could be done now, he blessed Rati and granted her a boon (that her wish to be reunited with her husband Kamdeo would be fulfilled in the next life when he would be born as the son of Lord Krishna).¹

Lord Shiva was so sorry for what had happened that he left the place to forget about it and went somewhere else. (27-28)

[Note—¹When Shiva burnt Kamdeo, the latter’s wife Rati came grieving, and fell at the feet of the Lord, asking for forgiveness and his blessings so that she could find her lost husband once again. She said that it is impossible for her to live without him. Shiva is most forgiving, kind, compassionate and loving. So though he had burnt Kamdeo for disturbing him in his meditation, when he saw Rati mourning, grieving and lamenting he felt very sad himself—because she was not at fault at all, and therefore should not be punished. Since it was not possible to revive Kamdeo at that instant because he was reduced to ashes, the only way out of the dilemma was to reunite the couple later on during Lord Vishnu’s advent on earth as Lord Krishna. So, Lord Shiva blessed her that she would be reunited with her husband during the incarnation of Lord Krishna. Satisfied, Rati went her way.

These developments are narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chanda that precedes Doha no. 87—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.

Even the Gods praised Lord Shiva for this gracious and kind act of his. They said—“Oh the merciful Lord. You have done the right thing by blessing Rati after having punished Kamdeo by burning him. It is your natural kindness that you first punish a creature for his misdeeds, but then immediately compensate him and grant him pardon. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 89.]

उमा नेह बस बिकल देह सुधि बुधि गई ।
 कलप बेलि बन बढ़त बिषम हिम जनु दई ।।29 ।।
 समाचार सब सखिन्ह जाइ घर घर कहे ।
 सुनत मातु पितु परिजन दारुन दुख दहे ।।30 ।।

umā nēha basa bikala dēha sudhi budhi gaī.
 kalapa bēli bana baṛhata biṣama hima janu daī. 29.
 samācāra saba sakhinha jā'i ghara ghara kahē.
 sunata mātu pitu parijana dārūna dukha dahē. 30.

29-30. When Uma (Parvati) saw the developments, she became very confounded and stunned with frustration so much so that she could not think what to do next, and was so stupefied that she became unaware of her surroundings and unconscious of her body as if a growing and thriving Kalpa-creeper has been struck by a terrible and killing frost.

[When Parvati saw that Shiva had burnt Kamdeo who represented the desire in the heart to have love and passion for a woman that would have inspired Shiva to think of marrying her, and the fact that he had left the place and gone to an undisclosed location because he wished to put everything behind him and move on, she was naturally confounded and perplexed. She did not know what to do next. All her efforts and hopes crumbled like a pack of cards. She was also alarmed at Lord Shiva's anger when she saw the way he opened his third eye to burn Kamdeo. Here, she is likened to the creeper which is destroyed when severe cold sets in the forest.]¹ (29)

Her companions (who had being deputed by her father to keep watch on her while she was doing severe Tapa by way of serving Lord Shiva) went back to their respective households and spread the news. When her father, mother and kith and kin learnt about the developments, they were extremely sad and remorseful because they were now very worried about the future of Parvati. They were literally being roasted in the fire of worries and concerns for Parvati's well-being and future.² (30)

[Note—¹A different version is given in Ram Charit Manas. It is said here that the Sapta-rishis, the seven celestial sages, went to see how Parvati reacted to Shiva burning Kamdeo. They taunted her that she did not listen to them on an earlier occasion when they had tried to deter her from attempting to pursue the dream of marrying Shiva, and now what will she do when Shiva had burnt Kamdeo himself, meaning when he had burnt the desire to have love with anyone. Parvati rebuked them, saying that Lord Shiva is renowned for fulfilling the wishes of his devotees, and if she had faithfully served him with diligence and honesty then the Lord is morally bound to fulfill her desires of marrying him. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 89—to Doha no. 90.

²Everyone was sad upon learning what had happened. But the seven celestial sages, known as Sapta-rishis, explained to them that though Shiva had burnt Kamdeo he had simultaneously blessed his wife Rati that she would get her husband back in her next life. This news pleased all of them, and Himwan, the father of Parvati, welcomed the news. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 91.]

जाइ देखि अति प्रेम उमहि उर लावहिं ।
 बिलपहिं बाम बिधातहि दोष लगावहिं ।।31 ।।
 जौ न होहिं मंगल मग सुर बिधि बाधक ।

तौ अभिमत फल पावहिं करि श्रमु साधक ।।32 ।।

jā'i dēkhi ati prēma umahi ura lāvahiṁ.
bilapahiṁ bāma bidhātahi dōṣa lagāvahiṁ. 31.
jau na hōhiṁ maṅgala maga sura bidhi bādhaka.
tau abhimata phala pāvahiṁ kari śramu sād'haka. 32.

31-32. They (the parents and other relatives of Parvati) went to the place where she was staying while serving Lord Shiva and doing Tapa (penance) to please the Lord. They were very sad about her future. When they met her, they embraced her affectionately, grieving and lamenting at the uncertain future that stared at her face, because the possibility of her now marrying Shiva had become remote. They accused the creator Brahma and other Gods of acting maliciously and ruining the future of Parvati. (31)

They said that if the Creator and the Gods do not interfere and unnecessarily cause obstacles/hindrances in the path of seekers, then the latter would be able to achieve their desired goals very easily. (32)

[Note—The parents accused the Gods of being selfish and jealous of everyone. They did not like that Parvati should marry Lord Shiva and start a family, as they feared that the future son of Lord Shiva would be superior to them and would undermine their authority and hegemony in this creation. So they decided to play spoil-sport by sending Kamdeo to disturb Shiva's meditation and making the Lord wrathful. They succeeded in their plan because as the events turned out Shiva indeed got angry, burnt Kamdeo, and then left the place where Parvati was serving him to go to an undisclosed location where she can't have access to him.

In reality, as we already know, this was not the fact. The Gods had sent Kamdeo so that Lord Shiva could be instigated to have a desire to marry Parvati. The Gods were indeed selfish, but Parvati marrying Shiva served their interest, and was not against it—because the son who will be born out of this wedlock would be able to kill the demon Tarkaasur. This incident has a lesson for all of us—more often than not we accuse the Gods for being unfavourable towards us because the things do not go the way we want. The reality might be different than what we think.]

साधक कलेस सुनाइ सब गौरिहि निहोरत धाम को ।
को सुनइ काहि सोहाय घर चित चहत चंद्र ललामको ।।
समुझाइ सबहि दृढाइ मनु पितु मातु, आयसु पाइ कै ।
लागी करन पुनि अगमु तपु तुलसी कहै किमि गाइकै ।।4 ।।

sād'haka kalēsa sunā'i saba gaurihi nihōrata dhāma kō.
kō suna'i kāhi sōhāya ghara cita cahata candra lalāmakō.
samujhā'i sabahi dṛṛhā'i manu pitu mātu, āyasu pā'i kai.
lāgī karana puni agamu tapu tulasī kahai kimi gā'ikai. 4.

Chanda 4. Telling her about the various troubles and tribulations, the miseries and torments, and the extreme difficulties which aspirants/seekers have to suffer from, everyone present there begged Gauri (Parvati) to come back home. [Parvati's parents and kith and kin tried to convince her that it is extremely difficult to please the Gods, and it is all the more difficult when the God is Lord Shiva who is renowned for his asceticism and renunciation. It's a dream that will elude her. So she should abandon her stubbornness and become practical by returning home.]

But who listens to them and who likes to go back home? For Parvati's mind and heart were eager to attain the Lord whose ornamentation is the moon. [That is, Parvati was determined to attain Shiva, and all sorts of persuasion had no effect upon her. This was good for her, because any great objective is never reached, any great success is not possible if one is not fully committed to it and does not have a firm resolve to reach his target against all odds. If one is determined and resolute, success is within his or her grasp. This will be proved now when Parvati rejected all offers to go back home, and instead decided to resume doing more severe form of direct Tapa (penance, austerity) to attain Shiva. She would be amply rewarded later on because the Lord finally marries her to fulfill her wish. Had she lacked in her determination and resolution, she would have been left in a void of neglect and ridicule in this world. She would not have achieved in becoming the Mother Goddess that she finally did by marrying Shiva.]

Then she (Parvati) politely comforted everyone, thanking them for being worried about her future and well-being, and assuring them that everything will be alright.

She sought and got permission from her parents to do severe Tapa to reach her goal of attaining Shiva. Tulsidas says that her Tapa was so intense and severe¹ that it is not possible for him to narrate it. [Parvati's self confidence and resolution are exemplary, especially when she happened to be a lady for whom doing severe form of Tapa is not a cake-walk.] (Chanda no. 4)

[Note—¹The severity of Parvati's Tapa is described below in verse nos. 34-40.

It has also been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 74 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it. It says—“Parvati enshrined Lord Shiva in her heart as the Lord of her life and existence ('Pran-Pati'), and went to a dense forest to do Tapa. Her body was delicate and not accustomed to hardships that Tapa requires, but she remembered (invoked) the holy feet of her Pran-Pati and discarded all comforts at the altar of Tapa. Newer and progressively more robust form of love and affection for the holy feet of her beloved Lord (Shiva) began to develop and grow in her heart with the passage of every day. She was so deeply engrossed in doing Tapa that she became unconcerned about her body and its comfort or well-being. For one thousand years she ate only roots and fruits, and for the next hundred years she survived on raw leafy plants. For some days she survived merely on water and air, and later on began to fast by abandoning everything. For three thousand years she ate only those leaves of the Bel tree (wood apple tree) that had dried up and fell to the ground on their own. At later stages of her Tapa she did not eat even these dried-up leaves, and it is because of this stern vow that she got to be honoured with the title of 'Aparna'—one who abandoned even the leaves. When Uma's body became extremely emaciated and decayed due to the severity of her Tapa, a voice from the sky said—Oh Parvati (the daughter of the mountains). Your Tapa is successful, and now you should stop doing it further. Your wishes will be fulfilled now for you will attain access to Lord Shiva.”]

फिरेउ मातु पितु परिजन लखि गिरिजा पन ।
जेहिं अनुरागु लागु चितु सोइ हितु आपन ॥३३॥
तजेउ भोग जिमि रोग लोग अहि गन जनु ।
मुनि मनसहु ते अगम तपहिं लायो मनु ॥३४॥

phirē'u mātu pitu parijana lakhi girijā pana.
jēhim anurāgu lāgu citu sō'i hitu āpana. 33.
tajē'u bhōga jimi rōga lōga ahi gana janu.

muni manasahu tē agama tapahim lāyō manu. 34.

33-34. Seeing Girija's (Parvati's) firm resolve and determination (that she will do anything to marry Shiva), the mother, the father, and other relatives returned back. When a person has developed an intensity of affection and love for somebody that the person's mind and heart are completely possessed by the thoughts of the lover, when the person's existence is overshadowed by the thoughts of the object of his adoration, then it is futile to talk of anything else with such a person. For this person, there is no one dearer than the one whom he or she loves and adores. [In the case of Parvati, this 'dear and beloved one' was Lord Shiva. So she would listen to no entreaties and could not be persuaded to return home.] (33)

[Finally, Parvati embarked upon doing severe Tapa to attain her goal of accessing Lord Shiva and marrying him at all costs.] She forsook worldly comforts and pleasures as if they were some kind of disease. [That is, she tried her best to avoid them just like one avoids catching so disease.]

She avoided all company and preferred to remain alone in solitude by treating people as if they were snakes. [That is, just like one runs away on seeing a serpent, Parvati avoided all forms of social contact and ran away if someone approached her or attempted to meet her. She liked being left alone.]

She concentrated herself in doing Tapa of such severity that even sages and hermits find it difficult of even contemplating of doing. [Parvati's Tapa was of the severiest kind that hermits and sages never think of doing. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 75 where Brahma, the creator, has declared that the type of Tapa that Parvati had done was never attempted by anyone though there are many resolute sages and hermits who have been regularly doing very stern and steady form of Tapa, but their Tapa was no match with that done by Parvati.]¹ (34)

[Note—¹The severity of Parvati's Tapa has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 74 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it. See note of Chanda no. 4 above for detail.]

Severity of Parvati's Tapa

सकुचहिं बसन बिभूषन परसत जो बपु ।
तेहिं सरीर हर हेतु अरंभेउ बड़ तपु ॥३५॥
पूजइ सिवहि समय तिहुँ करइ निमज्जन ।
देखि प्रेमु ब्रतु नेमु सराहहिं सज्जन ॥३६॥

sakucahim basana bibhūṣana parasata jō bapu.
tēhim sarīra hara hētu arambhē'u barā tapu. 35.
pūja'i sivahi samaya tihum̐ kara'i nimajjana.
dēkhi prēmu bratu nēmu sarāhahim̐ sajjana. 36.

35-36. The body which was so delicate and tender that even the clothes and ornaments felt most hesitant and reluctant to touch it, Parvati used the same body to do terribly severe Tapa for Har (Lord Shiva)¹. (35)

She bathed three times a day and worshipped Lord Shiva. Even saintly and pious gentlemen lauded her love and affection, her stern vows and steadfastness, and her daily routine of worship, adoration, service, Tapa etc. (36)

[Note—See note of Chanda no. 4 as well as verse nos. 33-34 above.

¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 74.]

नीद न भूख पियास सरिस निसि बासरु ।
 नयन नीरु मुख नाम पुलक तनु हियँ हरु ॥37 ॥
 कंद मूल फल असन, कबहुँ जल पवनहि ।
 सूखे बेलके पात खात दिन गवनहि ॥38 ॥

nīda na bhūkha piyāsa sarisa nisi bāsarū.
 nayana nīru mukha nāma pulaka tanu hiyaṁ haru. 37.
 kanda mūla phala asana, kabahuṁ jala pavanahi.
 sūkhē bēlakē pāta khāta dina gavanahi. 38.

37-38. She did not sleep, and had no hunger or thirst. For her, days and nights were equal (i.e. her mental state made no distinction between the night and the day, and both were the same for her as she remained submerged in the thoughts of Lord Shiva and doing Tapa). Her eyes were always filled with tears, her mouth always pronounced Lord Shiva's name, her body was always in a perpetual state of thrill, and Har (Shiva) constantly resided in her heart. (37)

She sometimes ate roots, stems or fruits, and at other times she survived on water and air only, while on many a days she spent the whole time surviving on dry leaves of the Bel tree (the wood apple tree; Aegle Marmelos; a creeper plant).¹ (38)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 74.]

नाम अपरना भयउ परन जब परिहरे ।
 नवल धवल कल कीरति सकल भुवन भरे ॥39 ॥
 देखि सराहहिं गिरिजहि मुनिबरु मुनि बहु ।
 अस तप सुना न दीख कबहुँ काहूँ कहु ॥40 ॥

nāma aparanā bhaya'u parana jaba pariharē.
 navala dhavala kala kīrati sakala bhuvana bharē. 39.
 dēkhi sarāhahim girijahi munibaru muni bahu.
 asa tapa sunā na dīkha kabahuṁ kāhūṁ kahu. 40.

39-40. When she even forsook eating dry leaves, she began to be called 'Aparna'¹. The glorious news of her stupendous deeds, her firm determination, her unique Tapa and her virtuous character spread far and wide, filling all available space in the entire creation consisting of 14 Bhuvans. [That is, the wonderful form of Tapa that Parvati did which was never attempted by anyone earlier, as well as the hitherto never imagined goal of attaining Lord Shiva with the aim of marrying him that she had set for herself, set her aside from all others who did Tapa for various reasons in this world. So, this helped to establish her fame and glory throughout the creation as someone outstanding and unique.] (39)

Looking at the severity of the Tapa done by Girija, many ascetics, sages, hermits, monks and seers praised her saying that no one had ever done or even heard about such severe form of Tapa before². (40)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 74.

²In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 75, even Brahma the creator has acknowledged that no one had ever done such severe Tapa as the one done by Parvati.]

Shiva approaches Parvati

काहूँ न देख्यौ कहहिं यह तपु जोग फल फल चारि का ।
 नहिं जानि जाइ न कहति चाहति काहि कुधर-कुमारिका ।।
 बटु बेष पेखन पेम पनु ब्रत नेम ससि सेखर गए ।
 मनसहिं समरपेउ आपु गिरिजहि बचन मृदु बोलत भए ।। 5 ।।

kāhūṁ na dēkhyau kahahim̐ yaha tapu jōga phala phala cāri kā.
 nahim̐ jāni jā'i na kahati cāhati kāhi kudhara-kumārikā.
 baṭu bēṣa pēkhana pēma panu brata nēma sasi sēkhara ga'ē.
 manasahim̐ samarapē'u āpu girijahi bacana mṛdu bōlata bha'ē. 5.

