

# *Devi Mahatyam*

## *The Glories of the Goddess*



An English translation with comments by  
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# Introduction

“One must propitiate the Divine Mother, the primal energy, in order to obtain God’s grace.  
It is She who deludes the world with Her illusion. We can go into the inner chamber  
only when She lets us pass through the door.”

—Sri Ramakrishna

The *Devi-Mahatmyam* or *Chandi*, consist of seven hundred verses from the much larger *Markandeya Purana*. It is considered the main scripture of the Hindu *Shakta* (Goddess) traditions. It contains three mythic episodes of the Divine Mother’s exploits told to a king and a merchant by an illumined sage. These ancient stories are told by way of explanations of the nature of *maha-maya*, the mysterious power that causes our ignorance, attachment and bondage, but when recognized and adored as the Divine Mother Herself, causes our spiritual illumination and final liberation. These stories are loaded with layers upon layers of philosophical, symbolic and mystical meaning. They record mythic cosmic events while simultaneously invoking corresponding personal inner transformations.

The gist of the stories is the repeated battle between the gods and the demons, the fundamental struggle between good and evil. In these stories, the demons get the upper hand and displace the gods from their heavenly realms. The gods invoke the Supreme Goddess, who is their own inner consciousness and power, to vanquish them. The scenes are sanguine and martial in nature, but the battles retold are symbolic of our internal struggles and correspond to the dynamic processes of *sadhana* (spiritual practice). The demons can be seen as representative of our baser inner enemies such as anger, greed, lust, envy, desire, selfishness and ego. By invoking the assistance of our loving, yet fierce Mother, we are ultimately victorious over such lower energies.

The Sanskrit verses of the *Devi-Mahatmyam* are divinely revealed mantras infused with spiritual potency. When translating Sanskrit texts one often has to sacrifice the original rhythm and structure of the verses in an attempt to convey their essential meaning in elegant English. Believing that the original revelation is more important than any translation, we have tried instead to adjust the English to the Sanskrit.

## śrī durgā saptaślokī

*Seven Verse Form of Goddess Durga  
(From the Devi Mahatmayam)*

**om jñāninām api cetāmsi devī bhagavatī hi sā /  
balād ākr̥ṣya mohāya mahā-māyā prayacchati // 1**

*She, Goddess Bhagavati (the possessor of all power), forcibly draws the minds of  
even the wise and throws them into delusion.*

**durge smṛtā harasi bhītim aśeṣajantoḥ /  
svasthaiḥ smṛtā matim atīva śubham dadāsi /  
dāridrya-duḥkhabhaya-hāriṇi kā tvad anyā /  
ṣarvo-pakāra-karaṇāya sadārdra-cittā // 2**

*To the suffering, remembering You dispels fear from all beings.  
To the happy, remembering You increases happiness.  
Who else but You, Oh remover of poverty, pain and fear,  
has such an ever sympathetic heart for helping everyone.*

**sarva-maṅgala-māṅgalye śive sarvārtha-sādhike /  
śaraṇye tryambake gauri nārāyaṇi namo'stu te // 3**

*Most auspicious among all auspicious beings, who grants fulfillment  
of all prayers, refuge of all, consort of Shiva, three-eyed, golden  
—to You, Narayani, we bow.*

**śaraṇāgata-dīnārta-paritrāṇaparāyaṇe /  
sarvasyārti-hare devi nārāyaṇi namo'stu te // 4**

*Protector and supreme rest of the weak and afflicted, of beings that take refuge in You,  
dispeller of all miseries —to You, Narayani, we bow.*

**sarva-svarūpe sarveśe sarva-śakti-samanvite /  
bhayebhyas trāhi no devi durge devi namo'stu te // 5**

*You are the essence of all, queen of all and possessor of all energy.  
Free us from all fear O Devi. To You, Goddess Durga, we bow.*

**rogān aśeṣān apahaṁsi tuṣṭā /  
riṣṭā tu kāmān sakalān abhīṣṭān /  
tvām āṣritānām na vipannarāṇām /  
tvām āṣritā hyāśrayatām prayānti // 6**

*When pleased, You destroy all illness. When displeased, You frustrate all desire.  
No calamity befalls those who take refuge in You.  
Those who take refuge in You invariably become the refuge of others.*

**sarvā-bādhā-praśamanam trailokyasyākhileśvari /  
evam eva tvayā kāryam asmad-vairivināśanam // 7**

*Queen of all, destroy all disturbances in the three worlds  
and remove from us all hostility.*

# Chapter One

## The **Slaying** of Madhu and Kaitabha

### Meditation of Goddess Kali

*Holding sword, discus, mace, arrows, bow, club, spear, sling, human head  
and conch in Your ten arms,  
with three eyes, adorned limbs, shining like a blue jewel, and having ten faces*  
– we worship You, Great Mother Kali,  
– who the lotus-born (Brahma) praised for the destruction  
– of the demons Madhu and Kaitaba.

### **Om Aim**

**The sage Markandeya said (to Krasushtuki Bhaguri):**

Savarni, the son of *Surya* (the Sun), became the eighth Manu. Please listen as I explain in detail his birth. By the grace of Goddess Mahamaya, the son of Surya became the Lord of the eighth *manvantara* (creative cycle). On this subject I will speak.

In ancient times there lived a king named *Suratha* (good vehicle/impeccable conduct), born from the Caitra dynasty. He protected his subjects like they were his own children. At that time, kings known as destroyers of the Kolas became his enemies. This wielder of powerful weapons fought these destroyers of the Kolas but was defeated by them, although their forces were smaller than his. He then returned to his own city, relinquishing his sovereignty over the earth, and continued to rule over his own land. There too these powerful enemies attacked the king. Even in his own city, the king, now bereft of strength, was robbed of his army and treasury by his own powerful and wicked ministers. Deprived of his sovereignty, the king fled alone into the dense forest on horseback on the pretext of hunting.

He saw there the hermitage of the greatest of the twice-born, the sage *Medhas* (spiritual intelligence), where ferocious animals were living together in peace with the sage and his many disciples. Respectfully welcomed by the sage, King Suratha spent time wandering about the great sage's hermitage. Overcome with attachment, he began to think, "The city, which my ancestors guarded, I have now left. Are my wicked servants righteously guarding my city in my absence? What enjoyment will my royal elephant, heroic and always happy, receive at the hands of my enemies? My constant followers, who received favor and wealth from me, are now serving other kings. The treasure which I gathered with great care will be wasted by those who are addicted to improper spending." As the king sunk deeper contemplating the loss of his wealth and his present situation, his mind became absorbed in the pain caused by attachment.

Near the hermitage of the sage he saw a merchant. After greeting him he asked, "Who are you? Why have you come here? Why do you appear to be in great sorrow, as if your mind is far from its goal?" Hearing the questions of the king, spoken in the spirit of friendship, the merchant replied to the king.

**The merchant said:**

My name is *Samadhi* (meditative absorption/divine union). I am a merchant born in a wealthy family. My sons and wife, because of their greed for wealth, have cast me out. My wife and sons have stolen my riches and deprived me of my wealth. Cast out by my own family I have come to this forest grief-stricken. I do not know if my children are happy or unhappy. I am unaware of the actions of my sons, family or wife. Are they presently happy or are they unhappy? Are my sons living good or evil lives?

**The king said:**

Your wife and sons have cast you out. Why is your mind so attached to them?

**The merchant said:**

As you are speaking, I too am thinking the same thing. But what can I do? My mind does not become hard towards them, but rather still holds a deep affection for those who have driven me out in their greed for wealth—abandoning the love for their father, master and family. Although I understand all this, dear noble-hearted king, how is it that my mind still loves even these characterless relations? It is because of their actions that I am sighing in depression and despair. But what can I do when my mind does not become hard even for those who have no love for me?

**The sage Markandeya said:**

Then, Oh Brahmana, the merchant Samadhi, along with the noble king, approached the sage and after showing him the respect due to him, sat down and engaged him in conversation.

**The king said:**

Because you are united with the Supreme Lord, I wish to ask you a question. Be pleased to reply. My mind is uncontrolled and afflicted with sorrow. Although I have lost my kingdom, I am still attached to the paraphernalia of the kingdom. Although I understand this, still I feel pain, like one who is ignorant. Great sage, why is this? And forsaken by his own people, this merchant has been cast out by his children, wife and servants. But he still feels the greatest affection for them. Thus both of us are feeling great pain. Knowing full well the defects of the objects

of our attachment, still our minds are drawn into affection. What is it, O Great Soul, which causes this ignorance even when we have this understanding? Both he and I are fools without the capacity for discrimination.

**The sage (Medha) said:**

All that lives has knowledge from the perception of sense-objects. Sense-objects are perceived differently by different beings. Some beings can see during the day and others can see during the night. Others can see well during both day and night. Human beings have the capacity for knowledge, but they are not alone in this. This knowledge is common to all animals as well, such as cattle, birds, and other creatures. The knowledge that humans have, the birds and beasts have also. In this respect the two are alike. Take birds for example. Although they have knowledge, they are busy putting food into the mouths of their children. Human beings are attached to their children out of an expectation of reciprocal help in their need. Can you not see their selfish desire? Even so, humans are hurled into the whirlpool of attachment and the pit of delusion through the power of *Mahamaya* (the Great Delusion) who is the cause of this world. Marvel not at this. She even put into *Yoganidra* (the sleep of divine union) the *Lord of the universe* (Vishnu). Mahamaya deludes the entire universe. She, the Goddess *Bhagavati* (the possessor of all power), forcibly draws the minds of even the wise and throws them into delusion. She creates this entire universe, made of both moving and unmoving beings. And it is She, who when pleased, gives the boon of final liberation. She is the giver of wisdom, liberation and eternal existence. She is the cause of our bondage to the world of birth and death and the controller over all that is.

**The king said:**

Blessed Lord, who is this Goddess Mahamaya of whom you speak? How did She come into being and what are Her activities? O twice-born, what is Her nature? What is Her form? Where did She come from? All this I wish to hear from you, who are supreme among the knowers of *Brahman* (the Absolute).

