

ShrI:  
ShrI BhUmidevIsametashrInivasaparabraHmaNe namaH  
Chapter 1

Sage Narada addressed Brahma thus:

‘ Oh Deva! Your eyes are like the lotus flower and you are seated on the lotus. You are worshipped by all the devas and all the worlds. You know the power and glory of all the sacred places, waters, vimaanams and mantrams as well. I request that you grant this wish of mine.

Once, I was elated to listen to Bhagavan’s pure and sacred splendour. Hence I ask you now. When you were relating the powerful story of Kumbhakonam, Markandeya kshetram was mentioned briefly. The history of this kshetram is very secret, and pure; nevertheless, since I am your sishya, please relate this Mahathmyam, the whole Universe will also benefit from this.’

Hearing this Brahma was exhilarated and paid obeisance to Lakshmi pathi and started to speak thus:

“ Listen Narada! The mere thought of MarkaNdeya kshetram destroys all sins at that very instance. Anyone who takes salt inside the temple will go to hell. Anyone who relishes a dish with salt inside the temple will also go to hell. If someone sees someone else eat such a dish and does not stop him, he attains all the sins of the world. Someone who eats or gives a little bit of salt without knowing also attains the same fate. This is true.

On the other hand, someone who worships Bhumidevi’s consort with the leaves of Tulasi, attains Ashvamedha Phalan for every leaf. Someone who goes to this kshetram attains Paundareeka Phalan for every step he takes. Someone who offers even a little bit of land equal to the size of a cow’s hoof attains moksham. A person who offers sandalwood, kumkumam, flowers, etc. is freed from even the worst of sins (brahmahatti). So does someone who performs festivals(utsavam). Someone who gives vessels for arghyam, incense, lamp, and thirumanjanam will live in heaven for as many years equal in number to the grains of sand. One who conducts ceremonial celebrations for the Bhagavan who destroyed Madhu, is freed of all unforgivable sins. So does one who gifts bronze bell and exquisite clothes.

On the thiruvonam day of Aippasi month, if one bathes in the AhoratrappushkariNi with devotion and a pure mind, and presents a Brahmin with whatever he can, and then praises Shri VAsudevan who resides there with Bhoomi Devi, and then serves at least five Brahmins with Payasaannam, and then does the Pradakshinam around the kshetram (kaatupradakshiNam), and goes back and again prostrates before Hari, is freed from all kinds of unforgivable sins. He attains VaikunTam as well.

MarutgaNaas, devatas, Siddhaas, Saadhyaas, Vishvedevaas, Kinnaraas, Yakshaas, Lokapalaas, Ganadharvaas, thirthaadidevaas, Vanadevataas, and other devatas worship ShrivAsudeva even today. Vasihsta, Kaahyapa, Kanva, MrukaNDu, Vaamadeva, Jaabaali, Jaangali, vitihotraka, Dhaumyaskruta, Gaalava, Vyaasa, Kapila, Vishvamitra, Atri, Kutsa, Jamadagni, Paraasharaa, Shataananda, Sumaali, Daksha, Vaaruna, Bhriгу, AngaNaka, sharabhanga, Gaarghya, Shaakala, Vatsa, Vatsanaabha, and many other rishis come to this MarkaNdeya kshetram, bathe in the AhoraatrappushkariNi and worship Bhoomi Devi’s consort Shrinivaasa, observing strict vratas.

By contemplating on Shri Vasudeva, one gets the fruits of thousand Aptoryamaas and one lakh PaunDariika Yagams. By listening about Him, and by seeing Him one enjoys the results of one lakh Ashvamedha yagnaas. If someone just utters the word “TuLasiivanam” he is freed from all sins and reaches VaikunTam.

Every year, during the waxing period of the month Aippasi, after hoisting the flag (dwajaarohaNam) according to Vaikhaanasa rules, let us perform ceremonial celebrations for nine days, and on the tenth day, let us perform Avabhruta Snaanam in the AhoraatrapushkariNi along with Apasaraas, Kinnaraas and Rishis. If those who come here for this Brahmotsavam, will live in Vaikuntam, can anything be said about those who live here in this kshetram?

The trees there are said to be Devaas, the stones to be Rishis, and tulasi tree is said to be Lakshmidivi herself. Bhodhi tree is considered to be Brahma, kokilas are gandharavaas, peacocks are apsaras and the temple itself is Pranavam. One who renovates the temple is said to be endowed with devaamsham.