Chanda 5. They (the sages, seers, hermits, ascetics, monks) say that nobody has heard of such a Tapa (severe penances and austerities) before. Are the four fruits (of Artha—wealth, prosperity; Dharma—righteousness, probity and noble conduct; Kaam—fulfilled desires; and Moksha—emancipation and salvation) sufficient reward for doing such a formidable and incomparable Tapa? [That is, these four traditional rewards that one gets for doing Tapa are insufficient to compensate Parvati for the sort of Tapa she has done. She surely deserves something more potentially important and significant than the above four rewards for the severity of the Tapa she has done. So, what could it be? As it turned out eventually, she was amply rewarded by the creator Brahma by blessing her that she has now become eligible to marry Lord Shiva and consequentially become the Mother Goddess of the world. This reward was the rarest of the rare, because of the simple reason that Lord Shiva is not going to marry again, so she would be the only Mother Goddess of creation. On the other hand, the other four rewards of Artha, Dharma, Kaam and Moksha can be attained by any number of ascetics and hermits who do Tapa.]

No one knows what the daughter of the Mountain wishes to have, nor do she say anything herself. [This is true Tapa. Parvati did not want any worldly rewards, and she had done Tapa for Lord Shiva. She left everything in the hands of the Creator, for she felt that it is best that way. If she asks for something, than the Creator may request her to ask for something else because it may not be possible to fulfill her desires. But if she does not ask anything, the Creator will be in a fix because he is morally bound to amply reward her. In that case, the Creator would repeatedly request her to ask for a boon, and it will be then that she would express her desire to marry Shiva. In this situation, it will be impossible for the Creator to deny her wish because he had repeatedly asked her to express her desires. It will also portray her in a good light—as a lady who has done the rarest kind of Tapa without harbouring any greed whatsoever in her heart. She did not want to jump the gun.]

Then 'Shashi Shekhar' (i.e. Lord Shiva; literally the Lord whose head is adorned by the moon) assumed the form of a 'Batu' (a young celibate Brahmin) and went to her to test the sincerity of her love and affection, her steadfastness of vows, her determination and resolve, as well as to observe her daily routine.¹

But when he reached the site where Parvati was doing Tapa, he was very pleased by her general demeanours and lifestyle. So Lord Shiva mentally accepted her

as his consort and submitted (i.e. surrendered) himself to Girija (Parvati). The Lord talked with her in a pleasant and sweet voice. (Chanda no. 5)

[Note—¹How did Shiva come to know that Parvati had done Tapa to attain him? Well, it is written in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 76—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 77 that says, in brief, that when Shiva was lost in deep meditation, Lord Ram, the Lord whom Shiva adored as his only deity and God, appeared before him and told him about Parvati's severe Tapa with the avowed aim of marrying Shiva. Lord Ram requested Shiva to honour her wishes. Shiva replied that though it is not proper for him to do so as he is a renunciate and an ascetic, but nevertheless it is also not possible for him to refuse the request made personally by Lord Ram whom he adores so much. So, in spite of its impropriety, Shiva agreed to accept Lord Ram's instructions and marry Parvati.

When Lord Shiva came to know that Parvati has done severe Tapa with a vow to marry him, the Lord wished to judge her first-hand himself. So he disguised himself as a Brahmin boy and approached her to observe her daily life and test her sincerity and purity of heart. After all, Lord Shiva must make sure about the integrity and cleanliness of the person he will be marrying.

Whereas here in Parvati Mangal it is said that Shiva went to test Parvati's integrity personally, in Ram Charit Manas a different version is given where Lord Shiva had sent the seven celestial sages, known as the Sapta Rishis, to do the job for him. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 77—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 82.]

देखि दसा करुनाकर हर दुख पायउ ।
मोर कठोर सुभाय हृदयँ अस आयउ ॥41॥
बंस प्रसंसि मातु पितु कहि सब लायक ।
अमिय बचनु बटु बोलेउ अति सुख दायक ॥42॥

dēkhi dasā karunākara hara dukha pāya'u.
mōra kathōra subhāya hrdayaṁ asa āya'u. 41.
bansa prasansi mātu pitu kahi saba lāyaka.
amiya bacanu baṭu bōlē'u ati sukha dāyaka. 42.

41-42. Watching her (miserable and pathetic) condition, the compassionate Har (Shiva) was moved, and he felt very sorrowful and developed sympathy for her. He thought to himself that he is very stern in his temperament that he forced Parvati to undergo such hardship because he had spurned her and rejected her services and prayers, and left her alone when he went to an undisclosed destination after burning Kamdeo. This left Parvati with little choice but to do severe Tapa in order to access him once again. The Lord regretted his decision, and thought to himself that he should have taken into consideration the love and honesty of Parvati before neglecting her prayers and serviced on the earlier occasion. [Refer verse nos. 22—34 above. He regretted at his stern vows of renunciation that forces his devoted followers to suffer such hardship in order to please him.] (41)

The Batu (i.e. Lord Shiva disguised as a young celibate Brahmin) first praised the family of Parvati and said that her parents were very honourable and praiseworthy in all respects. Then he said to her most sweetly—¹(42)

[Note—¹Refer Chanda no. 5 above.]

देबि करौं कछु बिनती बिलगु न मानब ।

कहउँ सनेहँ सुभाय साँच जियँ जानब ।।43 ।।
 जननि जगत जस प्रगटेहु मातु पिता कर ।
 तीय रतन तुम उपजिहु भव रतनाकर ।।44 ।।

dēbi karaum̐ kachu binatī bilagu na mānaba.
 kaha'um̐ sanēhaṁ̐ subhāya sāṁca jiyāṁ̐ jānaba. 43.
 janani jagata jasa pragaṭēhu mātu pitā kara.
 tīya ratana tuma upajihu bhava ratanākara. 44.

43-44. [Lord Shiva said to Parvati—] ‘Oh goddess! I make a humble prayer (submission) to you; please do not take it otherwise. I speak with genuine affection, so treat it in your heart as the truth spoken by me with full humbleness and sincerity. [I am speaking the truth, so please do not think that I have come to play any new tricks with you or tease you any further.] (43).

By your virtuous deeds and exemplary courage and determination, you have succeeded in establishing not only your own but even the glory of your parents in this world. In this world-like ocean, you have taken birth as if a gem is produced amongst the womenfolk.’ [Rare gems such as pearls and certain categories of shells such as the conch are the product of the ocean. Likewise, in the vast world which is likened to an ocean here, Parvati is born like a jewel amongst women.] (44)

[Note—A similar comparison is made in the book ‘Janki Mangal’ of Tulsidas where Sita is compared to the best jewel amongst the women who have taken birth in this world which is like an ocean—refer: Janki Mangal, verse no. 26.]

The Batu (Shiva disguised as a Brahmin) tries to dissuade Parvati

अगम न कछु जग तुम कहँ मोहि अस सूझइ ।
 बिनु कामना कलेस कलेस न बूझइ ।।45 ।।
 जौ बर लागि करहु तप तौ लरिकाइअ ।
 पारस जौ घर मिलै तौ मेरु कि जाइअ ।।46 ।।

agama na kachu jaga tuma kahaṁ̐ mōhi asa sūjha'i.
 binu kāmanā kalēsa kalēsa na būjha'i. 45.
 jau bara lāgi karahu tapa tau larikā'i'a.
 pārasa jau ghara milai tau mēru ki jā'i'a. 46.

45-46. Shiva, in the guise of a Batu, said to Parvati—‘It appears to me that nothing is inaccessible for you in this world. It is also true that one who does anything without expectation of a reward does not feel the troubles or hardships associated with that effort because it is a selfless exercise that is done willingly and enthusiastically. So, it looks that you have done Tapa without any expectation of any reward for doing it. [Shiva made this remark because he found that inspite of doing such severe Tapa, Parvati was very cheerful and happy. She showed no sign of frustration or weariness. Her zeal and enthusiasm remained undiminished inspite of all the difficulties she has had to face. Besides this, the Lord wanted her to express her internal desire to marry him explicitly in her own words before he could accept the proposal. As of now, she has not done so, and though she had served Shiva for a long time prior to his burning Kamdeo and leaving the place to go to another destination, she never expressed her

desire to him in explicit terms. Therefore Lord Shiva wished that she make the proposal first-hand. So he continued—]

But in case you are doing Tapa seeking a groom for yourself, then it is your childishness—because if one can find a ‘Parasmani’ (the philosopher’s stone which converts other base metals into gold) in one’s own house, why will he go out and search for it on Mt. Sumeru (the distant mountain where the Gods live)? [In other words, finding a groom is not something so serious that one would involve oneself in doing such severe form of Tapa as you have done. It’s a routine matter that a lady is married to some suitable man, and there is no need to do Tapa for it. Therefore surely the reason for your doing Tapa must be different than merely to find a suitable groom for yourself.]’ (45-46)

मोरें जान कलेस करिअ बिनु काजहि ।
सुधा कि रोगिहि चाहइ रतन की राजहि ।।47 ।।
लखि न परेउ तप कारन बटु हियँ हारेउ ।
सुनि प्रिय बचन सखी मुख गौरि निहारेउ ।।48 ।।

mōrēm jāna kalēsa kari'a binu kājahi.
sudhā ki rōgihi cāha'i ratana kī rājahi. 47.
lakhi na parē'u tapa kārana baṭu hiyaṁ hārē'u.
suni priya bacana sakhī mukha gauri nihārē'u. 48.

47-48. ‘In my view, you are unnecessarily taking so much trouble. Does the Amrit (elixir of life; ambrosia) ever wish to go near a severely diseased person, or does a gem/jewel wish to be near a king? [In other words, it is the sick man who searches for the medicine, but the latter does not go to him on its own accord. Similarly, the king searches for rare gems and jewels to store them in his treasury, and it is not the other way round. Here, Shiva is indirectly praising Parvati and her glory by comparing her to Amrit and a rare gem. He means that she is so virtuous and beautiful, possessing so many good qualities, that she is the most eligible bride in this world, and she has become so famous in this world that the groom who is suitable for her would come searching for her on his own, instead of her searching for him!] (47)

This Batu (Shiva in the form of a Brahmin) does not understand the reason for your doing such severe Tapa. He (i.e. me) has been tired of seeking an explanation for it (but could not find it).’ [As has been observed above, Shiva wished that Parvati becomes forthcoming and express her desire in clear terms.]

Hearing these sweet, pleasant and endearing words of his, Gauri (Parvati) looked at the face of her companion (i.e. her attendant or maid). [This implies that her father Himwan had left behind some of the maids to look after Parvati while she was doing Tapa. As has been said earlier in verse nos. 31-33, Himwan had gone to persuade Parvati to return home, but she refused and said that she will do Tapa to fulfill her desires. So it is clear that while returning home, her father must have left some of the maids quietly to take care of Parvati. It is one such maid that Parvati addresses now. When the Batu pretended that he did not know why she has been doing so severe Tapa, Parvati looked at her friend as if to say silently ‘Look at this fellow. The whole world knows why I have been doing Tapa, and he says he does not understand why I am doing it! How funny!'] (48)

गौरिं निहारेउ सखी मुख रुख पाइ तेहिं कारन कहा ।

तपु करहिं हर हितु सुनि बिहँसि बटु कहत मुरुखाई महा ।।
 जेहिं दीन्ह अस उपदेस बरेहु कलेस करि बरु बावरो ।
 हित लागि कहौं सुभायँ सो बड़ बिषम बैरी रावरो ।।6 ।।

gaurīm nihārē'u sakhī mukha rukha pā'i tēhim kārana kahā.
 tapu karahim hara hitu suni bihañsi baṭu kahata murukhā'ī mahā.
 jēhim dīnha asa upadēsa barēhu kalēsa kari baru bāvarō.
 hita lāgi kahaurñ subhāyañ sō baṛa biṣama bairī rāvarō. 6.

Chanda 6. Gauri (Parvati) looked at the face of her companion very intently. Having got a signal from her (Parvati), the companion told him (Shiva in the form of the celibate Brahmin, the 'Batu') that she was doing Tapa for Har (Shiva). [Parvati did not want to reply to Shiva directly because she wished to keep her desires secret lest the Batu make fun of her and cause further agony in her heart. Surely he must be a joker who does not warrant much attention. So Parvati kept quiet and signaled her companion to reply the Batu.]

Hearing it, the Batu laughed and ridiculed her, saying, 'This is your great foolishness. Whosoever has advised you to do such severe Tapa for a mad and crazy fellow like Shiva whom you have decided to accept as your groom—he is indeed your greatest enemy.'¹

[Remember, Shiva is merely testing Parvati's devotion towards him, as well as her resolve and sincerity. Lord Shiva wished to tell Parvati the facts about himself so that she does not regret later on at having married someone whose lifestyle is at odds with the world, who is a renunciate, who prefers to live like a hermit in the mountains, who does not like worldly comforts and pleasures, who remains engrossed in meditation and contemplation, leaving little or no time to attend to his wife. Parvati will have to contend with all these. If however she wants her husband to be a worldly man, she must change her decision to marry Shiva right now while still there is time. Later on, she would be left with no choice.

So, to make sure that she loves Shiva for the sake of loving him inspite of all his shortcomings and oddities, and not because he is some very powerful god and marrying him will automatically ensure a comfortable life for her, Shiva outlined all the odd but unique qualities that he possessed which are incompatible with a married life and which the ordinary world regards as oddities and faults in a person to make sure Parvati knows them and will have no regrets later on.] (Chanda no. 6)

[Note—¹In Ram Charit Manas, the same thing is said by the seven celestial sages, the Sapta-rishis, when they had gone to test Parvati's devotion, sincerity and integrity. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 78—to Doha no. 79.]

कहहु काह सुनि रीझिहु बर अकुलीनहिं ।
 अगुन अमान अजाति मातु पितु हीनहिं ।।49 ।।
 भीख मागि भव खाहिं चिता नित सोवहिं ।
 नाचहिं लगन पिसाच पिसाचिनि जोवहिं ।।50 ।।

kahahu kāha suni rījhihu bara akulīnahim.
 aguna amāna ajāti mātu pitu hīnahim. 49.
 bhīkha māgi bhava khāhim citā nita sōvahim.

nācahiṃ lagana pisāca pisācini jōvahiṃ. 50.

49-50. ‘Tell me what you have heard about the groom which has made you so mesmerized by him. Let me hear what is so charming and wonderful about that fellow who has no ‘Gunas’ (known and quantifiable qualities), no ‘Maan’ (measurements, limitations), no ‘Jaati’ (without any known family lineage or great pedigree) or known parents.’

[Lord Shiva is not an ordinary God, but Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, in a personified form. Hence, it is indeed true that Shiva has ‘no Gunas’ because Brahm has no specific attributes. He is beyond the three Gunas known as Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas that dominate the rest of the creation in some ratio. Being Brahm, Shiva is neutral, and therefore his character equilises all the three Gunas.

Similarly, being Brahm personified, Shiva has ‘no Maan’—meaning having no measurement; he is ‘eternal and unborn’. This also implies that he no family lineage or parents. In fact, he is the Parent of the entire creation.] (49)

‘Look, he (Shiva) eats by begging, sleeps in the cremation ground on ash left after cremation (or has ash smeared all over his body), dances naked, and he is watched on by ghosts and phantoms as he dances (i.e. he lives in the company of ghosts and spirits).’

[Lord Shiva is an ascetic. An ascetic is supposed to beg for meals and not hoard anything for himself.

His living in the cremation ground has two meanings—one is that he sees death as the fact of life and therefore remains aloof from all worldly attachments and attractions, and second, by living in the cremation ground he utters the holy name of Lord Ram in the ears of a dying person so that all the sins committed by the dying man are nullified and his soul can get emancipation and salvation. This fact is endorsed in Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.

Shiva dances not because he is mad but because he is ecstatic in the bliss obtained by remaining lost in meditation and existing in a transcendental state of consciousness. This dancing form of Shiva is known as ‘Nataraj’, the cosmic dance of the Supreme Being.¹

The presence of ‘spirits’ around him implies that ordinary people cannot understand his state of mind and level of existence, for it is understandable only when one leaves the level of gross existence that revolves around the physical body and rises above to the level of existence in which the ‘spirit’, the soul, lives, which is the state of ‘transcendental existence’ when one obtains absolute bliss. This is why Shiva dances, and this is why his dance is observed by spirits and not human beings with a gross body.] (50)

[Note—Similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 79 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8.

¹*Nataraj*—One of mystical forms of Lord Shiva is known as the ‘Nataraj’ (pronounced as ‘Nut-Raaj’). The word ‘Nat’ means to dance, and ‘Raaj’ means a king or an expert who knows the secrets of any kind of art. So, when Lord Shiva performs his cosmic dance he is known as ‘Nataraj’. This mystical form of Lord Shiva is known as the ‘Nataraj’ because it represents the Lord’s cosmic dance that symbolizes both the destruction and the creation of the universe, and it reveals the cycles of death and birth. Since one dances only when he is extremely happy and ecstatic, this Nataraj dance of Lord Shiva indicates that the Lord is extremely blissful and ecstatic in self-realisation. This pose is for the welfare of the world, and to tell the world how one enjoys total bliss upon self-realisation. In the pose of Nataraj, the ‘King of Dance Forms’, Shiva is giving darshan (divine viewing) to his beloved devotees within the

abode of Consciousness, which is the heart of man. In other words, only when one becomes self-realised and experiences the existence of the pure conscious Atma inside one's heart, inside one's inner-self, that he can dance in ecstasy, lost in bliss and oblivious of the surrounding world.

