

DITI STARTS HER AUSTERITIES



Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Kaśyapa Muni, thinking in this way, became somewhat angry. Condemning himself, O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, descendant of Kuru, he spoke to Diti as follows.

Kaśyapa Muni said: My dear gentle wife, if

you follow my instructions regarding this vow for at least one year, you will surely get a son who will be able to kill Indra. However, if you deviate from this vow of following the Vaiṣṇava principles, you will get a son who will be favorable to Indra.

Diti replied: My dear brāhmaṇa, I must accept your advice and follow the vow. Now let me understand what I have to do, what is forbidden and what will not break the vow. Please clearly state all this to me.

Kaśyapa Muni said: My dear wife, to follow this vow, do not be violent or cause harm to anyone. Do not curse anyone, and do not

Speak lies. Do not cut your nails and hair, and do not touch impure things like skulls and bones.

Never enter the water while bathing, never be angry, and do not even speak or associate with wicked people. Never wear clothes that have not been properly washed, and do not put on a garland that has already been worn.

Never eat leftover food, never eat prasāda offered to the goddess Kālī [Durgā], and do not eat anything contaminated by flesh or fish. Do not eat anything brought or touched by a śūdra nor anything seen by a woman in her menstrual period. Do not drink water by

joining your palms.

After eating, you should not go out to the street without having washed your mouth, hands and feet. You should not go out in the evening or with your hair loose, nor should you go out unless you are properly decorated with ornaments. You should not leave the house unless you are very grave and are sufficiently covered.

You should not lie down without having washed both of your feet or without being purified, nor with wet feet or with your head pointed west or north. You should not lie naked, or with other women, or during the

sunrise or sunset.

Putting on washed clothing, being always pure and being adorned with turmeric, sandalwood pulp and other auspicious items, before breakfast one should worship the cows, the brāhmaṇas, the goddess of fortune and the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

With flower garlands, sandalwood pulp, ornaments and other paraphernalia, a woman following this vow should worship women who have sons and whose husbands are living. The pregnant wife should worship her husband and offer him prayers. She should meditate upon him, thinking that he is

situated in her womb.

Kaśyapa Muni continued: If you perform this ceremony called puṁsavana, adhering to the vow with faith for at least one year, you will give birth to a son destined to kill Indra. But if there is any discrepancy in the discharge of this vow, the son will be a friend to Indra.

O King Parīkṣit, Diti, the wife of Kaśyapa, agreed to undergo the purificatory process known as puṁsavana. “Yes,” she said, “I shall do everything according to your instructions.” With great jubilation she became pregnant, having taken semen from Kaśyapa, and faithfully began discharging the

VOW.

O King, who are respectful to everyone, Indra understood Diti's purpose, and thus he contrived to fulfill his own interests. Following the logic that self-preservation is the first law of nature, he wanted to break Diti's promise. Thus he engaged himself in the service of Diti, his aunt, who was residing in an āśrama.

Indra served his aunt daily by bringing flowers, fruits, roots and wood for yajñas from the forest. He also brought kuśa grass, leaves, sprouts, earth and water exactly at the proper time.

O King Parīkṣit, as the hunter of a deer becomes like a deer by covering his body with deerskin and serving the deer, so Indra, although at heart the enemy of the sons of Diti, became outwardly friendly and served Diti in a faithful way. Indra's purpose was to cheat Diti as soon as he could find some fault in the way she discharged the vows of the ritualistic ceremony. However, he wanted to be undetected, and therefore he served her very carefully.

O master of the entire world, when Indra could find no faults, he thought, "How will there be good fortune for me?" Thus he was

full of deep anxiety.