Here Ganga and Goda flow towards the Lord’s south. Previously, Kaveri flowed to the west of Kumbhakonam around Shri Sharngapani like a garland by becoming two streams. There the stream that flows to the south also removes sins.

Once Goda and Ganga - who flows in all the three worlds, came and prostrated before me and said “ He Brahman! All the people in the world come and take dips in our waters and go back to their homes, freed of all their sins. Please show us a way that is powerful enough to get rid of these sins”

Oh Narada! Listen to what I told them. Go to the place where Kaveri flows to the south of Shri Sharngapani. Go to her to the west of MarkanDeyakshetram and become two streams there. You will provide Thirumanjana Theertham for Shri Vasudevan forever and become pure- there is no doubt about that.” They did this – hence among the streams that flow to the south of Lord Vasudeva, the first is Ganga, the second is Godavari, and the third is Yamuna. Their fame has spread all over the country and even today they are worshipping the Lord who granted boons to MarkanDeya.

During waxing of the moon, one who bathes in Ganga on Thursday gets children, one who bathes on a Friday in Godavari attains wealth, and one who bathes in Yamuna on Saturday (waxing moon) is free of all sins and attains the Lord’s feet.

One who reads or listens to this Maahatmyam which is very difficult to get, and very secret, enjoys Vaikuntam for a long time. He attains fame, all that is auspicious, long life, a lot of wealth and the Lord protects those who read or listen to this everyday. One who reads and/ or listens to this Maahatmyam during full moon, new moon, Thiruvanam, Ashtami, Friday, the months of Chithrai, Adi, Aippasi and Thai and during Sangramana times and during other seasons attain all kinds of benefits”

Thus spoke Brahma.

ShrIbHUmidevIsameta ShrinivAsaparabraHmaNe namaH

Chapter 2

Narada came up with a few more queries:

“ Oh Brahma! Thou wert born in the lotus and have eyes like the lotus itself and you are the favourite of PadmanAbha as well! You are also

seated on the lotus! I prostrate before thee again and again. Why did Bhagavan appear in the auspicious and superior MarkaNDeyakshetram? And at the time of appearance, what form did he take? Why did Dharitree (BhUdevI) appear there as well? Why is the pushakaiNI famous as AhoratrpushkarinI? Why did the kshetram come to be known as MarkanDeyakshtram? Please tell us this and everything else with full details!”

Brahma spoke thus:

“ Oh Narada! Listen to the amazing history of ShrIVAsudeva, which removes all sins. It gives Vaikuntam to those who think of him at the very instant of the thought. Even if we try for a thousand years, it is not possible to completely cover His Vaibhavam. I will tell you a little bit of it.

Once Tulasi Devi, who was born out of droplets of divine nectar, praised ShriHari with many stotrams and said “ Lakshmi lives on your chest and thus has the status of being above the best of the best. If I am also equally dear to you, I, too, should be on your bosom, just like her.”

Rameshan said “Lakshmi attained this place in my heart because of her severe penance. Soon, she will appear as Dharitree in the form of Bhooma Devi and be the daughter of MarkenDeya Maharshi. If you go there and take the form of a plant and live there for some time, Lakshmi will reincarnate below you in a few months. A few days later I will come there to wed her and will live there with BhoomiDevi and Markendya Rishi for thousands of years, according to the Rishi’s wishes.

“If someone worships me with your leaves, I will give him everything including wealth and grains, there is no doubt about this. Everyone who lives in your forest including animals, people and birds will attain a place in my abode, and there is no doubt about this either. Ramaa, who is also my consort like you, will emerge below your tree in the form of a little girl. Hence you will also become distinguished, and that forest will be henceforth be known by your name. Thinking, seeing, and meditating on you will give VaikunTam to those that do so, and this is certain.

“If anyone worships me in “TuLasIvanam” with your leaves he will get the benefit of, thousand Ashavamedha Yagas for every leaf, and that is certain as well. If someone does not worship me with your leaves, he will always encounter difficulties in this world. If anyone worships me with your Kavacham, I will grant him VaikunTam and there is no doubt about that.