During this form of cosmic dance that is known as 'Tandav' (pronounced as 'Taan-dav'), Lord Shiva is depicted as having crushed under his feet the demon of ignorance called 'Apasmara Purusha'. This demon of ignorance is created when the creature forgets the truth and reality of his true 'self' and that of existence as a whole, and the killing of this demon stands for overcoming ignorance and its attendant delusions. One hand is stretched across his chest and points towards the uplifted foot, indicating the release from earthly bondage of the devotee. The fire represents the final destruction of creation. But since Lord Shiva is the 'Maha-Dev', the great God, he is simultaneously responsible for bringing to an end this creation as well as creating it once again.

Therefore, this dance of the Nataraj is also an act of creation whereby the Lord arouses dormant energies and scatters the ashes of the universe in a pattern that will form the design, the contours and the texture of the ensuing creation.]

भाँग धतूर अहार छार लपटावहिं ।
जोगी जटिल सरोष भोग नहिं भावहिं ।।51 ।।
सुमुखि सुलोचनि हर मुख पंच तिलोचन ।
बामदेव फुर नाम काम मद मोचन ।।52 ।।

bhāṁga dhatūra ahāra chāra lapaṭāvahim.
jōgī jaṭila sarōṣa bhōga nahim bhāvahim. 51.
sumukhi sulōcani hara mukha pañca tilōcana.
bāmadēva phura nāma kāma mada mōcana. 52.

51-52. 'Bhang-Dhatura (an intoxicating hemp; *Cannabis Sativa* or *Tetrahydro Cannabinols*) are his staple food. He smears ash on his whole body. He is a difficult (stern) Yogi (ascetic) by nature as he is difficult to please because he has no attachment towards anything in this world and lives a detached life of renunciation and dispassion. He is not concerned with anyone, nor bothers to please anyone. He is inclined to be angry and wrathful at the least provocation (especially when his meditation and contemplation are disturbed). And he does not like enjoying material objects, pleasures and comforts of this world. [Well, as an ascetic, these are natural traits. (51)

You have a beautiful face and enchanting eyes, but he has five faces and three eyes! His name is 'Bamdeo' (because it literally means someone who lives an unconventional way of life). He is the crusher or vanquisher of the pride, ego, arrogance and haughtiness of Kamdeo-cupid (the patron God of love and passions).

[The *five heads* of Shiva stand for the 'Panch Vyom' or the five forms that the sky element is said to have. According to Vedanta, the concept of the *sky* or 'Akash' has many connotations. According to one interpretation, there are *five* subtle skies representing the space surrounding the five sheaths or *Koshas* present in the body of a creature. They are the sheaths that surround the Atma and are called 'Panch Akash'. These are the following—(1) the Food Sheath called Anna Maye Kosh; (2) the Vital Air Sheath called Pran Maye Kosh; (3) the Mental Sheath called Manomaye Kosh; (4) the Intellectual Sheath called Vigyan Maye Kosh; and (5) the Bliss Sheath called Anand Maye Kosh. Refer—Mudgal Upanishad, 4/5 of the Rig Veda.

Shiva has three eyes—two conventional and one in the forehead. He is therefore known as ‘Tri-netrum’ or ‘Trayambak’—the Lord with three eyes. The third eye is known as the eye of wisdom.¹

Shiva’s destroying Kamdeo is a metaphoric way of saying that he has conquered his inner self so much so that the negative qualities of passions, lust, longing and desire that are inherent and latent in all living beings, tormenting them and disturbing their peace of mind and heart, do not affect Shiva’s calmness and blissful state of existence.

In other words, the Batu asks Parvati how she can expect marital happiness and pleasures by marrying a Lord with such odd and unconventional characters and habits. How can one expect an ascetic to lead a married life? Is Parvati not aware of these things before making a resolve to marry Shiva? Is she sure that she won’t regret later on?] (52).

[Note—¹*Trinetrum/Trinetra/Trilaksha/Lalaataksha*—Refer (i) Atharva Veda = Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 6; and Canto 2, paragraph no. 21; Sharav Upanishad, verse nos. 10, 14; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-2; (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 93.

The word *Trinetra* means the Lord who has three eyes, two conventional eyes and one rare eye of wisdom located in the center of the forehead, between the eyebrows and just above the root of the nose. Hence, Lord Shiva is also known as Lord *Trinetrum*. [‘Tri’ = three; ‘Netra’ = eyes; ‘Laksha’ = to see.]

The location of the third eye in the center of the forehead has given Shiva the name of *Lalaataskha*. [‘Lalaat’ = forehead.]

The *third eye* is not some physical eye but a subtle eye symbolising the Lord’s high level of enlightenment and wisdom. This burning of the evil world by opening of the third eye of Shiva is a metaphoric way of saying that a creature can use his eyes of wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment to overcome all delusions and misconceptions about the truth and reality, along with all mischief as well as negativity and evil tendencies in this world. The ‘burning’ is elimination of such negativity and perversions.

According to Yoga philosophy, an ascetic focuses his Pran or vital winds at this spot in the forehead where he experiences enlightenment and the nectar of bliss dripping from it. By the way, Shiva is regarded as the patron God of all ascetics precisely for this reason.

There is a legendary story associated with this third eye. Once, Parvati, his divine consort, had closed his two eyes, and as a result the world was plunged in darkness. To save the world from this all-encompassing darkness, Shiva willed a third eye between the two eyebrows. This eye spouted fire with its accompanying heat and light. So, the celestial sun can be regarded as a symbol of this third eye.

Once when Shiva was in deep meditative trance and was teased by Kamdeo, the God of passions, at the behest of Gods who had wanted Shiva to marry and produce a male child who would kill the demons, he felt so annoyed by Kamdeo’s temerity and impertinence that he opened this third eye to burn him down.

According to the Atharva Veda’s *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph no. 21, the three eyes of Shiva or Rudra stand for the Sun, the Moon and the Fire. These three entities are regarded as the eternal sources of light in this creation. The Sun and the Fire provide the heat and energy so essential for sustenance of life besides being an eternal source of light, while the Moon is regarded as the pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of bliss and the soothing nectar that neutralises the scorching effects of the Sun and the Fire.

The third eye, as has been noted above, stands for the excellent level of wisdom, erudition, knowledge, enlightenment and omniscience that the Lord possesses.

The *Sharav Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse nos. 10 and 14 says as follows—

“Verse no. 10= We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra who can burn to ashes the entire world by the fierce spurt of fire emanating from the third eye located in his forehead¹, and is so gracious that he re-creates it once again after punishing it (for its sins and misdeeds by reducing it to ashes), and then offers it his protection (10).

“Verse no. 14 = We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra whose three eyes are the Sun, the Moon and the Fire (representing eternal sources of light, life, energy, warmth and heat) (14).”

From the metaphysical perspective, his two eyes are the conventional eyes, and his third symbolises his deep insight and great wisdom and enlightenment. Shiva personifies the fire element which also has a symbolic significance. The fire is known to burn all impurities present in gold when it is put into it, thereby purifying the metal. Similarly, fire is used in blast furnaces to extract iron from its ore. Fire has the inherent ability to reduce to ashes all filth and garbage, which is a metaphoric way of saying that a person who has worshipped this element in the form of Shiva is supposed to have burnt all his faults, blemishes and shortcomings that taint his character and soul, thereby purifying his inner self. The ash is indicative of total renunciation and detachment from the world of materialism, because it is indicative of a renunciate way of life and symbolically stands for burning of everything into the fire pit. That is why Lord Shiva has been called the patron God of ascetics, hermits and Sanyasis who worship the fire element only.

Besides these points, Shiva is the God assigned the task of concluding the world which necessitates his being closely associated with the ‘fire element’ in the sense that he must be as unrelenting, merciless, powerful and ferocious as the latter in order to conclude this creation in spite of all the odds. He must reduce everything to ashes just like the fire does. And it is from this ash that the new creation would emerge in due course. Herein lie the magic of creation and its chief Lord, Brahm, the Supreme Being—the fact that a new creation rises from ashes!

To quote *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse no. 93—“This (i.e. the fire element is the symbolic abode of Lord Rudra or Shiva. [That is, he symbolises the fire element.] One should meditate upon this Lord who has three eyes, who is the one renowned for granting boons (to his followers and devotees, and in the presence case to the ascetic), who is as splendid, illuminated and radiant as a sun which has just risen, and who has the ash of the fire sacrifice smeared all over his body (just like an ascetic, indicating that he is their great icon and patron deity of ascetics) (93).”

Trayambak—The word *Trayambak* means the Lord who has a most unconventional form with one extra eye oddly placed in the forehead. Lord Shiva’s behaviour and general bearing are also most unconventional and odd because he is at once an incarnation of the eclectic virtues of peace, renunciation, detachment, tranquility and blissful, and at another moment he becomes personified form of anger and wrath. On the one hand his cosmic form is the Supreme Being, the Greatest amongst the Gods (‘Maha-deva’), and in another form he is a gross Lingam (Shiva’s gross symbol made of stone). In one instance he is lost in meditation and contemplation, being completely detached from the outside world, and in another instance he is said to have a family consisting of his divine consort Parvati or Uma, the divine Mother, and sons known as Ganesh and Kartikeya. Hence, he is called *Trayambak*—the ‘odd one’.

The word also means ‘the Lord of the three (‘Traya’ = 3) worlds’ consisting of the heavens, the earth and the hell; the cosmos, the terrestrial world, and the nether world.

The Lord’s Mantra is given in the *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4 is entirely devoted to Lord Trayambak. It describes the meaning of this word and the Mantras dedicated to Lord Trayambak in great detail. This

Trayambak Mantra is given in paragraph nos. 1-6, and it is ‘Trayambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushti-varadhan Urwaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti Mamritaata’.

Lord *Triyambak*’s name appears in the following Upanishads—

(i) Atharva Veda’s *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph no. 6 which says that his Mantra should be said when the worshipper applies the sacred Bhasma (ash of the fire sacrifice) on his body from the toe to the head.

(ii) The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4 is entirely devoted to Lord Trayambak. It describes the meaning of this word and the Mantras dedicated to Lord Trayambak in great detail. This Trayambak Mantra is given in paragraph nos. 1-6, and it is ‘Trayambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushti-varadhan Urwaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti Mamritaata’.]

एकउ हरहिं न बर गुन कोटिक दूषन ।
नर कपाल गज खाल ब्याल बिष भूषन ॥53 ॥
कहँ राउर गुन सील सरूप सुहावन ।
कहाँ अमंगल बेषु बिसेषु भयावन ॥54 ॥

ēka'u harahim̐ na bara guna kōṭika dūṣana.
nara kapāla gaja khāla byāla biṣa bhūṣana. 53.
kahaṁ rā'ura guna sīla sarūpa suhāvana.
kahāṁ amaṅgala bēṣu bisēṣu bhayāvana. 54.

53-54. [The Batu continued--] ‘Har (Shiva) has not got even a single good character worth mentioning. On the contrary, he has millions of (i.e. numerous, uncountable) quirks, faults and shortcomings. He adorns himself with skulls around his neck by way of a necklace, wears hide of elephants, is adorned by snakes which he prefers to wrap around his body, and keeps poison in his throat.

[The serpents are wrapped around his body¹, while the poison is stored in his neck, rendering it blue-tinged. This form of Lord Shiva is known as ‘Neelkanth’².] (53)

On the one hand are your virtuous characters and matchless qualities as well as your attractive beauty and charm, and on the other hand is his inauspicious countenance and attire which are very fearful, horrible and terrifying. [Don’t you realise that he is not suitable for you as a husband?] (54)

[Note—¹The significance of the *serpents* wrapped around his body—The *snakes* that are wrapped around Lord Shiva show that he is beyond the power of death and poison.

These coiled serpents around his body indicate the fact that he constantly reminds himself of imminent death, because serpents are very poisonous and symbolise immediate death. They also remind him about the unholy and poisonous nature of the gross world. This helps him to remain focused on his spiritual aim of self-realisation instead of being attracted by the material charms of this material world of sense objects and getting deluded by them.

The serpents also signify that Shiva is the Lord of death; he is death personified. Since he is able to wrap the serpents around his body and they cannot harm him, it indicates the fact that he has conquered death. That is why he is called ‘Mrityunjay’, the conqueror of death.

Again, the coiled serpents represent the Kundalini, the coiled subtle cosmic energy center at the base of the spine which when activated can entitle the spiritual aspirant to experience a burst of stupendous spiritual energy which provides him a

glimpse of his own divine powers as well as the powers of the cosmic Consciousness present inside his bosom as his Atma. This Kundalini is activated by doing numerous Yoga exercises as described in the Upanishads on the subject of Yoga.

The coiled serpents may also represent cycles of time in the macrocosm and the basic energy of life in the microcosm in the form of sexual energy.

These reptiles are very ferocious, dangerous, poisonous, and a symbol of male potency. The symbolism is that Shiva is a very potent God who can be extremely ruthless and unforgiving towards sinful creatures. He has exercised extreme self control and has 'girdled' or readied himself in preparation for enduring the greatest of hardships and sufferance for self-realisation as well as to provide the world with liberation and deliverance. The serpents warn his enemies not to fool around with him. That is also why he has fire in one of his hands. This fire signifies his ability to reduce to ashes the entire physical world consisting of falsehood and sins as well as eliminate all impurities, imperfections, faults and shortcomings that cripple the creature's spiritual well being.

²*Neelkantha*—'The Lord with a purple or blue-tinged throat'. Lord Shiva is known as 'Neelkanth' because he had drunk the horrible poison called Halaahal which emerged as a scorching froth at the time of churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit or the ambrosia of life and eternity. The legend goes that Lord Shiva had drunk the fierce poison that emerged at the time of churning of the celestial ocean in the beginning of creation by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the nectar of eternity and bliss. As soon as this boiling poison came out, there was the fear of the entire creation being scalded by its heat and ferocity. So Lord Shiva took the name of Lord Ram and gulped it in one mouthful. But the Lord knew that if this poison entered his abdomen the whole creation will be annihilated nevertheless as it resided in his abdomen. This shows that Lord Shiva is none but the supreme Brahm in whose body the entire creation resides like the embryo lives in its mother's womb. Hence, the merciful Lord kept the poison in his throat, giving it a purple colour. [Refer: (i) Sharav Upanishad, verse nos. 11, 16. (ii) Mahabharat, Adi Parva, Canto 18. In its verse no. 18 it is stated that—(a) Lord Shiva had drunk the poison while invoking and repeating the holy Mantra, and of course that Mantra was the holy name of Lord Ram because the Lord is Shiva's patron deity, and (b) this is the reason why his throat became dark blue or purple, because he had retained the poison in his throat instead of gulping it down in his stomach. (iii) The same fact is endorsed in Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 19. (iv) Tulsidas' Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 157-158 allude to Lord Shiva drinking the Halaahal poison.]

जो सोचइ ससि कलहि सो सोचइ रौरैहि ।
कहा मोर मन धरि न बिरय बर बौरैहि ।।55 ।।
हिए हेरि हठ तजहु हठै दुख पैहहु ।
ब्याह समय सिख मोरि समुझि पछितैहहु ।।56 ।।

jō sōca'i sasi kalahi sō sōca'i raurēhi.
kahā mōra mana dhari na biraya bara baurēhi. 55.
hi'ē hēri haṭha tajahu haṭhai dukha paihahu.
byāha samaya sikha mōri samujhi pachitaihahu. 56.

55-56. 'The moon, which is otherwise so beautiful, suffers from the fault of changing shape every single night inspite of it remaining on the head of Lord Shiva. The same fate awaits you. So be wary and pay attention to my advice. Do not harbour any desire to want to have such a crazy and unconventional Lord as your husband.

[The moon thought that by sitting on the head of Lord Shiva it will be able to gain auspiciousness and praise. But it did not happen. The moon suffers from the fault of having a distorted shape that changes daily, from the crescent concave shape to the convex shape just prior to the full moon, and then declining once again to finally vanish from sight altogether. The beauty of the moon is in its full round disc, but it is so cursed that this glorious form is visible only once a month. For the rest of the time it is deformed and reduced in brilliance and shine. Shiva could not remove this single fault in the character of the moon, and this keeps the Lord worried as it portrays him in bad light too. It means that Shiva does not have the ability to rectify a simple fault in an entity that he had liked so much as to pick it up and put it on his head, a token of giving it, the moon, the highest respect and place.

Compare this to the case of Parvati. Whereas the moon was voluntarily selected by Lord Shiva to adorn his head, he has shown no inclination to accept Parvati till now. In fact, Shiva had neglected her while she was serving him in Kailash. So if she forces herself on him and compels him to marry her on the strength of her severe Tapa, does she expect him to pay attention to her when he has no liking for her?

Shiva is always worried that he could not take care of the problems faced by the moon and he could not make the moon happy by removing its curse that forces it to change shape every night and suffer from reduced shine and a chopped-up form, a distorted form that is crooked and lacking in glory and brilliance, a curse that prevents the moon from retaining its full glorious rounded shape for more than a day during the entire month, a curse that no other celestial body suffers from, then say, how can Parvati expect that Shiva will take care of her and look after her well-being and happiness.]

