

The Story of Anaghā Vratam

This story occurs in the Bhaviṣya Purāṇā (Mythology of the Future) composed by Sage Vēda Vyāsa.

Chapter 1

The story is narrated as a dialogue between two individuals.

1. The disciple Dīpaka asked his spiritual master thus:
“Oh Master ! I heard that the celestial were defeated by the demon Jambha. That Lord in turn defeated the demons and protected Indra and other celestials.
2. I am eager to know whether Datta himself fought against the demons or won over them by his power of yoga. I request you to kindly enlighten me.”
Sri guru replied thus:
3. “My son ! Long ago the emperor Dharmarāja asked Śrī Kṛṣṇa the same question. Listen to me

attentively while I narrate the details as given by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. “

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

4. “There is a Sage by name Atri. He was the spiritual son of Brahma the Creator. The Sage had a unique brilliance acquired by his great penance. His wife Anasūya became famous for her chastity.
5. As years went by, the sacred couple were blessed with a son named Datta who was austere, who performed severe penance, and was a great yogi. He was predominantly of the aspect of Viṣṇu.
6. Datta is famous in the entire universe. His wife is Anaghā Dēvi.
7. Anaghā Dēvi and Datta have eight sons. Anaghā Dēvi is very kind. She is the embodiment of spirituality. Datta is known as Anagha Swāmi. Datta’s consort Anaghā Dēvi is of the aspect of Lakṣmi, the Goddess of Prosperity.
8. Datta continued his yoga practices along with his consort, Anaghā Dēvi. One day, the celestials driven away from Heaven by the demon king Jambha, sought protection from Datta.
9. The demon Jambha, who was terribly arrogant on account of the boons he has acquired from

- Lord Brahma, invaded Amarāvati, the capital of Heaven. He battled for 1000 years.
10. Demons belonging to several species joined the battle and fought bitterly.
 11. Finally Indra and the celestials were utterly defeated in the battle. Forced to leave Heaven they ran hither and thither.
 12. Jambha and the other demons chased the celestials.
 - 13-14. The demons continued to inflict injuries on the celestials with several weapons such as spears and arrows. They rode on bisons, buffaloes, tigers, monkeys, donkeys and such other animals. The demons threw heavy boulders and used fire arms as well against the celestials while chasing them.
 - 15-16. Eventually the celestials approached the hermitage of Datta and Anaghā Dēvi. They sought protection at the feet of Datta.
 - 17-18. “Oh Lord of Lords! Oh Father of the Universe! You hold the conch shell (śankha), and the divine disc (cakra). We pray to you for protection. We have been defeated by the demon Jambha. Oh great Sage! Nothing other than your sacred feet can protect your devotees. We pray for your protection. Kindly save us. “

19-20. Lord Datta heard their ardent appeal. He made a meaningful gesture to Anaghā Dēvi.

21-23. In the meantime the cruel demons also arrived there sporting their weapons. When they saw Anaghā Dēvi there they were enchanted by her beauty on account of their evil nature. They told each other “Capture this woman. Offer her flowers and fruits.” Slowly their arrogance got to their heads. By emitting the fire of his penance through his looks, Datta made them powerless. Some of the demons picked up Anaghā Dēvi and started to carry her away on their heads.

24. The celestials started killing the demons who were rendered helpless on account of Datta’s glances, and weak by Anaghā’s spiritual power.

25-26. The demons cried out loud unable to bear the pain inflicted upon them by the celestials who used weapons such as maces and tridents. They were taken by surprise. Finally the celestials succeeded in killing all the demons. Indra killed Jambha.

27. The Kingdom of Heaven was restored to the celestials. Even the powerful celestials needed the protective power of Lord Datta.

Chapter 2

28. Datta continued his auspicious penance with the utmost purity of thought, word, and deed for the benefit of all the worlds.

29-30. He sat still with hands stretched upwards, with his attention completely focused at the point between the eyebrows. He was as immobile as a rock, a wall, or a log of wood while he performed penance.

31-33. Datta was thus engrossed in uninterrupted meditation, absorbed in a state of divine ecstasy. During that period, Kārtavīryārjuna, the king of Māhiṣmati, came alone and sincerely served Datta with unwavering attention, faith, and humility. The king observed strict discipline to his complete satisfaction as he offered worship to Lord Datta.

34-36. Lord Datta was immensely pleased with the king's devotion. He gave him four boons. 1. One thousand powerful arms whenever he required them. 2. Guidance and warning from saintly souls whenever the king was tempted to swerve from the path of righteousness. 3. The privilege to rule the entire world righteously after conquering all other

kings in a righteous battle. 4. Death at the hands of warrior who was superior to him.

37. Lord Datta blessed the king, his dear disciple, with an extensive empire and supreme spiritual knowledge.

38. Eventually the king became an emperor ruling over the entire world. He was blessed with the eight supernatural powers.

39. With the power of his one thousand arms and his spiritual brilliance, Kārtavīryārjuna conquered all the kings of the worlds in a righteous battle.

40. He propagated righteousness and benefited one and all by performing religious rituals thousands of times throughout the world with the utmost faith and devotion.