“This is TuLasIkavacham, I am considered the rishi for this kavacham, the meter is Anushtup, and the devata is TuLasI herself. Let TuLasI protect head, and let PankajadhAriNi( one who has the lotus) protect my forehead. Let PadmanayaNaa (one who has eyes like the lotus) guard my

eyes, and let the friend of Lakshmi guard me ears. Let sweet smelling TuLasi protect my nose, and beautiful TuLasI one who has a face like the moon, protect my face; let my tongue be protected by Her, who has a soft body; and the cheeks be protected by TuLasI who is the a form of vEda. Let my shoulders be protected by TuLasi who holds the lotus, my arms be guarded by Her form that destroys sins; let my hands be protected by TuLasi whose hands are like lotus and my heart be protected by Her, who is dear to VishNu. Let the middle part of my body be protected by TuLasi who gives Punyam, and my let my stomach be protected by TuLasi who increases auspiciousness; let my waist be protected by TuLasI who wears bracelets and my thighs be protected by Her who is worshipped by Narada; let my feet be protected by Her who is beloved to Shri NarAyana and let all parts of my body be protected by TuLasI who protects everyone. Let TuLasI who destroys all sins protect me in danger, difficulties, ups and downs, forts, fear, wind and wars. This is the TuLasI Kavacham, which is top secret and is like the divine nectar. It gives all the desired objects for those who recite in the morning. I will grant VaikunTam to those who worship me with your leaves on Friday, Tuesday and Sunday and I live in your forest. So, your forest will be known as the VikunTam on this earth and there is no doubt about that. If someone does not worship me with your leaves, he will be in hell for crore years. I have granted boons to you, so be not angry, Oh MangaLe!”

TuLasI, who was addressed thus, took the form of a tree and lived in the sacred forest that was full of trees, creepers and birds, to the east of KumbhakoNam. From then on this place has been known as “TuLasIvanam”.

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shrIBhoomidevI sameta shrIShrinvasaparabraHmaNe namaH

### Chapter 3

Days passed; there was a rishi called MrikaNDu, who was a tejasvi and had a deep knowledge of the vast Vedas and shastraas. He was filled with bhagavat bhakti. Serene and self-controlled, he had many students and an only son. His son MarkaNdeyaa, a great yogi, intelligent, and scholar of the Vedas; and he had complete mastery of anger, and total command of body and mind . He was knew all about kshetraas and thIrthaas and was an expert in the Puraanaas. He knew all the secrets of Neethishasatram, he had Achaaram, and was also an expert in Mantraas and Smrithis. He was full of Bhagavatbhakthi and was surrounded by numerous students.

MaakanDeya was traveling methodically, looking at all the Kshetraas and Tiirthaas and reached TuLasIvanam. This place was full of fragrant trees like champaka, tilaka, teak, lime, Kurundu, KaDambu, jackfruit, ketaki, pomegranate, vakuLa, coconut, date, mango, tamarind, gooseberry and many other trees as well. Cuckoos sang, bees buzzed, peacocks danced and there was always a mild and pleasant breeze. Groups of Apsaras were roaming about and Gandharavaas were singing and there was the fragrance of numerous flowers wafting in the air. Many rishis were chanting japams and musicians like Tumburu were singing. There were streams and ponds; and the rivers of Gangai and Godavari flowed closeby. MarkanDeyaa was captivated by the beauty of this place and wanted to live there.

“This seems to be the best among all keshtrams in the Bharata Kanda” he thought. “If I live here, Bhoomi Devi will reincarnate as my daughter. If I bathe in this thIrtahm and meditate on Bhagavan continuously and do severe penance. She will be my daughter and Bhagavan will be Her Bridegroom. There is no doubt about this. Then, I can even ask Bhagavan to grant me salvation. Till then, I will do penance here “. Having decided thus, he bathed in the AhoraatrapushkariNi everyday and ate without salt, and partook only roots and did penance beneath the TuLasI plant.

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#### Chapter 4

MarKanDeyaa then lived in TuLasivanam partaking just vegetables, roots and fruits as food without salt. MadhusUdhanan knew what he wanted and after a thousand years, he said to Lakshmi “ He Devi! Take the form of a little girl and go to TuLasIvanam and live as his daughter for some time. After a while, I will come there to bless the Rishi and will live there till the end of the Brahmakalpam for the welfare of the world.

Lakshmi Devi agreed and became an exquisite little girl with beautiful eyes, long arms, a comely countenance like that of the moon, a smile that resembled the shanbaga flower and shiny cheeks . She was adorned with fragrant sandalwood paste and beautiful jewels, a gorgeous dress, and a grand Tilakam. She appeared as a two year old girl. The surprised and delighted MarkanDeya called out to her and asked her to come to him. “Who are you? And who are your parents?” he asked.

