



Śrī Varuthinī Ekādaśī

Issue no: 36

3rd May 2016

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WHAT CAUSED SATI TO DESTROY HER BODY?*His Divine Grace**A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

The main reason for Sati giving up her body was that her father Daksa disrespected her husband Lord Shiva by performing a sacrifice without inviting him. Although any sacrifice is supposedly intended to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vishnu, generally when a sacrifice is performed, all the demigods, like Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva are invited. It is also customary to invite the other principal demigods such as Indra and Chandra. It is said that unless all the demigods are present, no sacrifice is complete. However, in the tension between the father-in-law and son-in-law, Daksa began a sacrificial performance, to which Lord Shiva was not even invited. Daksa was the chief progenitor employed by Lord Brahma. He was also a son of Brahma. Thus he held a respectable position. However, this simply resulted in him becoming proud.

Daksa was under the impression that he was exalted in both prestige and opulence. He regretted that he had offered his daughter to a person, who in his opinion, was not only poor but devoid of culture. Daksa may have opined that, although she was a chaste woman dedicated to her husband, her husband was in a pathetic condition and was no longer worthy of her respect.

To counteract such thoughts, Sati stated that the opulence possessed by her husband could not be understood by materialistic persons like Daksa and his followers who were flatterers and were engaged in fruitive activities. Her husband was different to them. He possessed all kind of opulences which could be displayed simply by his willing. However, he was not habituated to exhibit them. Therefore such opulence are called *avyakta*, or unmanifested. The opulence Lord Shiva possessed is in the realm of renunciation and love of God, and certainly not a material exhibition intended for sense gratification methods. Such opulences are possessed by spiritually exalted personalities like the Kumaras, Narada and Lord Shiva and not others.

Sati wanted to impress upon her father that he should not think her husband to be unqualified. Sati, being the devoted wife of Lord Shiva, offers all kinds of material opulence to those who worship her husband. Lord Shiva's worshipers sometimes appear more opulent than the worshipers of



Lord Vishnu. This is because Durga, or Sati - the superintendent of the material energy - in order to glorify her husband, offers all material opulence to the worshipers of Lord Shiva. However, the worshipers of Vishnu are blessed with spiritual elevation, and therefore their material opulence is sometimes found to decrease.

Shambhu, Lord Shiva, is the greatest of all devotees of Lord Vishnu. Sati has described that Lord Shiva is always in a transcendental position because he is situated on the pure Vasudeva platform. Vasudeva is that state from which Krishna, *Vāsudeva*, is born. Thus Lord Shiva is the greatest devotee of Lord Krishna. Sati's behavior here is exemplary because no one should tolerate blasphemy against Lord Vishnu or His devotee.

Sati was not aggrieved for her personal association with Lord Shiva. Conversely, because her body was related with Daksa, who is an offender to Lord Shiva's lotus feet, she felt herself to be condemned. Due to remembrance of this relationship, her body was always a source of unhappiness and thus Sati decided to give it up.

—Srimad Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 4: The Creation of the Fourth Order » SB 4.3: Talks Between Lord Shiva and Sati » Verse: 1, 21, 22, 23 » Purport by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. ❀

VIRABHADRA BEHEADS DAKSA*Conversation between Maitreya and Vidura*

When the angered Sati gave up her body, there was a tumultuous roar from all over the universe. How is it that Sati, the wife of the most respected demigod, Lord Shiva, quit her body in such a manner?

It was astonishing that Daksa, who was *prajāpati*, the maintainer of all living entities, was so disrespectful to his own daughter. Sati was not only a chaste wife but was also a great personality, yet she gave up her body because of his neglectful behavior. Daksa is so hardhearted that he is unworthy to be a *brāhmaṇa*. He will gain extensive ill fame for three reasons: 1) his offenses to his qualified daughter, 2) his failure to prevent her death, and 3) his envy towards the greatest devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

While those gathered for the sacrifice were talking about the shocking death of Sati, those who accompanied Sati prepared themselves to kill Daksa. Raising their weapons, they came forward aggressively. Bhṛigu Muni saw the danger in their threatening advances. Offering oblations into the southern side of the sacrificial fire, he hastily uttered mantric hymns from the *Yajur Veda* by which the destroyers of *yajñic* performances would be killed.