Therefore, be careful and pay heed to my advice. Keep my words in your heart as they are meant for your own welfare. (55)

Think it over again in your heart and abandon this stubbornness of yours. By being adamant and stubborn, you will get sorrows and anguish in return, and shall repent later on at the time of marriage when you remember my words, but at that time it would be too late for you to relent and recover.’ (56)

पछिताब भूत पिसाच प्रेत जनेत ऐहैं साजि कै ।
जम धार सरिस निहारि सब नर-नारि चलिहहिं भाजि कै ।।
गज अजिन दिव्य दुकूल जोरत सखी हँसि मुख मोरि कै ।
कोउ प्रगट कोउ हियँ कहिहि मिलवत अमिय माहुर घोरि कै ।।7।।

pachitāba bhūta pisāca prēta janēta aihaim sāji kai.
jama dhāra sarisa nihāri saba nara-nāri calihahim bhāji kai.
gaja ajina dibya dukūla jōrata sakhī haṁsi mukha mōri kai.
kō'u pragaṭa kō'u hiyaṁ kahihī milavata amiya māhura ghōri kai. 7.

Chanda 7. When he will arrive with the marriage party consisting of ghosts, spirits and phantoms, you will have to repent. Seeing that ridiculous and terrible party which would resemble an army of Death God’s messengers, all the men and women folk of your place shall run away.

At the time of ‘tying the knot’ ceremony, your magnificent silk garment would be tied to a corner of the elephant hide (which the groom would be wearing)—this stupid, funny, hilarious and ridiculous spectacle will make your companions turn their

faces sideways and laugh at you and smirk in derision at the absurd choice you had made due to your stubbornness and lack of reasoning. Your choice of a groom is highly stupid and hilarious. Some of them will say overtly and others covertly in their hearts that Amrit (elixir) and poison are being mixed together in a ridiculous and absurd cocktail. [Here, Parvati is compared to the Amrit, and Lord Shiva to poison. It simply means that marriage should always be made between compatible couples, and not between the type of individuals such as Parvati and Shiva who are completely at odds and opposite in character with each other. The two cannot stay happily with each other.] (Chanda no. 7)

[Note—This is exactly what happened when Lord Shiva arrived with his party for the marriage. See verse nos. 103-104 below.

तुमहिं सहित असवार बसहँ जब होइहहिं ।
निरखि नगर नर नारि बिहँसि मुख गोइहहिं ।।57 ।।
बटु करि कोटि कुतरक जथा रुचि बोलइ ।
अचल सुता मनु अचल बयारि कि डोलइ ।।58 ।।

tumahim sahita asavāra basahaṁ jaba hō'ihahim.
nirakhi nagara nara nāri bihaṁsi mukha gō'ihahim. 57.
baṭu kari kōṭi kutaraka jathā ruci bōla'i.
acala sutā manu acala bayāri ki ḍōla'i. 58.

57-58. 'When Shiva will ride with you on a bull after your marriage, the men and women folk of the city will hide their faces and laugh derisively or smirk at you in ridicule.' (57)

In this manner, the Batu presented many illogical arguments and rationales in his attempt to dissuade Parvati from her chosen path of determination to marry Lord Shiva. But all his nonsense logics could not sway the mind and heart of the daughter of the one who is very unmoving, stable and unwavering (i.e. the mountain Himwan). Why, can the wind ever move a mountain? [Parvati's firmness of resolve is compared to the mountain that is never affected by the wind, no matter how strong and howling it may be. All the arguments of the Batu directed at sowing the seed of doubt in the mind of Parvati had no affect on her, and she kept silent just as the mountain remains stoic when the wind howls over it.] (58)

Parvati's angry retort

साँच सनेह साँच रुचि जो हठि फेरइ ।
सावन सरिस सिंधु रुख सूप सो घेरइ ।।59 ।।
मनि बिनु फनि जल हीन मीन तनु त्यागइ ।
सो कि दोष गुन गनइ जो जेहि अनुरागइ ।।60 ।।

sāṁca sanēha sāṁca ruci jō haṭhi phēra'i.
sāvana sarisa sindhu rukha sūpa sō ghēra'i. 59.
mani binu phani jala hīna mīna tanu tyāga'i.
sō ki dōṣa guna gana'i jō jēhi anurāga'i. 60.

59-60. Anyone who attempts to interfere with and stem the tide of true love and sincere affection that one has for someone is making a futile attempt to do so which is similar to an attempt to divert the flow of a surging river, which is in spate during the rainy season as it gushes with enthusiasm towards the ocean, with the help of a winnowing basket!

[In other words, as it is impossible to stop or divert the flow of the river in spate with a humble winnowing basket, it is also impossible to divert the attention of a lover from his or her object of adoration and love. It's a futile attempt.] (59)

A serpent without its Mani (which is a luminescent sac that consists of the sap that is secreted from the hood of a special category of snakes), and a fish without water cannot survive. Similarly, anyone who loves someone very dearly and is completely overwhelmed by the thoughts of his beloved pays little or no heed to the latter's virtues and goodnesses or shortcomings and faults. [When one begins to love someone sincerely, he is not bothered about the goodness or the weakness of his lover. Any attempt to point out the faults will only invite angry retort from the lover.] (60)

करन कटुक चटु बचन बिसिष सम हिय हए ।
 अरुन नयन चढ़ि भृकुटि अधर फरकत भए ॥61 ॥
 बोली फिर लखि सखिहि काँपु तन थर थर ।
 आलि बिदा करु बटुहि बेगि बड़ बरबर ॥62 ॥

karana kaṭuka caṭu bacana bisīṣa sama hiya ha'ē.
 aruna nayana caḍhi bhr̥kuṭi adhara pharakata bha'ē. 61.
 bōlī phira lakhi sakhihi kāṃpu tana thara thara.
 āli bidā karu baṭuhi bēgi baṛa barabara. 62.

61-62. His (the Batu's) words appeared to lacerate her (Parvati's) ears, and hurt and wounded her heart as if they were arrows shot at her. Her eyes became furiously red (with anger and indignation), her eyebrows became taut, and her lips fluttered. (61)

Her body shook and trembled in anger. She looked askance at her companion and said (with contempt and disgust)—'Oh friend! Bid farewell to this Batu; get rid of him. He is very impolite and uncivilised, is very loud mouthed, talking too much even when the other person is not interested in hearing his long irreverent lectures. It is unnecessarily creating enormous annoyance in me. So tell him to scoot from here please.'¹ (62)

[Note—In Ram Charit Manas, Parvati tells the seven celestial sages, the Sapta-Rishis, the same thing in Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 81 where she tells them to go home as she is not going to change her views and determination to marry Shiva.]

कहुँ तिय होहिं सयानि सुनहिं सिख राउरि ।
 बौरैहि कैँ अनुराग भइउँ बड़ि बाउरि ॥63 ॥
 दोष निधान इसानु सत्य सबु भाषेउ ।
 मेटि को सकइ सो आँकु जो बिधि लिखि राखेउ ॥64 ॥

kahuṃ tiya hōhim sayāni sunahim sikha rā'uri.
 baurēhi kaim̐ anurāga bha'i'uṃ baḍi bā'uri. 63.
 dōṣa nidhāna isānu satya sabu bhāṣē'u.

mēṭi kō saka'i sō āṁku jō bidhi likhi rākhē'u. 64.

63-64. [Then she directly addressed the celibate Brahmin who was actually Lord Shiva testing her devotion and sincerity—] 'There might be some wise women somewhere who will listen to your sane advice. I have become very mad in my love for that fellow whom you portray to be crazy and eccentric. (63)

You have said that Shiva is a treasury of numerous faults and shortcomings—it is indeed all true, but nevertheless who can erase the writing of the creator (i.e. who can change the destiny which the creator has destined for someone). If it is written in my destiny that I will have a husband like the one Shiva is, what can do anything about it? (64)

[Note—In Ram Charit Manas, Parvati tells the seven celestial sages, the Sapta-Rishis, the same thing in Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 80—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 81. Briefly Parvati tells the sages that whatever they have said about Shiva not being a proper groom for her is true, but she will not change her views and determination. Yes, Vishnu is a treasury of good virtues, and Shiva is just the opposite, but what can one do if one's heart has fallen in love for someone. She said that she has lost herself to Shiva, and it is a waste of time and energy trying to persuade her any longer. If they are so much interested in finding a wonderful bride for Vishnu then surely there is no dearth for one, and that therefore they should please leave her alone.

Parvati tells her mother and friend the same thing when they started lamenting and wailing upon learning the sort of marriage party that has arrived, with the groom surrounded by ghosts, himself being naked with ash smeared all over his body, and wearing serpents and skulls as ornaments. At that she assuaged their feelings and told them not to get upset. Because if it is written in her destiny that her husband would be eccentric, can they or anybody else change it? So why lament and create a scene unnecessarily. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 96—to the Chanda that precedes Doha no. 97.]

को करि बादु बिबादु बिषादु बढ़ावइ ।
मीठ काहि कबि कहहिं जाहि जोइ भावइ ।।65 ।।
भइ बड़ि बार आलि कहूँ काज सिधारहिं ।
बकि जनि उठहिं बहोरि कुजुगुति सवौरहिं ।।66 ।।

kō kari bādu bibādu biṣādu baṛhāva'i.
mīṭha kāhi kabi kahahim̐ jāhi jō'i bhāva'i. 65.
bha'i baḍi bāra āli kahuṁ kāja sidhārahim̐.
baki jani uṭhahim̐ bahōri kujuguti savāṁrahim̐. 66.

65-66. Who would like to enhance one's miseries and destroy one's peace of mind by allowing oneself to get involved in futile, pointless and acrimonious debates and discussions? What is the use? Why don't you leave me alone?

The poets and bards have the habit of praising someone whom they like, and denounce others who are not to their liking. But how does it matter; this is their personal opinion.

[That is, whatever is liked by someone is dear, pleasant, compatible and sweet for him notwithstanding its merit or demerits. Therefore, there is no point in debating this issue any further. Whether I will be happy marrying Shiva or suffer for the rest of my life is a personal issue with me; why are you and the rest of the world so worried and concerned, especially when I don't like this discussion.

It is natural for an advocate to sing the glories of his client, whether the latter is worthy of such praise or not. It's a part of their profession. Likewise, the bards and poets are inclined to raise to the heaven their patrons who have engaged them, no matter if the concerned patron is not even worth the while paying any attention. This seems to be the case with you. You are criticizing Lord Shiva because you may not be pleased with him, or he may not have done your bidding at some point of time. So you want to avenge it. I request you to please go away from here and stop nagging me further.]' (65)

Then Parvati turned to her companion once again and said, 'Oh friend! Tell him that it is getting late and he should proceed to his other destination. Look, let him not think of some other mischief or lecture me with some new illogical reasoning and utter some further nonsense. [I am fed up with him, so tell him to scoot from here.]' (66)

Shiva reveals himself

जनि कहहिं कछु बिपरीत जानत प्रीति रीति न बात की ।
सिव साधु निंदकु मंद अति जोउ सुनै सोउ बड़ पातकी ।।
सुनि बचन सोधि सनेहु तुलसी साँच अबिचल पावनो ।
भए प्रगट करुनासिंधु संकरु भाल चंद सुहावनो ।।8 ।।

jani kahahim kachu biparīta jānata prīti rīti na bāta kī.
siva sādhu nindaku manda ati jō'u sunai sō'u baṛa pātakī.
suni bacana sōdhi sanēhu tulasī sāṁca abicala pāvanō.
bha'ē pragaṭa karunāsindhu saṅkaru bhāla canda suhāvanō. 8.

Chanda 8. What to say of courteous manners and a civilized way of talking about others, this fellow (the Batu) does not even know the essential etiquettes of talking with a stranger. [Parvati is chiding the Batu of talking irrelevant and irreverent things about Lord Shiva even though she has not asked him for his advice. Why is he thrusting himself upon her when she does not like to see his face and hear a single more word from him?]

He must not speak uninvited; he must abstain from saying uncivilised, impolite and unpleasant thing about others, especially Lord Shiva, and instead keep quiet. Those who criticise or speak ill of Shiva and saints are indeed very sinful, mean and lowly¹. Anyone who hears that sort of mean talk is also very sinful himself. [Doesn't this fellow know this—that it is very sinful and unholy to speak bad about Lord Shiva who is worshipped by even the Gods, and is honoured by them with the venerated title of being a 'Maha-deva', the Great God. Has this Batu lost his mind? In my opinion, it is not Shiva but this Batu who is crazy and eccentric because he is talking like one.]'

Tulsidas says that upon hearing these words, and recognising the genuinness and steadfastness of love, affection and devotion that Parvati had for her Lord Shiva, the Batu revealed his true form as Shiva himself, the Lord who is like an ocean of compassion, kindness and grace. The moon was adorning his forehead.

[As we have already read in Chanda no. 5, Shiva wanted to test the sincerity and integrity of Parvati himself, and so he assumed the form of a Batu, a celibate young Brahim, and went to her. After telling Parvati all the negative things one never imagine that a prospective groom will have, and then discovering her steadfastness

and devotion for Shiva, the Lord was completely satisfied. So he revealed himself to Parvati.] (8)

[Note—¹It is sinful to hear Lord Vishnu (Hari) and Lord Shiva (Har) being criticized; it is like killing a cow which is an unpardonable sin—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 32 where Angad, the emissary of Lord Ram, became very angry when Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, began criticizing Lord Ram who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Again it is said in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 23 and 26 that precede Doha no. 121 that those who criticize their Guru (teacher) and Har (Shiva) become a frog in their next birth (life), and those who criticize saints become an owl respectively.]

सुंदर गौर सरीर भूति भलि सोहइ ।
लोचन भाल बिसाल बदनु मन मोहइ ।।67 ।।
सैल कुमारि निहारि मनोहर मूरति ।
सजल नयन हिउँ हरषु पुलक तन पूरति ।।68 ।।

sundara gaura sarīra bhūti bhali sōha'i.
lōcana bhāla bisāla badanu mana mōha'i. 67.
saila kumāri nihāri manōhara mūrati.
sajala nayana hiyaṁ haraṣu pulaka tana pūrati. 68.

67-68. Ash was smeared on his beautiful and charming fair-complexioned body which looked most adorable. His eyes and forehead were broad, while the body enthralled and captivated the mind and heart (of his devotees by its charm and divine halo). (67)

Watching this magnificent image of Lord Shiva, the eyes of the daughter of the Mountain ('Sail Kumari') were filled with tears of exhilaration and ecstasy. Her heart was overwhelmed with joy, and her body was thrilled beyond description.

[She just could not believe her eyes at what she saw. It was astonishing for her to have Lord Shiva, the Lord of her dreams whom she admired and revered so much, standing before her himself, smiling lovingly and benevolently at her. She was amazed and stunned with disbelief.] (68).

पुनि पुनि करै प्रनामु न आवत कछु कहि ।
दैखौं सपन कि सौतुख ससि सेखर सहि ।।69 ।।
जैसैं जनम दरिद्र महामनि पावइ ।
पेखत प्रगट प्रभाउ प्रतीति न आवइ ।।70 ।।

puni puni karai pranāmu na āvata kachu kahi.
daikhaum̐ sapana ki sautukha sasi sēkhara sahi. 69.
jaisēm̐ janama daridra mahāmani pāva'i.
pēkhata pragata prabhā'u pratīti na āva'i. 70.

69-70. She repeatedly bowed before him. She could not speak a word (because she was so overwhelmed with joy and delight). She was wondering if what she saw was merely a dream, or was it in fact 'Shashi Shekhar' (i.e. Lord Shiva on whose forehead the moon is present) himself standing in front of her. (69)

Her amazement and joy at the sudden turn of events for good had made her stunned and dazed in astonishment just like a person who has been a pauper since birth suddenly finding a precious stone known as the 'Mahaamani' (literally, the great gem; here meaning the magical gem that can convert anything into priceless jewel; or else it might also refer to the philosopher's stone that converts base metals into gold).

Such a person is absolutely dumbfounded and stares at the Mahaamani in stunning disbelief, unable to realise that he is holding a stone that has magical powers, or that a stone as simple as the one he holds in his hand is ever capable of showing any sort of magical powers that are legendary and astounding. [That is, though Parvati is seeing Shiva standing right in front of her, she could not believe her eyes. She was dumbfounded and too stunned to react.] (70)

सुफल मनोरथ भयउ गौरि सोहइ सुठि ।
घर ते खेलत मनहुँ अबहिं आई उठि ॥71॥
देखि रूप अनुराग महेस भए बस ।
कहत बचन जनु सानि सनेह सुधा रस ॥72॥

suphala manōratha bhaya'u gauri sōha'i suṭhi.
ghara tē khēlata manahuṁ abahiṁ āī uṭhi. 71.
dēkhi rūpa anurāga mahēsa bha'ē basa.
kahata bacana janu sāni sanēha sudhā rasa. 72.