41. He gave bountiful gifts to scholars and saints each time he performed the sacred rituals.

42. The venue of the sacred rituals was exquisitely decorated with golden pillars and precious gems.

43. The celestial singers and divine dancers witnessed with astonishment the grandeur of these rituals.

44-46. Nārada, a celestial singer praised Kārtavīryārjuna thus: “Kārtavīryārjuna is unequalled in valor, scholarship, and the

performance of rituals and penance.” The king protected the entire world, traveling in majesty, equipped with the power of yoga, and his sharp sword. There was no fear of theft, and there was no grief in the kingdom. No one experienced strain. 47-49. The grand emperor reigned supreme for 40,000 years in a righteous manner. There was none to oppose him anywhere. He was himself the protector of the cattle and the crops. By his yogic power he caused timely and sufficient rainfall. With his spiritual prowess he would swim playfully in the ocean with one thousand arms radiating brilliance as the bright sun.

50-51. His army captured the serpent king Karkōtaka and imprisoned him. Once during the monsoon season he swam in the river Narmada. The flow of the river was reversed by his powerful movements.

52-53. It seemed as if he was joyously playing with the river. The river seemed to retreat in fear as if it were a beautiful woman.

54-55. Once he caused so much turbulence during his swim in the ocean that all the sea creatures were humbled. Even huge whales were killed by the

force of the waves created by the mighty arms of the emperor.

He once captured even the notorious demon king Rāvaṇa and imprisoned him in the city of Māhiṣmati.

56. Then Sage Pulastya came and appealed to Kārtavīryārjuna to release his grandson, Rāvaṇa. The emperor obliged the Sage. However, the ungrateful Rāvaṇa paid a deaf ear to his grandfather's sane advice to lead a pious life, and insulted the Sage.

57. Once Kārtavīryārjuna offered the entire world full of crops, creepers, and trees as food to the God of Fire.

58. O Dharmarāja! Kārtavīryārjuna was able to attain such a grand stature only by the grace of Lord Datta, Anagha Swāmi who is the supreme master of Yoga.

Chapter 3

Thus the blessed royal saint Kārtavīryārjuna propagated this Anaghāṣṭami Vratam throughout the world. The puja became very popular as it yielded benevolent results spontaneously.

60-62. Agha means sin. It is of three types: thought, word, and deed. Datta purifies us of the evil effect of all these three types of sins. Hence He is called Anagha (na+agha =one who removes sins). His eight sons personify the eight spiritual powers, the ashta siddhis, namely, Aṇima, Laghima, Prāpti, Prākāmya, Īsitva, Vaśitva, Kāmāvasāyitā, and Mahima. These are the special treasures which can be obtained as a result of sincere worship. These pave the way to salvation.

Hence the devotees must worship these siddhis with firm faith.

63-64. Datta removes the sins of His sincere devotees. He can transform the entire Universe to become sinless. That is why He is called Anagha. Śrī Kṛṣṇa concluded, “Datta incarnated with my (Viṣṇu’s) aspect. He is an incomparable seer. “

Dharmarāja said,

65-66. “Śrī Kṛṣṇa, what was the procedure for the worship that was followed by Kārtavīryārjuna? What were the rules observed by him? What is the appropriate day and time to do this puja? Kindly enlighten me.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied,

67-69. “The stipulated day of worship is the eighth day of the dark fortnight in the month of Mārgaśira

(falling in December). One should bathe, and clean the altar. The idols of the Anagha couple and their eight sons have to be prepared with darbha grass and placed in the stated order. (see figure on the chart). Or kalaśas (pots containing water) may be used to symbolize the deities and should be placed on the eight petal lotus design. One must meditate upon them according to the chants as per the Ṛg Veda and Viṣṇu mantras. Sandal paste, fresh flowers, and other auspicious materials should be offered.

70. Angha Swāmi is worshipped as Viṣṇu, and Anaghā Dēvi is worshipped as Lakṣmi. The eight siddhis must be worshipped as prescribed in the Harivamśa scripture.

71. Anyone can perform this puja. Various seasonal fruits and vegetables may be used in the food offerings in the worship. After the puja, prasadam should be served to friends and relatives.

73-74. The worshipper should explain this puja to others and motivate at least one person to perform this puja. This puja must be continued throughout one's life. This is my confirmed opinion. One must do this puja at least for one year. A sincere devotee

will fast all day, stay awake all night, and feast the following day.

75-76. All night worship with devotional music and dance may be followed by bathing idols in water early in the morning. All the sins will be destroyed of the person who diligently performs this puja every year.

77. The devotee's family will flourish in all aspects. Viṣṇu is pleased by this puja. The worshiper is blessed with good health for seven lifetimes. Thereafter he will attain salvation.

78. Dharmarāja! The Anaghāṣṭami Vrata is effective in removing sins. Whoever performs this puja with concentration will become as famous as Kārtavīryārjuna."

Sri Guru said,

79-80. "My son Dīpaka! I have narrated this story of Datta in detail. I have explained to you how the celestials defeated by the demon Jambha were saved by Datta, how He acquired the name Anagha, the various types of His yogic activities, the different types of boons that He bestows, and how one must perform this puja which pleases Him. I have given you all the details.

81. My son, if you have any further questions, I will be happy to answer them.”

Thus concludes the sixth chapter in the Mythology of the Future, also referred to as the fourth section in the Datta Purāṇa, wherein Śrī Anaghāṣṭami Vrata is described in detail.

Śrī Guru Datta