“I don’t know why I came here” said the fair girl. “You are my father, mother and kith and kin”. So saying, she climbed on to the Rishi’s lap. Rishi was overjoyed and named her “Bhoomi” since she was born near the TuLasi plant out of the Earth. He was as exhilarated as a man in extreme poverty suddenly endowed with permanent wealth.

Thus, the sacred Piratti who purifies all the Lokas became MarkanDeyar’s daughter!

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ShrI BhoomidevI sameta ShrinivAsaparabraHmaNe namaH

Chapter 5

MarkanDeyar, who was radiant with penance, brought up the little girl with great joy. He fed her with delights made with milk, rice, ghee and presented her with colourful necklaces, jewels and thambulam. Time passed, and watching his beautiful daughter reach a marriageable age, he became preoccupied with thoughts of finding a suitable bridegroom for her.

“Lo!” he said, “to whom will I give my daughter’s hand in matrimony? I don’t find anyone suitable” he pondered.

One day, the softhearted Hari, took the form of an old sage, and came to Markandeya’s cottage. He was coughing, wheezing and panting and was wearing a tattered dress with a stick and had a kettle in his hand. He came towards the rishi’s cottage in TuLasivanam on the auspicious Shravan day of the month of Panguni on ekadashi day, during the sacred muhurtham called ‘abhijit’.

Maharshi saw that an aged sage was coming towards his abode and went towards him and welcomed him. He gave him a chair to be seated and washed his feet.

“Welcome!” he said, “my life and my deeds have borne fruit today. Please let me know the reason for your visit. Madhyahnika kalam is approaching for both of us!”

The old man replied “Listen, Yogin! I do not have a wife or a son. Vedas say that a man, who does not have a son, cannot attain bliss in the afterworlds. There is no family for someone without a wife. Wealth, houses, cattle and grains do not bring comfort to such a person. There is no friend better than a wife. There is no doubt that a wife brings dharmam, kamam, artham and moksham to a man. I do not have agni as well, so how can I live? So I have come here to seek your daughter’s hand in matrimony. You are aware of what is right and what is dharma, so you should not refuse my request. I am a young man, even though I look old. There is no doubt about this”, he finished.

MarkanDeyar looked at him again and again and said, “How will I wed my young daughter to an old man like you? All the rishis will laugh at this. Your body is pale with age. So please do not marry!”

The old man prostrated before the rishi and held his feet. “If you do not give your daughter, I will give up this body right in front of you” he said.

MarkanDeyar spoke with great kindness. “You do not have parents, sister, nephew, his wife, uncle, aunt, cousins or anyone to call as relatives. If my daughter marries you, she will have to cook for you. Since she is very young, she may forget to add salt in your food. You may be angered and may try to beat her. Then I will become angry too and try to cast a curse on you. This will be an everyday daily occurrence. I have no doubts. So, how will I give my daughter? You say that if I don’t, you will surely give up your life. Oh! What will I do? I submit myself to the Lord

“Oh Lord! You are absolute, supreme and faultless. You see everything with your beautiful eyes that resemble the lotus! You have boundless auspicious qualities. You reside in all the worlds. You alone can help me! It seems to me that You are this old man and have come to my abode to test me. I meditate upon Thee, who is Lord of all the devas and who purifies all the worlds!”

After imploring Bhagavan like this, he said to his daughter, “Oh lovely maiden! Listen! I am bound by dharma. This sage wants to marry you and says that he will not live otherwise. What can I do?” he asked.

His daughter pretended not to know anything and said “If you marry me to this old man, I will not live!”

Hearing this, rishi started to pray to ShrimanNarayana : “ You are the absolute puNyarooopa! You are the saviour of good people. You are eternal. He Govinda! Lakshmi Devi rejoices in You. You are ever handsome, You are Krishna, you are Jagannatha, You please Lakshmi, and are Kindness itself. May you win! May all auspiciousness be with You! You reward us with the results of good and bad deeds! You are the protector! He Narayana! I am bound by dharma, Oh Lord! Save me! Why do You test me with Your Maya?”

Markandeya closed his eyes, prayed and entreated the Lord and when he opened his eyes, there stood the old man - He had become a young Lad with chakram, conch and gadai with beautiful yellow attire and dark as a water laden cloud. He wore the exquisite Vanamala, and a marvelous crown, and was a feast to the eyes of the beholder. Markandeya was filled with awe and joy and prostrated before him. Shrinivasan stood there shining with all the divya gunas and with a tejas that surpassed the brilliance of millions of suns and moons. Markandeya danced around him with joy and prayed!