71-72. The wishes of Gauri (Parvati) had been fulfilled. This achievement lifted her spirits to a new high, and made her look all the more charming and magnificent. It appears as if she has just arrived from her home to have some sort of game or sport. [That is, she seems healthy and cheerful. There was not a single sign of her doing any kind of severe Tapa or undergoing any kind of hardship associated with it. Prior to her meeting with Shiva, Parvati was lean and thin, being emaciated due to her long Tapa. But as soon as the Lord revealed himself before her, a magical change occurred in her as she regained her original beauty and charm.] (71)

Looking at her beauty and charm as well as her affection and sincerity, Mahesh (Lord Shiva) was captivated and enchanted by her, and he spoke to her affectionately with sweet words which were soaked in Amrit (or nectar). (72)

हमहि आजु लागि कनउड काहुँ न कीन्हेउ ।
पारबती तप प्रेम मोल मोहि लीन्हेउ ॥73॥
अब जो कहहु सो करउँ बिलंबु न एहिं घरी ।
सुनि महेस मृदु बचन पुलकि पायन्ह परी ॥74॥

hamahi āju lagi kana'uṛa kāhuṁ na kīnhē'u.
pārabatī tapa prēma mōla mōhi līnhē'u. 73.
aba jō kahahu sō kara'uṁ bilambu na ēhiṁ gharī.
suni mahēsa mṛdu bacana pulaki pāyanha parī. 74.

73-74. [Shiva said—] 'No one has made me feel so much indebted and obliged till date as you have. Oh Parvati, you have literally bought me over with your Tapa (austerities and penances) as well as with your profound and undiluted love and affection for me. I am indeed full of gratitude towards you. (73)

Now, whatever you say, I will do it instantly. There shall be no delay in it.'

Hearing such tender and sweet words of Mahesh (Shiva), Parvati was thrilled beyond measure, and she fell down at the Lord's feet. (74)

Parvati returns home

परि पायँ सखि मुख कहि जनायो आपु बाप अधीनता ।
परितोषि गिरिजहि चले बरनत प्रीति नीति प्रबीनता ॥
हर हृदयँ धरि घर गौरि गवनी कीन्ह बिधि मन भावनो ।
आनंदु प्रेम समाजु मंगल गान बाजु बधावनो ॥१॥

pari pāyaṃ sakhi mukha kahi janāyō āpu bāpa adhīnatā.
paritōṣi girijahi calē baranata prīti nīti prabīnatā.
hara hṛdayaṃ dhari ghara gauri gavanī kīnha bidhi mana bhāvanō.
ānandu prēma samāju maṅgala gāna bāju badhāvanō. 9.

Chanda 9. She (Parvati) fell down at Lord Shiva's feet and through her companion informed him about her dependence on her father. [Parvati told Lord Shiva that at present she has to obey her parents, and thus the Lord must follow tradition by approaching them in order to marry her. She cannot marry him directly against tradition and established norms. It will be unrighteous and unethical for her as well as for the Lord.]

Then Lord Shiva reassured Girija (Parvati, the daughter of the Mountain) that he will do whatever is needed to fulfill her wishes, and then went away, lauding and praising her immaculate virtues, glories and wisdom.

[Shiva praised her virtuousness as she maintained her dignity by not speaking to a stranger directly but through the medium of a friend, which was in accordance to tradition. Then, she showed respect to her parents and did not directly marry her or propose to him, again to conform to tradition. Had she wanted, she could have done so because she had done severe Tapa precisely for this purpose.]

Meanwhile, Gauri (Parvati) too went home with Har (Shiva) enshrined in her heart. The creator did everything as per her wishes. The happy turn of events made the people (of her native place, the mountain kingdom) exult in joyous abundance. Their love and respect for her increased manifold. Auspicious, congratulatory and felicitous songs were sung and complimentary music was played spontaneously everywhere. (9)

Shiva prepares for marriage

सिव सुमिरे मुनि सात आइ सिर नाइन्हि ।
कीन्ह संभु सनमानु जन्म फल पाइन्हि ॥७५॥
सुमिरहिं सकृत तुम्हहि जन तेइ सुकृती बर ।
नाथ जिन्हहि सुधि करिअ तिनहिं सम तेइ हर ॥७६॥

siva sumirē muni sāta ā'i sira nā'inhī.
kīnha sambhu sanamānu janma phala pā'inhī. 75.
sumirahim sakṛta tumhahi jana tē'i sukṛtī bara.

nātha jinhahi sudhi kari'a tinahim sama tē'i hara. 76.

75-76. Shiva remembered (i.e. summoned) the seven celestial sages called Saptarishis. They came and bowed before him. Shiva showed great respect to them and they too fell rewarded on having his divine vision. (75)

Then the sages said, 'Those who happen to remember you even once are deemed to be the best amongst the noble and virtuous ones. Oh Lord! Oh Har (Shiva)! Anyone who is remembered by you is fortunate and becomes honourable himself. [That is, anyone who you remember is lucky and fortunate because you are known to be a renunciate who has no desire and no wish of any kind. So the fact that you wished to meet us makes us very happy. It has given us a rare chance to have your holy vision.] (76)

[Note—The 7 celestial sages are—Kashyap, Atri, Jamdgni, Vishwamitra, Vashistha, Bharadwaj and Gautam.]

सुनि मुनि बिनय महेस परम सुख पायउ ।
कथा प्रसंग मुनीसन्ह सकल सुनायउ ॥77॥
जाहु हिमाचल गेह प्रसंग चलायहु ।
जौं मन मान तुम्हार तौ लगन धरायहु ॥78॥

suni muni binaya mahēsa parama sukha pāya'u.
kathā prasaṅga munīsanha sakala sunāya'u. 77.
jāhu himācala gēha prasaṅga calāyahu.
jauṁ mana māna tumhāra tau lagana dharāyahu. 78.

77-78. Hearing these words of the (seven celestial) sages, Mahesh (Shiva) felt very happy and contented. He narrated to them the entire episode pertaining to Parvati's severe Tapa and his conversation with her. (77)

Then he requested them, 'All of you go to the household of Himachal (father of Parvati, Himwan) and raise the topic of her marriage with me. If you find that everything is favourable and in accordance with your wishes, then you can decide on an auspicious date for the marriage ceremony.' (78)

[Note—In Ram Charit Manas also, Lord Shiva has summoned these sages and asked them to go the parents of Parvati with the marriage proposal. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 89, and Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precedes Doha no. 91.]

अरुंधती मिलि मनहिं बात चलाइहि ।
नारि कुसल इहिं काज काजु बनि आइहि ॥79॥
दुलहिनि उमा ईसु बरु साधक ए मुनि ।
बनिहि अवसि यहु काजु गगन भइ अस धुनि ॥80॥

arundhatī mili manahim bāta calā'ihī.
nāri kusala ihm kāja kāju bani ā'ihī. 79.
dulahini umā īsu baru sādhaḥka ē muni.
banihi avasi yahu kāju gagana bha'i asa dhuni. 80.

79-80. It was decided that Arundhati (wife of sage Vashistha) shall meet Maina (the mother of Parvati) and raise the topic of Parvati's marriage. Ladies are usually expert in this job. So the things will be sorted out favourably. (79)

Uma (Parvati) is the bride, Shiva is the groom, and these sages are the various spiritual aspirants or seekers. Hence, this job can be easily done (i.e. accomplished and success can be easily achieved). A formless heavenly voice from the sky (the heavens) predicted success of this endeavour. (80)

भयउ अकनि आनंद महेस मुनीसन्ह ।
 देहिं सुलोचनि सगुन कलस लिँ सीसन्ह ।।81 ।।
 सिव सो कहेउ दिन ठाउँ बहोरि मिलनु जहँ ।
 चले मुदित मुनिराज गए गिरिबर पहँ ।।82 ।।

bhaya'u akani ānanda mahēsa munīsanha.
 dēhim sulōcani saguna kalasa li'ēṁ sisanha. 81.
 siva sō kahē'u dina ṭhā'uṁ bahōri milanu jahaṁ.
 calē mudita munirāja ga'ē giribara pahaṁ. 82.

81-82. Hearing this mysterious voice from the sky (heavens), Lord Mahesh and sages felt very glad. Good omens were indicated by the following sign—women with beautiful eyes and having water filled pitchers on their heads were sighted. (81)

Shiva told the sages the place and time where their next meeting can be held. Then those sages cheerfully went to the king of mountains, Giribar (the father of Parvati; Himwan). (82)

Marriage of Shiva and Parvati finalised

गिरि गेह गे अति नेहँ आदर पूजि पहुँनाई करी ।
 घरवात घरनि समेत कन्या आनि सब आगें धरी ।।
 सुखु पाइ बात चलाइ सुदिन सोधाइ गिरिहि सिखाइ कै ।
 रिषि सात प्रातहिं चले प्रमुदित ललित लगन लिखाइ कै ।।10 ।।

giri gēha gē ati nēhaṁ ādara pūji pahuṁnā'ī karī.
 gharavāta gharani samēta kan'yā āni saba āgēṁ dharī.
 sukhu pā'i bāta calā'i sudina sōdhā'i girihi sikhā'i kai.
 riṣi sāta prātahim calē pramudita lalita lagana likhā'i kai. 10.

Chanda 10. When the seven celestial sages went to the household of Giri (the father of Parvati, the Mountain known as 'Himwan'), the latter most reverentially and affectionately worshipped and welcomed them. He was accompanied by his wife (Maina) and daughter (Parvati).

The king brought everything that was needed to welcome the revered sages, and placed these things before them. Then the topic of marriage was raised in a cheerful and pleasant atmosphere. An auspicious day for the formalizing of the marriage was determined, and the next morning the sages happily made their departure with the elegant marriage invitation containing the auspicious date written in it. (10)

Celebrations and preparations in Parvati's household

बिप्र बृंद सनमानि पूजि कुल गुर सुर ।
 परेउ निसानहिं घाउ चाउ चहुँ दिसि पुर ॥83॥
 गिरि बन सरित सिंधु सर सुनइ जो पायउ ।
 सब कहँ गिरिबर नायक नेवत पठायउ ॥84॥

bipra bṛnda sanamāni pūji kula gura sura.
 parē'u nisānahim ghā'u cā'u cahuṁ disi pura. 83.
 giri bana sarita sindhu sara suna'i jō pāya'u.
 saba kahaṁ giribara nāyaka nēvata paṭhāya'u. 84.

83-84. Himwan honoured the Brahmins and other elders. Then he worshipped the clan's Guru (moral preceptor) and the Gods. Musical drums were sounded, and there was a general atmosphere of cheerful excitement, of joy and celebration, in all the directions of the city. (83)

Mountains and hills, forests and gardens, rivers, streams and rivulets, seas, oceans and other large water-bodies, as well as the lakes and ponds—whosoever was heard of was sent an invitation by Giribar who was the best amongst the mountains.¹

[The word 'Giribar' means the senior Mountain; the king of the mountains. It should be remembered that all these entities have been personified in this verse. It basically means that all the kings of these kingdoms were invited to the marriage of the daughter of their emperor, the king of Mountains, Himwan.] (84)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 94.]

धरि धरि सुंदर बेष चले हरषित हिउँ ।
 चवँर चीर उपहार हार मनि गन लिउँ ॥85॥
 कहेउ हरषि हिमवान बितान बनावन ।
 हरषित लगीं सुआसिनि मंगल गावन ॥86॥

dhari dhari sundara bēṣa calē haraṣita hi'ēṁ.
 cavaṁra cīra upahāra hāra mani gana li'ēṁ. 85.
 kahē'u haraṣi himavāna bitāna banāvana.
 haraṣita lagīm su'āsini maṅgala gāvana. 86.

85-86. All of them assumed beautiful forms and started off to attend the marriage with a cheerful mind and exhilarated heart, taking along with them gifts such as ceremonial whisks, garments and robes, garlands and necklaces, and gems and jewels. (85)

Himwan delightedly ordered expert artisans to construct the 'Mandap' (a ceremonial canopy under which the marriage ceremony was to be formalised)¹, while married girls began singing auspicious and celebratory songs suitable for the occasion². (86)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 94.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 96; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precedes Doha no. 99.]

तोरन कलस चवैर धुज बिबिध बनाइन्हि ।
 हाट पटोरन्हि छाया सफल तरु लाइन्हि ॥87॥
 गौरी नैहर केहि बिधि कहहु बखानिय ।
 जानु रितुराज मनोज राज रजधानिय ॥88॥

tōrana kalasa cavaṁra dhuja bibidha banā'inhī.
 hāṭa paṭōranhī chāya saphala taru lā'inhī. 87.
 gaurī naihara kēhī bidhī kahahu bakhāniya.
 janu riturāja manōja rāja rajadhāniya. 88.

87-88. Different varieties of colourful buntings, festoons, ceremonial pots and pitchers, whisks, flags and standards were made and put up all over the place to decorate the entire area (as well as the city) to give it a festive look. The market places were covered with silk cloth, and fruit trees were planted by the side of the roads here and there, everywhere.¹ (87)

Say, how can one describe the parent's place of Gauri (Parvati)? It resembled the capital cities of Basant (the spring season) and Kamdeo-cupid.

[That is, the entire city was decorated and decked up fabulously. It looked magnificent and even the Gods may have been stunned by its charm. It is expected to be so—because the Mother Goddess had taken birth in this city.]² (88)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 287—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 289 which describe in detail how the city is decorated on the occasion of a royal marriage. In this case however, the occasion is the marriage of Lord Ram with Sita.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 65; (ii) Doha no. 94 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8 and the Chanda that accompanies them.]

जनु राजधानी मदन की बिरची चतुर बिधि और हीं ।
 रचना बिचित्र बिलोकि लोचन बिथकि ठौरहिं ठौर हीं ॥
 एहि भाँति ब्याह समाज सजि गिरिराजु मगु जोवन लगे ।
 तुलसी लगन लै दीन्ह मुनिन्ह महेस आनँद रँग मगे ॥11॥

janu rājadhānī madana kī biracī catura bidhī aura hīm.
 racanā bicitra bilōki lōcana bithaki ṭhaurahim ṭhaura hīm.
 ēhī bhāṁti byāha samāja saji girirāju magu jōvana lagē.
 tulasī lagana lai dīnha muninha mahēsa ānaṁda raṁga magē. 11.

Chanda 11. It looked as if the creator had crafted the capital of Kamdeo-cupid with special care, diligence and expertise so that it was different from other capital cities. The eyes seem to be transfixed anywhere it went to behold its strange, fascinating and magnificent construction.

In this way, Giriraj (Parvati's father) completed all the formalities and collected all the accoutrements necessary for the marriage ceremony, and waited for the arrival of the groom's party.

Tulsidas says that the seven celestial sages (the Sapta-rishis) brought the 'Lagan Patrika'—the invitation card formally containing the marriage proposal as well as the auspicious date, time and venue for the formalization of the marriage, and gave it to Mahesh (Shiva). (11)

Preparation of the Groom's Party

बेगि बोलाइ बिरंचि बचाइ लगन जब ।
 कहेन्हि बिआहन चलहु बुलाइ अमर सब ॥89 ॥
 बिधि पटए जहँ तहँ सब सिव गन धावन ।
 सुनि हरषहिँ सुर कहहिँ निसान बजावन ॥90 ॥

bēgi bōlā'i birañci bacā'i lagana jaba.
 kahēnhi bi'āhana calahu bulā'i amara saba. 89.
 bidhi paṭha'e jāhaṁ tahaṁ saba siva gana dhāvana.
 suni haraṣahim̃ sura kahahim̃ nisāna bajāvana. 90.

89-90. Then Shiva immediately called Brahma (the patriarch of the Gods) and made him read the marriage invitation. Then the latter asked him to summon and collect all the Gods and start preparing for the marriage ceremony. (89)

He sent Shiva's followers as messengers in all the directions. Hearing this, the Gods were exhilarant, and they ordered drums to be played to celebrate the good news.¹ (90)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 89.]

रचहिँ बिमान बनाइ सगुन पावहिँ भले ।
 निज निज साजु समाजु साजि सुरगन चले ॥91 ॥
 मुदित सकल सिव दूत भूत गन गाजहिँ ।
 सूकर महिष स्वान खर बाहन साजहिँ ॥92 ॥

racahim̃ bimāna banā'i saguna pāvahim̃ bhalē.
 nija nija sāju samāju sāji suragana calē. 91.
 mudita sakala siva dūta bhūta gana gājahim̃.
 sūkara mahiṣa svāna khara bāhana sājahim̃. 92.

91-92. They got their air-vehicles decorated and readied. Many auspicious signs occurred at that time. In this way, the Gods prepared themselves and set off to join the marriage party of Lord Shiva.¹ (91)

The followers of Shiva as well as other ghosts, phantoms etc. were thundering with joy and exhilaration. They decorated the various mounts such as pigs, buffaloes, dogs, donkeys etc. (for the marriage party).² (92)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 91, and Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 92.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 93 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8 and the Chanda that accompanies them.]

