

# From Durga Saptashati Katha

By Dr.Rupnathji

## Chapter 3

### \*The Slaying of Mahishasura:

Seeing the great asura swollen with rage and advancing towards her, Chandika displayed her wrath in order to slay him.

She flung her noose over him and bound the great asura. Thus bound in the great battle, he quitted his buffalo form. Then suddenly he became a lion. While Ambika cut off the head (of his lion form), he took the appearance of a man with sword in hand. Immediately then the Devi with her arrows chopped off the man together with his sword and shield. Then he became a big elephant. (The elephant) tugged at her great lion with his trunk and roared loudly, but as he was dragging, the Devi cut off his trunk with her sword. The great asura then resumed his buffalo shape and shook the three worlds with their movable and immovable objects.

And she with showers of arrows pulverized (those mountains) hurled at her, and spoke to him in flurried words, the colour of her face accentuated with the intoxication of the divine drink. The Devi said: 'Roar, roar, O fool, for a moment while I drink this wine. When you will be slain by me, the devas will soon roar in this very place.'

The Rishi said: Having exclaimed thus, she jumped and landed herself on that great asura, pressed him on the neck with her foot and struck him with her spear and thereupon, caught him under her foot. Mahishasura half issued forth (in his real form) from his own (buffalo) mouth, being completely overcome by the valour of the Devi. Fighting thus with his half-revealed form, the great asura was overpowered by the Devi who struck off his head with her great sword. Then, crying in consternation, the whole asura army perished; and all the hosts of deva were in exultation. With the great sages of heaven, the devas praised the Devi. The Gandharva chiefs sang and the bebies of apsaras danced.

Here ends the third chapter called 'The Slaying of Mahishasura' of Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya Purana during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

### \*Chapter 4,

The Devi Stuti:-

The Rishi said: When that most valiant but evil-natured Mahishasura and the army of that foe of the devas were destroyed by the Devi, Indra and the hosts of devas uttered their words of praise, their necks and shoulders reverently bent, and bodies rendered beautiful with horripilation and exultation.

'To that Ambika who is worthy of worship by all devas and sages and pervades this world by her power and who is the embodiment of the entire powers of all the hosts of devas, we bow in devotion. May she grant us auspicious things!

'May Chandika, whose incomparable greatness and power Bhagavan Vishnu, Brahma and Hara are unable to describe, bestow her mind on protecting the entire world and on destroying the fear of evil.

'O Devi, we bow before you, who are yourself good fortune in the dwellings of the virtuous, and ill-fortune in those of the vicious, intelligence in the hearts of the learned, faith in the hearts of the good, and modesty in the hearts of the high-born. May you protect the universe!

'You who are always bounteous, with whom you are well pleased, those (fortunate ones) are indeed the object of esteem in the country, theirs are riches, theirs are glories, and their acts of righteousness perish not; they are indeed blessed and possessed of devoted children, servants and wives.

'By your grace, O Devi, the blessed individual does daily all righteous deeds with utmost care and thereby attains to heaven. Are you not, therefore O Devi, the bestower of reward in all the three worlds?

'When called to mind in a difficult pass, you remove fear from every person. When called to mind by those in happiness, you bestow a mind still further pious. Which goddess but you, O dispeller of poverty, pain and fear, has an ever sympathetic heart for helping everyone?'

Thus the supporter of the worlds was praised by the devas, worshipped with celestial flowers that blossomed in Nandana and with perfumes and unguents; and with devotion all of them offered her - heavenly incense. Benignly serene in countenance she spoke to all obeisant devas.

The Devi said: 'Choose all of you, O devas, whatever you desire of me. (Gratified immensely with these hymns, I grant it with great pleasure)' The devas said: 'Since our enemy, this Mahishasura, has been slain by Bhagavati (i.e you) everything has been accomplished, and nothing remains to be done. And if a boon is to be granted to us by you, O Maheshvari, whenever we think of you again, destroy our direct calamities. O Mother of spotless countenance, and whatever mortal (human) shall praise you with these hymns, may you, who have become gracious towards us, also be gracious for him and increase his wealth, and other fortunes together with riches, prosperity and life, and good wife, O Ambika!'

The Rishi said: O King, being thus propitiated by the devas for the sake of the world and for their own sake, Bhadrakali said, 'Be it so' and vanished from their sight. Thus have I narrated, O King, how the Devi who desires the good of all the three worlds made her appearance of yore out of the bodies of the devas.