**The sage said:**

She is eternal and is embodied in all the forms in this universe. Although She is everywhere present, She manifests in many ways. Listen to me as I explain. When She manifests in order to accomplish the work of the gods, She is said to be born into the world. At the end of a *kalpa* (divine age), when the universe was one ocean (after the deluge), Vishnu (consciousness), the lord of the universe, reclined on *Shesa* (the divine serpent/kundalini) and entered yogic sleep. Then two terrible demons, known as *Madhu* (excess) and *Kaitabha* (lack) sprang from the dirt of Vishnu's ears. They became ready to slay *Brahma* (the creator), the father of all beings, who was sitting upon the lotus that sprang from Vishnu's navel. Seeing these two fierce demons, and *Janardana* (Vishnu) asleep, He began with concentration to praise the Goddess Yoganidra from his heart. In order to open the eyes of Hari, the resplendent Brahma began to glorify the queen of the universe, the support of the worlds, the cause of the universe's sustenance and dissolution, the Goddess of sleep, the unequaled consort of Vishnu.

**Lord Brahma said:**

You are the mantra "svaha." You are the mantra "svadha." You are the embodiment of pure sound. You are the eternal essence of all letters and the embodiment of the *three syllables* (a, u & m). You are the half vowel beyond and

its special mode of pronunciation. You are *sandhya* (the junction between day and night) as well as *Savitri* (the sun god). You are the Goddess beyond all born beings. The universe is sustained by You. The perceivable world is created by You. You protect what You create, O Devi, and You are the goal of all. As the creator, You exist in the form of Your creation. You are the support of all activities. You are destruction at the time of dissolution, O bewitcher of the world.

You are the greatest knowledge, the greatest veiling power, the greatest intelligence, and the greatest power of memory. You are the greatest confusion. You, dear Lady, are the greatest Goddess and the source of the greatest strength. You are nature and three *gunas* (qualities) that constitute creation. You are the dark night, the great night and the night of ignorance. You are prosperity. You are the supreme controller. You are humility. You are intelligence and the goal of knowledge. You are modesty, increase, contentment, peace and forgiveness. You hold sword, spear, club, and discus. You hold conch, bow and other weapons as well. You present a frightful form. You are mild, gentle and Your attractiveness and beauty are unlimited.

Supreme, supreme, supreme, You are the supreme Goddess. Thought, perception, and whatever exist, either true or untrue; all is pervaded by Your power. How then can we praise You? If *He* (Vishnu) who is the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the world has been plunged into slumber by You, how then can we praise You? You have made Vishnu, Shiva and *myself* (Brahma) wear bodies. How then can we praise You? O Devi, we have extolled You along with Your glories. Please subdue the mighty forces of Madhu and Kaitabha with your power. Please awaken the *master of the world* (Vishnu), so that he may conquer these great demons.

**The sage said:**

Thus praised, the Goddess of inertia, in order to awaken Vishnu for the destruction of the demons Madhu and Kaitabha, withdrew Herself from his eyes, mouth, nostrils, arms, heart and breast. She, who is beyond perception, appeared before the vision of Brahma, of mysterious birth. Thus freed, Janardana, the Lord of the Universe, rose from his couch on the universal ocean and beheld those two evil demons, the strong and heroic Madhu and Kaitabhau, coming forward in order to kill Brahma.

With eyes red with anger they came forward to attack Brahma. Then the all-pervading Hari rose and did battle with these two. He fought with the demons for five thousand years. The demons, becoming intoxicated by their extraordinary power and deluded by Goddess Mahamaya, exclaimed to Vishnu, “Ask a boon from us.”

**The Blessed Lord (Vishnu) said:**

If you are satisfied with Me, then let me slay you both right now. What other boon shall I ask here? This is my wish.

**The sage said:**

Thus deceived (by Mahamaya), the two demons saw that the whole universe was covered with water. Seeing this, they said to the lotus-eyed blessed Lord, “Kill us at the place which is not covered by water.” Saying, “Let it so be” the blessed Lord, the wielder of conch, disk and mace, took them on His loins and cut off their heads with his disc. Thus praised by Brahma, She Herself appeared. Now listen as I

again describe the Goddess's glory. I will tell you.

*Thus ends the first chapter entitled "The Slaying of Madhu and Kaitabha" found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana, spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

## **Comments on Chapter One**

King Suratha and the merchant Samadhi represent the external and internal goals of religion; righteousness and enlightenment respectively. Although aspects of our real nature, we have lost conscious experience of them due to our delusion and egotistic attachments. The brahminical sage Medhas represents the guru and our own insight, intuition and intelligence which lead us to leave behind our mundane thoughts and enter the mythical realms of divine reality. The story of Madhu and Kaitabah reveals both the cause and solution to our spiritual dilemma. Lord Vishnu represents our consciousness which rests upon its own latent spiritual power, the divine serpent kundalini, in the ocean of potentiality. Lord Brahma, born from the navel of Vishnu, is the soul's creative urge. Our divine consciousness is sleeping, as it were, bewildered by the concealing and delusive power of the Divine Mother known as *avidya-maya*, here called *yoga-nidra*. The two insect-like demons Madhu and Kaitabha represent the first obstacles to spiritual development: selfishness and self-deception. Born from ignorance as the byproducts of our sleeping consciousness, they attack our creative spiritual potential. Lord Brahma's prayer known as the *Tantroktam Ratri Suktam* (the Tantric hymn of Night) recognizes the Goddess as the source, controller and essence of everything and every mental state. This recognition is the essence of true worship. When we propitiate the Divine Mother, She withdraws Her deluding power through Her revealing and illuminating power, known as *vidya-maya*. This is the first step of the mystical path. The battle between Lord Vishnu and Mahdu and Kaitaba teaches that when we begin to awaken spiritually, we must fight our inner obstacles through dynamic spiritual disciplines. But in the end it is only an act of divine grace that grants us ultimate success.

**Hari Om Tat Sat**

## Chapter Two

### *The Destruction of the Armies of Mahishasura*

#### Meditation on Lakshmi

Holding (in Your eighteen hands) rosary, axe, mace, arrows, thunderbolt,  
lotus, bow, water pot, staff, shakti, sword, shield, conch, bell, wine-cup, trident,  
noose and sudarshana-discus, destroyer of Mahishasura,  
seated upon a lotus, with coral complexion  
— You, Great Mother Lakshmi, we worship.

#### **Om Hrīm**

#### **The sage (Medha) said:**

In ancient times—when *Mahishasura* (buffalo/bestial demon) was the lord of the demons and *Indra* (king of heaven) was the lord of the gods—there was a war between the gods and the demons that lasted a full hundred years. The greatly virile demons defeated the army of the gods. After conquering the gods, Mahishasura took over the position of Indra. The defeated gods—led by the lotus-born Brahma, the origin of all beings—then went to the abode of Shiva and Vishnu. The thirty gods told them in detail the actions of Mahishasura and how they were defeated by the demons, “He has taken over the positions of *Surya* (the Sun), *Indra*, *Agni* (divine fire), *Vayu* (god of air), *Chandra* (moon), *Yama* (death), *Varuna* (god of oceans) and the other gods. We have been forced to wander over the earth like ordinary humans, having been kicked out of heaven by the demon Mahishasura. We have told you all that this *enemy of the gods* (demon) has done. We have come to You for shelter. Please think of how he may be destroyed.”

Hearing the words of the gods, *Madhusudana* (Vishnu) and *Shambu* (Shiva) became very angry and their faces frowned. Then a great light issued forth from

the forehead of the *holder of the disc* (Vishnu), as well as from Brahma and *Shankara* (Shiva). From the bodies of Indra and the other gods issued great lights, which then formed one united light. The gods then saw this collection of light like a mountain of fire blazing in all directions. Then this incomparable light from the bodies of the gods collected into one feminine form which illuminated the three worlds. From Shiva's light Her face came into being. From Yama's light came Her hair. From Vishnu's light came Her arms. From Chandra's light came Her two breasts. From Indra's light came Her waist. From Varuna's light came Her shanks and thighs. From Earth's light came Her hips. From Brahma's light Her feet came into being. By Surya's light came Her toes. From the eight Vasus came Her fingers. From the light of *Kubera* (god of wealth) came Her nose. From *Prajapati's* (the progenerator) light came Her teeth and from Agni's light Her three eyes came into being. The light of the twin *sandhyas* (junctures) became Her eyebrows and from Vayu's light came Her ears. The lights of all the other gods also formed the auspicious Goddess.

Looking at the Goddess, who came from their own light, the immortals, although oppressed by the demon Mahishasura, experienced great joy. Pulling from His trident another trident, Shiva presented it to Her. Pulling from His discus another discus, *Krishna* (Vishnu) also gave it to Her. Varuna gave Her a conch, Agni gave Her a spear and Maruta gave Her a bow and two quivers full of arrows. Indra gave Her a thunderbolt from His own, as well as the bell from His royal elephant Airavata. The god of death gave Her a staff from his own staff and Varuna gave Her a noose. Prajapati then gave Her a rosary and Brahma gave Her a water pot. Surya bestowed his own radiance upon all the pores of Her body and *Kala* (time) gave Her a sword and a spotless shield. The ocean of milk gave Her a pure necklace, undecaying garments, a divine crest-jewel, earrings, bracelets, a half-

moon ornament, armlets for all Her arms, shining anklets, a unique necklace and excellent rings for all Her fingers. *Visvakarma* (the heavenly architect) gave Her a brilliant axe and impenetrable armor. The ocean gave Her a garland of unfading lotuses for Her head and another for Her neck and a beautiful lotus for Her hand. The Himalayas gave Her a lion to ride and various jewels. The lord of wealth gave Her a cup full of wine and *Shesha* (divine serpent), the support of the earth, gave Her a serpent necklace bedecked with the best of jewels. The other gods also gave Her ornaments and weapons.

Being worshiped by the gods, the Goddess roared and laughed, filling the sky with Her sound. There was such a vibration that all the worlds shook and the seas trembled. The earth shook, the mountains rocked and the gods exclaimed to the *rider of the lion* (Durga), “Victory unto You!” The sages praised Her with devotion.

Seeing the three worlds agitated by such a commotion, the enemies of the gods began to mobilize their armies and rose together with upraised weapons. The demon Mahishasura in anger exclaimed, “Ah! What is this?” He rushed towards that roar, along with all his demons, and beheld the Goddess pervading the three worlds. Her feet touched the earth and Her crown scraped the sky. The twang of Her bowstring shook the regions of hell. Her thousand arms filled all directions. Then there began a battle between the Goddess and the enemies of the gods.