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Chapter 6

Brahma spoke to Narada:

MarkanDeya said:

He KrishNa! Mukunda, destroyer of Mura! Vishno, consort of NeeLaa Devi! Victory be to you, Suresha! May Victory be with you! You are the embodiment of all that is good and auspicious. Krishna, the Encompassment of Knowledge! The whole world is your family! Root of all that “is” ! Creator of the Universe! Protector of the cosmos! You encompass all, inside and out! You are omniscient, constant, and perpetual! You are the source of all radiance ! You are the Master of all directions! He VAsudeva! He ParamATman! He Paresha! You are handsome! You hold the Chakra, Muravairin! He Madhava, Govinda, Salutations to you, who destroyed Madhu! He Purushottama! He ShrInivasa! Salutations to You, who holds the Sharngam, Conch, GadA and chakra! You wear exquisite KunDalams! He Ananta! Salutations to You, who resides in the ocean of milk! You are omniscient, Supreme and You grant all knowledge! You are Divinity and You possess divine form! I pray to You again and again! Salutations to You again! Having praised Devadevesan, the Lord of all Celestial beings, Markandeya, the rishi whose wealth was his penance, stood silently before the Lord.

Figure resplendent, Lord Ramakanthan looked at Markandeya and spoke to the Rishi in a majestic tone of a cloud, “I am pleased with your faith and verse.” I will be your son-in-law. Grant me your daughter’s hand forthwith. Due to her youthfulness, even if she neglects to add salt to her preparation of rice and accompanying fare, it will still be delicious to me. Moreover, if someone brings salt into the temple, he will have to go to hell as long as there are sun and moon. If someone eats without salt inside my temple, he will get the benefit of observing a thousand chandrayana vratams. You are one of the best of my

bhakthas and you should give your daughter as my bride. Ask and receive whatever you want. I will grant whatever you wish, I am your son-in-law. Do not think that I am an old man- I am always young”.

Markandeya was delighted and said”All my penance has yielded the right fruit and so have my birth and my actions. Now all the devatas and my ancestors are overjoyed. I do not want anything else – I have seen you in person. Nevertheless, since You have asked me to ask for what I want, grant me the following:

You should reside here till the end of this Kalpa with my daughter and this forest that will give all that is auspicious should be known by my name. You should partake rice, etc. without salt. Lastly, please grant me Moksha” he finished.

“So be it” said ShrInivasan. “Listen to me. Since I came here from Akaasham, this place will be known as Akaashanagaram> because of your penance it will also be known as “MarkaNDeyasthalam.” And it will be known as “TulasIvanam” as well because of TuLasi’s penance. If someone stays her for a minute or even for half a minute, he will attain whatever he wants. Perform the wedding accordingly”

Rishi said “You are single and I do not have relatives either. How can we perform the wedding? So, please invite the devas so that the wedding shall take place before them”.

The Lord Ramakantan who wanted to bless all his Bhaktas, thought of Garudan, who appeared immediately and prostrated and praised Him and asked why he had been summoned to His presence.

ShrI BhoomidevI sameta ShrinivAsaprabraHmaNe namaH

ShrI BhoomidevI sameta ShrinivAsaprabraHmaNe namaH

Chapter 7

Again Brahma narrated:

“Listen He Pakshin! My wedding has been decided. Go to Satyalokam and give the wedding invitation to Brahma. Also, inform Vayu, Indra, and all the DikpaalakAs , rishis, and all the thirty three crore devas that I am to be wed. Bring everyone quickly, you are quite capable of this task “ Bhagavan told Garudan. He then wrote the letter and gave it to Garudan and said “Go!” with great affection.

Vinatha’s son Garudan, was instructed by ShrInivasan thus; he praised the Lord again and again and went to Satyalokam. He first paid his respects with folded hands to Brahma who was seated in his court and said, “Wedding of ShrI VAsudevA is to take place soon. MArkanDeya has performed very severe penance that is extremely difficult to perform. And BhagavAn has been pleased and will be his son-in-law. Lakshmi herself is his daughter and has taken the form of a beautiful young girl. He will wed her to ShrInivAsan in TuLsIvanam. You should all come with Indran and all the other Devas to seek His blessings”.

Saying this, he gave the wedding invitation to Brahma.

Brahma looked at the invitation and was overjoyed. He read it aloud to the Devas who were present there:

“ Let all auspiciousness be to you He Vaakpate! Blessings to you. This is being written by Me, whose name is NArAyaNa. I am well and you too should write back to me about your welfare.

“Lakshmi DevI has incarnated as DharA as MarkaNDeya’s daughter. I will be his son-in-law since he has performed this severe penance. My wedding is to take place in the month of Aippasi in a shubhalagnam in the shubhamuhurtham on dashamI on the day of ShravanaNam. You should come joyfully to TuLasIvanam with all the Devas and participate in the wedding.

“I will incarnate in every Yuga to protect all the good people and to destroy the evil, and to bless all my bhakthas.

“This has been written by Madhavan with affection towards you”

Having heard this, all the Devas went to TuLasIvanam led by Brahma.

With great pleasure, SarasvatI Devi adorned Bhoomi Devi’s beautiful, brilliant face with exquisite ornaments. She bedecked Her hands with bracelets, wristlets, and armllets. IndraNi ornamented Her beautiful, soft feet with opulent anklets and pAda kaNkaNams. The delighted Indrapatni dressed Bhoomi with spectacular silks.

Then, the happy father, MarkanDeya rishi brought his daughter - who was bejeweled and bedecked and surrounded by all the important Devas, and who is praised by the whole universe for Her divine qualities and who purifies all sins - to ShrInivasan and gave Her in the presence of all the devarishis with fragrant



and sacred water. He tied the Kautukam in their presence and Lord ShrInivasan clasped her hand with great joy and accepted her. He came around the Agni thrice according to “vikhanssutram” and was delighted and exhilarated.

Then Brahma praised Him and returned to his world with his Devi and with other Devas. All the devas also went back to their abodes.

Even today, ShrInivAsan resides with Bhoomi Devi to bless his Bhakthas. He created the superior and splendid shuddhAnanda VimAnam that can fulfill everyone’s wishes just on sight.

ShrI BhoomidevI sameta ShrinivAsaprabraHmaNe namaH

A little note on the original:

The adjectives used for Piratti as the Divine Bride are just unparalleled.

The words used are:

“suvastravibhUsHaNasamyutaam” ( adorned with beautiful jewels and silks and notice the prefix “su” ) ,

“sakalalokasumaanitasadguNaam” ( respected and held in high esteem by all the worlds for Her divine qualities),

“suravarapramukhairupasevitaam” ( she is surrounded and saluted by all the important devas- so there is no question that the same is true of others too)

and the last one is:

“sakalapApaharAm” ( She destroys all sin).

There is one more “svasutAm” – here this means that this is his (markandeya rishi’s daughter – the prefix here is “sva” to the word ‘suta’ which means daughter) – the right to call her his daughter has been earned by him with his pure heart and severe penance, though She is the Divine Mother of the whole Universe and beyond.

The adjective used for the sacred water with which the Rishi weds them is

“divya + udakam (water) = divyodakam”

Also, the happiness of the father who gets the right bridegroom who is peerless and Supreme, for a daughter who is also unsurpassed and unequalled is portrayed in the original; and the delight of everyone present in the wedding including the Groom is depicted well.

## ShrI BhoomidevI sameta ShrinivAsaprabrahmaNe namaH

### Chapter 8

Again Brahma spoke to Narada:

“ Those who worship the Lord and Bhoomi Devi in TuLasIvanam will be freed of all sins and attain moksham. If someone worships him even with one TuLasI leaf, he will attain closeness with the Lord. One who renovates the temple will become an emperor. If someone performs Bramotsavam of ShrInivAsan, he will get children, wealth, etc. and will attain moksham in the end.

If someone bathes in the ahorAtrapushkariNi on a Saturday and worships BhoomiDevi and ShrInivAsan, he will attain VaikunTam. If someone eats without salt in the middle of the temple for one night, he will get the benefit of having performed one lakh chaNdrAyaNam. If someone desires children they should eat without salt in the temple for five nights; one who wants wealth must eat without salt in the temple for a ManDalam; and one who desires a wife must eat without salt inside the temple for a year and one who desires knowledge must do this for three years. However, a person who desires moksham should eat without salt in the temple for twelve years, having bathed in the ahorAtra pushkariNi and worshipped ShrInivasan.