When Bhṛigu Muni thus offered oblations to the fire, many thousands of demigods named *Ṛbhū*s immediately manifested. All of them were powerful, having achieved strength from Soma, the Moon-God. When the *Ṛbhū* demigods attacked the ghosts and Guhyakas with half-burned fuel from the *yajña* fire, all the attendants of Sati fled in different directions and disappeared. This was possible simply because of *brahma-tejas*, brahminical power.

When Lord Shiva heard from Narada that his wife Sati is now dead because of *prajāpati* Daksa's insult to her and his soldiers had been driven away by the *Ṛbhū* demigods, he became terribly angry. Thus the furious Lord Shiva bit his lip with his teeth and plucked a strand of hair from his head which then blazed like fire. He stood up at once, laughing like a madman, and dashed the hair to the ground. A terrifying black demon, as high as the sky and as bright as three suns combined, was thereby created. His teeth were very dreadful and his hair blazed like fire. He had thousands of arms equipped with various weapons, and he was garlanded with human skulls. Approaching Lord Shiva with



Lord Shiva and Virabhadra

folded hands, that gigantic demon asked, "What shall I do, my Lord?". Lord Shiva, who is known as Bhutanatha, immediately ordered, "Because you are the embodiment of my power, you are the foremost of all my associates. Therefore, I order you to kill Daksa and all his soldiers at the sacrifice."

That black demon called Virabhadra, was the personified anger of Lord Shiva. He was also prepared to execute anything ordered of him. Considering himself invincible, he departed after circumambulating Lord Shiva. Many other soldiers of Lord Shiva followed him making a tumultuous uproar. Virabhadra carried a great trident, fearful enough to kill even death, and on his legs he wore bangles which seemed to roar.

At that time, all the people assembled in the sacrificial arena - the priests, the chief of the sacrificial performance, the *brāhmaṇas* and their wives - wondered why did it suddenly become so dark. Upon discussion, they understood that it was a dust storm and in their hearts they felt dread. Conjecturing on the origin of the storm, they said: There is no wind blowing, no cows are passing, nor is it possible that this dust storm could be raised by plunderers, due to the presence of the powerful King Barhi, who would punish them. Where is this dust storm blowing from? Is the dissolution of the planet now to occur?

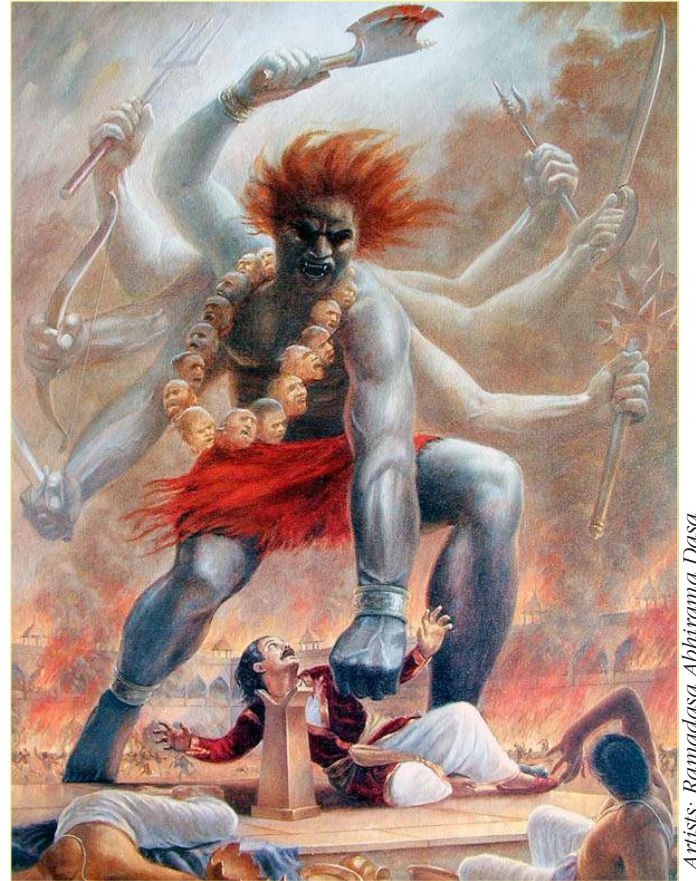
Prasuti, the wife of Daksa, and the other assembled women, became very anxious and said: This danger is caused by Daksa because the faultless Sati quit her body even in the presence of her sisters. In appreciation of the prowess of Lord Shiva, she told how at the time of dissolution, Lord Shiva's hair is scattered, and he pierces the rulers of the different directions with his trident. He laughs and dances proudly, scattering their hands like flags, as thunder scatters the clouds all over the world.