The sky was illuminated by many kinds of weapons. Mahishasura’s general, the great demon *Chikshura* (confusion), came forward for battle. *Chamara* (yak-like/fickleness), and other demons in *four-fold array* (cavalry, charioteers, elephant-soldiers and foot-soldiers) also fought with great strength. The great demon *Udagra* (pride) with sixty thousand chariots and the demon *Mahahanu*

(large-jawed/fickle minded), with ten million chariots, gave Her battle. The great demon *Asiloman* (sword haired/irresolute) with fifty million chariots and the demon *Bashkala* (glutton/memories) with sixty million fought in the battle. The demon named *Parivarita* (concealment/restlessness), along with many thousands of elephants and horses, and surrounded by ten million chariots, also fought. The demon called *Bidala* (impurity/hypocrisy) fought, surrounded by five hundred million chariots. Many other demons, thousands in number, surrounded by chariots, elephants and horses fought with the Goddess. The demon Parivarita fought on with his chariots racing about and others also continued the fight. Their chariots and elephants kept coming. The great demons continued to fight the Goddess. Uncounted thousand of warriors, chariots, horses, and elephants gathered there. The demon Mahishasura himself joined in the battle holding javelin, spear, missile and mace.

Other demons also fought in the battle and tried to strike the Goddess with swords and missiles, and to bind Her with their nets. They tried to kill Her by striking Her with their swords. Then showing Her own weapons *Chandika* (fierce goddess/ who tears apart thought) attacked them. Playfully, the Goddess rained upon Her attackers a shower of Her own weapons which cut to pieces the weapons of the demons, while the gods and sages sang Her praise. Without any strain on Her face, the Supreme Goddess hurled weapon after weapon upon the bodies of the demons. The lion, which carried the Goddess, shaking his mane in rage, also stalked the hosts of demons like a forest fire. Her every breath became a battalion of hundreds of thousands, fighting in battle with axes, javelins, swords, and sharp spears. They gained strength from Her power and destroyed the host of demons. Some played on drums and sounded conch shells in the festival of battle.

The terrible sound of Her bell stunned the great demons while She cut them with Her sword. Many demons were bound by Her net and dragged to the earth. Many others were cut into two by the sharp edge of Her sword. Some were smashed by the blows of Her mace and laid down on the ground, while others, severely beaten by Her club, vomited blood. Some demons, pierced in their breasts by Her spear, fell to earth in heaps. Many demons in that battle were cut apart by the rain of Her arrows. Some had their arms cut off and some had their necks broken. The heads of others rolled down, while others had their bodies torn in half. Some great demons fell to the ground with their legs severed. Some, who remained living with only one arm, one eye or one leg, were again cut in half by the Goddess. Others, although without heads, fell and rose again. Headless trunks fought with the Goddess with their best weapons in hand. Some of these headless trunks danced during the battle to the rhythm of musical instruments. The trunks of other great demons, still holding their swords, spears and lances, shouted at the Goddess with their severed heads, "Stop! Stop!" The part of the earth where the battle was fought became impassible due to the fallen demons, elephants, horses and chariots. The blood from the demons, elephants and horses flowed like a large river through the army of demons.

Within an instant, that huge army of demons died before the Mother of the Universe, just as grass or wood is reduced to ashes within a moment by a great fire. And then Her lion-mount, roaring loudly with his mane shaking, prowled about in the battlefield searching out the life-breath from the bodies of the demons. Thus the Goddess and Her army fought in battle with the multitude of demons, as the gods in heaven joyfully showered the earth with flowers.

*Thus ends the second chapter entitled "The Destruction of the Armies of Mahishasura" found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana, spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

## Comments on Chapter Two

The demon Mahisha represents the gross ego fueled by our animal instincts of lust, power and greed. Lord Indra is the refined spiritual sense of self, the controller of the divine energies of our personality. This story shows what happens when Mahaishasura “becomes” Indra, when our bestial nature takes over the governance of our lives.

The inner substance and power of each god shines forth to manifest the Maha-Devi (great Goddess). Our problems originate from our egoistically taking credit for our own strength. It is the Divine Mother who is the *shakti* (power) of all. This initial realization leads to the eradication of the lower qualities controlled by the gross ego.

## Chapter Three

### The Slaying of Mahishasura

#### Meditation of Devi

*Shining with the radiance of a thousand suns, dressed in red silk,  
wearing a garland of red skulls around Your neck,  
Your breast colored with red sandal paste, holding rosary  
and showing the gestures of knowledge,  
fearlessness and boons, Your three eyes shine,  
Your mouth is beautiful is like a flower bud  
and Your head is crowned with jewels and the moon, seated upon a lotus  
— we bow to You with limitless devotion.*

**Om**

**The sage said:**

When the great demon general saw his army being destroyed, Chikshura went forward in anger to fight *Ambika* (Divine Mother). The demon showered arrows upon the Goddess as rain clouds shower Mt. Meru. Then the Goddess cut his arrows into pieces and killed his horses and charioteers with Her multitude of arrows. Then She split his bow and high-flying banner. She then pierced the body of he whose bow She had split. His bow cut, chariot broken, horses and charioteers killed—the demon rushed at the Goddess with sword and shield. Striking the lion on the head with his sharp edged sword, he struck the Goddess on Her left arm. His sword shattered into pieces upon touching Her arm. He then, with eyes red with anger, grabbed his spear. Then the great demon threw his blazing spear at *Bhadra Kali* (benign Kali) as if he was throwing the sun from the sky. Seeing his spear coming towards Her, the Goddess threw Her spear and shattered his into many pieces and killed the great demon.

The greatly virile general of Mahishasura being killed, the demon Chamara, the torturer of the gods, came forward mounted upon an elephant. He threw his missile at the Divine Mother from above. Chanting “hum,” She made it fall to the ground, devoid of luster. Seeing his missile broken, Chamara became angry and threw a spear which the Goddess cut with Her arrows. The lion jumped onto the head of the elephant and engaged in combat with that enemy of the gods. Fighting, the two came down to earth from the back of the elephant. Rising, they began to fight with fierce blows. The lion quickly leaped into the sky and as he came down, severed Chamara’s head with his paw. The Goddess using stones and trees killed Udagra on the battlefield, and the paws and teeth of the lion struck down *Karala* (gaping mouth/disbelief). The Goddess angrily ground *Uddhata* (arrogance) to dust with Her club, killed *Bashkala* (anxiety) with a missile and killed *Tamara* (oppressing) and *Andhaka* (moral blindness) with arrows. *Ugrasya* (fierce faced/violent tempered), *Ugravirya* (fierce valor/passionate) and *Mahahanu* (great deception) were destroyed by the trident of the three-eyed Supreme Goddess. Bidala’s head was severed with Her sword and *Durdhara* (evil bearing/irresistible temptation) and *Durmukha* (foul-mouthed/abusive) were sent to the abode of death by Her arrows.

Seeing his army being destroyed, Mahishasura took the form of a buffalo and began to frighten the army of the Goddess. He fought some with his snout, some by stamping them with his hooves, some by lashing them with his tail and others by stabbing them with his horns. He scattered some on the ground by his great speed, his bellowing, his whirling around and by his blasting breath. Having scattered Her army, the demon rushed to kill the lion of the Goddess. Then Ambika became very angry. The great virulent one pounded the earth with his hooves and threw large mountains with his horns and roared loudly. His roars caused the earth to

crumble and his tail lashed the oceans into flooding. The clouds were scattered by the swaying of his horns and his breath caused mountains to fall from the sky.

Seeing the enraged great demon coming towards Her, Chandika showed Her anger in order to kill him. She threw Her noose at him and bound the great demon. Bound in the great battle, he gave up his buffalo form. He then assumed the form of a lion whose head was severed by Ambika. He then appeared in the form of a man holding a sword. Immediately the Goddess cut this man with Her arrows along with his sword and shield. He then became a kingly elephant. He grabbed the great lion with his trunk and roared loudly. The Goddess then cut off his trunk with Her sword. The great demon then resumed his buffalo form and with his inhalation and exhalation, shook the three worlds with their movable and immovable objects. The enraged Mother of the world, Chandika, then drank divine liquor again and again and laughed, her eyes becoming red. Intoxicated by his own strength and valor, the demon also roared and threw mountains at Chandika with his horns. She pulverized these mountains with Her arrows and then spoke, intoxicated by divine liquor.

### **The Goddess spoke:**

Roar and roar all you want, you foolish ass, as I drink this wine. When you die by My hands the gods will be roaring in this very spot.

### **The sage said:**

Having thus spoken, the Goddess jumped upon the great demon and pushed his neck down with Her foot and stabbed him with Her spear. Being thus struck by the Goddess' foot, his real form began to come forth from the mouth of the buffalo body. He was completely overcome by the Goddess' valor. Even with half of his body

coming out, the great demon still fought. Then the Goddess cut off his head with Her great sword. Screaming and crying, the remaining demon army ran away and all the gods became joyous. With satisfaction, the shining gods joined the divine great sages and sang the praises of the Goddess while *gandharvas* (heavenly musicians) sang and *apsaras* (heavenly nymphs) danced.

*Thus ends the third chapter entitled "The Slaying of Mahishasura"  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

### **Comments on Chapter Three**

As the lower energies and animal qualities are destroyed, the gross ego, fearing his rule threatened, attacks with renewed vengeance. The Goddess takes on one of Her most famous forms as *Mahishasura-Mardini* (the killer of the demon Mahaisha) and pins the ego-demon down with Her feet, showing that all will have to surrender to Her eventually; the demonic thru force and the divine thru love. Mahisha's head is severed by the Goddess, liberating him from his demonic identification with his body, granting him final beatitude.

## Chapter Four

### **Praises of the Goddess by Indra and the other Gods**

#### **Meditation on Jaya-Durga**

*Your beautiful body is dark like a rain cloud,  
Your sidelong glances fill all enemies with fear,  
a crescent moon shines upon Your head,  
You hold conch, discus, a small sword and a trident.  
Three-eyed, You stand upon the shoulders of a lion  
and Your radiance illuminates the three worlds.  
We meditate upon You, Victorious Goddess Durga,  
surrounded by the gods and ever served by those desiring perfection.*

**Om**

**The sage said:**

After the death of the excessively forceful demon and the destruction of his army by the Goddess, Indra along with the other gods, with bent heads and necks, offered praise with their bodies beautified by delight and excitement:

“This entire divine creation is filled with Your energy. You are the embodiment of the energy of all the gods. You, Ambika, are worshiped by gods and great sages. We bow to You with devotion. Please bless us with auspiciousness. Your greatness cannot be described by Vishnu, Brahma or Shiva. O Chandi, supreme queen of the universe, please fix Your attention on the protection of the entire world and destroy all evil. O Devi

Goddess, You are fortune in the homes of the virtuous, poverty for the wicked, discrimination in the hearts of the wise, faith in the hearts of the good, and humility in the hearts of the noble. Please protect the universe.