नाचहिँ नाना रंग तरंग बढ़ावहिँ ।
 अज उलूक बृक नाद गीत गन गावहिँ ॥93 ॥
 रमानाथ सुरनाथ साथ सब सुर गन ।
 आए जहँ बिधि संभु देखि हरषे मन ॥94 ॥

nācahiṃ nānā raṅga taraṅga baṛhāvahiṃ.
 aja ulūka bṛka nāda gīta gana gāvahiṃ. 93.
 ramānātha suranātha sātha saba sura gana.
 ā'ē jahaṃ bidhi sambhu dēkhi haraṣē mana. 94.

93-94. They danced in merriment in myriad of ways, enhancing the atmosphere of joy and celebrations that pervaded everywhere. Goats, owls and wolves rejoiced and spoke excitedly in their own tongues, while Shiva's followers happily sang songs of felicitation and ceremony. (93)

Laxmi's Lord (Vishnu) and the king of Gods (Indra), along with all other Gods, came to the place where Shiva and Brahma were already assembled to join the marriage party. They all felt very delighted in their hearts.¹ (94)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Doha no. 92 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 93.]

Departure of the groom's party for the bride's home

मिले हरिहिं हरु हरषि सुभाषि सुरेसहि ।
 सुर निहारि सनमानेउ मोद महेसहि ।।95 ।।
 बहु बिधि बाहन जान बिमान बिराजहिं ।
 चली बरात निसान गहागह बाजहिं ।।96 ।।

milē harihiṃ haru haraṣi subhāṣi surēsahi.
 sura nihāri sanamānē'u mōda mahēsahi. 95.
 bahu bidhi bāhana jāna bimāna birājahiṃ.
 calī barāta nisāna gahāgaha bājahiṃ. 96.

95-96. Har (Shiva) welcomed the Gods as they assembled at his abode to join his marriage party which was about to embark on the journey to the bride's place. Shiva spoke sweetly with the king of Gods (Indra), and he then met Hari (Vishnu). Thereafter, he affectionately saw (i.e. made eye contact with) other assembled Gods as a gesture of welcome and respect. This gathering caused immense delight to Mahesh (Shiva).¹ (95)

Many types of mounts, vehicles and air-chariots of all denominations belonging to the different Gods were present on the occasion.

The groom's party finally made its departure for the bride's place with musical instruments such as kettle-drums etc. playing loudly and enthusiastically. (96)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 92.]

बाजहिं निसान सुगान नभ चढि बसह बिधुभूषन चले ।
 बरषहिं सुमन जय जय करहिं सुर सगुन सुभ मंगल भले ।।
 तुलसी बराती भूत प्रेत पिसाच पसुपति सँग लसे ।
 गज छाल ब्याल कपाल माल बिलोकि बर सुर हरि हँसे ।।12 ।।

bājahiṃ nisāna sugāna nabha caḍhi basaha bidhubhūṣana calē.
 baraṣahiṃ sumana jaya jaya karahiṃ sura saguna subha maṅgala bhalē.
 tulasī barātī bhūta prēta pisāca pasupati saṅga lasē.

gaja chāla byāla kapāla māla bilōki bara sura hari haṁsē. 12.

Chanda 12. The sky reverberated with the sound of the kettle-drums being played loudly as well as the from the sound of melodious songs having sweet lyrics that were being sung everywhere in this world.

Shiva—for whom the moon is an ornament of the head—rode a bull (known as the Nandi). The Gods enthusiastically applauded and praised Shiva as they showered flowers upon him, while good omens heralding good luck and auspiciousness began to happen.

Tulsidas says that ghosts, spirits and phantoms made up the groom's party. Seeing 'Pashupati' (literally, the lord of animals and non-humans) adorned with an elephant skin, serpents wrapped around his body and a garland/necklace of skulls hanging from his neck, the Gods and Hari (Vishnu) began to laugh (at such a strange groom).¹ (Chanda no. 12)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 92—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 94.]

Merry-making en-route to the bride's place

बिबुध बोलि हरि कहेउ निकट पुर आयउ ।
 आपन आपन साज सबहिं बिलगायउ ।।97 ।।
 प्रमथनाथ के साथ प्रमथ गन राजहिं ।
 बिबिध भाँति मुख बाहन बेष बिराजहिं ।।98 ।।

bibudha bōli hari kahē'u nikaṭa pura āya'u.
 āpana āpana sāja sabahim bilagāya'u. 97.
 pramathanātha kē sātha pramatha gana rājahim.
 bibidha bhāṁti mukha bāhana bēṣa birājahim. 98.

97-98. Hari (Vishnu) summoned the Gods and advised them—'We have arrived near the city (of the bride). Hence, all of you should segregate yourselves and your companions into separate groups.'¹ (97)

Presently, the ghosts and the phantoms look stunning in the company of their Lord (i.e. Lord Shiva). They present an awesome sight—having all sorts of unconventional faces, clothes, ornamentations, vehicles and mounts.² [That is why Vishnu asked the Gods to separate themselves from Shiva's group which is very odd and fear-inspiring. The Gods and their retinue had charming forms while Lord Shiva and his companions had all the oddities one can ever imagine to be present in a groom—there were ghosts and phantoms to accompany Lord Shiva, and he himself was attired in an elephant skin, was wrapped by serpents, had a necklace of skulls and got ash smeared all over his naked body. It was a time of rejoicing and merry-making, so when Lord Vishnu asked the Gods to separate themselves from the party of Lord Shiva he did not mean any slight to Shiva but was done in jest.] (98)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 92, and Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 93.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 93—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 94.]

कमठ खपर मढ़ि खाल निसान बजावहिं ।
 नर कपाल जल भरि—भरि पिअहिं पिआवहिं ।।99 ।।
 बर अनुहरत बरत बनी हरि हँसि कहा ।
 सुनि हियँ हँसत महेस केलि कौतुक महा ।।100 ।।

kamaṭha khapara maḍhi khāla nisāna bajāvahiṃ.
 nara kapāla jala bhari-bhari pi'ahiṃ pi'āvahiṃ. 99.
 bara anuharata barata banī hari haṃsi kahā.
 suni hiyaṃ haṃsata mahēsa kēli kautuka mahā. 100.

99-100. They (the companions of Lord Shiva) used the hollowed-out shell of tortoise with a hide (skin) stretched taut across it as drums to play music with. They filled the upturned skulls of humans with water and used them as a cup to drink water from, and asked others to drink from it too. (99)

Hari (Lord Vishnu) laughed at the funny sight and said jokingly that the marriage party was compatible with the nature and temperament of the groom¹. [This is because Lord Shiva is the Lord of ghosts and phantoms, and he lives an austere life like that of a mendicant or hermit who is accustomed to living simply and without pomp and pretensions.]

Hearing this, Mahesh (Lord Shiva) also laughed internally, and felt cheerful in his heart². [That is, Lord Shiva did not mind the jokes cracked by Vishnu, but rather enjoyed the satirical comments, taking it in good humour and in his stride. Shiva knew that Lord Vishnu had great affection and respect for him, and it is usual for close friends to tease the groom during marriage ceremonies. So, Shiva also enjoyed Vishnu's sarcastic comments instead of feeling hurt or offended by them.]

In this way, there was a spectacle of fun, jest and merry-making as the members of the marriage party poked fun at the groom and his attendants as they wended their way cheerfully to the bride's place. (100)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 94.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 93.]

Arrival of the marriage party at the bride's place

बड़ बिनोद मग मोद न कछु कहि आवत ।
 जाइ नगर नियरानि बरात बजावत ।।101 ।।
 पुर खरभर उर हरषेउ अचल अखंडलु ।
 परब उदधि उमगेउ जनु लखि बिधु मंडलु ।।102 ।।

baṛa binōda maga mōda na kachu kahi āvata.
 jā'i nagara niyarāni barāta bajāvata. 101.
 pura kharabhara ura haraṣē'u acala akhaṇḍalu.
 paraba udadhi umagē'u janu lakhi bidhu maṇḍalu. 102.

101-102. There is a lot of fun and merry-making en-route to the bride's place. One cannot describe/narrate the joys and happiness of that time. The marriage party arrived near the city to the accompaniment of music and singing of songs. (101)

There was a noisy tumult in the city and the whole of the mountain kingdom erupted with exhilaration and joy.¹ It resembled the ocean which heaves and surges ahead on watching a full moon. (102)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 95.]

Shock waves in the city upon seeing Shiva and his companions

प्रमुदित गे अगवान बिलोकि बरातहि ।
 भभरे बनइ न रहत न बनइ परातहि ॥103 ॥
 चले भाजि गज बाजि फिरहिं नहिं फेरत ।
 बालक भभरि भुलान फिरहिं घर हेरत ॥104 ॥

pramudita gē agavāna bilōki barātahi.
 bhabharē bana'i na rahata na bana'i parātahi. 103.
 calē bhāji gaja bāji phirahim nahim phērata.
 bālaka bhabhari bhulāna phirahim ghara hērata. 104.

103-104. Those who were assigned with the duty to welcome the marriage party came forward cheerfully, but when they saw the party they became horrified. At that time they were in a fix—they could not decide whether to stay or run away. (103)

The elephants and horses (of the welcoming party that was sent to receive the guests) ran away terrified (upon seeing the ghosts and phantoms in Shiva's party), and they could not be controlled. Even the children lost their nerves and ran away. They lost their way back home, so much shocked they were at the fearful sight of ghosts and phantoms that consisted of Shiva's party. [It was a staggering and awesome sight. The children were terrified; they ran back to their homes but lost the way in the melee and hurry.]¹ (104)

[Note—¹Refer: Chanda no. 7 above.

The frightening scenario is described in Ram Charit Manas, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 and Chanda that precede Doha no. 95. Let us see what happened:

“When the groom's (Shiva's marriage) party arrived near the city (of the bride, Parvati), there was a joyous tumult in it, and this increased its charm and vibrancy. Those who were assigned the task of receiving and welcoming the groom's party arranged all the necessary paraphernalia and went out to receive the guests. (1-2). When they saw the Gods and their companions they felt very happy, and this happiness increased manyfold when they saw Lord Vishnu with his retinue. [The Gods and Lord Vishnu led the marriage party.] But as soon as they saw the groom and his unconventional party (consisting of ghosts, spirits, phantoms etc.), they were horrified, and the animals they rode (such as elephants, horses, bulls etc.) ran away terrified. (3-4). Some amongst the group who were older in age gathered courage and remained there, but youngsters were so scared at the sight that all of them ran away from there and entered the city. When these youngsters reached home, their parents asked them what happened. They answered with a trembling body—‘What can we say; we don't know what to say. Is this a marriage party or the army of the God of Death? The groom (Shiva) is crazy and he rides a bull. He is adorned with serpents, skulls and ash (of the fire sacrifice which he has smeared all over his body). (5-8). Ash is smeared all over the groom's body. His ornaments consist of serpents and

skulls. He is naked, has thick matted hairs on his head, and he looks extremely horrifying. He is accompanied by male and female ghosts, spirits, phantoms, hobgoblins and ogres with terrible faces and mouths. The sight is so chilling that anyone who does not die out of shock is really lucky, and only such survivors would be able to see Parvati's marriage. [In other words, the groom and his companions are so terrifying and scaring that people will either run away or die due to fear. Who will go and witness such a marriage; who wants to die?]' The boys spread this word in each household where they ran for safety. (Chanda that precedes Doha no. 95)"]

दीन्ह जाइ जनवास सुपास किए सब ।
 घर घर बालक बात कहन लगे तब ॥105 ॥
 प्रेत बेताल बराती भूत भयानक ।
 बरद चढ़ा बर बाउर सबइ सुबानक ॥106 ॥

dīnha jā'i janavāsa supāsa ki'ē saba.
 ghara ghara bālaka bāta kahana lagē taba. 105.
 prēta bētāla barātī bhūta bhayānaka.
 barada caṛhā bara bā'ura saba'i subānaka. 106.

105-106. The royal heralds of the king of the mountains who were dispatched to receive the marriage party gave proper lodging to the arriving guests, providing them with all possible worldly comforts while they stayed at the bride's place during the marriage ceremony.¹

Meanwhile, all the children reached their homes excitedly, shouting and gesticulating wildly and deliriously— (105)

'The marriage party is made up of terrible ghosts, spirits and phantoms while the groom himself appears to be funny, quirky and crazy as he rides on the bull. The entire entourage is as terrible and horrifying as the groom himself.'² (106)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 96.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 and Chanda that precede Doha no. 95.]

कुसल करइ करतार कहहिं हम साँचिअ ।
 देखब कोटि बिआह जिअत जौं बाँचिअ ॥107 ॥
 समाचार सुनि सोचु भयउ मन मयनहिं ।
 नारद के उपदेस कवन घर गे नहिं ॥108 ॥

kusala kara'i karatāra kahahim hama sāñci'a.
 dēkhaba kōṭi bi'āha ji'ata jaurm bāñci'a. 107.
 samācāra suni sōcu bhaya'u mana mayanahim.
 nārada kē upadēsa kavana ghara gē nahim. 108.

107-108. We are telling the truth—God bless us; if we survive, we will see thousands of (i.e. countless other) marriages. (107)

When Maina (the mother of Parvati) heard this shocking news, she was very dismayed and worried. She thought to herself pensively that no household has ever been spared from ruin if it relied on the advice of sage Narad.¹

[It was Narad who had told Parvati that it is written in her destiny that she would have a crazy person as her husband. He had also advised her that this crazy husband will be no ordinary one, but Lord Shiva, the Great God. So she need not worry. But in order to attain Shiva she needed to do severe form of Tapa. When Parvati's mother has expressed her dismay and reservation at that time, her husband, the king of mountains, Himwan, had assured her that Narad never speaks lie, and if it is written in their daughter's destiny that she will get Shiva as her husband then there is no point in lamenting and regretting because whatever the Creator has already written can't be now erase. Maina, the mother, forgot all of this, and when she heard of the sort of groom that has come to marry her beloved daughter she started wailing and lamenting².

When Maina wailed, Parvati comforted her bravely, saying almost the same thing that her father had told her mother earlier. She in effect told her mother that if it is destined that she is to marry a crazy groom, can she change what the Creator has fixed for her? So she must act wisely like a grown-up, and stop lamenting and grieving when the marriage party is at the door. It will be highly absurd and laughable to throw tantrums now.³] (108)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 96—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 97.

Refer also to Chanda no. 13 below.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 71—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 72.

³Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 and the Chanda that precede Doha no. 97]

घर घाल चालक कलह प्रिय कहियत परम परमारथी ।
तैसी बरेखी कीन्हि पुनि मुनि सात स्वारथ सारथी ॥
उर लाइ उमहि अनेक बिधि जलपति जननि दुख मानई ।
हिमवान कहेउ इसान महिमा अगम निगम न जानई ॥13 ॥

ghara ghāla cālaka kalaha priya kahiyata parama paramārathī.
taisī barēkhī kīnhi puni muni sāta svāratha sārathī.
ura lā'i umahi anēka bidhi jalapati janani dukha māna'ī.
himavāna kahē'u isāna mahimā agama nigama na jāna'ī. 13.

Chanda 13. Narad is said to be a great well-wisher and benefactor of all, but in practice he ruins households, is clever and cunning, wicked and mischievous. Even the seven sages (see verse 75) were similarly crooked and self-serving; they talked about the marriage in the same clever vein (i.e. they spoke half truths and did not divulge the negative traits of the groom to us). [This refers to the seven celestial sages, known as the Sapta-rishis, coming to Himwan with the marriage proposal of Lord Shiva sent on his behalf by the Creator, Brahma, as his guardian. They painted a rosy picture of the groom as being a great God whose proposal is sent by none other than Brahma, the patriarch of creation. What more can a girl's parents want—that were excited at the prospect of their daughter getting married to the senior most God, Lord Shiva. She was deemed to be very lucky and privileged.]¹

In this fashion, the mother felt forlorn and dismayed beyond measure. She clasped Uma (Parvati) to her bosom and lamented gravely in various ways.²

Then Himwan (father of Parvati) consoled and comforted her by saying that even the Vedas are unable to fathom the greatness and glories of the Lord (Shiva).

[And therefore, she must not feel contrite at all; there is no reason why she should regret at Parvati having Shiva as her husband, for does she not know that Shiva is the Great God of creation, the 'Maha-deva', and it is the good fortune of their daughter that the Lord had accepted her hand in marriage, something that is rare and a privilege of sorts. So instead of complaining she should rejoice at the good fortune of the family that they have Lord Shiva as their groom and son-in-law.]³ (Chanda no. 13)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 90—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 92.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 96.

³In Ram Charit Manas, Himwan has comforted and reassured his wife Maina in Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 71—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 72.

But when Maina started lamenting once again when the marriage party arrived, it was Narad who came and explained everything to her—about the previous life of Parvati when she had sacrificed herself by burning her body in the fire sacrifice at her previous father's place when she discovered that Shiva was insulted by not being offered his share like any other God during that fire sacrifice, and at the time of death she had asked for a boon that she may be reunited with her eternal Lord, Lord Shiva. It is precisely this reason why the Creator had written in her destiny that she will marry Shiva because it is what she wanted. Therefore, no one should grieve or lament. She is being married off to the greatest God of creation and not to some ordinary god or some mad person. When Maina and the rest of the family heard this tale from Narad, all of them realised the truth, and the atmosphere changed immediately from one of sorrow and grief to that of rejoicing and joy.