The gigantic Virabhadra bared his fearful teeth. By the movements of his brows he scattered the luminaries all over the sky, and covered them with his strong, piercing effulgence. Because of the misbehavior of Daksa, even Lord Brahma, Daksa's father, could not have been saved from Virabhadra's exhibition of anger. While all the people talked amongst themselves, Daksa saw dangerous omens from all sides, from the earth and from the sky. All the followers of Lord Shiva surrounded the arena of sacrifice. They were of short stature, were equipped with various kinds of weapons and their bodies appeared to be like those of sharks, blackish and yellowish. They ran through the sacrificial arena creating havoc and wrecking destruction.

Some of the soldiers pulled down the pillars which were supporting the tent made for the sacrifice, some of them entered the female quarters, some began destroying the sacrificial arena, and some entered the kitchen and the residential quarters. They broke all the pots made for use in the sacrifice, and some of them began to extinguish the sacrificial fire. Some tore down the boundary wall of the sacrificial arena, and some passed urine on the arena. Some blocked the way of the fleeing sages, some threatened the women assembled there, and some arrested the demigods who were fleeing the sacrificial arena. There was a continuous shower of stones, and all the priests and other members assembled at the sacrifice were put into immense misery. For fear of their lives, they dispersed in different directions.

Maniman, one of the followers of Lord Shiva, arrested Bhrigu Muni, and Virabhadra, the black demon, arrested *prajāpati* Daksa. Another follower, Candessa, arrested Pusa and Nandishvara arrested the demigod Bhaga. Virabhadra then tore off the mustache of Bhrigu, who was offering the sacrificial oblations with his hands in the fire. Virabhadra immediately caught Bhaga, who had been moving his eyebrows during Bhrigu's cursing of Lord Shiva, and out of great anger thrust him to the ground and forcibly put out his eyes.

Just as Baladeva knocked out the teeth of Dantavakra, the King of Kalinga, during the gambling match at the marriage ceremony of Aniruddha, Virabhadra knocked out the teeth of both Daksa and Pusa. This was in retaliation of Daksa showing his teeth while cursing Lord Shiva, and Pusa's broad sympathetic smirk while this took place. Then the giant Virabhadra sat on the



Artist: Ramadasa Abhirama Dasa

chest of Daksa and tried to cut off his head, but was unsuccessful. He tried to cut off the head of Daksa with hymns as well as weapons, but found it impossible to even cut his skin. Thus Virabhadra was exceedingly bewildered.

Then Virabhadra saw the wooden device that is used to kill the animals for the sacrifice. He made use of this device to behead Daksa. Upon seeing the action of Virabhadra, the party of Lord Shiva was pleased and cried out joyfully. All the bhutas, ghosts and demons that had come simultaneously made a tumultuous sound. On the other hand, the *brāhmaṇas* in charge of the sacrifice cried out in grief at the death of Daksa. Virabhadra then took his head and with great anger threw it into the southern side of the sacrificial fire, offering it as an oblation. In this way the followers of Lord Shiva devastated the sacrificial arena. After setting the whole place on fire, they departed for their master's abode, Kailash.