And again how, as a benefactress of the devas, she appeared in the form of Gauri for the slaying of wicked asuras as well as Shumbha and Nishumbha, and for the protection of worlds, listen as I relate it. I shall tell it to you as it happened. Here ends the fourth chapter called 'The Devi Stuti' of the Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya-Purana during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

\*Section Three-

The destruction of demons Shumbha and Nishumbha.

\*Chapter 5,

Shumbha and Nishumbha:

The Rishi said, Of yore Indra's (sovereignty) over the three worlds and his portions of the sacrifices were taken away by the asuras, Shumbha and Nishumbha, by force of their pride and strength. The two, themselves, took over likewise, the offices of the sun, the moon, Kubera, Yama, and Varuna.

They themselves exercised Vayu's authority and Agni's duty. Deprived of their lordships and sovereignties, the devas were defeated. Deprived of their functions and expelled by these two great asuras, all the devas thought of the invincible Devi. She had granted us the boon, "Whenever in calamities you think of me, that very moment I will put an end to all your worst calamities."

Resolving thus, the devas went to Himavat, lord of the mountains, and there extolled the Devi, who is the illusive power of Vishnu. The devas said: 'Salutations to the Devi, to the Mahadevi. Salutations always to her who is ever auspicious. Salutation to her who is the primordial cause and the sustaining power. With attention, we have made obeisance to her. We bow to her who is welfare; we make salutations to her who is prosperity and success. Salutation to the consort of Shiva who is herself the good fortune as well as misfortune of kings. Salutations always to Durga who takes one across in difficulties, who is essence, who is the authority of everything; who is the knowledge of discrimination.

'O Prince, while the devas were thus engaged in praises and (other acts of adoration), Parvati came there to bathe in the waters of the Ganga. She, the lovely-browed, said to those devas, 'Who is praised by you here?' An auspicious goddess, sprung forth from her physical sheath, gave the reply: 'This hymn is addressed to me by the assembled devas set at naught by the asura Shumbha and routed in battle by Nishumbha.'

Because that Ambika came out of Parvati's physical sheath (Kosa), she is glorified as Kaushiki in all the worlds. After she had issued forth, Parvati became dark and was called Kalika and stationed on mount Himalaya.

Then, Chanda, and Munda, two servants of Shumbha and Nishumbha, saw that Ambika (Kausiki) bearing a surpassingly charming form. They both told Shumbha: 'O King, a certain woman, most surpassingly beautiful, dwells there shedding lustre on mount Himalaya. Such supreme beauty was never seen by any one anywhere. Ascertain who that Goddess is and take possession of her, O Lord of the asuras! Nishumbha has every kind of gem produced in the sea. Fire also gave you two garments, which are

purified by fire. Thus, O Lord of asuras, all gems have been brought by you. Why this beautiful lady-jewel is not seized by you?’

The Rishi said: On hearing these words of Chanda and Munda, Shumbha sent the great asura Sugriva as messenger to the Devi.

He said: Go and tell her thus in my words and do the thing in such a manner that she may quickly come to me in love. He went there where the Devi was staying in a very beautiful spot on the mountain and spoke to her in fine and sweet words.

The messenger said: O Devi, Shumbha, lord of asuras, is the supreme sovereign of three worlds. Sent by him as messenger, I have come here to your presence. Harken to what has been said by him whose command is never resisted among the devas and who has vanquished all the foes of the asuras: (He says), "All the three worlds are mine and the devas are obedient to me. We look upon you, O Devi, as the jewel of womankind in the world. You who are such, come to me, since we are the enjoyers of the best objects. Take to me or to my younger brother Nishumbha of great prowess, O unsteady-eyed lady, for you are in truth a jewel. Wealth, great and beyond compare, you will get by marrying me. Think over this in your mind, and become my wife."

The Rishi said: Thus told, Durga the adorable and auspicious, by whom this universe is supported, then became serene.

The Devi said: You have spoken truth; nothing false has been uttered by you in this matter. Shumbha is indeed the sovereign of the three worlds and likewise is also Nishumbha. But in this matter, how can that which has been promised be made false? Hear what promise I had made already out of foolishness. "He who conquers me in battle, removes my pride and is my match in strength in the world shall be my husband." So let Shumbha come here then, or Nishumbha the great asura. Vanquishing me here let him soon take my hand in marriage. Why delay?