This entire episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 97—to Doha no. 98.]

सुनि मैना भइ सुमन सखी देखन चली ।
जहँ तहँ चरचा चलइ हाट चौहट गली ॥109 ॥
श्रीपति सुरपति बिबुध बात सब सुनि सुनि ।
हँसहिं कमल कर जोरि मोरि मुख पुनि पुनि ॥110 ॥

suni mainā bha'i sumana sakhī dēkhana calī.
jahaṁ tahaṁ caracā cala'i hāṭa caihaṭa galī. 109.
śrīpati surapati bibudha bāta saba suni suni.
haṁsahim kamala kara jōri mōri mukha puni puni. 110.

109-110. Hearing these words, Maina felt comforted and reassured (because a father cannot speak and think ill of his beloved daughter, and if he says that their daughter is lucky to have Shiva as her groom, then surely it must be so).¹

Her companions proceeded to have a glimpse (of the groom and his party). Everywhere—on the streets, in the lanes and by-lanes, in the market places and central squares—there was talk of the marriage party. (109)

Hearing all this murmuring, chatter and gossip, Sripati (Vishnu), Surpati (Lord of Gods—i.e. Indra) and other Gods laughed repeatedly with their heads turned sideways and their faces covered with their palms like the closed petals of a lotus flower. [That is, they hid their embarrassment by hiding their faces in their palms like the closed petals of the lotus flower while they smiled and smirked and tried to suppress their laughter at the ridiculous and funny situation by glancing sideways.

Vishnu and the other Gods laughed at the sight of Lord Shiva's party not to demean or insult the Great God Lord Shiva but to make light of the situation.]² (110)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 99.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 93.]

Shiva's magical transformation into a handsome and charming groom

लखि लौकिक गति संभु जानि बड़ सोहर ।
भए सुंदर सत कोटि मनोज मनोहर ।।111।।
नील निचोल छाल भइ फनि मनि भूषन ।
रोम रोम पर उदित रूपमय पूषन ।।112।।

lakhi laukika gati sambhu jāni baṛa sōhara.
bha'ē sundara sata kōṭi manōja manōhara. 111.
nīla nicōla chāla bha'i phani mani bhūṣana.
rōma rōma para udita rūpamaya pūṣana. 112.

111-112. [Then a fantastic and magical transformation occurred in Shiva, and an amazing spectacle unfolded—]

Realizing that ways of the world demand that the groom should be attractive and decked up in all finery, Lord Shiva underwent a magical transformation. The Lord changed his form to one that was exceptionally charming and handsome. This transformed form of Shiva was so stupendously magnificent that it shamed even 100 million (i.e. countless) Kamdeo-cupids taken together.

[Kamdeo is said to be the most handsome and attractive amongst Gods. So, Lord Shiva assumed a form that surpassed all the other Gods in the assembly by many thousand times. This was a befitting reply to the way Lord Vishnu and other Gods were laughing at him and poking fun at his crazy form. Now after the miraculous metamorphosis of Shiva, all the Gods, including Vishnu, who prided themselves for their charm and beauty, felt humbled and humiliated.] (111)

His elephant hide (wrapped around his body) became a blue-tinged magnificent garment, while all the serpents wrapped around his body became gem-studded ornaments. At that moment it appeared that countless beautiful suns were shining on each of his body hairs (i.e. Lord Shiva's divine form began to glow intensely and radiate charm like the rays of the brilliantly shining sun). (112)

गन भए मंगल बेष मदन मन मोहन ।
सुनत चले हियँ हरषि नारि नर जोहन ।।113।।
संभु सरद राकेस नखत गन सुर गन ।
जनु चकोर चहुँ ओर बिराजहिँ पुर जन ।।114।।

gana bha'ē maṅgala bēṣa madana mana mōhana.
sunata calē hiyaṁ haraṣi nāri nara jōhana. 113.
sambhu sarada rākēsa nakhata gana sura gana.
janu cakōra cahuṁ ōra birājahiṁ pura jana. 114.

113-114. The countenance and form of Shiva's followers also underwent a magical transformation. They too became auspicious and good looking. They appeared so wonderful in appearance that their sight enchanted the mind not only of the onlookers but also that of Kamdeo himself.

Hearing this good tiding, the women and men folk of the city felt very delighted and went ahead to have a glimpse of the party once again. (113)

At that time, it appeared that Shiva was like the full moon of a winter night, the Gods were like the stars, while the citizens resembled flocks of Chakors (Indian red-legged partridge which is said to be enamoured of the moon) who had assembled in all the directions to watch or to stare unblinkingly at them. [The citizens of the mountain kingdom who collected to have a glimpse of the wonderful sight of Shiva and his companion after their transformation into beautiful forms are compared to the bird Chakor which gather in large numbers to gaze at the full moon of the winter night.] (114)

The marriage ceremony of Shiva and Parvati

गिरबर पटए बोलि लगन बेरा भई ।
मंगल अरघ पाँवडे देत चले लई ॥115॥
होहिं सुमंगल सगुन सुमन बरषहिं सुर ।
गहगहे गान निसान मोद मंगल पुर ॥116॥

girabara paṭha'e bōli lagana bēra bha'ī.
maṅgala aragha pām̐varē dēta calē la'ī. 115.
hōhim̐ sumaṅgala saguna sumana baraṣahim̐ sura.
gahagahē gāna nisāna mōda maṅgala pura. 116.

115-116. When the auspicious moment arrived, the most exalted amongst the mountains, Giribar (Himwan, father of Parvati) sent an invitation to the groom's party to come to the venue of the marriage ceremony. He brought them respectfully by offering libations and laying a red-carpet to welcome them.¹ (115)

There were auspicious signs and the Gods showered flowers. Joyous songs and musical beating of drums were accompanied by joyous celebrations and festivities in the city.² (116)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 99—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 100.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i), Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 99; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 100; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

पहिलिहिं पवरि सुसामध भा सुख दायक ।
इति बिधि उत हिमवान सरिस सब लायक ॥117॥
मनि चामीकर चारु थार सजि आरति ।
रति सिहाहिं लखि रूप गान सुनि भारति ॥118॥

pahilihim̐ pavari susāmadha bhā sukha dāyaka.
iti bidhi uta himavāna sarisa saba lāyaka. 117.
mani cāmīkara cāru thāra saji āratī.

rati sihāhiṁ lakhi rūpa gāna suni bhārati. 118.

117-118. At the first gate itself, there was an affectionate and cordial union between the two sides. On this (Shiva's) side was Brahma (the patriarch amongst the Gods), and on the other (Parvati's) side was Himwan. Both of them were equal in stature and fame, and were equally worthy, capable and potent.

[Brahma, the creator, acted as the guardian of Shiva—it was he who had sent the marriage proposal to Himwan. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand—(i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 89; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 91 which are explicit on this issue.] (117)

The women-folk went ahead to perform the ceremonial 'Arti' (i.e. showing of lighted lamps on a platter as an auspicious gesture to honour the guest and show that he is welcome and respected) with golden platters studded with gems.¹

Seeing their stupendous beauty, even Rati (the consort of Kamdeo-cupid) praised them, while Bharti (also known as 'Saraswati', the goddess of learning and special skills) lauded their singing expertise, prowess and acumen. (118)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 96.]

भरी भाग अनुराग पुलकि तन मुद मन ।
मदन मत्त गजगवनि चलीं बर परिछन ॥119॥
बर बिलोकि बिधु गौर सुअंग उजागर ।
करति आरती सासु मगन सुख सागर ॥120॥

bharī bhāga anurāga pulaki tana muda mana.
madana matta gajagavani calīṁ bara parichana. 119.
bara bilōki bidhu gaura su'aṅga ujāgara.
karati āratī sāsu magana sukha sāgara. 120.

119-120. Being thrilled in body and delighted in heart, they felt privileged and lucky and were overwhelmed with the warmth of surging affections and endearments for the groom. Those Kamdeo-like beauties walked majestically and gracefully like an elegant and proud she-elephant. They went to do 'Parichan' (i.e. worshipping, showing honours and formally welcoming) of the groom. (119)

Beholding the groom to be of a fair complexion like the moon with a radiantly glowing body/countenance, the mother-in-law (Maina) was literally drowned in an ocean of happiness and joy as she performed the groom's Arti (i.e. as she showed lighted lamps to Lord Shiva as part of the ritual).¹ (120)

[Note—¹See Chanda no. 14 below.]

सुख सिंधु मगन उतारि आरति करि निछावर निरखि कै ।
मगु अरघ बसन प्रसून भरि लेइ चलीं मंडप हरषि कै ॥
हिमवान दीन्हें उचित आसन सकल सुर सनमानि कै ।
तेहि समय साज समाज सब राखे सुमंडप आनि कै ॥14॥

sukha sindhu magana utāri ārati kari nichāvara nirakhi kai.
magu aragha basana prasūna bhari lē'i calīṁ maṇḍapa haraṣi kai.
himavāna dīnhēm ucita āsana sakala sura sanamāni kai.

tēhi samaya sāja samāja saba rākhē sumanḍapa āni kai. 14.

Chanda 14. She (the mother-in-law) was immersed in an ocean of joy and happiness while taking the Arti (of the groom). Then she offered sacrifices, watched him enthralled, and escorted him to the ceremonial canopy (the Mandap). She was continuously making libations before the groom as ceremonial welcoming carpets were spread in the front as they walked towards the marriage canopy. All along the way, fresh flowers were being showered on the path of the groom.

Himwan honoured all the Gods and gave them suitable seats. Whatever was necessary at that time (for performance of the marriage rites) were brought and kept at the auspicious Mandap (the main venue of the marriage ceremony). (14)

अरघ देइ मनि आसन बर बैठायउ ।
 पूजि कीन्ह मधुपर्क अमी अचवायउ ॥121 ॥
 सप्त रिषिन्ह बिधि कहेउ बिलंब न लाइअ ।
 लगन बेर भइ बेगि बिधान बनाइअ ॥122 ॥

aragha dē'i mani āsana bara baiṭhāya'u.
 pūji kīnha madhuparka amī acavāya'u. 121.
 sapta riṣinha bidhi kahē'u bilamba na lā'i'a.
 lagana bēra bha'i bēgi bidhāna banā'i'a. 122.

121-122. Oblations were offered and the groom was seated on a gem-studded seat¹. He was then worshipped and honoured, and the ritual of 'offering sweets' was completed and he was offered water (to clean the mouth). (121)

Thereafter, Brahma asked the seven celestial sages not to delay any further because the auspicious moment had arrived. 'Complete all the formalities quickly', he said. (122)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 100.]

थापि अनल हर बरहि बसन पहिरायउ ।
 आनहु दुलहिनि बेगि समय अब आयउ ॥123 ॥
 सखी सुआसिनि संग गौरि सुठि सोहति ।
 प्रगट रूपमय मूरति जनु जग मोहति ॥124 ॥

thāpi anala hara barahi basana pahirāya'u.
 ānahu dulahini bēgi samaya aba āya'u. 123.
 sakhī su'āsini saṅga gauri suṭhi sōhati.
 pragaṭa rūpamaya mūrati janu jaga mōhati. 124.

123-124. Then the ceremonial, sacred fire was lit and the groom was made to wear suitable garments. Then it was asked that the bride be brought to the venue as soon as possible because the auspicious time had arrived. (123)

At that time Gauri (Parvati) looked most adorable and magnificent along with her companions and other married girls of her age as if beauty had assumed an image to enchant and captivate the world and hold it enthralled¹. (124)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 and Chanda that precede Doha no. 100.]

भूषण बसन समय सम सोभा सो भली ।
 सुषमा बेलि नवल जनु रूप फलनि फली ॥125 ॥
 कहहु काहि पटतरिय गौरि गुन रूपहि ।
 सिंधु कहिय केहि भाँति सरिस सर कूपहि ॥126 ॥

bhūṣaṇa basana samaya sama sōbhā sō bhālī.
 suṣamā bēli navala janu rūpa phalani phalī. 125.
 kahahu kāhi paṭatariya gauri guna rūpahi.
 sindhu kahiya kēhi bhāṁti sarisa sara kūpahi. 126.

125-126. Magnificent ornaments and garments befitting the occasion looked very charming on the bride's body as if a new creeper (symbolizing the bride) of majestic beauty has been liberally endowed with fruits and flowers (symbolizing the ornaments and clothes) that covered it from one end to another. (125)

Say, with whom can one compare the beauty, charm and glamour as well as the virtues and good characters of Gauri (Parvati)? How can one call the ocean as being equivalent (or comparable) to a river, a pond, lake or a well? [Here, the ocean represents the beauty of the bride, and all other comparisons to her to the inconsequential water bodies such as ponds and lakes.]¹ (126)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6 and 8 that precede Doha no. 100.]

आवत उमहि बिलोकि सीस सुर नावहि ।
 भव कृतारथ जनम जानि सुख पावहि ॥127 ॥
 बिप्र बेद धुनि करहि सुभासिष कहि कहि ।
 गान निसान सुमन झरि अवसर लहि लहि ॥128 ॥

āvata umahi bilōki sīsa sura nāvahiṁ.
 bhava kṛtāratha janama jāni sukha pāvahiṁ. 127.
 bipra bēda dhuni karahiṁ subhāsiṣa kahi kahi.
 gāna nisāna sumana jhari avasara lahi lahi. 128.

127-128. When the Gods saw that Uma (Parvati) was coming to the venue, they bowed their heads (in reverence); they considered themselves and their birth as being most lucky, successful and fortunate.¹ (127)

The Brahmins chanted the hymns of the Vedas and blessed the couple². There are felicitous songs and sounding of the musical drums as well as showering of flowers every other moment³. (128)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 100.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 101.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

बर दुलहिनिहि बिलोकि सकल मन हरसहि ।
 साखोच्चार समय सब सुर मुनि बिहसहि ॥129 ॥
 लोक बेद बिधि कीन्ह लीन्ह जल कुस कर ।

कन्या दान सँकलप कीन्ह धरनीधर ।।130 ।।

bara dulahinihi bilōki sakala mana harasahim.
sākhōccāra samaya saba sura muni bihasahim. 129.
lōka bēda bidhi kīnha līnha jala kusa kara.
kan'yā dāna saṁkalapa kīnha dharanīdhara. 130.

129-130. Everyone felt jubilant and exhilarated in their hearts when they saw the groom and the bride together. During the ritual of 'Sakhochar' (a ritual wherein the glory of the two clans, that of the groom and the bride, are narrated aloud), all the Gods and sages laughed overtly.

[Why did they 'laugh'? Because when it came to listing to the lineage of the family of Lord Shiva, the narrators were confounded—for the Lord has no beginning or end, he has no father or mother, he is the Lord of the world and hence its creator himself, he creates and destroys everything himself, he is the 'Maha-deva', the Great God whom all the other Gods pay their obeisance and respect and therefore he is not supposed to worship any other God though it is mandatory to do so during the rites of marriage, and so on and so forth. There is so much paradox with the groom, Lord Shiva, that the gods and sages could not resist themselves from smiling.

Then there was another reason for the smile—Lord Shiva is supposed to be an ascetic who has deemed to have renounced all worldly attachments and relationships, who is supposed to be immune to emotions of love and affection, and here the same Lord is so enchanted by Parvati that he is willingly marrying her and getting entangled in the web of responsibilities that are incumbent with marriage!

To top it was the determination of Parvati to accept such a Lord as her husband who lives in the company of ghosts and phantoms, who spends the better part of his existence lost in deep meditation and contemplation, whose wrath and anger is so fierce that he had destroyed Kaam-deo just for the error of disturbing his meditation by his passionate overtures. What kind of happiness she expects to find in the company of this groom, wondered the gods and the sages.] (129)

Then 'Dharnidhar' (literally one who takes care of the earth; here meaning Himwan, the 'king' of the mountains, as he takes care of his realm) did all the customs according to established traditions and as prescribed by the Vedas.

Thereafter, he took Kush grass and water in his hands (i.e. in his cupped palms) and made the vow called 'giving away of the daughter', the ritual known as 'Kanyadaan'. ['Kanya' = daughter; 'Daan' = to give in a selfless manner.]¹ (130)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 101.]

पूजे कुल गुर देव कलसु सिल सुभ घरी ।
लावा होम बिधान बहुरि भाँवरि परी ।।131 ।।
बंदन बंदि ग्रंथि बिधि करि ध्रुव देखेउ ।
भा बिबाह सब कहहिं जनम फल पेखेउ ।।132 ।।

pūjē kula gura dēva kalasu sila subha gharī.
lāvā hōma bidhāna bahuri bhāṁvari parī. 131.
bandana bandi gaṁṁrathi bidhi kari dhruva dēkhē'u.
bhā bibāha saba kahahim janama phala pēkhē'u. 132.

131-132. The clan's Guru (moral preceptor) and the deities (or Gods) were worshipped. Then the ritualistic pitcher and the grinding-stone were worshipped during that auspicious moment.