O Devi, how can we describe Your inconceivable form, unsurpassed strength in killing demons or wonderful feats in the battle between the gods and demons? You are the origin of the universe. You possess the three *gunas* but remain unaffected. Incomprehensible to even *Hari* (Vishnu), *Hara* (Shiva) and others, You are the refuge of all. This vast universe is only a fraction of Your being. You are supreme consciousness and primordial nature.

In sacrifices You are the mantra “svaha,” at whose utterance the gods are satisfied. You are also the mantra “svadha” that all pronounce to satisfy the ancestors. O grantor of liberation, inconceivable are the vows taken for You. You are the goal of sages whose senses are well controlled. You are knowledge, O Bhagavati, the Supreme Goddess. You are the essence of sound, the source of the *Rig-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda* and the *Samana* hymns along with their charming meter. You, Goddess Bhagavati, are the embodiment of the three Vedas, the sustenance of life and the supreme destroyer of the pain of all universes. O Devi, You are the power by which we can comprehend the scriptures. You are Durga, the boat that takes us across the difficult ocean of the world, unbound by attachments. You are *Shri* (Lakshmi), whose abode is in the heart of Vishnu. You are our *Gauri* (golden Parvati) who is established with Shiva.

Your gently smiling face shines pure like the full moon whose beauty is more pleasing than pure gold. How strange it is that Mahishasura in anger could strike at such a face? Stranger still is it, O Devi, that even after seeing Your face turn

fierce, frowning as red as the rising moon, Mahishasura did not give up his life at once. Who can live after seeing the mighty destroyer? O Devi, please bless us with that what is supremely uplifting. When provoked You immediately vanquish the hosts of demons. This we understood the moment Mahishasura was destroyed.

O grantor of all welfare, those with whom You are pleased are certainly respected in their own land, prosperous, glorified, righteous and blessed with affection from children, spouse and servants. O Devi, by Your grace, the righteous perform their daily work with the utmost of care, thereby attaining the celestial realms. Are You not then the grantor of the fruits of all acts? To the suffering, remembering You dispels fear from all beings. To the happy, remembering You increase happiness. Who else but You—O remover of poverty, pain and fear—has such an ever sympathetic heart for helping everyone?

*‘This entire universe is pleased by the destruction of these demons. They have certainly committed enough sin to warrant long-suffering in hell, yet let them attain heaven by meeting their death by My hands.’*—Thinking thus, You certainly destroy our enemies, O Devi. Why is it that Your one glance does not burn all demons to ash? It is so that by directing Your weapons towards them, the demons may be raised to the heavenly realms. You are compassionate even to these enemies. If the eyes of the demons were not blinded by the terrible light from Your sword or the luster of Your spear it was because they also beheld Your face, shining refreshingly like the moon.

Your nature is to frustrate the activities of the wicked. O Devi, Your beauty has no second. Those who steal from the gods are destroyed by Your power, thus You manifest Your compassion even to Your enemies. With whom can Your valor be compared? Where else is found such peerless beauty that strikes fear in the hearts

of enemies? O Devi, giver of blessings, in the three worlds this is found only in You. You have saved the three worlds by the killing of these enemies. Dying in battle, they have attained heaven. You thus dispel the fear of the demons. We bow to You.

With Your spear please protect us, O Devi and protect us with Your sword, Ambika. With the sound of Your bell, protect us, as well as with the twang of Your bow. Protect us from the east and from the west, Chandi, protect us from the south. With the movement of Your spear, protect us from the north. You have forms exquisitely beautiful in the three worlds as well as forms exceedingly frightful. Protect us and the earth with all of them. With Your sword, spear, and club, O Ambika, and with any other weapon touched by Your lovely hands, please protect us from all sides.”

**The sage said:**

Thus the gods praised the support of the world and worshiped Her with heavenly flowers and perfumes. United in devotion, they offered Her incense, fragrances and food and bowed down to Her. She then spoke, serene in countenance.

**The Goddess spoke:**

Ask of Me a boon. I will fulfill your desire.

**The gods said:**

O Supreme Goddess, You have fulfilled our every desire, nothing remains undone. Our enemy Mahishasura has been slain. Still, if a boon is to be granted; whenever we think of You please remove our calamities, Great Goddess. Gracious One, please bless anyone who praises You with these verses with knowledge, prosperity,

greatness, love, and other fortunes, O Mother of all.

**The sage said:**

Being thus praised by the Gods, the Goddess said, “*So be it.*” and vanished from their sight.

I have thus told you great glory of the Goddess , the loving mother of the world. She was again born as Gouri in order to kill Sumbha and Nisumbha and other misbehaved demons, protecting the worlds and saving the Gods. Listen to these stories from me as I recount them as they happened.

*Thus ends the fourth chapter entitled “Praise by Indra and the Other Gods”  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

**Comments On Chapter Four**

This hymn is known as the *Shakradi Stuti*, as it was led by *Shakra* (Lord Indra). It was Indra, representing our spiritual identity, that unexpectedly lost his divine reign to his lower appetites. Seeing their own power manifest as the Goddess, thus restoring them to their original divine positions, Indra and the other Gods pray with deep devotion that their more animalistic qualities never again gain the upper hand. These verses reveal the true nature of a divine being, as they ask for protections, purity, devotion and the good of all. Demons steal. Humans ask. Gods give.

## Chapter Five

### The Conversation of the Goddess with the Messenger

#### Meditation on Saraswati

*Holding a bell, trident, plough, conch, mace, discus, bow and arrow,  
radiant as the moon shining through the fringe of a cloud,  
the support of the three worlds,  
upon You Mother Sarasvati,  
the destroyer of Shumbha and other demons –we meditate.*

#### **Om Klīm**

#### **The sage said:**

The demon brothers *Shumbha* (conceit/ego) and *Nishumbha* (self-loathing/attachment), do to the force of their pride and strength, robbed the *husband of Shaci* (Indra) of his sovereignty over the three worlds and of his portion of the sacrifices. They also took the control away from *Surya* (the sun), *Chandra* (the moon) Kubera, Yama and Varuna. They likewise took control away from Vayu and Agni. Deprived of their authority all the gods were defeated. Denied their duties and expelled by these two demons, the gods remembered the invincible Goddess.

(They thought), “She granted us a boon.” (She said), “Whenever in difficulty, if you remember Me, that very moment I will come and end all your troubles.” Thinking thus the gods went to the Himalaya, the king of mountains, and began to praise the Goddess, the illusive power of Vishnu.

#### **The gods said:**

We bow to You, Divine Goddess, the Great Goddess—we bow always to You who

are the primordial cause and the sustaining power. With attention, we have saluted You. You are fearsome—we bow to You. Eternal, golden, support of the universe—we bow to You again and again. You are the moon, moonlight and happiness itself—we bow to You. You are welfare, prosperity, perfection and success—we bow to You again and again. Consort of Shiva, the fortune and misfortune of kings—we bow to You again and again.

Oh Durga, You takes us across our difficulties. You are the essence and the author of everything. You are discrimination, black like a storm cloud and the color of smoke—we bow to You. You are at once most gentle and most terrible—we bow to You again and again. We bow to You, the support of the world. To that Goddess who exists as volition—we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, the Lord's own maya, the inscrutable power pervading all things—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again. To that Goddess, known as consciousness in all beings—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **intelligence**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **sleep**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **hunger**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **appearance**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **energy**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **thirst**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **forgiveness**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **existence**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **humility**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **peace**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **faith/sincerity**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **modesty**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **auspiciousness**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **activity**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **memory**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **compassion**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **satisfaction**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **motherhood**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

To that Goddess, who abides in all beings in the form of **confusion**—we bow to You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

Divine Mother, who presides over all the senses, abides in all beings and pervades all things—we bow to You again and again.

Divine Mother, who pervades the world and abides here in the form of consciousness—we bow you You, we bow to You, we bow to You again and again.

In ancient times the gods, led by Indra, daily sang these prayers. Oh *Ishvari* (controller/goddess), source of all goodness, please bring us auspiciousness and end our suffering. We gods again worship You, being tormented by these arrogant demons. Being thus invoked by us with devotion please destroy this very moment all our suffering.

**The sage said:**

Dear king, while the gods where thus worshiping, *Parvati* (the daughter of the Himalayas) came there to bathe in the waters of the Ganges. That lovely-eyed lady asked the gods, “Who is being worshiped here?” Then an auspicious form emerged from Her physical body and gave the answer, “These prayers adore Me, sung by the gods after being reduced to nothing by the demon brothers Shumbha and Nishumbha.” Because Ambika came out of the form of Parvati, She is glorified by the name “*Kausiki*” (who comes from within.) Having thus come out, Parvati became dark, known by the name Kali, She sat in the Himalayas.

At that time the demons *Chanda* (lust) and *Munda* (anger), servants of Shumbha and Nishumbha, saw Ambika, who had a supremely beautiful form. They went and told their lord, the demon Shumba, “Beloved king, there is a certain woman of supreme beauty sitting brilliantly on the Himalayas. Such beauty has never before been seen. You should find out who this lady is and take possession of Her, O lord of the demons. Among woman She is the gem with exquisitely beautiful limbs. She illuminates the quarters with Her luster. She is there. Lord of the demons; You should see Her. Our lord, the greatest jewels, stones, elephants, horses, etc. are already in your home. The gem of elephants Airavata has been stolen from Indra. So has the sacred Parijata tree and the horse Uchhaihsravas. Here in your courtyard you have this beautiful chariot, bedecked with gems and pulled by

swans, stolen from Brahma. You possess the treasure *Mahapadma* (the great lotus) which was taken from the god of wealth. And you possess the unfading lotus garland stolen from the ocean. The gold-showering umbrella of Varuna stands here in your home as does this excellent chariot that belonged to Prajapati. You have stolen the shakti-weapon of Yama called Utkrantida. The god of the ocean's noose is now owned by your brother. Your brother Nishumbha has every kind of gem produced by the sea. Agni also gave you his two garments purified by the divine fire. Since you now possess all the treasures of the world, why isn't this treasure of a woman possessed by you?"

**The sage said:**

Upon hearing the demons Chanda and Munda's words, the demon Shumbha sent the great demon *Sugriva* (false friend) as his messenger to the Goddess.

(He said), "Go and speak to Her in such a pleasing way that She will quickly come to me in love." *He* (Sugriva), then went to that lovely spot in the Himalayas where the Goddess was staying and spoke to Her in fine and sweet words.

**The messenger said:**

Listen Goddess, Shumbha, the lord of demons, now controls the three worlds. I have been sent by him to You with a message. Listen to the words of he whose order the gods can not disobey and who has defeated all enemies of the demons.

(Speaking in the words of Shumbha), "The three worlds are mine and all the gods are my slaves. I now enjoy their share of the sacrificial offerings. I possess the greatest gems in the three worlds and have stolen the best of elephants and the

vehicle of the king of the gods. The gods themselves offered me with reverence the best of horses that came from churning the milk-ocean. O lovely lady, whatever rare objects that existed among the gods, *gandharavas* (heavenly musicians) or nagas (divine serpents) are now with me. We see that You, O Devi, are the jewel among womankind. As such You too should come to me since I am the supreme enjoyer. You should come to me or to my powerful younger brother Nishumbha, O unsteady-eyed lady, for You are in truth a jewel. If You marry me You will get wealth beyond compare. Think this over and become my wife.”

**The sage said:**

Hearing this, the adorable and auspicious Durga, by whom this universe is supported, became serene and spoke.

**The Goddess spoke:**

You have spoken the truth. You have said nothing untrue in this matter. Shumbha is indeed the lord of the three worlds along with his brother Nishumbha. But how can a vow be broken? Listen to the vow I have made out of foolishness, “He that conquers Me in battle, thus removing My pride, shall be My husband.” Let the great demons Shumbha or Nishumbha come here. Defeating Me he will have my hand in marriage. Why delay?

**The messenger said:**

O Devi, You are being haughty. Do not speak like this before me. Who is there in the three worlds who can stand before Shumbha and Nishumbha? None of the gods can stand face to face with even the other demons in battle, what to speak of You, a mere woman. If Indra and the other gods could not stand up in battle against

Shumbha and the other demons, how will You, a woman, face them? Listen to my advice. Go willingly to Shumbha and Nishumba. Do not lose Your dignity by being taken to them dragged by Your hair.

### **The Goddess spoke:**

It is true that Shumbha is strong and Nishumba heroic! But what can I do after taking My ill-considered vow long ago? Go to the lord of the demons and tell him all I have said. He can do whatever he thinks proper.

*Thus ends the fifth chapter entitled "The Conversation of the Goddess with the Messenger"  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

### **Comments on Chapter Five**

After the struggle with their lower animalistic tendencies represented by Mahishasura in the previous story, the Gods become complacent and unwittingly allow more refined enemies, the demons Shumbha and Nishumbha, to once again usurp their sovereignty. Shumbha represents conceit and his brother Nishumbha represents self-loathing. Conceit and self-loathing always go together, as real self-esteem is always the result of devotion and humility.

In the previous episode the Gods prayed to Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva for help. But remembering how spiritual power emanated from their own bodies forming the Great Goddess, they now retreat to the lofty peak of the Himalayas and invoke their own *shakti* (spiritual power) by chanting the *Aparajita Stuti* (Hymn to the Invincible Goddess) also known as the *Tantrotam Devi Stuti* (Tantric praise of the Goddess). As electricity manifests as heat in a heater, cold in a cooler and light in a lamp, so the universal consciousness manifest in all beings as intelligence, sleep, hunger, energy etc. Recognizing consciousness as divinity is the goal of meditation and worship.

The Goddess first appears as Parvati, the daughter of the Himalaya. Parvati represents the power of consciousness known as Kundalini within the body, here represented by the Himalayan mountain. Kundalini exists in most people in a latent form at the base of the spine, just below the muladhara chakra. As this

chakra is predominated by the earth element, consciousness is trapped in matter. From Parvati, Goddess Kaushika appears. *Kaushiki* means “She who comes out of the sheath”. This refers to the awakened kundalini, who when liberated from attachment to the body and material world, rises energetically up the spine leading to progressively more enlightened states. It is this awakening consciousness that destroys the subtle demons that are encountered along the spiritual path.

In this story when the demons see the awesome power and beauty of the Divine Mother, their first response is to try to possess Her. The nature of our the demons is to steal what they want by force and try to enjoy through possession. Divine Mother can never be controlled by these methods, and trying to is akin to attempted rape. She reveals Herself to those who approach Her with purity, service, surrender and devotion.

## Chapter Six

### The Slaying of Dhumralochana

#### Meditation on Padmavati

*Your tender body shines like the jewels upon the hood of the Lord of serpents, on whom You rest. You shine like the sun and Your three eyes are brilliant.*

*You hold rosary, goad, skull and lotus. A shining crescent moon decorates Your crown. Ever existing within the gaze of Lord Bhairava, the Lord of wisdom, Upon You, Mother Padmavati, we meditate.*

#### **Om**

#### **The sage said:**

After hearing these words of the Goddess, the messenger, full of anger, went to the king of the demons and related them in detail. The demon king became enraged by these words of his messenger and addressed *Dhumralocanam* (smoke-eyed/ignorance) thus, “Hey Dhumralocanam! Go quickly with your army and drag that misbehaved girl here by Her hair. If any one tries to defend Her, be he a god, yaksha (semi-divine being) or gandharva, then kill him.”

#### **The sage said:**

Then the demon Dhumralocana, as commanded by Shumbha, went forth immediately with his army of sixty thousand demons. On seeing the Goddess seated in the snow-covered mountains he yelled, “Enemy! Go at once to Shumbha and Nishumbha. If You do not go to my master right now, I will grab You by Your hair and drag You there by force.”

**The Divine Goddess said:**

You have been sent by the king of demons. As you are extremely powerful and accompanied by this mighty army, if you take Me away by force, what can I do?

**The Sage said:**

Upon hearing these words, Dhumralocana attacked Her. Ambika, merely uttering the sound “hum” reduced him to ash. In great anger the army of demons began to shower Ambika with arrows, spears and battle-axes. Then the carrier of the Goddess, the mighty lion, shook his mane in anger and jumped on the army of demons. He killed some demons with his front claws, other he killed with his fangs, and others still by treading upon them with his hind legs. Striking them with his claws, he tore out the hearts of some and severed the heads of others. He cut many arms and heads off and shaking his mane, he drank the blood from their hearts. Within a moment, the angry lion, the mount of the Goddess, destroyed the demon army.

Hearing news of the death of Dhumralocana at the hands of the Goddess and the destruction of his demon army by her lion-mount, the demon king became furious. His lower lip quivering he commanded the two mighty demons Chanda and Munda thus, “Hey Chanda!, Hey Munda!, take a huge army of demons and go bring Her here dragging Her by the hair or blinding Her. If you doubt that you can do this then let the demons wound Her with their weapons. After wounding Her and striking down Her lion, bind Ambika and bring Her to me quickly.”

*Thus ends the sixth chapter entitled “The Slaying of Dhumralochana”  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

## Comments on Chapter Six

*Dhumralochana*, whose name means “smoke eyes,” represents spiritual ignorance. Ignorance is easily vanquished with knowledge, just as darkness is defeated by light. The mantra “hum” is known as the kurcha bija-mantra and invokes the purifying fire of knowledge, which is sufficient to destroy our ignorance.

The *Siddha-Kunjika Stotram* reveals that the demons Chanda Munda refer to lust and anger respectively. Just as conceit and self-loathing always go together, so also does lust and anger. Lust is selfish desire and anger is the result of this desire thwarted.

## Chapter Seven

### The Slaying of Chanda and Munda

#### Meditation on Matangi

*We meditate upon You, sitting upon a throne of jewels,  
listening to the sweet sounds of parrots.*

*You body is dark, Your foot rests upon a lotus, a  
nd You wear a crescent moon upon Your head.*

*Wearing a garland of forest flowers,  
You play upon the strings of a vina.*

*You are clad in red cloth.*

*Goddess Mantangi, You hold in Your hands a cup made from conch-shell.*

*A slight sweet intoxicating fragrance comes from Your face  
which is decorated with a brilliant vermilion mark.*

**Om**

**The sage said:**

At this command (of Shumba) the demon army with Chanda and Munda at their head, marched ahead in four-fold array, well armed with weapons and armor. They saw the Goddess, gently smiling, seated on Her lion, on the high peak of the great mountain. Seeing Her, the demons became excited to capture Her and made ready with their bows bent and swords drawn.

Ambika then became very angry with these enemies and Her face became dark with rage. From the center of Her fierce frowning forehead suddenly appeared Goddess Kali, frightening to behold, armed with sword and noose. Wearing only a tiger skin, a garland of human skulls and carrying a strange skull-topped staff, Her flesh was withered and Her body was made only of skin and bones, giving Her a frightening appearance. Her immense gaping mouth showed Her large lolling

tong. Her eyes were sunken and blood red. Her roars filled all directions.

She attacked and slaughtered the army of demons, the enemies of the gods, and swallowed them whole. Grabbing elephants with their protectors, drivers, warriors and bells with one hand, She threw them into Her mouth. Likewise cavalries with their horses, chariots and their charioteers were put into Her mouth and hideously chewed up with Her teeth. Some She grabbed by their hair, others by their necks. Some She trampled with Her feet, others She crushed with Her body. She caught the weapons shot by the demons in Her mouth and in Her fury crunched them with Her teeth. Destroying the army of mighty and wicked demons, She ate some and fiercely beat others. Some demons were killed with Her sword, some with Her skull-topped staff, and still others by being ground by Her teeth.

Seeing the army destroyed, the demon Chanda rushed to attack the awesome Kali. He showered the fierce-eyed Goddess with terrible arrows and the demon Mudha hurled thousands of discs at Her. These numerous discs disappeared into Her mouth looking like suns disappearing into clouds. Roaring fiercely, Her teeth gleaming in Her terrible mouth, Kali laughed in extreme fury.

The Goddess, riding upon Her great lion, then seized the demon Chanda and severed his head with Her sword. Seeing the destruction of Chanda, the demon Munda attacked the Goddess. In terrible anger She killed him with Her sword leaving Him lying on the ground. Seeing the valiant demons Chanda and Munda destroyed the remaining army panicked and ran in all directions. Kali, holding the severed heads of Chanda and Munda, came before Chandika, Her voice filled with loud laughter and said, "I have brought You the heads of Chanda and Munda as animal offerings in this sacrifice of battle. You Yourself will kill the demon

brothers Shumba and Nishumbha.”

**The sage said:**

Seeing the heads of the demons Chanda and Munda brought to Her, the auspicious Chandika said to Kali in playful words, “Because You have brought me both Chanda and Munda, You shall now be known in all the worlds as “*Chamundeti*” (the killer of Chanda and Munda).”

*Thus ends the seventh chapter entitled “The Slaying of Chanda and Munda”  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

**Comments on Chapter Seven**

Goddess Kali is said to come from the anger of the Divine Mother. She is one of Her most fierce forms and embodies the destructive and transformative power of the Goddess. A tigress is seen as a loving mother to her cubs, but to her prey she appears as horrible death personified. So also is the all-loving and merciful Divine Mother seen as frightening to the darkest parts of our personality that need purification. When lust and its byproduct anger are purged of self-interest (decapitated) they bloom forth as the true desire of the soul to love.

## Chapter Eight

### The Slaying of Raktabija

#### Meditation on Bhavani

*Embodiment of existence, granter of perfection,  
holding net, sword, bow and arrow,  
surrounded by rays of light and other subtle energies, with red colored body,  
Your eyes shine with compassion  
—on You, Divine Mother Bhavani, we meditate.*

#### **Om**

#### **The sage said:**

When Chanda was slain, the demon Munda stuck down and most of the army destroyed, the lord of the demons, the powerful Shumbha's mind became overcome with anger. He ordered the mobilization of all the demonic generals thus, "Let the eighty-six *Udayudhas* (upraised weapons/strong thoughts) and all their soldiers, as well as the eighty-four *Kambus* (plunders) surrounded by their armies assemble. Let the five hundred demonic *Kotiviryas* (eminently brave) families and the hundred *Dhaumra* (vices) families go forth on my command. Let the demon families *Kalakas* (black/calamity), *Daurhridas* (evil hearted), *Mauryas* (destroyers/recurring thoughts) and the *Kalakeyas* (darkness/fear of the unknown) march forth ready for battle."

Ordering thus, Shumbha, the ferocious king of the demons, went forth with many thousands of huge armies. Seeing the approach of this terrible army, Chandika twanged Her bowstring, filling space from earth to sky with its sound. Her lion-mount then let out a loud roar, dear king, and Ambika increased the sound with the ringing of Her bell. Kali opened Her mouth and filled the quarters with the

sound, “hum,” overwhelming the sounds of the bowstring, lion and bell by Her frightful laughter. Hearing this roar the enraged demon armies surrounded the lion, Chandika and Kali on all four sides.

At this time, dear king, in order to annihilate the enemies of the gods and to benefit the Supreme Divinities, there issued forth with extreme strength, *shaktis* (female deities/energies) from the bodies of Brahma, Shiva, *Guha* (Kartikeya, son of Siva), Vishnu and Indra. These forms went forth in battle with Chandika. In the same form, with the same ornaments and with the same vehicles that the different gods possessed, their shakti’s came forward to fight the demons. Seated upon a chariot pulled by swans (*vital breath*), holding rosary and water pot, came *Brahmani* (Brahma’s Shakti.) *Maheshvari* (Shiva’s shakti) came riding a bull, holding a trident, wearing bracelets of great serpents, and adorned with a crescent moon. The *Kaumari* (virgin), the shakti of the form of Guha came riding a peacock to attack the demons. Then came *Vaishnavi Shakti* (energy of the Vishnu), seated upon the eagle-mount *Garudha* (vehicle of consciousness), holding conch, disc, club, bow, and sword in Her hands. Assuming the form of an incomparable sacrificial boar, the shakti of Hari advanced in Her boar form (*Varahi*). Narasimhi, in the form like Nrisimha (*half man and half lion*), arrived bringing down the stars with the tossing of Her mane. The thousand-eyed Aindri (Indra’s shakti) came holding a thunderbolt in Her hand and riding an elephant.

Then Shiva, surrounded by the Shakti’s of the gods, said to Chandika. “Let these demons be killed by You for My pleasure.” Then from out of the body of the Goddess came forth the shakti Chandika, terrifying, extremely fierce and yelling like hundreds of jackals. Then the invincible Goddess said to Shiva, who has dark matted hair, “Go, my Lord, as my messenger to Shumbha and Nishumbha. Tell

those two haughty demons, Shumbha and Nishumba and the other demons present for battle, ‘Give back the three worlds to Indra and allow the gods to enjoy the sacrificial oblations. Go back to the underworlds if you want to keep your lives. But if out of pride of your strength, you are anxious for battle, then come and let my jackals be filled with your flesh.’ Because the Goddess sent Shiva Himself as Her messenger, She became known in this world as “Shiva-Duti.”

Hearing these words from the Goddess conveyed by Shiva, the great demons became filled with anger and approached the place where *Katyayani* (the Goddess of sages) stood. Then the enraged enemies of the gods began to shower the Goddess with arrows, pikes and spears. She playfully cut to pieces the arrows, spears, darts and axes hurled by them with the twang of Her bow.

Then Kali came before these enemies and pieced some with Her spear and crushed them with Her skull-topped staff. Brahmani moved about sprinkling the enemies with water from Her water pot, thus robbing them of their valor and power. The wrathful Mahesvari slew demons with Her trident, Vaishnavi with Her discus and Kaumari with Her spear. Torn to pieces by the thunderbolt hurled down at them by Aindri, the *daityas* and the *danavas* (two classes of demons) fell to earth by the hundreds, rivers of blood flowing from their bodies. (Demons) fell by being shattered by blows from the snout of the Goddess in the form of a Divine Boar, wounded in their chests by the ends of Her tusks and torn to pieces by Her discus. Narasimhi, filling the quarters and the sky with Her roars, roamed about in battle devouring other great demons by tearing them with Her claws. Losing their valor by hearing the violent laughter of Shiva-Duti, some demons fell to earth, only to be devoured by Her.

Seeing this enraged band of mothers crushing the great demons by various means, the armies of the enemies of the gods took to their heels. Seeing the demons fleeing this band of mothers, the great demon *Raktabija* (seeds of desire/ego) came forward to fight with wrath. Whenever a droop of blood fell from his body, at that moment a new demon would rise up with the same form and power. This great demon fought Indra's shakti with club in his hand.

Aindri struck Raktabija with Her thunderbolt. Blood began to flow from his body, being injured by this thunderbolt. From this blood rose up new fighters with his form and valor. As many droops of blood that fell from his body, that many persons came into being with his strength and valor. These persons, who sprang from his blood, also began to fight with the mothers in a dreadful manner, hurling powerful weapons. Again, when his head was wounded by Her thunderbolt, thousands of persons were born from his blood. Vaishnavi stuck him with Her discus and Aindri beat this lord of demons with Her club. The world became pervaded by thousands of great demons who had his form, rising up from the blood that flowed from him when cloven by Vaishnavi's disc. Kaumari stuck this great demon Raktabija with Her spear, Varahi with Her sword and Maheshvari with Her trident. Raktabija, filled with wrath, also stuck each mother many times with his club. Receiving multiple wounds from the spears, darts and other weapons, hundreds of demons came into being from his blood.

These demons, born from his blood, pervaded the world. The gods became very alarmed by this. Seeing the gods frightened, Chandika laughed and told Kali, "Hey Chamunda!, open Your mouth. Swallow the drops of blood caused by the blows of My weapons and swallow the demons that have been born from the blood of Raktabija. Roam about the battlefield devouring the great demons that have

sprung from him. This demon emptied of his blood, shall soon parish. As You devour them, other fierce demons will not be born.” Having spoken to Her thus, the Goddess stuck him with her dart. Kali then drank Raktabija’s blood with Her mouth. He then struck Chandika with his club. This blow from his club did not hurt Her in the least. Chamunda swallowed the blood flowing from his wounded body. Chamunda devoured the great demons that sprang from the flow his blood and also drank his blood. The Goddess then killed Raktabija with Her dart, thunderbolt, arrows, swords and spears as Chamunda drank his blood. Stricken with such a multitude of weapons, bereft of blood, this great demon fell on the ground, dear King. The Gods then rejoiced. The band of Mothers who sprang from their bodies began to dance, intoxicated by the demon’s blood.

*Thus ends the eighth chapter entitled “The Slaying of Raktabija”  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

### **Comments on Chapter Eight**

The one Supreme Goddess manifests as the feminine forms of the primary gods, known as the Sapta Matrikas, or the seven mothers (Brahmaani, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Barahi, Narasimhi & Aindri), showing that She is the inner strength or shakti of all the gods. Even after this demonstration, Shiva egoistically takes the position of ruler, only to be humbled by the Goddess and told to act as Her messenger.l

## Chapter Nine

### The Slaying of Nishumbha

**Om**

**King Suratha said:**

Wonderful is this story, worshipful sage, which you have related to us about the greatness of the Goddess's slaying the demon Ratatabija. I wish to hear more about what the angry demons Shumbha and Nishumba did after the killing of Raktabija.

**The sage said:**

After the slaying of Raktabija and the killing of the other demons in battle, the demons Shumbha and Nishumba gave way to unbounded wrath. Infuriated by seeing his great army slaughtered, Nishumbha rushed forward with his main armies of demons. Surrounded by great demons biting their lips in anger, he came forward to kill the Goddess. Shumba, strong in valor, also advanced with his armies to slay Chandika, enraged after fighting with the shaktis. Then began a fierce battle between the Goddess and Shumba and Nishumba, who like two thunderclouds, showered Her with terrible arrows. Chandika quickly split the arrows shot by the two demons with Her many arrows. She then stuck the bodies of the demon lords with Her mass of weapons. Nishumba grabbed a sharp sword and shining shield and stuck the Goddess' great lion-mount on his head. When Her carrier was stuck, the Goddess quickly cut Nishumba's exquisite sword and shield decorated with eight moons, with a sharp arrow. With his shield split and sword broken, the demon threw his spear at Her, which was likewise split in two by Her disk. The demon Nishumba, swelling in his wrath, then threw his dart. This too

was reduced into powder by the Goddess's fist. He then flung his club against Chandika, which was burned to ashes by being split by the Goddess's trident. The Goddess attacked the heroic demon, with battle-axe in hand, and he fell dead on the ground.

Seeing his powerful brother Nishumbha laying on the ground, Shumbha became completely infuriated and rushed forward to slay Ambika. Standing in his chariot and holding awesome weapons in his eight mighty arms, he pervaded the atmosphere with his luster.

Seeing him approaching, the Goddess blew Her conch and twanged Her bowstring, making an unbearable sound. The sound of Her bell, filling all directions, destroyed the strength of the demons. The lion gave out a great roar, filling heaven and earth and the ten directions, causing kingly elephants to go out of rut. Then Kali leaped up to the sky and then struck the earth with both Her hands, causing such a noise that drowned out all previous sounds. Shiva-Duti made a loud peal of laughter, which frightened the demons and Shumbha became very angry.

“O evil one, stop where you are!” shouted Ambika. The gods cheered Her saying, “Victory to You!”

Shumbha came forward thrusting a Shakti-weapon, frightening like a flaming mountain. The Goddess put it out with Her fire-brand. The lion-like roar of Shumbha filled the three worlds but the thunder-clap (of the Goddess) overcame that sound. Shumba and the Goddess cut one another's arrows by the hundreds and thousands. Then Chandi stabbed him with Her spear. Wounded, he fell senseless to the ground.

Nishumbha, regaining consciousness, picked up his bow and shot Kali and Her lion with arrows. The demon lord, the son of Diti, with ten thousand arms, attacked Chandika with his discuses. Bhagavati Durga grew angry and destroyed those discuses with Her arrows. Thereupon Nishumbha quickly seized his club and rushed to kill Chandika surrounded by his army of demons. As he rushed towards Her, Chandika broke his club with Her sharp-edged sword. He grabbed his spear and with spear in hand, Nishumbha, the enemy of the gods, came forward and was stabbed in the heart by Chandika's own spear.

From his heart thus pierced by Her spear came a person of great strength and great virility crying, "Stop!" Laughing loudly, the Goddess cut off his head with Her sword. He fell to the ground.

The lion then devoured the demons whose necks had been crushed by his teeth while Kali and Shivaduti devoured others. Kaumari's missiles killed some great demons while others were repulsed by the holy water sprinkled by Brahmani. Maheshvari's trident pierced others, while Varahi crushed some into powder with Her snout. Some demons were cut to pieces by Vaishnavi's disc and others were hit by the lightning bolt of Indri. Some demons perished, some fled from the great battle and others were devoured by Kali, Shivaduti and the lion.

*Thus ends the ninth chapter entitled "The Slaying of Nishumbha"  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

## Chapter Ten

### The Slaying of Shumbha

#### Meditation on Kameshwari Devi

*Wearing a radiant half-moon upon Your forehead,  
You shine beautifully like excellent gold.  
You have the sun, moon and fire as Your three eyes  
and hold bow, arrows, curved sword, net and spear  
in Your lovely hands. Mother Kameshwari (Goddess of desire),  
we worship You in the fullness of our heart.*

**Om**

**The sage said:**

Seeing his brother Nishumbha, as dear to him as his own life, slain and his army destroyed, the demon Shumbha angrily said, “Wicked and proud of Your strength, Durga, do not show your pride before me. You fight resorting to the strength of others.”

**The Goddess spoke:**

“I am the only one here in this world. Who else is here besides Me? O wicked one, all these goddesses are my own powers. They are again entering into Me.”

Then all the Goddesses, led by Brahmani, were reabsorbed into the body of the Goddess. Ambika alone then remained.

**The Goddess spoke:**

“The numerous forms projected by My power have all been withdrawn by Me. I

now stand alone. Stand up and fight!”

### **The sage said:**

Then between the Goddess and the demon Shumbha began a dreadful battle while the gods and demons looked on. With showers of arrows, sharp weapons and frightful missiles, the two engaged in a battle that frightened all the worlds. The lord of the demons broke all the divine missiles that Ambika hurled at him in the hundreds with his own defensive weapons. Many of the excellent weapons hurled by him were likewise playfully broken by the Supreme Goddess by the chanting of “hum” and other mantras.

Then the demon covered the Goddess with hundreds of arrows and the Goddess, in anger, cut his bow with Her own arrows. With his bow broken, the lord of demons took up his spear. The Goddess also split this spear while still in his hands with a discus. Taking his sword, bright as the sun, and a shield with a hundred moons, the one known as the supreme monarch of the demons rushed at the Goddess. As he rushed towards Her, Chandika split his sword with sharp arrows shot from Her bow, as well as his shield, shining like the sun. With his horses dead, his bow broken and without his charioteer, the demon grabbed his terrible club to try to kill Ambika. With Her sharp arrows She split Shumba’s club while he rushed at Her. Even then he rushed at her with his fist upraised. The demon king brought his fists down upon the heart of the Goddess and the Goddess also hit him on the chest with Her palm. The demon king, wounded by the blow from Her palm, fell to the earth but immediately rose up again. Grabbing the Goddess, he jumped into the sky. There also Chandika fought with him without any support. The demon and Chandika fought in close combat in the sky like never before, causing wonder in the minds of *siddhas* (perfected beings) and sages.

After long close combat, Ambika lifted him up, whirled him around and then threw him down to the earth. Thus thrown to earth, the evil-natured one quickly got up and rushed forward to kill Chandika with his first upraised. The Goddess, seeing the approach of lord of the demons, threw him again to earth by piercing him in his chest with Her spear. Pierced by Goddess's sharp spear, he fell dead on the ground, shaking the entire earth with its seas, islands and mountains.

When this evil-natured demon was slain, the entire universe became happy and regained perfect peace and the sky grew clear. The flaming ominous clouds became tranquil and the rivers regained their natural courses after he was slain. After his death the minds of the multitude of gods became filled with joy and the gandharvas began to sing sweet songs. Others played their musical instruments while heavenly nymphs danced. Favorable winds began to blow and the sun shined radiantly above. The sacred fires blazed peacefully and the fearful sounds that had filled all directions became tranquilized.

*Thus ends the tenth chapter entitled "The Slaying of Shumbha"  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

## Chapter Eleven

### *Praise of Goddess Narayani*

Meditation on Bhuvaneshwari Devi

*Your body shines like the sunrise. You wear the moon upon Your head as a crown.  
Your breasts are swollen and overflow with milk and Your three eyes are united.  
Your face shows a radiant smile and Your hands hold a curved sword,  
a net and show the mudras of blessings and fearlessness.  
Upon You, Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, we meditate.*

**Om**

**The sage said:**

When the great lord of the demons was slain there by the Goddess, Indra and the other gods led by Agni, with their desire fulfilled and their cheerful faces illuminating the quarters, praised Goddess Katyayani (*Durga*) thus:

O Devi, You remove the sufferings of Your devotees—be gracious. Be propitious, Mother of the world. Be gracious, Mother of the universe. Protect the universe. You are, O Devi, the ruler of all moving and unmoving beings. You are the substratum of the world, the form of Mother Earth. You exist as water. The universe is satisfied, O Goddess of unconquerable valor. You are Vishnu's shakti, of endless valor, the primeval illusive power, the source of the universe. You, O Devi, have thrown the universe into illusion and if You be gracious, You are the cause of its liberation. All methods of knowledge are Your manifestations and all women are Your forms. By You alone, Mother, is this world filled. How can we praise You who art beyond praise? When You have been extolled as the embodiment of all beings, O Devi, and the giver of enjoyment and liberation, what words, however

excellent, can we use to praise You?

You who abide as intelligence in the hearts of all beings, the giver of both heaven and liberation—to You, Narayani, we bow.

You as time, bring change to all things, who exist even after the destruction of the universe—to You, Narayani, we bow.

Most auspicious among all auspicious beings, who grants fulfillment of all prayers, refuge of all, consort of Shiva, with three eyes, golden—to You, Narayani, we bow.

Eternal One, power that creates, sustains and destroys the worlds, on You material nature rests and of Your being is constituted—to You, Narayani, we bow.

Protector and supreme rest of the weak and afflicted, of beings that take refuge in You, dispeller of all miseries—to You, Narayani, we bow.

Riding on a chariot pulled by swans, in the form of Brahmani, purifying all with water from Your kusha-grass—to You, Narayani, we bow.

Displaying trident, moon, serpent, and riding a bull, in the form of Maheshvari—to You, Narayani, we bow.

You are attended to by peacock and rooster and hold a spear. Established in the form of a virgin—to You, Narayani, we bow.

Displaying conch, disk, club and bow, give us Your blessings. In the form of

Vaishnavi—to You, Narayani, we bow.

Holding a huge disc, You uplift the world with Your tusk, in the form of a Divine Boar, to You, Narayani, we bow.

In the courageous form of Narashinga You set out to slay the *daitas* (demons), protecting the three worlds—to You, Narayani, we bow.

You wear a crown, hold a thunderbolt and have a thousand eyes. You took the life of the demon Vritra, O Aindri—to You, Narayani, we bow.

In the form of Shivaduti, You slew the mighty host of demons. Fearful in form and great in sound—to You, Narayani, we bow.

You have great teeth and wear a garland of heads, Chamunda, destroyer of anger—to You, Narayani, we bow.

You are Lakshmi, humility, great knowledge, faith, nourishment, the mantra “svaha,” immovable, the great night, and the great illusion—to You, Narayani, we bow.

You are intelligence, Saravati, the highest, prosperity, consort of Vishnu, dark, and destiny. Give us Your blessings—to You, Narayani, we bow.

You are the essence of all, Queen of all and possess all power. Free us from all fear, Divine Goddess—to You, Goddess Durga, we bow.

May this beautiful face, adorned with three eyes, protect us from all fear—to You, Katyayani, we bow.

Flaming, fearful, sharp, the fierce destroyer of all demons, with Your trident protect us from fear—to You, Benign Kali, we bow.

May the sound of Your bell that fills the world and destroys the prowess of the demons, protect us, Divine Goddess, as a mother protects her children from all evil. May Your sword, smeared with the blood and fat of the demons and gleaming, act for our welfare, O Chandi.

When pleased, You destroy all illness. When displeased, You frustrate all desires. No calamity befalls those who take refuge in You. Those who take refuge in You invariably become a refuge to others. Who else could do what You have done; slaughtering the great demons, enemies of righteousness, Divine Mother, by multiplying Your form into many? Who else is spoken of in knowledge, scriptures, and the discourses that light the lamp of knowledge? You also throw this universe whirling into the darkness of egotism and attachment. Wherever there are demons, poisonous serpents, enemies, armies of robbers, and forest fires; there, and in mid-sea, You stand to save the world. As Queen of the universe, You protect the universe. As soul of the universe, You support the universe. You are worthy of being worshipped by the Lord of the Universe. Those who bow to You with devotion become the refuge of the universe. O Devi, please bless us. As You have just saved us by killing the demons, please save us from the fear of enemies. Destroy all evil from all the worlds that spring from negative tendencies. Remover of universal suffering; be gracious to us who worship You, O Devi, worthy of worship by the inhabitants of the three worlds, please grant the best to all the world.

### **The Goddess spoke:**

O gods, I shall grant you a boon. Whatever blessing your mind desires for the benefit of the world, that I shall grant.

### **The gods said:**

Queen of all, destroy all disturbances in the three worlds and remove from us all hostility.

### **The Goddess spoke:**

During the twenty-eighth yuga, when Vaivasvata will be the Manu, the great demons Shumbha and Nishumbha will be born again. Through the womb of Mother Yashoda, in the home of the cowherd Nanda, and dwelling in the Vindhya mountains, I will destroy them both. I shall again incarnate on earth in a ferocious form and slay the demons who are the descendents of Viprachitta. When I will devour these great demonic descendents of Viprachitta, my teeth shall become as red as a pomegranate flower. Then the gods in heaven and humans upon the earth shall praise Me as *Raktadanta* (She with red teeth). And again during a time when it will not rain for a hundred years, worshiped by the sages, I shall be born on the drought-ridden earth, but not through a womb. Then I will see the sages with a hundred eyes and humankind will glorify Me as *Shatakshi* (She with a hundred eyes). During that time, Oh gods, I shall feed the whole world with life-giving vegetables from My own body until the rains come again. Then I shall be famous upon the earth as *Shakambhari* (giver of vegetables). During that period I shall slay the great demon named Durgama. I will then be worshiped by the name Durga Devi. And again, assuming a terrible form in the

Himalayas, I will destroy the demons for the protection of the sages. At that time all the sages will bow their bodies in worship of Me and shall call me Bhima Devi. When the demon named Aruna shall work great havoc in the three worlds, I will take on a form consisting of innumerable bees to kill this great demon for the welfare of the three worlds. At that time people will praise Me everywhere as *Bhramari* (like a bee). In this way, whenever trouble arises due to the rising of the demons, I shall incarnate Myself and destroy the enemies.

*Thus ends the eleventh chapter entitled "Praise of Goddess Narayani"  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

## Chapter Twelve

### Declaration of the Fruits

#### Meditation on Durga Devi

*Your beautiful body shines like lightning.*

*You sit upon the shoulders of a lion, appearing very fierce.*

*Many maidens, holding double-edged swords, stand ready to serve You.*

*You hold in Your hands discus, club, double-edged sword, shield, arrow,*

*bow, net and the mudra joining thumb and pointer-finger,  
with the other three fingers extending upward (granting wisdom),*

*Your nature is like fire and You wear the moon as a crown.*

*You, three-eyed Mother Durga, we worship.*

**Om**

**The Goddess spoke:**

Whoever will praise Me with these hymns with a concentrated mind, I will without a doubt put an end to his (or her) every difficulty. Those who shall recite the story of the destruction of the demons Madhu and Kaitabha, and the killing of the demons Mahishasura, Shubha and Nishumbha (I will likewise protect). Those who listen with devotion and concentration to this sublime hymn about My greatness on the eighth, fourteenth and ninth days of the lunar fortnight, no wrong shall befall them, nor any misfortunes arising from wrong actions, nor poverty, nor separations from loved ones. That person shall not experience fear from enemies, thieves, kings, weapons, fire or flood. This hymn of My greatness must be chanted by those with concentrated minds and always heard with devotion, for this is the path to the supreme goal. May this hymn of My greatness, the great destroyer of all disturbance, pacify all suffering from epidemics and the threefold natural sufferings.

My sanctuary is the place where this hymn is chanted daily. I will never leave such a place. Whenever sacrifices are performed, during worship services, fire-ceremonies, and great festivals, this entire hymn of My glorious deeds must be chanted and heard. I will then accept with love the sacrifice, worship and offerings to the sacred fire, whether or not they are performed with proper knowledge. When the great worship is yearly performed in the autumn season (*Navarati*), this hymn of My glories should be heard with devotion and full attention.

Through My grace, all will be delivered from all troubles and blessed with prosperity, food and offspring. Hearing this hymn about My glories, auspicious manifestations and feats of power in battle, people become fearless. Enemies will perish, welfare will be gained and the family will rejoice for those who hear this hymn of My praise. Let My glories be heard everywhere during ceremonies for peace, upon waking from a bad dream and during the time of greatly malignant influences of planets. By this, trouble will subside, the unfavorable influence of planets will be removed and bad dreams will turn into good dreams. It pacifies children possessed by evil spirits and it brings friendship to those whose relationships have broken. It destroys the strength of all evil powers. Its chanting destroys demons, ghosts and ungodly spirits. This entire hymn of My glories draws a devotee very near to Me. The satisfaction I get from being worshiped day and night for a year with the gifting of cows, the offering of flowers, *arghyas* (respectful offerings), perfumes and lamps, by the feeding of brahmanas, by oblations, by the sprinkling of water and the offering of gifts —the same satisfaction you can give Me by hearing this hymn just once.

The chanting and hearing of this hymn of My manifestations removes sins and grants perfect health and protects one from evil spirits. When My martial deeds in

killing the wicked demons is heard, you will not have any fear from your enemies. These hymns chanted by you, those chanted by the sages and those chanted by Brahma grant one a holy mind. One lost in a desolate forest, surrounded by fire, encircled by thieves in a lonely place, captured by enemies, chased by lions, tigers, or wild elephants in the forest, imprisoned, sentenced to death by an angry king, tossed about in a boat by a storm in the vast ocean, in the midst of a terrible battle under a shower of weapons, amidst all kinds of dreadful problems, or afflicted with pain—by remembering this story of Mine one is saved from all troubles. Through My power, lions, thieves and enemies flee one who remembers this divine story. By remembering this story of Mine one is saved from all troubles. Through My power, lions, thieves and enemies flee one who remembers this divine story.

**The sage said:**

Having spoken thus, the worshipable Chandika, of fierce prowess, disappeared on that very spot as the gods looked on. The enemies being killed, the gods were delivered from fear. All of them resumed their own duties as before and received their share of the sacrifices. When the greatly heroic demon Shumbha, the greatest enemy of the gods and afflicter of the world, and the fierce demon Nishumbha, of unparalleled power, had been killed by the Goddess, the remaining demons again entered the underworld.

Oh king, the adorable Goddess, although eternal, incarnates again and again for the protection of the world. By Her this universe is deluded and it is She who creates the universe. When worshiped She bestows supreme knowledge as well as prosperity. Oh king, by *Maha-Kali* (the great Goddess Kai), who takes the form of

the great destroyer at the end of time, is this cosmic creation pervaded. She indeed takes the form of the great destroyer at the proper time. Although unborn, She indeed becomes this creation. She is Herself the eternal One who sustains all beings. In times of fortune She is known as Lakshmi, who gives prosperity to our homes. In times of misfortune She is known as Alakshmi, who brings about our ruin. When praised and worshiped with flowers, incense, perfumes etc, She bestows wealth, offspring, a righteous mind and a prosperous life.

*Thus ends the twelfth chapter entitled "Declaration of Fruits"  
found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana,  
spoken when Survarni was Manu.*

## Chapter Thirteen

### The Granting of Boons to Suratha and Samadhi

#### Meditation on Shivaa Devi

*You are as beautiful as the sunrise, with four hands and three eyes.*

*You hold in Your hands net, curved sword,  
and the mudras granting boons and fearlessness.*

*You, Goddess Shivaa, we worship.*

**Om**

**The sage said:**

I have now narrated to you, O king, this sublime hymn on the glory of the Goddess. The Goddess is endowed with such royal power. By Her is this world upheld. Knowledge comes from Her, the illusive power of Vishnu. It is by Her that this merchant and men of discrimination are deluded. Others were so deluded in the past and others will be so deluded in the future. O great king, take refuge in Her, the Supreme Goddess. When worshiped, She bestows enjoyment, heaven and final liberation.

**The sage Markandeya said (to Bhaguri):**

Thus having heard the words of the great sage who had performed great austerities, King Suratha, upset due to his attachment to his kingdom and its loss, as well as the merchant, both bowed before him and retired to perform austerities. Both the king and the merchant, in order to have the vision of *Amba* (Divine Mother) sat down upon the sandy bank of a river and practiced austerities by chanting this supreme hymn to the Goddess. Making an image of the Goddess out of sand from the river, they both worshiped Her with flowers, incense, fire and offerings of water. Sometimes fasting from food and sometimes taking only a

limited amount of food, with their minds focused upon Her with concentration, they offered sacrifices sprinkled with blood from their own bodies. After they had worshiped Her with controlled mind for three years, Chandika, the support of the universe, became pleased with them and appeared before them and spoke.

**The Goddess spoke:**

Whatever you ask, O king, and you (O merchant), the delight of your family, receive it from Me. Being well pleased, I will give it to you both.

**The sage Markandeya said:**

The king then chose a kingdom, imperishable even in another life, and in this life the return of his own kingdom by the destruction of his enemy's armies. The wise merchant, with his mind full of dispassion for the world, then chose that knowledge that removes all attachment coming from the feeling of "I" and "Mine."

**The Goddess spoke:**

O king, your kingdom will be returned within a few days. After destroying your enemies, your reign will be firm and unshaken. After your death you will be born as the son of *Visvasvat* (sun-god). You will then be the Manu named Savarni. And you, O best of all merchants, I grant you the boon you have asked from Me. The supreme knowledge shall be yours for liberation.

**The sage Markandeya said:**

Granting them both the boons they desired, the Goddess disappeared from their midst as they praised Her with devotion. Receiving boons from the Goddess, Suratha, the foremost of *kshatriyas* (warriors), shall be born as the son of Surya and shall be the eighth Manu named Savarni. He shall be the Manu named Savarni.

*Thus ends the thirteenth chapter entitled "The Granting of Boons to Suratha and Samadhi" found in the Devi Mahatyam of the Markandeya Purana, spoken when Survarni was Manu.*