“ If someone worships the Lord of the celestial beings with one lakh TuLasi leaves, he will attain VaikuNTam. Someone who performs thirumanjanam with five kinds of juices will live happily in Vaikuntam for a long time, being free of all sins. If a

bhaktha feeds brahmins in MarkaNDeyakshetram, then he will get the benefit of feeding one crore Brahmins. There is no kshetram that is equal to MArkaNDeyakshetram, there has not been one and there will never be one equal to this kshetram.

“ If someone recites and worships ShrIBhoomipati with the stotram recited by MArkaNDeyar, he will attain VaikunTam – there is no doubt about this. If someone does vanapradakshiNam, then ShrInivAsan grants his all wishes. One who wants children gets children and all his wishes will be fulfilled. There is no doubt about this either. If someone does pradakshinam of the Lordwith bhakthi, reciting the rik “agnenaya” he will have all his wishes fulfilled. There is no doubt.”

ShrI BhoomidevI sameta ShrInivAsparabrahmaNe namaH

ShrI BhoomidevIsametha ShrInivAsaparabrahmaNe NamaH

ShrI BhoomidevI sameta ShrInivAsparabrahmaNe namaH

Chapter 9

Brahma continued:

“ Once Brahma, who is the chief of Satyaloka, came to the earth to Akaashanagaram (the best among kshetrans), with all the other devAs, gandharavAs, apsarAs, yakshAs and kinnarAs to worship Hari. With deep devotion, he praised the merciful ShriniVAsa and Bhoomi devI with superior vedavAkhyAs.

“ Salutations to you, oh Lord, who is the embodiment of countless auspicious qualities. All the important devas like Svayambhu and Shiva worship you. You are the creator and protector of the whole universe. You have thousand heads, thousand eyes, two thousand arms and two thousand feet. The Sun and Moon are your eyes and Agni is your face and the winds are your ears. Even the Vedas return, failing to reach Him even with their thoughts and He is all bliss and happiness. He is the Brahman. I prostrate before this ShriHari. You are the remover of all bondage and You are far from all that is not good, and You are the emperor of all the Bhagavathas. Salutations to you, Oh ShrIniVasa!”

Having spoken thus, he went around Hari in PradakshiNam with all the Devas and requested Him to grant permission to perform celebrations. Having received His consent, Brahma performed Utsavam for nine days and did “avabhritasnaanam” in the ahorAtrapushkariNI with all the rishis and devAs. He presented everyone who had come to see the Utsavam with tasty feasts, rich clothes, jewels, etc. All the dEvas returned to their abodes after taking leave from Brahma.

“He Narada! Even today, Brahma comes here with all the celestial beings during the waxing of moon in the month of Aippasi, and performs Utsavam. Similarly Brahma comes during the month of Panguni and hoists the Utsava flag on the day of the star chithrai. He then performs the festival according to VaikhAnasa rules with pomp and splendour with all the Mangala vadhyams amid vedic chanting for nine days; and after the day of the chariot, bathes in AhorAthrapushkariNi as “avabhritasnaanam” on the sacred day of shravana and ekadashi. Hence there is no kshetram that equals this kshetram- there has never been and there never will be!

“A person who takes even one step to go to Akaashanagaram is a celestial being and this is the absolute truth. There is no doubt about this. Hari came from the sky to this

kshetram that manifested, so this kshetram is called 'AkAshanagarI'. After seeing this AkAshanagarI, a person will not be born again. It is known as "MARkanDeyasthalam" because of MARkanDeyA's penance; and it is also known as 'TuLasIvanam' because of TuLasIdevi's penance. A person becomes the king of devas if he worships the Lord in AkAshangarI with bunches of TuLasI for a minute - or even for half a minute.

"Listen to me Narada! I will tell you the guidelines for bathing in the theerthams. If someone even thinks about this, he will not be bothered by Mrithyu. AhorAthra pushkariNi is towards the northeast of ShrInivAsa and pushkariNi gives the benefits for bathing night and day. This pushkariNI is a destroyer of all sins including brhamahatyA and drinking wine and gives the results of performing one lakh paundrikA yagas. Bathing in this pond on full moon day, new moon day and eclipses of the sun and moon destroys the sins committed in crores of lives. Bathing here on New Year's Day (Indian calendar), sankranthi, and the days of the parents destroys the sins of many brahmahatyAs.

"Once there was a man called Devasharma, who was a descendant of Bharadhwaja lineage and was an expert in all the shastras. He saw Jaimini's daughter who was picking flowers in the garden. He was overcome by Manmathan and misbehaved with her. She called out to her father, who came running and cursed Devasharma thus: "You will become a krauncha bird this instant!" Devasharma was very sorry and he prayed to the rishi and was told by him "Go to MARkanDeyakshetram and live on the branch of a tree. After a few days, there will be strong winds; and the branch will fall into the AhorAtrapushkariNi and you will be purified by its waters, there is no other alternative".

At that same instant, Devasharma became a krauncha bird on the branch of a tree on the bank of the AhorAtrapushkariNi. After time had passed, the branch on which he lived broke due to powerful winds and fell in the water of the pushkariNi at midnight. As soon as he got wet with the drops of water, he took his original form, and climbed onto a decorated airship, and started to fly to VaikunTam. Then, Varuna's followers stopped him and asked him "Where are you going? You were in the water at night - and those who bathe in the water after one yamam should be punished. You fell in this water at midnight and how can you go in this wonderful vehicle to Vishnu's abode?" Hearing this, Vishnu's messengers laughed at them said "This AhorAtrapushkariNi gives benefits night and day. Without knowing the fine points of dharma, you are speaking. If you have any doubts, go and ask VARuna himself!" So saying they went to VaikunTam.

From then onwards, that pond is known as AhoRatrapushkarinI. By bathing in this pushkarinI, one attains VaikunTam. There is a TuLasi tree on the eastern bank of this pond. After doing AshtAkshara mantram under this tree, if someone gives TAMboolam, Kanya, a cow that gives milk, along with money, he will attain VaikunTam, free of all sins. On bathing here on Saturdays, Fridays, Tuesdays, on the janmanakshatram and on the day of ShravanaNanakshatram, one is cleansed of all sins.

"There is a teertham called 'shArngateertham' to the southwest of that Lord. If someone even thinks of this teertham he will be freed of all sins, and what can be said about the results of bathing in this pond? Endless wealth is attained by just seeing this theertham and this gives many times more benefits than bathing in DanyshkoTi.

To the north, there is another teertham called 'Suryateertham'. By seeing, listening and just thinking about this theertham, a person can attain moksham. Once,

Shiva cut off Brahma's head and went to all the kshetrams and bathed to get rid of that sin. But this did not happen. Then, he reached the Lord in AkAshanagaram and became pure by bathing in this Suryatheertham. He also became very bright (kAnti) and even today, he does penance on the bank of this Suryateertham. As Surya renovated this very sacred teertham, it is called suryateertham. Thirtythree crore Devas, bathe here everyday. Those who cannot bathe here everyday, should bathe for three months. If someone is not able to do that, he should bathe here during the month of Karthikai. If that is also not possible, he should bathe here on a Sunday of the month of Karthikai. Then he will be free of five sins and will become a king just by bathing in this teertham on Sunday. By bathing here on a Monday, he becomes the king of seven islands, there is no doubt about this. He will become Indra by bathing here on a Tuesday and will become Brahma by bathing on a Wednesday. By bathing on a Thursday, one can attain moksham and will not be reborn. After killing Daksha, Shiva washed his tresses of hair here on a Sunday of the month of Karthikai. After bathing here, wheat or fruit should be given as donation with great devotion. Bathing here and not worshipping ShrInivAsan begets a person all sins and lands him in the hell called Rauravam. Hence one should bathe here and worship ShrinivAsan.

There is a teertham called Indrateertham to the northeast of Lord ShrInivAsa. One who bathes here with devotion gets all the benefits of performing all yagyas. Long back, Indra bathed in this teertham and was freed of the papam of befriending Ahalya.

Then to the south there is the Brahmateertham. By just looking at this, it is possible to get all knowledge and bathing here gives the quality of Brahma. Brahma became the chief of Satyalokam by bathing here. One who bathes in this teertham will get all his wishes fulfilled.

This is the sacred history of the five teertham, Oh Narada! This is a well guarded secret!

Such is the glory of VAsudevan. The sacred story of MarkanDeyakshetram purifies everyone who listens to it. There is no doubt about this. This is sung and read by rishis and people with great devotion. One who wakes up in the early hours of the morning and reads this, becomes worthy of attaining dhramam, artham, kamam and moksham. The home that houses this pure PuraNam is equal to Kurkshetram and there is no doubt about this. The person who relates this purANam should be honoured with clothes and jewels. There is no doubt that ShrInivAsan will protect him. Those who listen to this puraNam will achieve all kinds of prosperity and MangaLam.

ShrI BhoomidevI sameta ShrInivAsparabrahmaNe namaH  
SthalapuRaNam is concluded