After that, the rituals of 'offering of the rice flakes', the 'Homa' and the 'Bhanwari' were completed. (131)

Thereafter, red vermilion powder was put on the forehead of the bride, the 'tying the knot' ceremony was completed, and the 'Dhruva star' (the polar star) was seen.

Then everybody observed that 'the marriage ceremony is complete and all of us have got the benefit or fruit of taking birth.'¹ (132)

[Note :- (i) The 'offering of puffed rice flakes' involves a ritual wherein the bride's brother fills the lap of his sister with rice flakes.

(ii) The 'Homa' is the worship of the sacrificial fire.

(iii) 'Bhanwari' is the ritual wherein the couple moves around the sacrificial fire seven times, making the marriage vows.

(iv) The vermilion powder is applied on the head of the bride by the groom as an auspicious sign that he is accepting her as his wife. The lady applies this powder daily on her head after her bath etc. throughout her life.

(v) The Polar Star is seen in a ritual that implies that the bond between the two persons getting married will be as steady and stable as the North Star which remains in its position throughout the year. The Polar Star is the only celestial body that does not change its position, so the other idea is to make it a witness to this bond between the husband and the wife.

¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

पेखेउ जनम फलु भा बिबाह उछाह उमगहि दस दिसा ।
नीसान गान प्रसूत झरि तुलसी सुहावनि सो निसा ॥
दाइज बसन मनि धेनु धन हय गय सुसेवक सेवकी ।
दीन्हीं मुदित गिरिराज जे गिरिजहि पिआरी पेव की ॥15॥

pēkhē'u janama phalu bhā bibāha uchāha umagahi dasa disā.
nīsāna gāna prasūta jhari tulasī suhāvani sō nisā.
dā'ija basana mani dhēnu dhana haya gaya susēvaka sēvakī.
dīnhīr̄m mudita girirāja jē girijahi pi'ārī pēva kī. 15.

Chanda 15. In this manner, everyone obtained the rewards of their lives. The marriage was completed and exhilaration surged in all the ten directions (i.e. in all the parts of the world, the terrestrial as well as the heavenly worlds)¹.

Tulsidas says that the night became very pleasant and most charming due to the tumultuous and joyous beating of musicals drums, singing of celebratory songs and raining of flowers.

Whatever was dear to Girija (Parvati)—such as clothes/garments, gems/jewels, cows/other pet animals, wealth/treasures, elephants and horses, male and female attendants and other servants etc.—all of them were given most lovingly by Giriraj (father of Parvati) as marriage gift (dowry) to her². (15)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 101.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

बहुरि बराती मुदित चले जनवासहि ।
 दूलह दुलहिन गे तब हास—अवासहि ॥133 ॥
 रोकि द्वार मैना तब कौतुक कीन्हेउ ।
 करि लहकौरि गौरि हर बड़ सुख दीन्हेउ ॥134 ॥

bahuri barātī mudita calē janavāsahi.
 dūlaha dulahina gē taba hāsa-avāsahi. 133.
 rōki dvāra mainā taba kautuka kīnhē'u.
 kari lahakauri gauri hara baṛa sukha dīnhē'u. 134.

133-134. Then the members of the marriage party cheerfully went to their place of lodging, while the groom and the bride went to the 'Kohabar'. [This is the place where the family deities are kept for worship by the newly married couple.] (133)

At that time, Maina (the mother of Parvati) stopped them briefly in the doorway joyously as part of a ritual. Then Gauri and Har (i.e. Parvati and Shiva) did the rite of 'Lahakauri', and thereby gave immense delight and satisfaction to her (Maina) (134).

[Note—The 'Lahakauri' ritual involves the bride and groom symbolically feeding each other with sweetened curd using their fingers as spoons while the ladies surrounding them pass lewd remarks at the couple and poke fun at them, making them blush. It is a rite aimed at overcoming their inhibitions. It is meant to make them more informal and break the barrier of shyness and bashfulness that is usually present in the early stages of a married life, especially during the marriage ceremony itself when so many people attending it have their gaze fixed on the couple.]

जुआ खेलावत गारि देहिं गिरि नारिहि ।
 आपनि ओर निहारि प्रमोद पुरारिहि ॥135 ॥
 सखी सुआसिनि सासु पाउ सुख सब बिधि ।
 जनवासेहि बर चलेउ सकल मंगल निधि ॥136 ॥

ju'ā khēlāvata gāri dēhiṁ giri nārihi.
 āpani ōra nihāri pramōda purārihi. 135.
 sakhī su'āsini sāsū pā'u sukha saba bidhi.
 janavāsēhi bara calē'u sakala maṅgala nidhi. 136.

135-136. During the ritual of playing the 'game of dice', all the women sang sarcastic songs spiced (laced) by offensive language (but this is not done to offend anyone but merely to crack jokes and make light banter to create a cheerful, informal and friendly atmosphere, to break ice between the groom's side the bride's side). Shiva looked at himself and felt delighted (wondering that since he had no mother, how these women would abuse him or poke funs at him and his mother). (135)

Parvati's friends, married girls and the mother-in-law—all of them felt happy and exhilarated.

Then the groom (Lord Shiva)—who was a treasury or a personified form of all auspiciousness, well-beings and goodness in this world—proceeded cheerfully towards the place where the marriage party had been lodged¹. (136)

[Note—The 'game of dice'—The dice game is another such ritual to break the so-called ice of formalities and protocol between the bride and groom's families. This ritual tends to bring the two families closer at the down-to-earth level by poking

jokes, making fun, mockery, mimicking and generally making light of the otherwise formal, solemn, starched, stiff and crisp occasion because the two families are alien to each other prior to it. All through the game, the bride's friends keep teasing the groom and make such comments that are bound to titillate the couple.

¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 102.]

The marriage feast

भइ जेवनार बहोरि बुलाइ सकल सुर ।
 बैठाए गिरिराज धरम धरनि धुर ॥137 ॥
 परुसन लगे सुआर बिबुध जन जेवहिं ।
 देहिं गारि बर नारि मोद मन भेवहिं ॥138 ॥

bha'i jēvanāra bahōri bulā'i sakala sura.
 baiṭhā'ē girirāja dharama dharani dhura. 137.
 parusana lagē su'āra bibudha jana jēvahiṁ.
 dēhiṁ gāri bara nāri mōda mana bhēvahiṁ. 138.

137-138. Thereafter, all the Gods were invited for the grand marriage feast that consisted of a delicious, multi-dish spread of a sumptuous meal that was organized to mark the culmination of the grand marriage ceremony.

Giriraj (Himwan, the king of mountains)—who sustained his realm according to the principles of Dharma (i.e. in a righteous, proper and noble manner)—requested everyone to take their seats for the meal. (137)

Expert, professional waiters began to serve food to the guests, the Gods and other members of the marriage party, as they cheerfully ate at the grand feast. At that time, beautiful women sang celebratory songs jestfully, using lyrics that incorporated uncouth and taunting language to tease the guests and make them laugh. The members of the marriage party enjoyed this ritual and felt delighted in their hearts and minds as they dined their way through the sumptuous offerings at the marriage dinner. (138)

[Note—In Ram Charit Manas, this feast was organized when the marriage party had arrived, and not after the marriage. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precedes Doha no. 99.]

Preparation for the departure back home to Mt. Kailash

करहिं सुमंगल गान सुघर सहनाइन्ह ।
 जेइँ चले हरि दुहिन सहित सुर भाइन्ह ॥139 ॥
 भूधर भोरु बिदा कर साज सजायउ ।
 चले देव सजि जान निसान बजायउ ॥140 ॥

karahiṁ sumāṅgala gāna sughara sahanā'inha.
 jē'im̐ calē hari duhina sahita sura bhā'inha. 139.
 bhūdhara bhōru bidā kara sāja sajāya'u.
 calē dēva saji jāna nisāna bajāya'u. 140.

139-140. Experts and bards sang melodious, sweet songs using the clarinet. Having eaten to their full, Hari (Vishnu) accompanied by Brahma and other compatriots and brotherly Gods made their way out of the venue of the grand feast. (139)

The king of mountains made all the preparations necessary for the farewell ceremony. In the morning, all the Gods prepared their chariots, and to the accompaniment of the sound of musical drums they made their ceremonial exits (from the places they had been lodged in). (140)

सनमाने सुर सकल दीन्ह पहिरावनि ।
कीन्ह बड़ाई बिनय सनेह सुहावनि ॥141 ॥
गहि सिव पद कह सासु बिनय मृदु मानबि ।
गौरि सजीवन मूरि मोरि जियँ जानबि ॥142 ॥

sanamānē sura sakala dīnha pahirāvani.
kīnha barā'ī binaya sanēha suhāvani. 141.
gahi siva pada kaha sāsū binaya mṛdu mānabi.
gauri sajjivana mūri mōri jiyam̐ jānabi. 142.

141-142. He (Himwan) honoured all the Gods by giving them ceremonial robes of honour and praised them most humbly and affectionately. (141)

Then the mother-in-law caught hold of Shiva's feet and said—'Pay heed to one humble prayer of mine, oh Lord. Recognise (realise, understand) that Gauri is the very root of my life—i.e. she is very dear to me, and if any harm comes to her, then I will be ruined. [In other words, please take proper care of my daughter.]' (142)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 101 and its preceding Chanda. The only difference between these two versions is that while in the current book Parvati Mangal it is the mother of Parvati who prays to Lord Shiva, in Ram Charit Manas it is her father.]

भेंटि बिदा करि बहुरि भेंटि पहुँचावहिं ।
हुँकरि हुँकरि सु लवाइ धेनु जनु धावहिं ॥143 ॥
उमा मातु मुख निरखि नैन जल मोचहिं ।
नारि जनमु जग जाय सखी कहि सोचहिं ॥144 ॥

bhēṅṭi bidā kari bahuri bhēṅṭi pahuṁcāvahim̐.
huṁkari huṁkari su lavā'i dhēnu janu dhāvahim̐. 143.
umā mātu mukha nirakhi naina jala mōcahim̐.
nāri janamu jaga jāya sakhī kahi sōcahim̐. 144.

143-144. She met them (Shiva and Parvati) and bid them farewell repeatedly, running behind them again and again to say good-bye repeatedly in quick succession just like a cow who has only recently given birth to her calf bellows and runs behind it again and again when her young-one (the calf) is being taken away from her. (143)

Uma (Parvati) looked at the face of her mother and tears rolled down her eyes, while the womenfolk lamented woefully that 'in this world, the life of a women is in vain, it is futile and useless' (because she is always dependent upon others, and she has to always suffer the agony of separation from her parents at the time of marriage).¹ (144)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 102.]

भेंटि उमहि गिरिराज सहित सुत परिजन ।
 बहुत भाँति समुझाइ फिरे बिलखित मन ॥145 ॥
 संकर गौरि समेत गए कैलासहि ।
 नाइ नाइ सिर देव चले निज बासहि ॥146 ॥

bhēṅṭi umahi girirāja sahita suta parijana.
 bahuta bhāṁti samujhā'i phirē bilakhita mana. 145.
 saṅkara gauri samēta ga'e kailāsahi.
 nā'i nā'i sira dēva calē nija bāsahi. 146.

145-146. Giriraj (the father of Parvati) met Uma for the last time along with his family members and their sons, consoled her in many ways and then returned back with a heavy and sad heart. (145)

Thereafter, Shiva went to Kailash with Gauri (Parvati), while all the other Gods (who had accompanied him in the marriage party) went away to their own respective abodes after paying their obeisance to Shiva and Parvati by bowing their heads to them. (146)

उमा महेस बिआह उछाह भुवन भरे ।
 सब के सकल मनोरथ बिधि पूरन करे ॥147 ॥
 प्रेम पाट पटडोरि गौरि हर गुन मनि ।
 मंगल हार रचेउ कबि मति मृगलोचनि ॥148 ॥

umā mahēsa bi'āha uchāha bhuvana bharē.
 saba kē sakala manōratha bidhi pūrana karē. 147.
 prēma pāṭa paṭṭōri gauri hara guna mani.
 maṅgala hāra racē'u kabi mati mṛgalōcani. 148.

147-148. All the Bhuvans (i.e. corners of the world) were full of joy and delight at the marriage of Uma and Mahesh. The Creator fulfilled the desires of all.¹ (147)

Using the silk thread symbolising love and affection, the poet's intellect—representing doe-eyed beautiful maiden—has made an auspicious garland using gems symbolising the different virtues, qualities and noble characters of Har and Gauri (Shiva and Parvati).

[That is, poets sing the magnificent marriage of Lord Shiva with his divine consort Parvati with great affection and love for the Lord. They feel privileged to remember the Lord's glories and divine virtues on the excuse of singing the divine couple's auspicious marriage ceremony.] (148)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 101.]

मृगनयनि बिधुबदनी रचेउ मनि मंजु मंगलहार सो ।
 उर धरहुँ जुबती जन बिलोकि तिलोक सोभा सार सो ॥
 कल्यान काज उछाह ब्याह सनेह सहित जो गाइहै ।
 तुलसी उमा संकर प्रसाद प्रमोद मन प्रिय पाइहै ॥16 ॥

mṛḡanayani bidhubadanī racē'u mani mañju maṅgalahāra sō.
 ura dharahuñ jubatī jana bilōki tilōka sōbhā sāra sō.
 kalyāna kāja uchāha byāha sanēha sahita jō gā'ihai.
 tulasī umā saṅkara prasāda pramōda mana priya pā'ihai. 16.

Chanda 16. The doe-eyed, moon-faced beautiful wife (symbolising the poet's intellect—see previous verse 148) has created this auspicious garland using the beautiful gems (represented by the glorious stories pertaining to the marriage of Shiva and Parvati).

The women-folk representing the wisdom of devotees should consider this garland as the essence of the beauty and majesty of the whole of the three worlds (i.e. the whole world) and wear it.

Those who sing this song (Parvati Mangal) affectionately at the time of marriage as well as other auspicious occasions and festivities, Tulsidas asserts and declares with firmness that by the grace and benevolence of Uma and Shiva, they will always find happiness, joy and pleasure of all kind which will be to their liking (i.e. they will have all their desires fulfilled). (Chanda no. 16)

-----*****-----

About the

Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

- (a) www.amazon.com (in their 'kindle' + 'paper-back book' versions),
- (b) www.pothi.com (in 'paper-back book' + 'e-book' versions),
- (c) www.draft2digital.com (in 'e-book' version) through the following platforms: (i) Apple (ibooks), (ii) Barnes & Noble (nook), (iii) Kobo, (iv) Page Foundry, (v) Scribd, (vi) Tolino etc.:-

(A) List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

(A-1) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala Nahachu" & "Geetawali", and sage Veda Vyas' book "Adhyatma Ramayan"; (14) "Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram"; (15) "Vairagya Shatkam" of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" or the "Aadi Ramayan" based on Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of Hanuman; (19) "Narad Bhakti Sutra"—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the

Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) “Shandilya Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) “Bhakti Sutra Mala”—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitawali Ramayan); (27) The Great Ancient Sages, Seers, Saints and Enlightened Kings of India; (28) The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads: The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

(A-2) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- ‘Dohawali’; (2) Book 2- ‘Parvati Mangal’; (3) Book 3- ‘Kavitawali’; (4) Book 4- ‘Janki Mangal’; (5) Book 5- ‘Ram Lala Nahachu’; (6) Book 6- ‘Geetawali Ramayan’; (7) Book 7- ‘Vairagya Sandipani’; (8) Book 8- ‘Vinai Patrika’; (9) ‘Barvai Ramayan’.

(B) The following Books have been published in ‘Printed-Book Deluxe Editions’ by a reputed Indian Publisher (details given below) :

1. Detailed English renderings, with explanatory notes and commentaries of the 108 Upanishads classified according to the Vedic tradition = 6 volumes; 18 parts. [Vol. 1=Rig Veda Upanishads; Vol. 2= Sam Veda Upanishads; Vol. 3= Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 4= Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 5= Atharva Veda Upanishads; Vol. 6= Vedanta Concepts explained with specific references to the relevant Upanishads.]

2. English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.
3. English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
4. English rendering of Devi Puran’s Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
5. A Divine Biography of Lord Ram & Glory of Lord’s Holy Name.

Name and contact of Publisher of above Printed Books listed under (C):

Chaukhamba Publishing House, Delhi. [Sri Neeraj Gupta.]

Email < chaukhambapublishinghouse@gmail.com >

< chaukhamba_neerj@yahoo.com >

Postal Address: 4697/2, Street no. 21-A, (HDFC Bank wali Gali),

Ansari Road, Darayaganj, Delhi—110002.

Phone: Mobile (Neeraj Gupta)—+919811133683

Office: 011-23286537; 011-32996391

(C) Book under preparation:

A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas’ epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’ is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

Contact details of Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia—

Postal address:-36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg, P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—
224123, Distt. Ayodhya (Faizabad), U.P. India.
Phone:—(India) +919451290400; +919935613060.

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Archive.org: < https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia >

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: < www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia >

Goodreads:

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia