

Devi Bhagavatam
THE SECOND BOOK

Chapter I

On the birth of Matsyagandhâ

1-5. The Risis said :-- “O Sûta! Your words sound wonderful to us indeed! but you have not as yet definitely spoken to us the original events in detail; so a great doubt has arisen in our minds. We know that the king S’antanu married Vyâsa’s mother, Satyavatî. Now say, in detail in how Vyâsa became her son? How such a chaste woman Satyavatî, remaining in her own house, came to be married again by S’antanu? and how the two sons came to be born of S’antanu’s sperm and Satyavatî’s’ ovum? Now O highly fortunate Suvrata? Kindly describe in detail this highly sanctifying historical fact. These Risis, who are observing vows, are desirous to hear of the birth of Veda Vyâsa and Satyavatî.”

6-23. Sûta said :-- I bow down with devotion to the Highest Primordial Force, the bestower of the four fold aims of existence of human life, who grants to all, their desires when so prayed by the help of the Vâgbhava Vîjamantra with their heart and soul, for the success of all their desires. The above vîja is so potent in its effect that even pronounced very lightly, even under a pretext, it grants all siddhis. So the Devî should be remembered by all means; and now saluting Her, I begin my narration of the auspicious Purânic events. In days gone by there reigned a king, named Uparichara; he ruled over the Chedi country and respected the Brâhmins; he was truthful and very religious. Indra, the lord of the Devas, became very pleased by his asceticism and presented him an auspicious celestial car (going in the air) made of pearls, and crystals, helping him in doing what he liked best. Mounting on that divine chariot, that religious king used to go everywhere; he never remained on earth; he used to remain always in the atmosphere and therefore he had his name as “Uparichara Vasu” (moving in the upper regions). He had a very beautiful wife, named Girikâ; and five powerful sons, of indomitable vigour, were born to him.

The king give separate kingdoms to each of his sons and made them kings. Once on an occasion, Girikâ, the wife of the Uparichara Vasu, after her bath after the menstruation and becoming pure came to the king and informed him of her desire to get a son; but that very day his Pitris (ancestors) requested him also to kill deer, etc., for their Srâddha (solemn obsequies performed in honour of the manes of deceased ancestors). Hearing the Pitris, the king of Chedi became somewhat anxious for his menstruous wife; but thinking his Pitris words more powerful and more worthy to be obeyed, went out on an hunting expedition to kill deer and other animals, with the thought of his wife Girikâ in his breast. Then while he was in the forest, he remembered his Girikâ, who was equal in her beauty and loveliness to Kamalâ, and the emission of semen virile took place. He kept this semen on the leaf of a banyan tree and thought “How the above semen be not futile; my semen cannot remain unfruitful; my wife has just now passed her menstruous condition; I will send this semen to my dear wife.” Thus thinking the time ripe, he closed the semen under the leaves of the banyan tree and charging it with the mantra power (some power) addressed a falcon close by thus :-- “O highly fortunate one! Take this my semen virile and go to my palace. O Beautiful one! Do this my work: take this semen virile and go quick to my palace and hand it over to my wife Girikâ for to-day is her menstruation period.”

24. Sûta said :-- “O Risis! Thus saying, the king gave that leaf with the virile therein to the falcon, who is capable of going quick in the air, took it and immediately rose high up in the air.

25-26. Another falcon, seeing this one flying in the air with leaf in his beak, considered it to be some piece of flesh and fell upon him. Immediately a gallant fighting ensued between the two birds with their beaks.

27. While the fighting was going on, that leaf with semen virile fell down from their beaks on the waters of the Jumná river. Then the two falcons flew away as they liked.

28-39. O Risis! While the two falcons were fighting with each other, one Apsarâ (celestial nymph) named Adrikâ came to a Brâhmin, who was performing his Sandhyâ Bandanam on the banks of the Jumná. That beautiful woman began to bathe in the waters and took a plunge for playing sports and caught hold of the feet of the Brâhmana. The Dvija, engaged in Prânâyâma (deep breathing exercise), saw that the woman had amorous intentions, and cursed her, saying :- "As you have interrupted me in my meditation, so be a fish."

Adrikâ, one of the best Apsarâs, thus cursed, assumed the form of a fish Safari and spent her days in the Jumná waters. When the semen virile of Uparichara Vasu fell from the beak of the falcon, that fish Adrikâ came quickly and ate that and became pregnant. When ten months passed, a fisherman came there and caught in a net that fish Adrikâ. When the fish's belly was torn asunder, two human beings instantly came out the the womb. One was a lovely boy and the other a beautiful girl. The fisherman was greatly astonished to see this. He went and informed the king of that place who was Uparichara Vasu that the boy and the girl were born of the womb of a fish. The king also was greatly surprised and accepted the boy who seemed auspicious. This Vasu's son was highly energetic and powerful, truthful and religious like his father and became famous by the name of the king Matsyarâj. Uparichara Vasu gave away the girl to the fisherman. This girl was named Kâli and she became famous by the name of Matsyodarî. The smell of the fish came out of her body and she was named also Matsyagandhâ. Thus the auspicious Vasu's daughter remained and grew in that fisherman's house.

The Risis said :- The beautiful Apsarâ, cursed by the Muni, turned into fish; she was afterwards cut asunder and eaten up by the fisherman. Very well! What happened afterwards to that Apsarâ? How was she freed of that curse? and how did she go back to the Heavens?

Thus questioned by the Risis, Sûta spoke as follows :- When the Apsarâ was first cursed by the Muni, she was greatly astonished; she began to weep and cry like one greatly distressed and afterwards began to praise him. The Brâhmin, seeing her weeping, took pity on her and said :- "O good one! Don't weep; I am telling you how your curse will expire. As an effect of having incurred my wrath, you will be born as a fish and when you will give birth to two human children, you will be freed of your curse."

The Brâhmin having spoken thus, Adrikâ got a fish-body in the waters of the Jumná. Afterwards she gave birth to two human children and became freed of the curse when she, quitting the fish form assumed the divine form and went up to the Heavens. O Risis! The beautiful girl Matsyagandhâ thus took her birth and was nourished in the fisherman's house and grew up there. When the extraordinarily lovely girl of Vasu, Matsyagandhâ attained her youth, she continued to do all the household duties of the fisherman and remained there.

Thus ends the first chapter of the Second Skandha on the birth of Matsyagandhâ in the Mahâpurâna S'rî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa.

Chapter II

On the birth of Vyâsa Deva

1-10. Once on an occasion, the highly energetic Muni Parâs'ara went out on pilgrimage and arrived on the banks of the Yamunâ, and spoke to the religious fisherman who was taking his food then thus :-- "O fisherman! Take me on your boat and carry me to the other side of the river." Hearing this, the fisherman spoke to the beautiful girl Matsyagandhâ :-- "O beautiful smiling one! This religious ascetic intends to cross the river; so take the boat and carry him to the other bank." Thus ordered by her father, the exceedingly beautiful Vasu girl Matsyagandhâ began to steer the boat whereon sat the Muni. Thus while the boat was sliding on the waters of the Yamunâ; the Muni Parâs'ara saw the beautiful-eyed damsel Matsyagandhâ and became as if under the command of the great destiny, greatly enamoured of her. He desired to enjoy Matsyagandhâ, full of youth and beauty and with his right hand caught hold of her left hand; the blue coloured Matsya looking askance spoke out smilingly in the following words :-- O knower of Dharma! What are you going to do, pierced by the arrows of Cupid? What you desire now, is it worthy of your family or your study of the S'âstras or worthy of your Tapasyâ; see, you are born in the line of Vas'istha and you are well known as of good character. O best of Brâhmins! You are quite aware that the attaining of a man-birth in this world is very rare; and over and above this the attainment of Brâhminhood is, as far as my knowledge goes, particularly difficult.

11-14. O Prince of Brâhmins! You are the foremost and best as far as your family, goodness, and learning in the Vedas and other S'âstras are concerned; you are well versed in Dharma; how is it, then, that you are going to do this act, not worthy of an Ârya, though you see me possessed of this bad smell of fish throughout my body. O one of unbaffled understanding! O best of twice-born! What auspicious sign do you see in my body that you are stricken with passion on my account that you have caught hold of my hand to enjoy me? Why have you gotten your own Dharma? Thus saying, Matsyagandhâ thought within herself :-- "Alas! This Brâhmin has certainly lost his brains in order to enjoy me; certainly he will be drowned just now in his attempt to enjoy me in this boat; his mind is so much agitated with the arrows of Cupid that no body, it seems, can act against his will." Thus thinking Matsyagandhâ spoke again to the Muni :-- "O highly fortunate one! Hold patience! let me first take you to the other side of the river; then you may do as you please."

15-19. Hearing these reasonable words, the Muni let loose of her hand and took his seat on the boat and gradually got down on the other bank of the river. But the Muni, becoming again extremely passionate caught hold of Matsyagandhâ; when the young woman spoke to Parâs'ara, in front of her, shuddering :-- "O best of Munis! My body is emitting very bad smell; do you not feel this? You know very well that the sexual intercourse between male and female of similar types brings in happiness and comfort." Thus spoken to, Parâs'ara made Matsyagandhâ emit sweet scent like that of musk to a distance of one Yojana (8 miles) and her body exceedingly lovely and beautiful and, becoming extremely passionate, again caught hold of her right hand.

20-34. Then the auspicious Satyavatî addressed Parâs'ara Muni, resolved to enjoy her, thus :-- "O Muni! Behold! all are looking at us; my father too, is there on the bank of the Yamunâ; so, O Muni! wait till night this beastly act before all is highly unsatisfactory to me. The wise persons declare it a great sin to commit sexual intercourse during day they have ordained night time as the best time of intercourse for men not the day time; the more so that many person's eyes are in this direction. So, O intelligent one! hold on your passion for a while; for the blame pronounced by the public is horrible." Hearing these reasonable words, the liberal minded Parâs'ara created, by his influence of Tapasyâ, a dense fog so that both the banks of the Yamunâ became covered with darkness. Then Matsyagandhâ gently spoke to the Muni :--

“O best of Dvîjas! I am not as yet married; I am now a girl; you will go away after enjoying me; your semen virile is not fruitless; so Brâhman! What will be my fate? If I be pregnant today, what shall I say to my father? and what will be my future state? There is no doubt that, after enjoying me, you will go away; what will I do afterwards; kindly say.” Hearing these words of Matsyagandhâ, Parâs'ara said :-- “O beloved! after you have done my pleasant duty, you will remain a girl as you are now; yet, O timid one! ask from me any boon you like; I will grant it to you.” Satyavatî then said :-- “O best Brâhman, O giver of one's honour! grant me these things :-- That my father and mother do not know anything of this affair and that my virginity be again as ever the same. Also let an extraordinarily powerful energetic son be born to me like you; let this nice smell continue to remain always in my body and let my youth and beauty remain afresh and increase ever more. Hearing this, Parâs'ara said :-- “O beautiful one! a son, very pure and holy, will be born to you, from Nârâyana's part! his name will be famous in the three worlds. O beautiful one! never before my heart was agitated with such passion. I do not know why I have become so much passionate for you. I saw the unrivalled beauties of Apsarâs but I never lost my patience; but seeing you, I have become attracted to you; it must be under the direction of Providence; know it certain that there must be some mysterious cause in this. However Fate is unavoidable to all; otherwise you are full of so bad smell; why shall I be fascinated by your sight? O beautiful one! your son will be famed in the three worlds; will compose the Purânas and will sub-divide the Vedas.

Thus saying, the Muni Parâs'ara enjoyed Matsyagandhâ, who became quite submissive; and after bathing in the Yamunâ, quickly went away. On the other hand, the chaste Satyavatî, too, became pregnant and immediately gave birth on the island of Yamunâ to a son beautiful, as if the Second Kâmadeva, the god of Love, Kâmadeva. No sooner that son, very fiery and highly potent, was born than he devoted his mind to tapasyâ and spoke to his own mother Satyavatî thus :--“O Mother! now go wherever you like; I will also go to perform tapasyâ. O highly fortunate one; No sooner you remember me, I will come to you. O Mother! where you will have any onerous duty, remember me and I will instantly come to you. Let all good be unto you; now I go. Avoid all cares and live happily. Thus saying, Vyâsadeva went out. Matsyagandhâ, too, went back to his father. Vyâsa was named also Dvaipâyan (born in an island, a Dvîpa) in as much as Satyavatî gave birth to him in a Dvîpa island); and as he was born of Visnu's parts, he grew up no sooner he was born.

The Muni Dvaipâyana bathed in every Tîrtha and performed the highest asceticism. Thus Dvaipâyan Vyâsa was born of Parâs'ara in Satyavatî's womb. Seeing the advent of Kali Yuga, he adorned the tree of the Vedas with many S'âkhâs (branches). It is because he expanded the Vedas many S'âkhâs, that he is denominated also as VedaVyâs; he composed eighteen Purânas, Samhitas, the excellent Mahâbhârat, subdivided the Vedas and made his disciples Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, Vaisâmpâyan, Asita, Devala and his son S'uka to study them.

Sûta said :-- “O Munis! Thus I have described to you the birth of the holy Vyâsa, the son of Satyavatî and all the causes. O Munis! Do not allow any doubt enter your mind as regards his birth; for it is always advisable to take up only the good things as far as the lives of great persons and Munis are concerned. There must be some extraordinary mysterious cause owing to which Satyavatî was born of a fish, and she was first united to Parâs'ara and then to Sântanu. Otherwise how can one account for the fact of the Muni Parâs'ara being so much agitated by passion and why he would behave like a mean low person in the committal of a grossly blameable act? Now has been spoken the wonderful birth story of Vyâsa Deva together with all incidents, and enveloped under the great mystery. If any man hears this holy

narrative, he will be freed from sins and will never fall into difficulties and will always be happy.

Thus ends the Second Chapter of the Second Skandha on the birth of Vyâsa Deva in the Mahâpurânâ S'rî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

Chapter III

On the description of the curse on Gangâ, Mahâbhisa and Vasus

1-8. The Risis said :- "O Sinless Sûta! You have described to us in detail the birth of Vyâsa, of unrivalled fire, and of Satyavatî; but we have one great doubt in our minds though, O Knower of Dharma! which is not being removed by your words. O Sinless one! First, as regards the mother of Vyâsa, the all auspicious Satyavatî, we have this doubt how she came to be united to the virtuous S'antanu? The king S'antanu, of the family of Puru is a greatly religious man; how could he have married Satyavatî knowing her to be a fisherman's daughter and born of a low family? Now say who was the first wife of S'antanu and how Bhîsma, the intelligent son of S'antanu came to be born of the parts of Vasu? O Sûta! You have told before that Bhîsma, of indomitable valour, made the Satyavatî's son, the brave Chitrângada, king; and subsequent to his death made his younger brother Vichîtravîrya king. But when the elder brother Bhîsma, the greatly religious and beautiful was present, how was it that Chitrângada and Vichîtravîrya having been installed by Bhîsma himself could have reigned."

9-12. Again on the demise of Vichîtravîrya, Satyavatî became very much grieved and got two sons born of her two son's wives by Vedavyâsa? How can we explain this fact? Why did she do this? Why did she not give to Bhîsma the kingdom? Why did Bhîsma not marry? And how was it that the elder brother Vyâsa Deva, of indomitable valour, did such an irreligious act as to beget two (Goloka) sons from the wives of the brothers? Vyâsa composed the Purânas and knew everything of religion; how then did he go to other's wives, especially, of his brother's wives?

13-14. O Sûta! Why did Vyâsa Deva do such a hateful act, in spite of his being a Muni? The actions of Vedas are inferred from their subsequent good conducts; how can this act of Vyâsa be calculated as one amongst them? O Intelligent one! You are the disciple of Vyâsa; therefore you are the best man to solve our doubts. We all of this Dharmakshetra Naimisâranya are very eager to hear this.

15-39. At this Sûta said :- In ancient days there reigned a king named Mahâbhisa, in the family of Iksâku endowed with all the qualities of a great king; he was the foremost of all the kings, truthful and religious. That highly intelligent king performed thousand horse-sacrifices (Asvmedhas) one hundred Vâjapeya sacrifices and thereby satisfied Indra, the king of the Devas and went to Heavens. Once, on an occasion, that king went to the abode of Brahmâ; the other gods also went there to serve Prajâpati. The great river, Gangâ Devî, too, assuming the feminine form, went to Brahmâ to serve him. Now, in the interval, violent winds arose and the clothing of Gangâ Devî went off; at this the Devas did not look at her; rather kept their faces downwards; but the king Mahâbhisa continued gazing at her. Gangâ also came to know the king and that he had become attached to her. Brahmâ, seeing that both of them are love-stricken and are shameless, became angry and cursed them immediately :- O king! you better take your birth again in the human world and practise great meritorious deeds and come again to this Heaven. Thus saying, Brahmâ looked at Gangâ, who was attached to the king, and addressed her :- "You too better go to the human world and become his wife." Both of them, the king as well as Gangâ, came out of Brahmâ's abode, very much grieved in their hearts. The king Mahâbhisa thought of coming to this world and reflected on the kings thereof

and settled to make the king Pratîpa of Puru's family his father. At this time the eight Vasus with their wives wandering in various places and enjoying as they liked came to the hermitage of Vas'istha. Amongst the aforesaid eight Vasus Prithu and others, one Vasu Dyau's wife seeing Nandini, the sacrificial cow (Kâmadhenu) of Vas'istha asked her husband :-- "Whose is this excellent cow that I see? Vasu then replied as follows :-- " O Beautiful one! This is Vas'istha's cow. Whoever, be he a man or woman drinks her milk gets his longevity extended to ten thousand years and his youth never ends." Hearing this, the Vasu's wife said :-- "There is a very beautiful comrade (Sakhî) of mine, the daughter of the Rajarsî-Us'îna in the world, of auspicious qualities. O Mahâbhâga! Kindly bring to me from Vas'istha's hermitage that auspicious sacrificial milch cow Nandini together with her calf that yields all desires; my Sakhî will then drink her milk and be thereby free from disease, old age and become the chief amongst all mankind. Hearing thus, his wife's word, the Vasu Dyau, though sinless, stole away together with Prithu and the other Vasus the cow Nandini in utter defiance to the self-controlled Muni Vas'istha. When the cow Nandini had been stolen, the great ascetic Vas'istha came quickly to the hermitage with abundance of fruits.

The ascetic Muni Vas'istha, not finding, in his hermitage, his cow with her calf, searched for her in many forests and caves; but he, the son of Varuna, could not find out his cow even after prolonged searches; he, then, took recourse to meditation and came to know that the Vasus had stolen the cow and became angry. He expressed :-- "When the Vasus have stolen this my cow in utter defiance to my self, they must be born amongst men." When the religious Varuna's son Vas'istha thus cursed the Vasus, they became very sorry and absent-minded; all of them went to Vas'istha's hermitage and saw him there; they began to supplicate him as much as they could; and took refuge under him. Seeing the Vasus standing before him in an extremely distressed condition, the virtuous Muni Vas'istha said :-- "You all will be free from the curse within one year; but the Vasu Dyau will dwell amongst men for a long, long period as he had stolen direct my Nandini with her calf."

40-60. While the Vasus, thus cursed, were returning, they saw on the way the chief river Gangâ Devî also cursed and therefore distressed; all of them bowed down to her simultaneously and said: "O Devî! A serious thought is troubling our minds, how can we, who live on nectar, take our birth in human wombs; so, O best river! You better be a woman and give birth to us. O Sinless one! You better be the wife of the sage King S'antanu and no sooner we be born of your womb, kindly throw us in the river Gangâ (your water). If you do thus, O Gangâ we will certainly be freed of our curse." Gangâ Devî replied "Well; that will be." Thus spoken, the Vasus went to their respective places; and Gangâ Devî, too, thinking on the subject again and again, went out of that place. At this time Mahâbhîsa became born as a son of the king Pratîpa and became known as S'antanu. He was exceedingly religious and true to his promise. One day while the King Pratîpa was praising the Sûrya Devî (the sun) of unequalled energy, Gangâ Devî assumed an extraordinarily beautiful feminine form and came out of the waters and sat on the right thigh, resembling like a sâl tree, of the king Pratîpa. The sage king Pratîp spoke out to the lady sitting on his right thigh, thus :-- "O beautiful faced one! Why, unasked, have you sat on my auspicious right thigh?" The lovely Gangâ then replied :-- "Hear why I have sat here. O best of Kurus! O king! Becoming attached to you, I have sat on your thigh; so please accept me." At this the king Pratîpa spoke to the beautiful lady, full of youth and beauty, "I never go, simply out of passion to another's wife. There is another point; you have sat on my right thigh; that is the seat of sons and son's wives; so, when my desired son will be born, you will then, be my son's wife. And certainly, by your good will, my son will be born." The lady, of divine form, said, Well; that will be done! and went away. The king returned to his palace, thinking of the lady. After some time, he had a son born to him and

when the son attained his teens, the king desired to lead a forest life and communicated this matter to his son. He said also, if the aforesaid beautifully smiling girl comes to you to marry, then marry her. And I am also ordering you not to question her anything “who are you” and so forth. If you take her as your legal wife, you will certainly be happy. Thus saying to his son, the king Pratîpa handed over all his kingdom to his son and gladly retired into the forest. The king practised tapasyâ in the forest and worshipped Ambikâ; on quitting his mortal coil, he went by his sheer merit to the Heavens. The highly energetic king S’antanu, on getting his kingdom, began to administer justice according to the laws of Dharma and governed his subjects.

Thus ends the third Chapter of the Second Skandha on the description of the curse on Gangâ, Mahâbhisa and Vasus in the Mâhapurânam S’rî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

Chapter IV

On the birth of the Vasus

1-8. Sûta said :-- On the king Pratîpa, ascending to the Heavens, the truly hero-king S’antanu went out a hunting tigers and other forest animals. Once, while he was roaming in a wild wilderness, on the banks of the Ganges, he saw a fawn-eyed well decorated beautiful woman. No sooner the king S’antanu saw her than he became addicted to her and thought within himself thus :-- “Certainly my father spoke of this beautiful faced woman who is looking like a second Laksmî, endowed with beauty and youth.” The king could not rest satisfied simply with seeing the lotus-like face. The hairs on his body stood on their ends and his heart was very much attracted to her. Gangâ Devî, too, knew him to be the king Mahâbhisa and became, in her turn, very much attached to him. She then went smiling towards the king. Seeing the blue-coloured lady looking askance at him, the king became very happy and consoled her in sweet words and said :-- “O, one of beautiful thighs! Are you Devî; Mânusî (human kind) Gandharvî; Yakshî, the daughter of Nâgas (serpents), or a celestial nymph? Whoever you may be, O beautiful one! be my wife; your sweet smiles, it seems, are brimful of love; so be my legal wife to-day.”

9-26. Sûta said :-- The king S’antanu could not recognise the lady to be Gangâ; but Gangâ knew that he is the king Mahâbhisa and is born as S’antanu. Hearing the above words of the king, Gangâ, out of her previous affections, spoke out to the king, smiling :-- “O king! I know that you are the son of the king Pratîpa. Behold! Though it is inevitable that woman will get their husbands, yet who is that beautiful lady that does not husband according to her liking and qualifications? But I can take you as my husband, if you make a certain promise to me. Hear my resolve afterwards I will marry you. O king! Whatever I will do, be it good or bad, auspicious or inauspicious, you must not hinder or interrupt me nor ever say that is not to your liking and satisfaction. Whenever you will break this my resolve, I will instantly quit you and go to another place wherever I like. The king S’antanu, then, said :-- “Well! That will be” and promised to the above effect; then Gangâ Devî recollected within herself Vasus' words and thought of the attachment of the king Mahâbhisa and accepted S’antanu as her husband. Thus married to the king S’antanu, the beautiful Gangâ in human form went to his abode. The king, on having got possession of her, began to enjoy in pleasant gardens. The lady, too, appreciated his mental feelings and began to serve him to his satisfaction. Thus many years elapsed in lovely enjoyments and intercourses between the couple who looked like Indra and his pair Sachî; and they did not feel at all how the time passed. The lady endowed with all qualities and the clever king, well-versed in the art of loving, began to enjoy incessantly like Laksmî and Nârâyana, in their divine palace.

Thus many years passed when the lovely eyed lady became pregnant of the king S'antanu's sperm and, in due time, gave birth to a son who was a Vasu. No sooner the son was born than Gangâ Devî threw it in the waters of the Ganges. Thus the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh sons were thrown successively on the waters. Then the king became very anxious and thought within himself :-- "What am I to do now? How my family be preserved? This my wife, incarnate of sin, has killed my seven sons; if I now desist her, she will instantly leave me and go away. Now this is the eighth pregnancy as desired by me. Now if I do not interrupt her, she will certainly throw my son in the Ganges. Whether a son will be born again or not is doubtful; and even if that be born, it is doubtful whether she will preserve that child; now what am I to do in this doubtful point? However I will try my best to continue the thread of my family line."

27-46. Now, in due time, the Vasu who, having been influenced by his wife had stolen Vas'istha's cow Nandini, became born as the eighth son of Gangâ Devî; the king S'antanu, seeing this son fell unto Gangâ's feet and said :-- "O thin-bodied woman! I pray to you to give my life to-day; better nourish this my one son. O beautiful one! You killed in succession my seven exceedingly beautiful sons. O one of beautiful hips! I now fall at your feet. O beautiful one! save the life of this child of mine. If you ask from me any other thing to day, even that be very rare, I will give it to you; but you better now keep the thread of my family line. The Pundits, versed in the Vedas, say that he who has no issues cannot go to Heaven; so, O Beautiful one! To-day I pray to you to keep the life of this my eighth son." Though thus spoken by S'antanu,

Gangâ Devî was eager to take away the son to throw in the waters; the king became very sorrowful and angrily spoke out "O vile and vicious woman! What are you going to do? Do you not fear hell! of what villain are you the daughter, that you are always doing this vicious deed? O Sinner! go away wherever you will or remain here as you like, it matters little; but my son will remain here. When you attempt to bring my family to extinction, what use is there in living with you?" When the king thus spoke to the woman who was ready to take away the son she angrily spoke as follows :-- O King! When you have acted against my promise, my word is broken and my connection with you has stopped from to-day. Therefore I will take this son to the forest, where I will nourish him. I am Gangâ; to fulfil God's work I have come here. The high-souled Vas'istha cursed before the eight Vasus :-- "Better be born as men"; they became very anxious; and seeing me they prayed :-- "O Sinless one! let you be mother of us all." O best of kings! I granted them what they desired; and then for the purpose of serving god's ends, I became your wife. Know this my history. The seven Vasus already were born and were freed; now this is the last Vasu and he will remain here for sometime as your son. O S'antanu! now take this son offered by Gangâ. Know this to be the Deva Vasu and enjoy the pleasure of having a son. O highly fortunate one! This son will be famous by the name of Gângeya (Gangâ's son) and will be the most powerful of all. O King! To-day I will take this son to the place where I chose you as my husband; I will nourish him and when he attains his youth, I will return him to you. For, this son, if deprived of mother, will not be happy nor will he live." Thus saying, Gangâ vanished with the son; the King S'antanu became very sorrowful and passed away his time in his palace. The king thought always of the separation from his wife and son and thus painfully governed his kingdom.

47-69. Thus some time passed on, when, once on an occasion, the king S'antanu went out a hunting and killed, with arrows, buffaloes, boar, and other wild animals and came to the banks of the Ganges. Here he saw with great wonder that a boy was playing with a great bow and was shooting arrows after arrows. The king's attention was more attracted towards the boy,

but whether that boy was his or not, did not at all come to his mind. Looking at his extraordinary feats, his agility in shooting arrows with ease and quickness, his learning that can have no equal and his beautiful form, as if of Cupid, he became greatly surprised and asked him :- "O Sinless one! whose son are you?" The hero boy did not reply anything but went away shooting his arrows. The king thought within himself "Who is this boy? Whose son is he? What to do now? To whom shall I go now?" Thus pondering, he recollected within himself and began to recite verses in praise of Gangâ; Gangâ, assuming her beautiful form as before, became visible to the king. Seeing her, the king said :- "O Gangâ! Who is this boy that has just gone? Will you show him once more to me now?" Hearing these words of S'antanu, Gangâ said :- "O king of kings! He is your son, he is that eighth Vasu. So long I have nourished him and now I hand him over to you. O Suvrata! This is the great ascetic Gângeya. He is the illustrious scion of your family. The glory of your line will be enhanced. I have taught him the whole science of archery. This pure son of yours dwelt in the hermitage of Vas'istha and has become versed in all the Vidyâs and skilled in all the actions. Your this son knows everything that Jamadgni Paras'urâm knew. So, O king of kings! Take now your son and be happy. Thus saying, Gangâ gave him his son and vanished; the king also became very glad and embraced his son; he smelled his head and took him to his chariot and drove towards his own city. On returning to Hastinâpur, the king held a great festival (utsab) in honor of the arrival of his son; he called all his astrologers and enquired what day was auspicious. He then called all his subjects and ministers and installed Gângeya as the Crown Prince. The religious S'antanu became very happy on making Gângeya, the Crown Prince; he forgot the pains due to Gangâ's bereavement. Sûta said :- "Thus I have described to you the cause of the curse on Vasus, the birth of Bhîsma from the womb of Gangâ, the union of Gangâ and S'antanu, etc., He who hears in this world this holy story of Gangâ's birth and the birth of the Vasu, is freed of all sins and gets mukti. O Munis! I have described these meritorious holy accounts, as I heard from the mouth of Vyâsa. Any body who hears this holy S'rîmad Bhâgavatam, endowed with five characteristics and filled with various anecdotes, that came out of the mouth of Vyâsa, finds all his sins destroyed and attains peace and blessedness. O Munis! Thus has been described completely to you this holy history.

Thus ends the fourth Chapter on the birth of the Vasus in the Mahâpurâna S'rîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

Chapter V

On the marriage of Satyavatî

1-20. The Risis said :- "O son of Lomaharsana, O Sûta; you have described to us how the eight Vasus, cursed by Vas'istha, took their birth and how Bhîsma was born. O knower of Dharma! Now describe to us in detail how the greatly religious king S'antanu married the auspicious Yojanagandhâ, the chaste Satyavatî, the mother of Vyâsa, knowing full well that she was a fisherman's daughter? O Suvrata! Remove our this doubt. Sûta then said :- The sage king S'antanu always used to go to forests on hunting expeditions, with his heart addicted to hunting buffaloes, deer and various other wild animals.

Thus, for four years that king went out a hunting, with his son Bhîsma, deer and other wild animals and got the highest happiness as Mahâdeva finds in company with Kârtikeya. Once, on an occasion, while he was shooting arrows at rhinoceros and boar, etc., he went so far as to reach a forest on the banks of the Yamunâ, the chief of the rivers. There he began to smell an excellent nice smell that could not be described in words; he tried to find out the source and wandered here and there, and on all sides of the forest; and thought that this enchanting smell was not that of Mandâra flowers, musk, champaka nor that of Mâlatî nor that of Ketaki

flower; the air was blowing saturated with peculiar fragrant smell that he never experienced before. Thus thinking of that smell, the king S'antanu, being enchanted with that, followed to its source in that forest. At last he came to a spot on the banks of the Yamunâ the chief of the rivers, where a very beautiful girl, calm and quiet and with feminine gestures and posture amorous, lovely but ill-clad, was sitting; and he found out that the above beautiful smell was coming out of her body. The form of the lady was extremely beautiful; the smell was very wonderful, and captivating the hearts of all; her age then entered to youth and she was very auspicious. The king was greatly surprised and was eager to know who the lady was; whence she had come; whether she was a Deva girl, or a human or a Gandarbha daughter or a Nâga daughter? But, being unable to come to a definite conclusion and becoming passionate, he remembered Gangâ and asked that lady sitting on the bank of the Yumnâ, thus :- "O dear! Who are you? Whose daughter are you? Why are you alone in this lovely forest? O beautiful eyed! Are you married? Or are you as yet unmarried? So answer to all these. O lovely eyed one! Seeing your lovely enchanting form I am become extremely passionate. So, O dear! Describe in detail to me, who are you? and what do you intend to do?" When the king spoke thus the lotus eyed nice-teethed lady replied as follows :- "O king! Know me as a fisherman's daughter and I am completely under my father's command. O king of kings! For Dharma's sake I carry ferry across this Yumnâ river. My father has gone to-day to our house. O Master of wealth! Thus I have spoken truth to you." Thus saying the lady desisted; the passionate king then spoke to her :- "I am the foremost hero of the Kuru family; so choose me as your husband; then your this youth will not go in vain.

21-32. O fawn-eyed one! I have no other wife existing; so you will be my legal wife. O Dear! Passion is giving much pains to me; therefore I am now become your obedient servant for ever. O Beloved! My former dear wife has abandoned me and gone away; but I have not married since then. Now seeing you beautiful, in all respects, I cannot bring my mind under control."

Hearing these nectar-like beautiful words of the king, the sweet scented fisherman's daughter, though also turned extremely passionate, held patience and exclaimed :- "O king! I also desire that which you have expressed; I am of opinion to act according to your wishes. But, what am I to do? I am not dependent. You are to know this. My father alone can give me in marriage to you. So better ask my father for me. Though I am a fisherman's daughter, still I am not wanton and wilful. I am always obedient to my father; if my father wills, you can marry me. And I will be obedient to you. O king! The god of love is tormenting me, who is endowed with youth; he does not torment you so much. Still I must regard my family manners and customs coming down from ancient times. I must hold my patience." Sûta said :- Thus passionately pleased with these fascinating words of the lady, the king went to the fisherman's house for the lady. Seeing the king coming, the fisherman was greatly bewildered and astonished and bowed down with great devotion and said :- "O King! I am Thy servant. I am blessed by Thy presence. O great King! Now be graciously pleased to order me the cause of Thy arrival." Hearing the fisherman's words, the King said :- "O sinless one! This I tell you truly that if you give me your daughter in marriage I will certainly make her my legal wife." The fisherman replied :- "O king! What must be given ever, how can I say that is not to be given. Therefore if Thou askest for my daughter, I will certainly give her to Thee. But, O great King! Thou wilt have to make her son, the king of Thy kingdom; no other son of Thine could be king, after Thy absence."

33-40. Hearing these words of the fisherman, the king S'antanu became very anxious. He remembered Gângeya and could not speak anything. He, being sick with love anxiously

returned home; but he abandoned bathing, fooding, sleeping, etc. At this, the son Gângeya Bhîsma whose vow was equal to that of the gods, marking that the king was being troubled with some thought, went to him and asked why he was anxious :-- “O king! Say truly what is your anxiety; who is your enemy that is not conquered; whom do you want to bring under your control? O king! What use is there of having a son who does not understand the difficulties of his father, or does not try to remove these difficulties. A son can be called really the son, who is born to repay the debts incurred by him in previous births; there is no manner of discussion in this. See, Raghu's son Dâsarathî Râm abandoned his kingdom under the orders of his father and repaired to Chitrakûta forest with his brother Laksman and wife Sîtâ. The son of king Haris Chandra, Rohîta, ready to repay the debt of his father and sold by his father, worked as a servant at a Brâhmana's house. So the famous S'unahs'ephah, sold by his high souled father Ajigarta was tied for sacrifice in a sacrificial post; but he was afterwards freed by the Gâdhi's son Vis'vâmitra.

41-59. It is well known that, in ancient days, the Jamadagni's son Paras'urâm cut off his mother's head under the orders of his father. He considered the father's words more important, and hence could do such an unjust act. O king! This my body is at your disposal; I can certainly do what you order me to do. So say what am I to do? as long as I am living, you need not express any sorrow; if you permit, I will do what is even hardly practicable to do. O king! Say why you are anxious; I will remove that at once with this bow in my hand. If my body goes in carrying your mandate know that your desire will be fructified. Fie to that son, who, being capable, is averse to do what his father desires! What use is there in having a son who does not remove the cause of his father's anxiety? Hearing the words of the son, the king S'antanu felt much ashamed in his heart and said :-- “O son! This is now my gravest care that you are my only son; besides you are a hero very powerful, honoured and never showing your back in battles; therefore, if, out of ill-luck you become dead in some battlefield, I will become issueless; under such circumstances what am I to do? So, O son! My life is fruitless when I have got only one son; this is my gravest care; therefore I am sorry. O son! I have no other cares that I can mention to you.” Hearing these words of the father, Gângeya called the old ministers and said that the king was too ashamed to speak out to me the real matter; so I ask you all to know exactly the king's cares and communicate them to me as they are; I can carry them out, without any hitch, then. At these Bhîsma's words, the ministers went to the king, and learned the true cause, and spoke to Bhîsma; learning this, he began to think what ought to be done.

The Gangâ's son Bhîsma, then, accompanied by the ministers, quickly went to the house of the fisherman, and with words of humility and affection, spoke :-- “O tormentor of foes! I pray to you to give your beautiful daughter in marriage to my father. Your daughter will be my mother and I will be her servant.” The fisherman, then, said :-- “O highly lucky prince! Then the king's son will not be able to become king, in your presence; so kindly marry yourself my daughter.” At this Bhîsma again said :-- Let your daughter be my mother; I will never accept the kingdom. The son of your daughter will, no doubt, become king. The fisherman said :-- “I know your words are true; but if your son be powerful, he can take forcibly the kingdom for himself.” At this Bhîsma again said :-- “O Sire! Know my words as true; I will never marry; from to-day I have accepted this difficult vow.” Sûta said :-- Hearing this firm resolve of Bhîsma; the fisherman gave over his beautiful daughter to the king S'antanu. Thus S'antanu married the dear Satyavatî; but he was quite unaware of the wonderful birth of Vyâsa Deva.

Thus ends the fifth Chapter of the second Skandha on the marriage of Satyavatî in the Mahâpurâna S'rîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

Chapter VI

On the birth of the Pândavas

1-12. Sûta said :—Thus S'antanu married Satyavatî; two sons were born to her and they died in course of time. Out of Vyâsa Deva's semen, Dhritarâstra was born. Ambikâ Devî, the mother of Dhritarâstra closed her eyes on seeing Veda Vyâsa; hence Dhritarâstra was born blind. Seeing Dhritarâstra blind Satyavatî asked Vyâsa to go to Ambâlikâ (Pându's mother); the princess Ambâlikâ, mother of Pându turned pale at the sight of Vyâsa; hence her son became of a pale colour out of Vyâsa's wrath. Hence the name of the son was Pându. Next the maid servant, expert in the science of amorous pleasures, satisfied Vyâsa; hence her son Vidura was born of Dharma's part and became truthful and holy. Though Pându was younger, the ministers installed him on the throne. Dhritarâstra could not become king, as he was blind. By the permission of Bhîsma the powerful Pându obtained the sovereignty; and the intelligent Vidura became his minister. Dhritarâstra had two wives Gândhârî and Sauvalî; this Sauvalî was Vaishyâ; she was engaged in the household affairs. The king Pându had two wives, too; the first was Kuntî, the daughter of Sûrasena; and the other was Mâdri, the daughter of the Madra king. Gândhârî gave birth to one hundred beautiful sons; Vais'yâ Sauvalî gave birth to one beautiful son named Yuyutsu. While Kuntî was a virgin, she gave birth, through the medium of the Sun, the lovely Karna; next he became the wife of Pându. Hearing this, the Rishi said :-- "O Muni Sûta! What are you saying? First Kuntî brought forth a child and afterwards she was married to Pându; this is wonderful, indeed! How was Karna, born of Kuntî, unmarried? and how came Kuntî to be married afterwards? describe all these in detail."

13-35. Sûta then said :-- "O Dvija! While Sûrasena's daughter Kuntî was a virgin girl, the king Kuntibhoja asked for Kuntî that she might become her girl and Sûrasena gave her to the king Kuntibhoja who brought up this beautifully smiling girl. He put to her the service of Agni of Agnihotra. Once, on an occasion, Durvâsâ Muni, engaged in the vow, lasting for four months, came there; Kuntî served him during that period; the Muni became greatly pleased and gave her a very auspicious, mantra, by virtue of which any Deva, when called upon by that mantra will come to Kuntî and satisfy her desires. When the Muni went away, Kuntî, remaining in her house, wanted to test the accuracy of the mantra and asked within herself "What Devatâ to call upon." Seeing the God Sûrya had arisen in the sky, Kuntî uttered the Mantra and invoked him. The Sun, then, assuming an excellent human form, came down from the Heavens and appeared before Kuntî in the same room. Seeing the Deva Sun, Kuntî became greatly surprised and began to shudder and instantly became endowed with the inherent natural quality of passion (had menstruation). The beautiful-eyed Kuntî, with folded palm; spoke to Sûrya Deva standing before :-- "I am highly pleased to-day seeing Thy form; now go back to Thy sphere."

Sûrya Deva said :-- "O Kuntî! What for you called me, by virtue of the Mantra? Calling me, why do you not worship me, standing before you? O beautiful blue one! Seeing you, I have become passionate; so come to me. By means of the mantra, you have made me your subservient so take me for intercourse." Hearing this, Kuntî said :-- "O Witness of all! O knower of Dharma! You know that I am a virgin girl. O Suvrata! I bow down to you; I am a family daughter; so do not speak ill to me." Sûrya then said :-- "If I go away in vain, I will be an object of great shame, and, no doubt, will be laughed amongst the gods; So, O Kuntî! If you do not satisfy me, I will immediately curse you and the Brâhmin who has given you this mantra. O Beautiful one! If you satisfy me, your virginity will remain; no body will come to know and there will be born a son to you, exactly like me." Thus saying Sûrya Deva enjoyed the bashful Kuntî, with her mind attracted towards him; He granted her the desired boons and

went away. The beautiful Kunti became pregnant and began to remain in a house, under great secrecy. Only the dear nurse knew that; her mother or any other person was quite unaware of the fact. In time, a very beautiful son like the second Sun and Kârtikeya, decked with a lovely Kavacha coat of mail and two ear-rings, was born there. Then the nurse caught hold of the hand of the bashful Kunti and said :-- "O Charming one! What care can you possibly have as long as I am living." Kunti then, placed the son in a box and said :-- "O son! What shall I do? Being afraid of shame, I am leaving you, though you are dear to me as my life itself! I am exceedingly fortunate that I am casting aside this all auspicious son. May the attributeless Bhâgavatî Ambikâ, the World Mother and the Lady of all, endowed with attributes, protect Thee! May Kâtyâyani, the giver of all desires, feed you with Her milk! Alas! I am quitting you, born of Sûrya's semen in this solitary forest like a vitiated wanton woman. I do not know, when shall I see your lotus like beautiful face, dearest to me like my self. Alas! I never worshipped in my former birth S'ivânî, the mother of the three worlds; I never meditated Her lotus like feet, the Giver of all happiness; hence I am so very unfortunate. O Dear son! I must perform great tapasyâ to expiate for this terrible sin, that I knowingly commit in relinquishing you in the forest."

36-48. Sûta said :-- Thus saying to the son within the casket, Kunti gave over that to the hands of her nurse, terrified, lest some one might see her. Kunti then bathed and remained with a fearful heart in her father's house. A carpenter (charioteer?) named Adhiratha got accidentally that casket floating in the Ganges. The carpenter's wife Râdhâ, prayed for the son and nourished him under her care. Thus nourished in the carpenter's house, the famous Kunti's son Karna became a very powerful warrior. The king Pându then married Kunti in a Svayamvara, a marriage in which the girl chooses her husband from among a number of suitors, assembled together. And the all auspicious daughter of the king of Madra became also the second wife of Pându. Once, on an occasion, the powerful Pându, while hunting in the forest killed a Muni, in the form of a deer, engaged in the act of co-habitation, thinking it to be a deer. The dying Muni became inflated with wrath, cursed Pându :-- "If you co-habit, certainly you will die." Thus cursed by the Muni, Pându became very sorrowful and abandoned his kingdom and began to live in the forest. O Munis! His two wives Kuntî and Mâdrî, followed their husband as chaste women do, to serve him in the forest. Dwelling in the hermitage of the Munis, Pându listened to the Dharma S'âstras and practised severe penance. Once while he was listening to the religious discourses of the Munis, he heard unmistakably the Munis telling that the man who is sonless can never go to the Heavens; so he must get a son somehow or other. The Pundits declare that the sons born of the father's semen, the sons born of their daughters, the Ksettraja, the Goloka, the Kunda, the Sahoda, the Kânîna, the Krîta, one obtained in the forest, or one offered by another father, unable to nourish his son, all are entitled to inherit the wealth of the father; but the sons, enumerated successively are more and more inferior.

N.B.: Ksettraja - of a son, the off spring of the wife by a kinsman appointed to procreate issue to the husband.

Goloka - Bastard child of a widow.

Kunda - a child born in adultery.

Sahoda - the son of a woman pregnant at the time of marriage.

Kânîna - the son born of a young and unmarried woman.

Krîta - purchased

49-52. Hearing this, Pându spoke to the lotus-eyed Kunti to procreate sons for him soon by a great ascetic Muni :- "By my order, you will not incur any sin in doing this. I heard that in ancient times the high souled kin Saudâsa got son from Vas'istha." Kunti, then spoke to the king :- "O Lord! I know one Siddha mantra; it was given to me before by the Muni Durvâsâ. Whichever Devatâ I will invoke by that Mantra, he will instantly come to my side, controlled by that Mantra."

53-71. At the request of the husband, Kuntî invoked Dharma, the best of the Devas; and after being impregnated by him, gave birth to Yudhishthira. Then she got through Pavana Deva, the son Vrikodara; and through Indra the Lord of the Devas, Arjuna. Thus, in every year, Kunti gave birth to one son and so in three years she gave birth to three very powerful and mighty sons. At this Mâdri spoke to her husband :- "O king, the best of the Kurus! What shall I do now? Kindly suggest to me the means of procreating sons; O Lord, remove my pain." Pându asked Kunti for this; Kunti, moved with pity, gave her the mantra, so that she might get one son. Then the beautiful Mâdrî, invoked the twin As'vin under the advice of her husband and got a pair of twins Nakula and Sahadeva through them. O Munis! Thus five Pândavas were born successively in every following year to the wives of Pându by the seed of the Devas. Once on a time Pându, whose end was drawing nigh became very passionate at the sight of Mâdrî in that solitary hermitage. He, though forbidden repeatedly by Mâdri, warmly embraced her, as if dictated by the great destroyer, and fell to the ground. As the creeper falls down when the tree is felled, so Mâdrî dropped on the ground and began to cry violently. Having heard the wailings of Mâdrî, Kunti and the five sons of Pându came there weeping and crying; a tumult then ensued and the great Munis also appeared on the scene. Then those Munis, practising great vows, knew that Pându was dead and performed duly, on the banks of the Ganges, the ceremony of burning the dead.

At that time Mâdri gave over to Kunti the charge of her two sons and followed the Satî practice along with her husband to go to Satyaloka.

The Munis, then, performed Tarpana ceremonies in honour of Pându and Mâdri and took Kunti and the five sons to Hastinâpur. Knowing that Kunti has come, Bhîsma, Vidura and the relatives of Dhritarâstra within the city, all came to Kunti. They all asked Kunti -- "O beautiful one! Whose are these five sons?" Kunti, then, remembered the curse on Pându and sorrowfully expressed -- " These are the Deva's sons born in Kuru family." In order to convince the people assembled there, Kunti invoked the Devas who came in the celestial space above and said -- "Yes, these are the sons born of our seeds." Bhîsma, then, paid respect to the words of the Devas and honoured duly the boys. Bhîsma then took the five sons and Pându's wife to Hastinâ and gladly nourished them. O Munis! The sons of Prithâ were thus born and nourished by Bhîsma.

Thus ends the sixth chapter of the second Adhyâya on the birth of the Pândavas in the Mahâpurânâ S'rî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam.

Chapter VII

On shewing the departed ones

Sûta said :- The chaste Draupadi was the common wife of all the five very beautiful sons of Kunti; and she bore five sons, one to every husband. Arjuna had one wife more; she was Subhadrâ, the sister of S'rî Krisna. By the order of S'rî Krisna, Arjuna stole her away (took her by force). The great hero Abhimanyu was born of Subhadrâ. This Abhimanyu and the five sons of Draupadi were killed in battle. Abhimanyu's wife Uttarâ was the charming daughter of the king Virât. She gave birth to one dead child, after all the boys, the descendants of the

family were extinct. The above child died out of the arrows of As'vatthâmâ. The extraordinarily powerful S'ri Krisna Himself made alive again this his sister's dead grandson. As this son was born after the family had become extinct, he became known in the world by the name of Parîksit. When the sons were all destroyed, Dhritarâstra became very sorry, and, tormented by the arrow-like words of Bhîma, remained in the kingdom of the Pândavas. Gândharî, too, exceedingly distressed on the bereavement of the sons, remained there also. Yudhisthira, day and night, served Dhritarâstra and Gândhârî. The greatly religious Vidura always used to console, by the advice of Yudhisthira, his brother Dhritarâstra, who possessed the eye of wisdom and he remained by his brother's side. Dharma's son Yudhisthira used to serve his uncle Dhritarâstra in such a way as he might forget the pain of the death of his sons. But Bhîma used to pierce his heart by his arrow-like words that he pronounced so loud as to reach the ears of the old king Dhritarâstra. Bhîma used to say -- "In the battle field I killed all the sons, of the wicked blind king (Dhritarâstra) and it was I that sucked well and drunk, full to the brim, the blood of the heart of Duhs'âsana. Now this blind king eats shamelessly like a crow and a dog, the mass of food (Pinda) given by me, and thus is bearing uselessly the burden of life. Daily Bhîma used to tell, thus, harsh words to him; whereas the religious Yudhîsthira used to console him, saying "Bhîma is a quite illiterate brute" and so forth. The king Dhritarâstra remained there with a grieved heart for eighteen years; the one day he proposed to the Dharma's son Yudhîsthira about his intention to dwell in forest thus -- "To-day I wish to perform Tarpanas in the names my sons. True it is, that Bhîma performed the funeral obsequies of them all; but, having in view of the former enmity, he did not do anything for my sons. If you give me some money, I will, then, perform the funeral obsequies of my sons and then retire to the forest to perform tapasyâ that I can go to Heaven." Vidura also asked Yudhîsthira privately pay to Dhritarâshtra the sum that he wanted; Yudhîsthira also intended to pay the required money. Then Yudhîsthira, the lord of the world call his younger brothers and addressed them as follows -- "O highly fortunate ones! Our revered uncle is desirous to perform the funeral obsequies of his sons; so we will have to give him some money for the purpose." Hearing these words of his elder brother of indomitable valour, Pavana's son, the mighty armed Bhîma became very angry and spoke out follows -- "O highly lucky one! Is it that we will have to give wealth for the spiritual benefit of Duryodhana and others? What a great stupidity can there be than the fact that such a malevolent blind king is deriving so great happiness at your hands? O Ârya! It is by your bad counsel that we suffered endless troubles in the forest and the extremely good Draupadi was brought before the public in the hall by Duhs'âsana. O one of good vows! It is for your satisfaction alone that we, though we were very mighty, had to remain in the house of Matsya Râj Virât as servants. Had you not been our elder brother and not been addicted to the gambling, would it have been possible I, who killed Jarâsandha, would have been a cook to Virât Râj! Never we had been put to so great a trouble! Never would the mighty armed Arjuna, the Vâsava's son, have acted the part of an actress (a dancer), dressing himself in a female garb, under the name Vrihannalâ. Alas! What more painful could there be by assuming a human birth that the hands of Arjuna, that wielded always the Gândîva bow, would have worn bracelets befitting a woman? I would have been happy then had I, seeing the braid of hair on Arjuna's head and the collyrium in his eyes, cut off the head of Dhritarâstra!

O Lord of the earth! Without asking you, I set fire on the house, named Jatugriha (a lac-house, as built by Duryodhana in order to burn up the Pândavas) and therefore the vicious Virochana, who wanted to burn us, was himself burnt up. Again, O Lord of men! similarly, without asking you, I slew Kichaka; this is now the one thing I regret that I could not have killed in the same way the sons of Dhritarâstra before the public hall. O king of kings! It was

simply your stupidity that you liberated Duryodhana and other sons, the great enemies of the Gandarbhas, when they had been imprisoned by them. Again to-day you are willing to give wealth for the spiritual benefit of those Duryodhana and others! But, O Lord of the earth, I would never give wealth, even if you request me specially to do this.

Thus saying, Bhîma went away. Dharma's son Yudhisthira then consulted with the other three brothers and gave abundance of wealth to Dhritarâstra. With this sum, the Ambikâ's son Dhritarâstra duly performed the Srâdh ceremony of his sons and gave away lots of things to the Brâhmanas. The king Dhritarâstra, thus performing all the funeral obsequies, became ready to go early to the forest with Gândhârî, Kunti and Vidura. By the help of Sanjaya, the highly intelligent Dhritarâstra became informed of the roads of the forest, and then went out of the house. Sûrasena's daughter Kunti, though stopped by her sons, followed them. Bhîma and other Kauravas went along with them weeping up to the banks of the Ganges and thence returned to Hastinâpura.

The ascetics went to the auspicious S'atayûpa hermitage on the banks of the Ganges and building a hut practised tapasyâ with their hearts concentrated. Thus six years elapsed when Yudhisthira, troubled by their bereavements, said to his younger brothers :-- " I dreamt that our mother Kunti got very lean and thin. Now my mind wants bitterly to see mother, uncle, aunt, the high souled Vidura and the highly intelligent Sanjaya. If you approve, I want to go to there." Then the five brothers, Pându's sons, became desirous to see Kunti, and taking with them Draupadî, Subhadrâ, Uttarâ, and other persons went to the Satayûpa hermitage and saw the persons there; but not seeing Vidura, Yudhisthira asked :-- "Where is Vidura?" Hearing this Dhritarâstra said :-- "Vidura has taken up Vairâgyam (dispassion) and has gone alone to a solitary place and is meditating in his heart the eternal Brahmâ." Next day while the king Yudhisthira was walking along the banks of the Ganges, he saw in the forest Vidura, engaged in his vow and become lean and thin by his tapasyâ; he then exclaimed :-- "I am the king Yudhisthira; I am saluting you." The holy Vidura heard and remained motionless like a log of wood. Within an instant a wonderful halo came out of Vidura's face and entered the mouth of Yudhisthira, both of them being Dharma's parts. Vidura then died; Yudhisthira expressed great sorrow. When the Vidura's body was going to be set on fire, a celestial voice was heard :--"O king! He was very wise; so he ought not to be burnt; you can go away as you like." Hearing this, Yudhisthira bathed in the pure Ganges and returned to the As'rama and informed everything in detail to Dhritarâstra. While the Pândavas were staying in the hermitage with the other inhabitants of the city, Vedavyâsa, Nârada, and other high-souled Munis came there to Yudhisthira. Kunti then spoke to the auspicious Vyâsa :-- "O Krisna! I saw my son Karna, only just when he was born; my mind is being very much tormented for him; so, O great ascetic! Show him once to me. O highly fortunate One! You alone can do this; so O Lord! Satisfy my heart's desire." Gândhârî said :-- "O Muni! I did not see while Duryodhan went to battle; so, O Muni! Show me Duryodhana with his younger brothers." Subhadrâ said :-- "O Omniscient one! I want very much to see the great hero Abhimanyu, dearer to me than my life even; O great ascetic! Show him once to me." (33-57.)

Sûta said :-- Satyavatî's son Vyâsa Deva, hearing their words, held Prânâyama (deep breathing exercise) and meditated on the eternal Devî, the force of Brahmâ. When the evening time came, the Muni invited Yudhisthira and all others to the banks of the Ganges. He then bathed in the Ganges and began to chant hymns in praise of the Devî Brahmâmâyî Prakriti, resting on the Purusa, the Dweller in the Mani Dvîpa, with attributes, at the same time transcending them, thus :-- "O Devî! When Brahmâ was not, Visnu was not, Mahes'vara was

not, nor when existing Indra, Varuna, Kuvera, Yama, and Agnî, Thou alone existed then; my salutation to Thee.

When there existed not water, Vâyû, ether, earth and their Gunas, taste, smell, etc., when there were no senses, mind, Buddhi, Ahankâra; when there existed no Sun, Moon nor anything, Thou alone existed then; so, O Devî! I bow down again and again to Thee. O Mother! Thou holdest all these visible Jîva lokas in the cosmic Hiranyagarbha; again Thou bringest this Hiranyagarbha, the sum-total of Linga Sarîras (the subtle bodies), with the Gunas Sattva, Rajas and Tamas to a state of equilibrium named Sâmyâvasthâ and remainest quite independent and apart for a Kalpa period. At that time even those that are possessed of the power of great discrimination and dispassion cannot fathom Thy nature. O Mother! These persons are praying to me to see their dead ones; but I am quite incapable to do that. So kindly shew them their departed ones early.” While Vyâsa praised thus the Devî, the Devî Mahâmâyâ, the Lady of the Universe, of the nature of Universal Consciousness called all the departed ones from the Heavens and showed them to their relatives. Then Kunti, Gândhârî, Subhadrà, Uttarâ, and the Pandavas became very glad to see their relatives come to them again. Vyâsa, of indomitable valour, again remembering Mahâmâyâ, bade good bye to the departed ones; it seemed then, a great magic had occurred. The Pandavas and the Munis bade good bye to each other and went to their respective places. The king Yudhisthira talked on the way about Vyâsa and ultimately came to Hastinâ. (58-68.)

Thus ends the seventh chapter of the Second Skandha on shewing the departed ones in the Mahâpurânam S'rî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

Chapter VIII

On the extinction of the family of Yadu and on the anecdote of Parîksit

1-23. Sûta said :-- On the third day after the Pândavas had returned to Hastinâpur, the king Dhritarâstra was burnt up together with Gândhari and Kunti, by the conflagration of fire in the forest. Sanjaya went away at that time, leaving Dhritarâstra in the forest, on a tour on pilgrimage. The king Yudhisthira heard all this from Nârada and was very sorry. Now after thirty six years after the Kuru family had become extinct, all the descendants of Yadu in the Prabhâs tîrtha were destroyed by the Brâhmana's curse. The high-souled descendants of Yadu, intoxicated by drinking wine, fought against each other and were extirpated in the presence of Krisna and Balarâm. Balarâm then quitted his mortal coil; the lotus-eyed Bhagavân Krisna quitted his life, struck by the arrows of a hunter, to pay respect to a Brâhmin's curse. Vasudeva heard of Hari's quitting his mortal coil, and meditated the Goddess of the Universe within his heart and left his holy life. Arjuna became very sorry; he went to Prabhâsa and performed the funeral obsequies of all duly. Seeing the dead body of Hari, Arjuna collected fuel and burnt his body together with his eight principal wives; he burnt also Balarâm's body with that of his wife Revatî. Arjuna, then, went to the Dvârakâ city and removed all the inhabitants of the city when the whole Dwârkâ city of Vâsudeva was drowned in the waters of the ocean. While Arjuna was taking all the persons with him after getting out of Dwârkâ, he felt himself very weak on the way; and therefore a band of robbers, known by the name of Âbhîras plundered all the wealth and all the wives of Krisna. Arjuna, of indomitable valour, after his arrival at Indraprastha made Vajra, Aniruddha's son, the king of the place.

Then the highly powerful Arjuna informed Vyâsa of his powerlessness when Vyâsa said :--“O highly intelligent one! When Hari and you will reincarnate in another Yuga, then your heroic strength will again be manifested. Hearing all these words, Prithâ's son Arjuna returned to

Hastinâ with a sorrowful heart and informed everything to Yudhisthira, the Dharmarâja. Hearing the extinction of the Yâdavas and Hari's quitting His mortal coil, Yudhisthira wanted to go to the Himâlayâs. He installed Parîksit, Uttarâ's son who was then thirty six years old on the throne and went out of his palace in company of his brothers, and Draupadi to the forests of the Himâlayâs. Thus the Pândavas, Prîtha's son, reigned for thirty six years in Hastinâ and quitted their mortal coils in the Himâlayâs. Here the greatly religious sage-king Parîksit governed with vigilance all his subjects for sixty years. After this, Parîksit went once on an hunting expedition to a dense forest and shot a deer. He then searched for the deer and it became noon and he felt very thirsty, hungry, quite fatigued with his body, perspiring, when he saw a Muni merged in meditation; he asked the Muni "Where can water be had?" But the Muni held at that time the vow of silence; so he did not answer anything. Seeing this, the thirsty king, influenced by Kali, became angry and raised a dead serpent by the fore-end of his bow and coiled it round the Muni's neck. Even thus coiled with a snake round his neck the Muni remained as before motionless in his state of enlightenment and spoke nothing. The king also returned home.

24-49. Then the Muni's son, born from the cow's womb, S'ringî, a great ascetic, a fiery devotee of Mahâs'akti, heard of the above event, while he was playing in the forest. His friends spoke to him :-- "O Muni! Some body has now enclosed a dead serpent around the neck of your father." Hearing their words, S'ringî became very angry and taking water in his hands, cursed thus :-- "He who has coiled to-day a dead serpent around my father's neck, let that villain be bitten by the serpent Taksak within one week from this day". One disciple of the Muni then went to the king in his house and informed him of the Muni's curse. Abhimanyu's son Parîksit heard of the curse pronounced by a Brâhmin, and knowing infallible, spoke to the aged councillors :--

"O Ministers! Certainly it is through my fault that I have been cursed by a Brâhmin's son. Now find out and settle what is to be done though the persons versed in the Vedas say that death is inevitable under these circumstances; yet the wise ones should try their best to thwart this according to the S'âstras. Many sages who are the advocates of taking steps to redress any act, say that all the actions of wise persons are fructified by proper means; their solution does not remain unsolved. Therefore I am saying that the powers of manis, mantrams and herbs (osadhis) are indescribable; if applied duly, do you think that they will bear no fruit in this case? I heard that when a Muni's wife died out of snake-bite, the Muni gave away the half of his life to his wife Apsarâ and made her alive again. It is not proper for the learned to depend on the maxim that what is inevitable must come to pass; one must try one's best to act for the living present. O Ministers! Have you seen any person in the Heavens or in the world who remains idle, depending on fate alone? The Sannyâsins have renounced the world; but they must have to go to the houses of the house-holders, whether they be invited or not invited. See again. supposing that the food of a person is brought to him unasked and suppose it is thrown into the mouth by some one, can you conceive that food would go down into the belly, from the mouth without one's effort? Therefore one should exert one's own prowess from the very outset; though the intelligent ones should be satisfied with the thought "What can be done? It is not ordained in my fate." When Parîksit said thus, the ministers asked :-- "Which Muni made his dead wife alive again, by giving her half his own life? And how did his wife die? Kindly describe all these in detail to me." The king said :-- Bhrigu Muni had a very beautiful wife Pulomâ. In her womb the world renowned Chyavana Muni was born. Sukanyâ, the daughter of S'aryâti was the wife of Chyavana. In her womb was born a beautiful son named Pramati; he was very famous. Pramati had his famous beautiful wife Pratâpî. In her womb was born the great ascetic son Ruru. At this time a person named Sthûlakes'a, a

religious truthful man of great name, was practising tapasyâ. O Ministers! In the meanwhile, the chief Apsarâ Menakâ held sexual intercourse with Visvâvasu Gandharva on the banks of a river and became pregnant. She went out from that place to the hermitage of Sthûlakes'a on the river bank and gave birth to a very beautiful daughter. Seeing this girl quite an orphan and very beautiful, the Muni Sthûlakes'a began to rear up her and named her Pramadvarâ. This all-auspicious girl Pramadvarâ attained youth in due course when the Muni Ruru saw her and became smitten with passion.

Thus ends the eighth chapter of the Second Skandha on the extinction of the family of Yadu and on the anecdote of Parîksit in the Mahâpurânam S'rî Mad Devî Bhâgâvatam of 18,000 verses.

Chapter IX

On the account of Ruru

1-17. Parîksit said :-- When the Muni Ruru went to his room to sleep, his mind having become perturbed with passion, his father Pramati seeing him sorrowful, asked him :-- "O Ruru! Why do you look so absent minded?" Ruru was passionate then; so he said to his father :-- "I saw a girl named Pramadvarâ in the hermitage of Sthûlakes'a; I wish that she might become my wife." Hearing this, Pramati went immediately to the hermitage of Sthûlakes'a, and pleased him by various conversations and asked for her beautiful daughter when Sthûlakes'a promised that he would give her daughter in marriage on an auspicious day. Then both the high-souled persons Pramati and Sthûlakes'a began to work in co-operation and make arrangements for marriage ceremony and collected various articles in that hermitage when the fair eyed girl Pramadvarâ, while playing in the courtyard in the house, trod on a serpent and was bitten by it and consequently died. Seeing then Pramadvarâ dead, all the Munis of the place assembled and cried and wept with sorrowful hearts, when a great tumultuous uproar ensued. Though the life departed from Pramadvarâ's body, yet seeing the brilliant lustre of her lifeless body lying on the ground, her nourisher and father Sthûlakes'a became very sorry and wept aloud. Hearing this cry of his, Ruru came there to see what had happened and perceived the girl, though lifeless, yet seeming alive and lying on the ground.

Seeing Sthûlakes'a and other Risis weeping, Ruru went out from that place and with a grievous heart, began to cry aloud. "Alas! Fate has certainly sent this serpent as the cause of all my miseries and to mar all my happiness. Alas! What am I to do now? Where to go? When my beloved has fallen unto the jaws of death, I do not want to live any longer, bereft of my wife. Oh! What an unfortunate creature I am? I have not been able to embrace this beautiful darling of mine. I am deprived of kissing her face and marrying her. Alas! Fie to my human birth! Let my life get out just now in as much as I could not, out of mere shame, throw myself on the burning pyre along with my beloved! Oh! When death comes not to the sorrowful person, even when prayed for, how then can I expect divine happiness in this world? So let me now drop myself down in a lake or enter in to a burning fire or drink venom or strangle myself by tying rope round my neck!"

18-31. Thus Ruru wailed much on the bank of the river and long reflecting in his mind found out a way and thought what would be the advantage in death? "Rather an irretrievable sin would be incurred in committing suicide; and my father and mother would be sorry. Seeing me commit suicide, my bad luck and enemies will be gladdened; there is no manner of doubt; in this. What benefit will my beloved gain if I commit suicide or if I be distressed for her bereavement. Suppose I die, even then my beloved will not become mine in the next world; so there are many faults in my committing suicide but there is no fault if I preserve my life."

Thus coming to a conclusion Ruru bathed, performed Âchaman and became pure. He then took water in his hand and said :- "Whatever good works, worshipping the gods, etc., that I have done and if I have performed, with devotion, the service to my preceptors and teachers and superiors, homa ceremonies, Japam, tapasyâ, if I have studied all the Vedas and if I have recited Gâyatri and worshipped the Sun then let my beloved have life and get up as an outcome of my Punyam. If my beloved does not get back her life, I will certainly quit my life." Thus saying, he worshipped the Devas mentally and threw that water of his hands on the ground. Thus Ruru, with a sorrowful heart, was weeping. The Deva's messenger came down and said :- "O Brâhman! Don't make this bold attempt; how can your beloved get back her life? The life-period of this beautiful girl, born of Gandharva's sperm and Apsarâ's ovum is now exhausted; now look for another beautiful woman. O one of very dull understanding! Why are you crying in vain? Where is the affection between you and this girl; she died in an unmarried state (without marrying you)." At this Ruru said :- "O Deva messenger! I won't marry any other lady, whether my beloved gets back her life or does not get back her life; in case she does not regain this life, I will also forego my life at this instant." At this greatest impertunity of Ruru, the Deva messenger became glad and spoke the following truthful beneficent yet beautiful words :-

32-51. "O Brâhmana! I will suggest one way to you; kindly hear. The Devas ordained this long, long ago. You can give up your half life period, and with that you can make this girl alive soon."

Ruru said :- "O Deva messenger! I give half my life-period to this girl; there is no doubt in this. Let my beloved get back her life soon and get up."

The king said :- O Ministers! At this time Visvâvasu, knowing that his daughter Pramadvarâ is dead, descended from the Heavens in a celestial car and came to the place; then the Gandharva king and the Deva messenger both went to Yama, the Dharmarâj, and spoke thus :- "O Dharmarâj! This Visvâvasu's daughter Pramadvarâ, the wife of Ruru, the Risis' son was bitten by a snake and has now come to your place. The Dvija Ruru is now desirous to quit his life; so, O Sun's son! Now let the girl again get her life through the influence of Ruru's brahmacharya (purity) as a consequence of his giving away half his life period for the girl."

Dharma said :- "O Deva messenger! if you want to make the girl alive again, let her get life as a consequence of half the life-period of Ruru being subtracted. Go immediately and give the girl to Ruru."

The king said :- "O Ministers! Yama having said thus to the Deva messenger, he went away immediately and made Pramadvarâ alive and handed her over to Ruru.

Thus, on an auspicious day, Ruru married her. Thus the Risis' daughter Pramadvarâ though fallen dead, got again her life by proper means. So, O Councillors! to save life, one should resort one's best duty according to the S'âstras, by the use of gems, mantras, and herbs and plants."

Thus speaking to the ministers, the king Parîksit had a fine building of seven floors in height erected, placed the principal guards around it and stationed also the most powerful men well versed in the knowledge of mani (gems), mantrams, and plants for protection and immediately ascended to this building. To appease the wrath of the Muni S'ringî, the king sent the Muni named Gaurmukha to him and requested him repeatedly "Let the crime of the humble devotee be forgiven." Then, for self preservation, the king brought from all sides the Brâhmanas, who are perfect in their knowledge and application of the mantras. The minister's son placed the elephants in proper places so that no body can ascend to the top of the

building; what more can be said than the fact that even air could not find entrance there when once ordered “no admission” what to speak of others! The king Parîksit remained there and counted the number of days of the serpent Taksaka's coming there; he performed his bath, Sandhyâ Bandanams and fooding; even he consulted with his ministers and governed his kingdom from there. O Risis! At this time a Brâhman named Kas'yapa, versed in the mantras, heard of the curse of the king and thought that he would get abundant wealth if he could free the king from Taksaka's poison and proposed to himself that he would go to the place where the cursed king Parîksit was staying with the Brâhmanas. Pondering thus, the Brâhmana went out of his house, on the expectation of wealth from the king.

Thus ends the ninth chapter of the second Skandha on the account of Ruru in the Mahâpurânâ S'ri Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

Chapter X

On the death of king Parîksit

1-3. Sûta said :- “O Risis! On that very day when the Brâhmin Kas'yapa went out of his house, Taksak, knowing the king Parîksit cursed, assumed an aged Brâhmin's form and went out of his abode.

The serpent Taksak met the Brâhmin Kas'yapa on the way. Seeing the Brâhmana, versed in the Mantras, Taksak asked him “Where are you going so in haste, and what for are you taking this trouble?”

4-17. Thus questioned, Kas'yapa replied :- I heard that the serpent Taksak will bite the king Parîksit; therefore I am going in haste to the king Parîksit to cure him of the serpent's poison. I know the mantra (mystic verse) that can destroy the effect of poison. If his life-period is not exhausted, I will certainly give him back his life. Taksak then. Said :- “O Brâhmana! I am that Taksak; I will bite him and take away his life. So you better desist. Will you be able to treat him whom I bite; certainly you will not.” Kas'yapa said :- “O chief of snakes! When you will bite the king who has been cursed by the Brâhman, I will no doubt make him alive by the power of my mantra.” Taksak said :- “O chief of Brâhmanas! If you have so thought that you will make the king alive after I bite him, then shew me your strength before hand. O sinless one! I will bite this Nyagrodha tree (the Indian fig-tree); just now make it alive.”

Kas'yapa said :- “Certainly I will make this tree alive, that will be burnt away by the venom of your teeth.” Sûta said :- “The snake Taksak then bit the tree, which was reduced to ashes; and asked Kas'yapa to bring back that tree to life.” Seeing the tree reduced to ashes by the fire of venom of the snake, he collected all the ashes and said :- “O highly venomous serpent. See to-day the power of my mantra. Behold! While you are witnessing, I will enliven this tree. Thus the great mantra-knower Kas'yapa took water in his hand, and impregnating it with his mantra power, sprinkled the water on the ashes. Immediately, on the sprinkling of the mantra saturated water, the Nyagrodha tree got back its life as before. Taksak became greatly astonished to see the tree enlivened again and said to Kas'yapa :- “O chief of Brâhmins! What is your object in taking so much pains? Speak out what you want and I will fulfil your desires.” Kas'yapa said :- “O chief of serpents! Knowing the king cursed, I am going to do good to him by my knowledge and to get in return abundant wealth.” Hearing this, Taksak said :- “I will give you the amount of wealth that you desire; take that and go back to your house, and let my desire be also fulfilled.”

18-26. Kas'yapa, the knower of the highest state, heard Taksaka's words and pondered in his mind again and again. “What is to be done now? If I take this wealth and go back to my

house, my name and fame will not be known in this world, simply for my greed; but if the king be made alive again, my undying fame, abundant wealth, and greater

Punyam will accrue to me. Again fie to that wealth with which there is no fame; so one must try one's best to preserve one's fame. The king Raghu, in ancient days, gave away everything of his to the Brâhmanas for fame; the king Harischandra and Karna did not hesitate a bit to give away endless property. There is one point again to take into account, how can I trifle away the matter, seeing the king burnt up by the venomous fire?

If I can bring back the king's life, everyone will become happy. If the kingdom be without its king, the subjects will, no doubt, be ruined. So, following the king's death, sin will also incur on me due to the ruin of the subjects; and infamy will come on my head that I am a very greedy man." Thus meditating in his mind, the highly intelligent Kas'yapa began to meditate, and plunged himself in Dhyân; he thereby came to know that the king's life period was spent up. Thus knowing the king's death imminent, the virtuous Kas'yapa took the desired wealth from Taksak and returned home.

27-48. Thus making Kas'yapa to retire to his house on the seventh day Taksak went on to Hastinâpur to bring death and destruction on to Parîksit. When he went close to the city, he heard that the king Parîksit was staying on the upper story of the palace; and the palace had been preserved by various gems, mantras, herbs and plant. Taksak became very anxious; and fearing, lest the curse of the Brâhmanas, will fall on his head, became very much agitated and thought. "How shall I now enter the palace? How can I cheat this stupid hypocrite vicious king, cursed by the Brâhmana, who causes troubles to the Brâhmanas. Not a single man has taken birth in the Pandava family ever since that he coiled a dead serpent round the neck of an ascetic Brâhmin. The king has committed a very heinous crime and knowing the course of time to be in fallible, has placed sentries on all sides of the palace and has ascended to the top-most story of the building, thinking thereby to deceive Death and is staying in a peaceful mind. How can then he be smitten, in accordance with the Brâhmana's word? The king, of dull intellect, knows not that death cannot be prevented; for that reason he has placed guards and sentinels round the building, and himself has got up the house and is happily whiling away his time; but he is quite ignorant that when Fate who can never be violated, ordains the death, how can it be prevented though thousands of attempts are made to thwart it? This scion of Pandu family knows that his death is at hand and yet wants to live and therefore is staying in his own place with a tranquil mind. The king ought now to make charities and other meritorious works; it is only by acts of Dharma that disease is destroyed and life is prolonged.

And if that be not the object then a dying man ought to take bath, to make charities and to await his time of death; he thereby attains heaven; otherwise hell is inevitable. The king committed great sin in the act of causing pains and trouble to the Brâhmin or other similar acts and therefore death is so close that the Brâhmin curse has fallen thus on his head. Is there no such Brâhmin who can make him understand this; or the Creator has ordained his death now as inevitable." Thus meditating, the chief serpent made other serpents following him assume then form of ascetic Brâhmanas and gave them roots and fruits to be taken to the king. The serpent Taksak himself entered within the fruits in the form of an insect. Then the ascetic serpents took the fruits and quickly went out of the place. They came to the palace where Parîksit was resting. Seeing them, the guards asked :-- "What for have you come here?" Hearing this, "We are coming from the hermitage to prolong the life of the hero king, the son of Abhimanyu and the son of the Pândava family, by chanting the mantras of the Atharvavedas, and we want to have an interview with the king; now you better go and inform the king that some Munis have come to see you. We will sprinkle water on him and give him

some sweet fruits and then depart. We have never come across such gatekeepers in the family of Bharat as disallow the ascetic Muni visitors to go and see the king. We will ascend to the place where the Parîksit is staying and we will bless him, and wish him long life; we will communicate to him our orders and then depart to our own places.”

49-68. Sûtâ said :- Hearing these words, the sentinels spoke as previously ordered by the king, as follows :- “O Brâhmanas! We think verily you won't be able to have an interview with the king to-day; you, all ascetics can come to-morrow to this palace. O Munis! Owing to the Brâhmana's curse, the king has built this place; then it follows, as a matter of course, that the Brâhmanas are not allowed to get up to the palace.” Then the serpents, in the form of the Brâhmanas, spoke :- “O good sentinels! Then take these roots and fruits and offer them to the king and communicate to him our blessings.”

The sentinels went to the king, and informed him of the arrival of the ascetic Brâhmanas. The king replied :- “Bring here the roots and fruits offered by them and ask what for they have come. Give them my pranâms; to-day I cannot meet with them; let them come to-morrow morning.” The sentinels went to the ascetics and got from them their roots and fruits and offered them with great respect to the king. When the serpents in the guise of the hypocrite Brâhmins went away, the king took those fruits and spoke to his ministers “Take these fruits and let all my friends eat them. I will take only this one fruit given by the Brâhmanas and will eat it.” Saying this, the Uttarâ's son Parîksit gave away fruits to the friends and took one ripe fruit for himself, broke it and saw within it a very fine copper-coloured black eyed insect. At this the ministers were astonished; the King spoke to them :- “The sun has set; so there is no further chance of any fear from any poison to-day. I speak then to-day, fearing the Brâhman's curse, let this insect bite me.” Thus saying the king took that insect and placed it on his neck. That Taksak in the form of an insect, when placed, during the sun-set, on the neck by the king, immediately assumed the form of the terrible Kâla (Death), coiled round the king and beat him. The Ministers were greatly surprised and began to weep and cry with great pain and sorrow. Seeing that terrible serpent, the ministers, overwhelmed with terror, fled away on all sides. The guards cried out loudly. The terrible out-cry was raised on all sides. Then Uttarâ's son, the king Parîksit, coiled by the serpent, saw that all his efforts were rendered fruitless, and remained silent and held fast to his patience. From the mouth of the serpent Taksak the terrible venomous flames came out burning all and immediately killed the king. Thus taking away the life of the king, Taksak went up in the celestial atmosphere; the people then saw that the serpent was ready as if to burn the world. The king fell down lifeless like a burnt tree; and all the persons cried out seeing the king dead.

Thus ends the tenth Chapter of the Second Skandha on the death of the king Parîksit in the Mahâpurânâ S'rî Mad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

Chapter XI

On the Sarpa Yajña

1-4. Sûta said :- “O Munis! seeing now the king lifeless, and his son a mere boy, the ministers themselves performed all his funeral ceremonies. First they burned the king on the banks of the Ganges without uttering any Mantra, as his death was an accidental one due to snake bite, afterwards they had an effigy of the king made of kus'a grass and placed it on a funeral pyre and burned it, with sandal and scented wood. The priest then performed and completed his funeral obsequies, repeating duly the Vedic mantras, and distributed various things in charities to the Brâhmins, together with sufficient quantity of gold, and varieties of food and clothings so that the king may attain heaven.

5-7. Next, on an auspicious moment, the ministers installed the boy prince on the throne that gladdened the hearts of the subjects and all the populace of the city, towns, and villages acknowledged the boy prince Janamejaya, endowed with all royal qualities as their king. The Dhâtreyi gave all instructions to the king about his duties. The boy prince gradually grew in years and became endowed with great intellect.

8-15. When Janamejaya became eleven years old, the family priest initiated him duly with the Gâyatrî mantra and he also studied it duly. Then Kripâ châyra taught him perfectly the science of archery (Dhanurveda) as Dronâchâyra taught Arjuna and Paras'urâma taught Karna. Janamejaya learnt by and by all the sciences and became very powerful and indomitable to his enemies as he was skilled in the science of archery, he was similarly in the other branches of the Vedas. Truthful, self-controlled, religious, the king Janamejaya acquired full knowledge in the Dhârmâs'âstras (philosophies and law books) and Arthas'âstras (economics) and governed his kingdom like the Dharma's son Yudhisthira.

The king of Kâs'î gave his all-auspicious daughter Vapustamâ in marriage to the king Janamejaya wearing golden coat of armour. The king Janamejaya, with the beautiful Vapus'amâ casting side-long looks, looked very happy as was the king Vichîtravîrya, when he got for his wife the daughter of Kâshirâj and also when Arjuna got his Subhadrâ. Then the king began to enjoy his lotus-eyed Vapustamâ in forest, and gardens like S'atakratu and S'achî. The able ministers conducted satisfactorily the reins of government; and the subjects, well governed passed away their time with cheerful hearts.

16-32. In the meanwhile, a Muni, named Uttanka, being much troubled by Taksaka, thought who could help him in his taking revenge on Taksak and, seeing the king Parîksit's son the king Janamejaya a proper person came to Hastinâ to the king and spoke out thus :-- "O good king! Thou dost not know when to do a thing that ought to be done; Thou art doing at present what ought not to be done; and thou art not doing what should be done now. There is nothing of anger or energy within Thee; Thou dost things as a child does; so Thou dost not know the meaning of the S'âstras nor dost Thou know Thy former enemy; so what shall I pray before Thee?" Hearing this Janamejaya said :-- "O highly fortunate one! I do not know who is my enemy; what wrong is there to be redressed? please speak out what I am to do." Uttanka said :-- "O king! the wicked Taksak killed Thy father; ask about the death of Thy father from Thy councillors." Hearing these words, the king Janamejaya asked his ministers; they replied "Thy father died out of the snake Taksaka's bite." Then the king spoke :-- "The cause of my father's death is the Brâhmin's curse; what is the fault of Taksaka in this matter; please say." Uttanka said :-- It was Taksaka that gave abundance of wealth to Kâs'yapa who was coming to cure Thy father of Taksaka's poison and made him desist from his purpose; so O king! Is not that Taksaka, then, Thy father's great enemy and his slayer?

O King! In former days, when Pramadvarâ, the dearest wife of the Muni Ruru, died of snake bite in her unmarried state, Ruru made her alive again. But Ruru made then the promise "whichever serpent will see, I will take away its life by striking it with a club." O King! Thus making the resolve, he began to kill snakes wherever he found with his club, and thus, in his course of travel all round the earth, he saw within a forest an aged terrible water-snake (Dhonda serpent) and immediately lifted his club to kill it and angrily struck a blow on it, when the snake replied :-- "O Brâhmana! Why are you striking me thus? I have not caused any offence to you." Ruru said :-- "O serpent! My dearest wife died of snake bite; since then I have made this resolve, under great provocation and sorrow, to kill snakes." Hearing thus, the water-snake Dundubha replied :-- "I do not bite; those who bite are a different class of snakes; simply on account of my bearing a body similar to them that you will strike me is not quite

proper.” Hearing these beautiful humane words from the mouth of a serpent, Ruru asked :-- “Who are you? Why have you become this Dundubha snake?”

33-45. The snake replied :-- “O Brâhmana! I was formerly a Brâhman; there was a friend of mine named Khyâs, very religious, truthful and self-controlled. Once he was staying in his Agnihotra room and I foolishly terrified him much by placing before him an artificial snake created by me of the leaves of trees. He became so much bewildered with fear and shuddered so terribly that he at length cursed me saying :-- “O one of blunt intellect! As you have terrified me by this snake, having no poison, so you better be a snake of that type.” Immediately I turned into a snake and when I much entreated that Brâhmana, his anger abated a little and he said again :-- “O snake! Pramati's son Ruru will no doubt free you of this curse.” I am that snake; and you are also that Ruru; now hear my words in conformity with Dharma. The highest Dharma of the Brâhmana, is non-killing. There is no doubt in this. The wise Brâhmanas ought to show mercy to all. No harm or killing is to be committed anywhere except in Yajña (sacrifice); killing is only allowed in a Yajña; for at the sacrifice, the animal killed attains the highest goal; hence killing in sacrifice is not reckoned as an act of killing. Uttanka said :-- That Brâhmana was then freed of the serpent body; and Ruru, too, desisted from killing since then. O King! Ruru gave life back to that girl and married her but even then, remembering the former enmity he killed the snakes. But, O chief of Bharata's family! Thou art staying without any care, without any anger to the snakes and without any revenge to the previous wrong. O king of kings! Thy father died high up in the air without any bath or charity due to be done at the time of death. So rescue thy father by killing his enemies, the snakes. That son is dead, though living, who does not consider the act of his father's enemy as inimical. Until Thou dost kill the snakes, Thy father's enemies, Thy father's hell life will not be freed. O king! Now remember the wrong done to Thy father and perform the sacrifice to the Great Mother, denominated as the Sarpa Yajña (the sacrifice of snakes).

46-55. Sûta said :-- Hearing the words of Uttanka, the king Janamejaya sadly wept and shed tears, and thought within himself :-- “Alas! Fie to me! I am a great stupid; hence I feel myself proud but in vain. Where can his honour be whose father, bitten by a snake, has gone down to hell. Now I will, no doubt, commence the Sarpa Yajña and ensure the destruction of all the snakes in the blazing sacrificial fire and thus deliver my father from hell.” Thus coming to a conclusion, he called all his ministers and said :-- “O ministers! Better make arrangements duly for a great sacrifice. Have a suitable holy site on the banks of the Ganges, selected and measured by the Brâhmanas and have a beautiful sacrificial hall built up on one hundred pillars and prepare a sacrificial altar within this. O Ministers! When all these preliminaries will be completed, I will commence with great eclat the great Sarpa Yajña (sacrifice of snakes). In that Yajña, the snake Taksak will be the animal victim; and Uttanka, the great Muni, will be the sacrificial priest; so invite early the all-knowing Brâhmanas, versed in the Vedas. Thus at the command of the king, the able ministers collected all the materials of the sacrifice and prepared a big sacrificial altar. When the oblations were offered on the sacrificial fire, calling on the snakes, Taksak became greatly distressed with fear and took refuge of Indra saying “Save my life”. Indra, then, gave hopes to Taksaka, trembling with fear, and made him sit on his Âsana, encouraged him with words “No fear”. O! snake do not fear any more.

56-65. The Muni Uttanka, seeing that Taksak had taken Indra's protection and that Indra had given him hopes of “no fear”, called on Taksaka with Indra to come to fire with an anxious heart; Taksak, then, seeing no other way, took refuge of the greatly religious Âstik, the son of the Muni Jarat Kâru, born of the family of Yâyâvara. The Muni's son Âstik came to the sacrificial hall and chanted hymns in praise of Janamejaya; the king, too, seeing the Muni boy

greatly learned worshipped him and said :-- "What for have you come? I will give you what you desire." Hearing this, Âstika prayed :-- "O highly enlightened one! Let you desist from this sacrifice."

The truthful king, prayed thus again and again, stopped the Sarpa Yajña to keep the Muni's word. Vais'ampâyana then recited the whole Mahâbhârata to the king to cheer up his heart. But the king, hearing the whole Mahâbhârata could not find peace and asked Veda Vyâsa "how can I get peace; my mind is constantly being burned with sorrow; say what am I to do? I am very miserable; hence my father Parîksit the son of Abhimanyu has died an unnatural death. O lucky one! See that a Ksatriya's death in a deadly battlefield or in an ordinary battle is praiseworthy; even his death in his own house, if followed up according to natural laws and Vidhis (rules) is commendable; but my father did not die such a death; under the Brâhmana's curse why did he, quite senseless, quit his life high up in the air? O son of Satyavatî! Now advise me so that my father who is now in hell can again go up to the heavens, and that my heart may find its way to peace."

Thus ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Second Skandha on the "Sarpa Yajña" in the Mahâpurâna S'rîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses.

Chapter XII

On the birth of Âstika

1-4. Sûta said :-- Hearing these words of the king, Vyâsa Deva, the son Satyavatî addressed to him before the assembly, thus :-- "O king! I am now reciting to you a Bhâgavata Purâna, holy, wonderful, filled with many anecdotes, and leading to auspicious results; listen. Before I made my son S'uka study this Purâna; O king! I will now recite before you that highest Purâna, with all the secrets contained therein. I have extracted this from all the Âgamas; it brings in Dharma (religion), Artha (wealth), Kâma (fructification of desires) and Moksa (liberation); hearing this gives always happiness and good results.

5-6. At this Janamejaya said :-- "O Lord! Whose son is this Muni Âstika? Why did he come as an obstacle in my Sarpa Yajña (sacrifice of snakes)? And what object had he in preserving the snakes? O highly fortunate one! Kindly describe all this in detail; after this recite the Purâna, also, in detail to me."

7-18. Vyâsa Deva said :-- "O king! In former days there lived a Muni named Jaratkâru. He always remained in the path of peace; and did not marry. Once he saw, in a cave in a forest, his fathers and forefathers pendant. They spoke to Jaratkâru thus :-- "O son! Marry; we will thereby be greatly pleased; if there be a son of good character born to you, we all will be freed from all troubles and we would then able to go to Heavens." Hearing this Jaratkâru said :-- "O Forefathers! If I get a girl of my name, without begging and asking and if she be entirely obedient to me, I will marry and lead a householder's life; thus I have spoken truly to you." Thus saying to his forefathers, Jaratkâru went on tour to the holy places. Now it happened so, that at that very time Kadru, the mother of snakes cursed her sons, saying "May you be burnt by fire." The matters of this incident run as follows :-- "At that moment Kadru and Vinatâ, the two co-wives of Kas'yapa saw the horses yoked in the chariot of the sun and thus argued with each other :-- Kadru, seeing the sun's horse, first asked Vinatâ "O good one! Tell me soon, what is the colour of this horse?" Vinatâ said :-- "O auspicious one! What do you think?" I said, the colour of the horse is white; you also better say before hand what is its colour? We will then lay a wager (and challenge). Kadru said :-- "O Smiling one! I think the the horse is black. Now come; let us challenge; whoever will be defeated will become the slave of the other." Thus saying, Kadru told her sons that were obedient :-- "Cover by your bodies all the

pores of the body of the horse of the chariot of the Sun, so it may look black; go and do it.” At this some snakes replied “That cannot be.” Kadru then cursed them saying :-- “Let you fall on the sacrificial fire of Janamejaya.” Then the other snakes tried to please their mother and coiled round the back of that horse so that the horse began to look black. Kadru and Vinatâ, the two co-wives went together and saw the horse. Vinatâ saw it black and became very sorry.

19-21. Now, Garuda, Vinatâ's son, very powerful and devourer of snakes was passing that way and seeing his mother very distressed asked her :-- “O Mother! Why do you look so very sorry? It seems as if you are weeping. Aruna, the charioteer of the Sun and I myself are your two sons living. Fie to us that, while we are living, you will have to suffer pains. O beautiful one! If mother suffers while the son is living, then what use is there in having such a son? So, O Mother, give out the cause of your grief and I will remove it at once.”

22-31. Hearing this Vinatâ said :-- “O son! What shall I say to you of my misery; I am now become the slave of my rival wife. By some pretext she defeated me and is now telling me to carry her on my back. O son! For this reason I am sorry.” Hearing these words of the mother, Garuda said :-- “Very well I will carry her on my shoulders wherever she wishes to go. O auspicious one! You need not be sorry; I will remove all your cares.” Vyâsa Deva said :-- Thus spoken to by Garuda, Vinatâ went to Kadru. At that time the highly powerful Garuda went there also to free his mother of her slavery and carried Kadru with all her sons on his back to the other side of the ocean. When Garuda went across the ocean, Garuda spoke to Kadru :-- “O mother! I bow down to thee; kindly say how my mother can be freed of your slavery. Hearing this Kadru said :-- “O son! If you can bring to-day by your sheer force nectar from the Deva loka and give it to my sons then you will be able to free your helpless mother. When Kadru said so, the highly powerful Vinatâ's son, Garuda immediately went to the abode of Indra and, fighting hard, stole away the jar of nectar and brought and gave it to Kadru and freed his mother Vinatâ from the slavery of Kadru. In the meantime, the snakes went for their bath, after which they would drink the nectar. Indra stole away that jar which contained nectar. O king! Thus, by the sheer strength of arms of Garuda Vinatâ was freed of her slavery. On the other hand, when the snakes returned from their bath and found that there was no jar of nectar, they began to lick the Kusa grass over which the jar of nectar was kept, thinking that they would thereby get some drops of nectar which might have trickled over; and the result was that by the sharp edges of kusa grasses, the tongues of all the snakes were cut asunder into two; hence the snakes are called Dvijihva.

32-36. The snake Vâsuki and others, whom Kadru, the mother of snakes, cursed, went to Brahmâ and took his refuge and informed all of the cause of their terror, the curse from their mother; when Brahmâ spoke to them :-- “Go and give the sister of Vâsuki, named Jaratkâru, in marriage to the great Muni Jarat Kâru, (both of the same name). In her womb, a son named Âstika will be born; and he will certainly deliver you from your difficulties. Hearing those beneficial words of Brahmâ, Vâsuki went to the forest and requested humbly the great Muni Jarat Kâru to accept in marriage her own sister when the Muni, knowing the girl to be of his name, spoke out thus :-- “But when your sister will act against my wishes, I will forsake her at once.”

37-46. Under these conditions, the Muni married her. And Vâsuki, after giving her sister in marriage according to her own wishes to the Muni, returned to her own abode. O Tormentor of foes! Then the Muni Jaratkâru built a white hut of leaves in that great forest and began to pass his days happily in enjoyment with his wife. Once, on an occasion, after he had taken his dinner he slept and told his wife not to awaken him under any circumstances and fell fast

asleep. The beautiful sister of Vâsuki sat by his side. When the evening time came and the sun began to set, the Vâsuki's sister Jaratkâru became afraid at the thought that the evening Sandhya might not be performed by the Muni and thought thus :-- "What am I to do now? My heart finds not rest if I do not awaken him; and if I awaken him, he will forsake me at once. Now if I do not awaken him, the evening will pass away to no purpose. Whatever it be, if he quits me or if my death ensues, that is better than the non-observance of Dharma; for when Dharma is destroyed, hell ensues.

Thus thinking, the girl awakened him saying :-- "O One of good vows! It is evening time; so get up; etc." The Muni got up in great anger and addressed his wife :-- "When you have disturbed my sleep, I now go away from you; you also better go to your brother's house." When the Muni said so, Vâsuki's sister spoke out, trembling :-- "O One of indomitable lustre! How will the object be served for which my brother has given me in marriage with you."

47-50. The Muni then spoke firmly to his wife Jaratkâru :-- "That is within your womb." Jaratkâru then, forsaken by the Muni, went to the abode of Vâsuki. When her brother Vâsuki asked her about her son, she said :-- "The Muni has forsaken me, saying that the son is within your womb." At this Vâsuki trusted; and said :-- "The Muni won't ever tell lies" and gave shelter to his sister. O Kurusattama! After some time, a famous boy named the Muni Âstika was born.

51-56. O king! That Muni boy, the knower of truth, had desisted you from your sacrifice of snakes for the preservation of his mother's family. It is well and good, befitting you, that you respected the words of the Muni Âstika, born of Yâyâvara family and the cousin of Vâsuki. O Mighty-armed! Let all auspiciousness come to you; you have heard the whole Mahâbhârata and gave away lots of things in charities. You have worshipped innumerable Munis. But, O king! Though you have done so many good things, yet your father has not attained heaven and you have not been able to sanctify your family. So, O king Janamejaya! Now install a capacious temple of the Devî with the highest devotion; then all your desires will be fulfilled. The all auspicious Devî, the Giver of all desires, makes the kingdoms more stable and increases the family, if She be always worshipped with the highest devotion.

57-64. O king! You better perform duly the Devîmakha Yajña Yotistoma and others, pleasing to the Devî, and hear the great Purâna S'rîmad Devî Bhâgavatam, filled with accounts of the glorious deeds of the Devî. I will make you hear now that Divine Purâna, filled with various sentiments, highly sanctifying and capable to carry one across this ocean of world. O king! There is no other subject in this world worthy to be heard than the above Purâna and there is no other thing to be worshipped than the lotus feet of the Devî. O king! Those are certainly fortunate, those are intelligent and blessed, in whose hearts of love and devotion reign always the Devî Bhagavatî. O illustrious scion of Bharata's family! Know them to the always afflicted with troubles who do not worship in this world the great Mother Mahâmâyâ. O king! Who is there that will not worship Her when Brahmâ and all the Devas are always engaged in Her devotional service. O king! He who hears always this Purâna gets all his desires fulfilled; in former days Bhagavatî Herself spoke this excellent Purâna to Visnu. O king! Your heart will be appeased and become peaceful when you hear this; and, as a result of your hearing this Purânam, all your ancestors will attain endless Heavenly life.

Thus ends the Twelfth Chapter of the Second Skandha on the birth of Âstika in the Mahâpurânam S'rîmad Devî Bhâgavatam of 18,000 verses by Maharsi Veda Vyâsa. Here ends as well the Second Book.