—Srimad Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 4: The Creation of the Fourth Order » SB 4.4. Satī Quits Her Body » Verse: 28-34 and SB 4.5. Frustration of the Sacrifice of Dakṣa » Verse: 1-26, ॐ



LORD SHIVA'S MERCY ON DAKSA*Sriman Purnaprajna Dasa*

Having been defeated and injured by Lord Shiva's soldiers, the *brāhmaṇas* and demigods went to take shelter of Lord Brahma. After offering their obeisance to the Grandsire, they anxiously explained all that had taken place. Actually, Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma had foreseen what would happen, and for that reason they had not attended the sacrifice of Daksa.

After hearing from the demigods, Lord Brahma replied, "You cannot become happy by performing a sacrifice and at the same time blaspheming a great personality. By excluding Lord Shiva from his share of the sacrificial offerings, you have all become offenders at his lotus feet. Therefore, you must go and surrender unto him by falling down at his lotus feet without any mental reservations, and in this way, he may become pleased. Lord Shiva is so powerful that he can immediately destroy all the planets, along with their presiding deities. Because he has become very aggrieved due to the loss of his wife, as well as Daksa's cruel words, it behooves you to go and beg for his forgiveness."

Thereafter, Lord Brahma, escorted the demigods and great sages to Lord Shiva's abode, which is known as Kailash Hill. While on the way, they passed over the Saugandhika forest, where Alakapuri, the abode of Kuvera, is situated. The whole area was astonishingly beautiful due to the forests filled with all varieties of fruit trees and flowers, as well as the lakes, which abounded with lotus flowers and swans. The demigods admired the bathing ghats, whose stairways were made of vaidurya stone.

At Kailash Hill there were many waterfalls whose pleasing sounds combined with the crowing of peacocks and humming of bees. The whole area was inhabited by Kinnaras and Gandharvas, along with their beautiful consorts, the Apsaras, and within the caves lived Siddhas in the company of their wives. The entire region was filled with the very best of trees, such as the mandara, parijata, tamala, tala, arjuna, mango, kadamba, campaka, ashoka, malati, mallika, madhavi and bakula, so that the scented breezes served to agitate the minds of the celestial women for sexual enjoyment.

Indeed, due to an abundance of desire trees, the abode of Lord Shiva appeared to resemble the planet of Lord Krishna in the spiritual world. Because of the many varieties of lotuses and other

fragrant flowers, the entire forest seemed to be one great garden wherein all kinds of animals roamed, including musk deer.

In Kailash there are two rivers, the Nanda and Alakananda, which are sanctified by the dust from the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda. The celestial damsels come to bathe in these rivers after having satisfied their lust by engaging in sexual activities with their husbands. After the bathing of the heavenly damsels, the water becomes yellowish due to the kunkuma from their bodies. For this reason, the elephants along with their wives come to bathe and drink, even if they are not really thirsty.

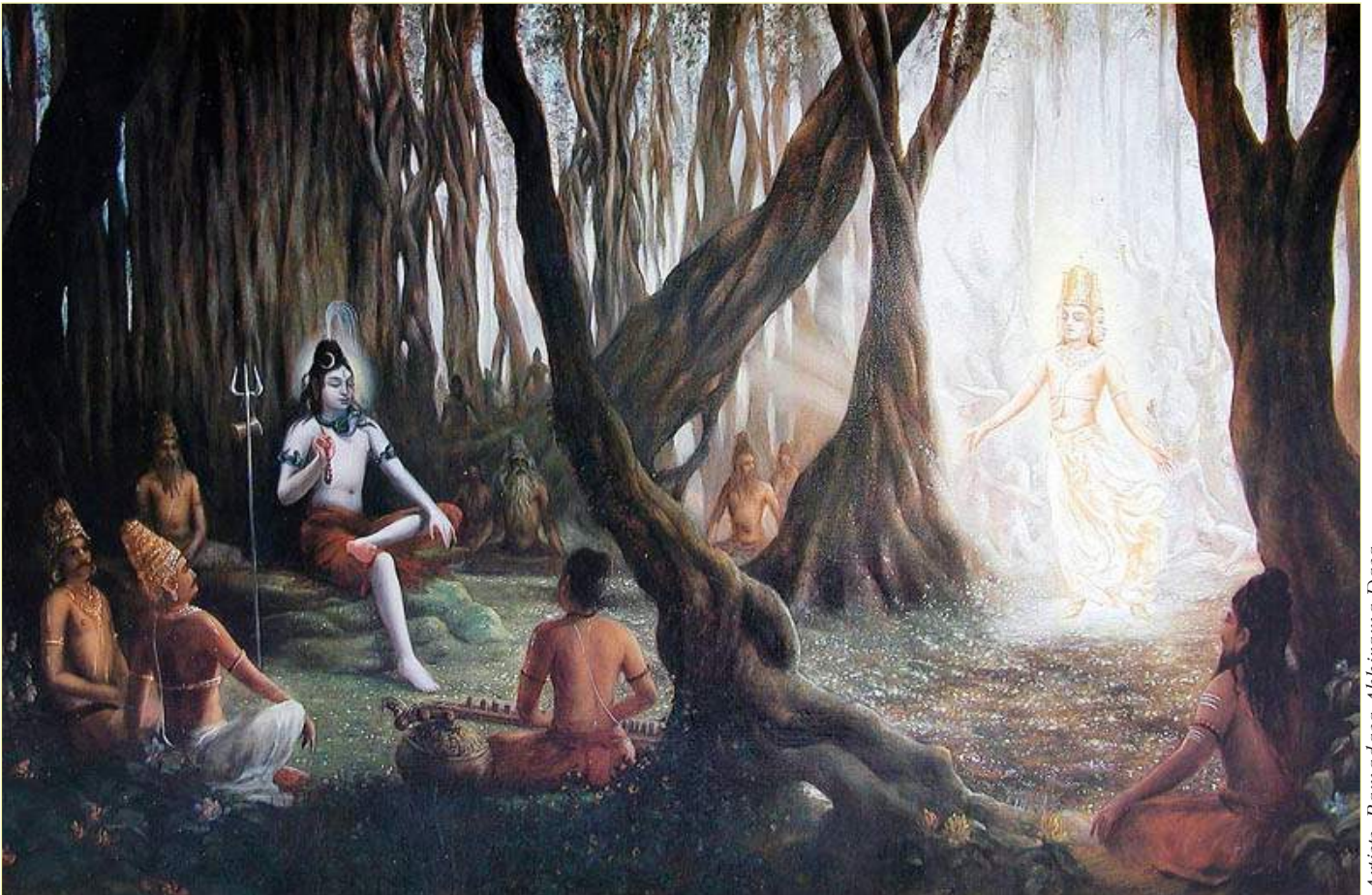
The demigods saw a small lake named Alakananda, where Sati used to bathe. Finally they came to a place where they saw a great banyan tree which was one hundred yojanas tall. The shade of this tree made the air surrounding it very cool. Similarly, as there were no bird's nests, the atmosphere was calm and quiet. The demigods saw Lord Shiva sitting underneath this tree. His expression was serene and so it seemed that he was no longer angry.

Lord Shiva was seated upon a deerskin, and was surrounded by great souls like Kuvera, Narada and the four Kumaras. Due to his body smeared with ashes, he appeared like an evening cloud, and his hair was decorated with the symbol of a crescent-moon. Because he was engaged in speaking about the Absolute Truth, the forefinger of his right hand, which held a string of *rudrākṣa* beads, was in the mode of argument. His left leg was placed upon his right thigh, and his left hand was resting upon his left thigh, a sitting posture that is called *virāsana*.

The demigods and *brāhmaṇas* offered their obeisances to Lord Shiva with folded hands. In turn, when Lord Shiva saw Lord Brahma before him, he stood up and then bowed to touch his feet, as did all the sages, headed by Narada. After being worshipped, Lord Brahma smiled to conceal his concern that Lord Shiva might still be enraged.

Lord Brahma then said, "My dear Lord Shiva, I know that you are the controller of the entire material manifestation, and thus you create, maintain and annihilate it exactly as a spider creates, maintains and winds up its web."

"My dear Lord, devotees who have fully dedicated their lives unto your lotus feet certainly see the Paramatma within everyone and thus do not discriminate between one living entity and another. They never become overwhelmed by



Artist: Ramadasa Abhirama Dasa

anger like the animals who see everything with differentiation. Those who discriminate, upon seeing the flourishing condition of others, give them distress by uttering harsh words. For this, they will be killed by providence. Therefore, there is no need for them to be killed again by an exalted personality like you. Materialists are always bewildered by maya, so a compassionate saintly person does not take their offenses seriously. Nor does he retaliate.”

“My dear Lord, you are never bewildered by the illusory energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Consequently you should be merciful toward those who are bewildered. You have a right to receive a share of the sacrificial offerings, but the foolish priests neglected you. As a result, you destroyed everything. So the sacrifice remains unfinished. Please do what is needed so that the sacrifice can be resumed and then you may take your rightful share. Let Daksa get back his life, Bhrigu his moustache, Bhaga his eyes, and Pusha his teeth. Also let the brahmanas who were injured by your soldiers become healed, by your grace.”

Lord Shiva replied, “My dear father, I do not mind the childish offenses of the less-intelligent demigods. I have punished them just to bring them to their senses. Since Daksa’s head has been

burned to ashes, he shall receive the head of a goat. Bhaga will be able to see his share of the sacrifice through the eyes of Mitra. Pusha will be able to chew only through the teeth of his disciples, or if he eats independently, he will have to be satisfied with dough made from chickpeas flour. Bhrigu will get the beard from the goat’s head that is given to Daksa. The demigods and priests who have agreed to give me my share of the sacrificial offerings will recover from all their injuries. However, those whose arms were severed will have to work with the arms of the Ashwini-kumaras, and those whose hands were cut off will have to work with the hands of Pusha.”

Everyone was satisfied with this resolution and thereafter, Bhrigu invited Lord Shiva to come to the sacrificial arena. Lord Shiva, accompanied by Lord Brahma, the demigods, and sages then went to the place where the sacrifice had been demolished. Under Lord Shiva’s direction, the head of a goat that was meant for sacrifice was placed on Daksa’s shoulders. As soon as the goat’s head was joined to his body, Daksa regained consciousness, and upon awakening from his slumber, he saw Lord Shiva standing before him.

Seeing Lord Shiva with a respectful attitude,



Artist: Dhruva Dasa

Daksa's heart, which had been polluted by envy, immediately became cleansed. Daksa wanted to offer suitable prayers to Lord Shiva, but as he sorrowfully remembered the death of his daughter, Sati, his eyes filled with tears and his voice choked up. He could not speak. Having come to his senses, Daksa pacified his mind with great endeavor.

He then prayed, "My dear Lord, I committed a great offense, but you are so kind that instead of withdrawing your mercy, you have exhibited great favor by punishing me. I did not know your glories and thus I criticized you in the assembly of demigods and sages. As a result, I was destined to plunge to hell. You have saved me from that by punishing me and thus bringing me to right consciousness."

After being pardoned by Lord Shiva, Daksa took permission from Lord Brahma and with the help of the *brāhmaṇas* resumed the sacrifice. First, the sacrificial arena was purified, followed by offering oblations into the fire called *purodāśa*. After the sanctity of the sacrificial arena had been fully restored, Daksa offered ghee into the fire as mantras from the *Yajur Veda* were being chanted. Lord Vishnu then appeared there, riding upon the shoulders of Garuda.

The Lord's great effulgence diminished the luster

of all other present. In His eight hands he held a conch shell, wheel, club, lotus flower, arrow, bow, shield and sword. Due to His various ornaments, the Lord's entire body resembled a blossoming tree beautifully decorated with various kinds of flowers. The Lord's enchanting smile captivated all those who saw Him, especially the devotees. The white camaras that appeared on both sides of His body looked like swans and the white canopy over his head appeared like the moon.

As soon as Lord Vishnu appeared, all the demigods and sages, including Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva, prostrated themselves before Him in obeisance. Although Brahma had previously referred to Lord Shiva as supreme, now both he and Lord Shiva prostrated themselves before Lord Vishnu.

The demigods and sages then stood before Lord Vishnu with folded hands and offered prayers with great awe and veneration. Everyone admitted their own faults, and glorified the Lord to the best of their ability.

Lord Shiva prayed, "My dear Lord, my mind and consciousness are always fixed upon Your lotus feet, which are worshiped by all liberated sages. Because my mind is engaged in this way, I am no longer disturbed by persons who blaspheme me, claiming that my activities are not pure."

Lord Vishnu replied by instructing Daksa about His supreme position: "O twice-born one, I am the original cause of all causes, but because I expand Myself to act through My material energy, My different representations are variously named. Thus, Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva are not different from Me, nor are any of the other living beings. Only one who is in ignorance thinks that Lord Shiva or anyone else is independent of Me. Just as no one considers the head and other bodily limbs to be separate from the whole body, those who understand the truth see everything in relation with Me."

Thereafter, Daksa worshiped Lord Vishnu by resuming his sacrificial performance. After completing the sacrifice, he very respectfully worshiped Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva separately with their respective shares of the sacrificial offerings. Finally, after satisfying all others present, Daksa took his *avabhṛtha* bath. He felt completely satisfied because he was once again situated on the correct path of religion.

The demigods then blessed Daksa so that he might always increase in piety, and thereafter, they departed for their respective abodes.



After giving up her body, Sati was born again as the daughter of Menaka and the king of the Himalayas. Later on, she once again accepted Lord Shiva as her husband, since that is their eternal relationship.

Maitreya continued, "My dear Vidura, I heard this story of the Daksa-yajna from Uddhava, the great disciple of Brihaspati. If one hears and describes this narration with faith and devotion, he will certainly become cleansed of all the contamination of material existence."

—Adopted from the book "Srimad Bhagavatam in story form" by Purnaprajna Das. ❀

RE-BIRTH OF SATI AND DAKSA

Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakur

The term 'Sati quit her body' means that within her heart she gave up her relationship with Daksa. Since Sati is the superintendent deity of the external potency, when she quit her body she did not get a spiritual body. Rather she immediately transferred herself into the womb of Menaka, her future mother. She gave up the body she had received



Sati's rebirth as Parvati

nityam bhāgavata-sevayā

from Daksa and accepted another, better body.

Daksa, who was first born during the reign of Svayambhuva Manu, offended Lord Shiva and was punished by having the head of a goat substituted for his own head. Having been insulted in this manner, he too gave up that body. In the sixth manvantara, called the Caksusa manvantara, he was born again in the womb of Marisa as Daksa.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.30.49), this fact is confirmed.

*cākṣuṣeṭvantareprāpte
prāk-sargekāla-vidrute
yaḥsasarjaprajāiṣṭāḥ
sadakṣodaiva-coditāḥ*

"His previous body had been destroyed, but he, the same Daksa, inspired by the supreme will created all the desired living entities in the Caksusa manvantara." Thus Daksa regained his previous opulence and again begot thousands and millions of children to fill the three worlds.

— From *Sārāntha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Srila Vishvanātha Chakravartī Thakura. ❀



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

Dedicated to

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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Our heart felt thanks to Isha Prakash Das for helping as Copy Editor, Vrajsevika Devi Dasi for her Sanskrit and Bengali Translations and Rasa Manjari Devi Dasi for her assistance.

Quotations from the books, letters, and lectures of
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(Śrīmad-bhāgavata mātmya , Chapter Three)