The messenger said: O Devi, you are haughty. Talk not so before me. Which man in the three worlds will stand before Shumbha and Nishumbha? All the devas verily cannot stand face to face with even the other asuras in battle. Why mention you, O Devi, a single woman?

Indra and all other devas could not stand in battle against Shumbha and other demons, how will you, a woman, face them? On my word itself, you go to Shumbha and Nishumbha. Let it not be that you go to them with your dignity lost by being dragged by your hair.

The Devi said: Yes, it is; Shumbha is strong and so is Nishumbha exceedingly heroic! What can I do since there stands my ill-considered vow taken long ago? Go back, and tell the lord of asuras carefully all this that I have said; let him do whatever he considers proper.

Here ends the fifth chapter called 'Devi's conversation with the messenger' of the Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya-Purana during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

\*Chapter 6,

## The Slaying of Dhumralochana,

The Rishi said: The messenger, filled with indignation on hearing the words of the Devi, returned and related them in detail to the king of the daityas. Then the asura monarch, enraged on hearing that report from his messenger, told Dhumralochana, a chieftain of the daityas: 'O Dhumralochana, hasten together with your army and fetch here by force that shrew, distressed when dragged by her hair. Or if any one else stands up as her saviour, let him be slain, be he a god, a yaksa or a gandharva.'

The Rishi said: Then the asura Dhumralochana, commanded thus by Shumbha, went forth quickly, accompanied by sixty thousand asuras. On seeing the Devi stationed on the snowy mountain, he asked her aloud, 'Come to the presence of Shumbha and Nishumbha.' When Sheba, the lord of asuras, heard that asura Dhumralochana was slain by the Devi and all his army was destroyed by the lion of the Devi, he was infuriated, his lip quivered and he commanded the two mighty asuras Chanda and Munda: 'O Chanda, O Munda, go there with large forces, and bring her here speedily, dragging her by her hair or binding her. But if you have any doubt about doing that, then let the asuras strike (her) in the fight with all their weapons. When that shrew is wounded and her lion stricken down, seize that Ambika, bind and bring her quickly.' Here ends the sixth chapter called 'The Slaying of Dhumralochana' of Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya Purana during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

## Chapter 7

### The Slaying of Chanda and Munda

The Rishi said:

Then at his command the asuras, fully armed, and with Chanda and Munda at their head, marched in fourfold array. They saw the Devi, smiling gently, seated upon the lion on a huge golden peak of the great mountain.

On seeing her, some of them excited themselves and made an effort to capture her, and others approached her, with their bows bent and swords drawn.

Thereupon Ambika became terribly angry with those foes, and in her anger her countenance then became dark as ink. Out from the surface of her forehead, fierce with frown, suddenly issued Kali of terrible countenance, armed with a sword and noose. Bearing the strange skull-topped staff, decorated with a garland of skulls, clad in a tiger's skin, very appalling owing to her emaciated flesh, with gaping mouth, fearful with her tongue lolling out, having deep-sunk reddish eyes and filling the regions of the sky with her roars, and falling upon impetuously and slaughtering the great asuras in that army, she devoured those hosts of the foes of the devas.

Then the Devi, mounting upon her great lion, rushed at Chanda, and seizing him by his hair, severed his head with her sword. Seeing Chanda being slain, Munda also rushed at her. She felled him also to the ground, striking him with her sword in her fury.

Seeing the most valiant Chanda and Munda laid low, the remaining army there became panicky and fled in all directions. And Kali, holding the heads of Chanda and Munda in her hands, approached Chandika and said, 'Here have I brought you the heads of Chanda and Munda as two great animal offerings in this sacrifice of battle; Shumbha and Nishumbha, you shall yourself slay.'

The Rishi said: Thereupon seeing those asuras, Chanda and Munda brought to her, the auspicious Chandika said to Kali these playful words: 'Because you have brought me both Chanda and Munda, you O Devi, shall be famed in the world by the name Chamunda. Here ends the seventh chapter called 'The slaying of Chanda and Munda' of Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya Purana, during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

## Chapter 8

### The Slaying of Raktabija

Seeing the asuras harassed by the band of Matrs and fleeing, the great asura Raktabija strode forward to fight in wrath. Whenever from his body there fell to the ground a drop of blood, at that moment rose up from the earth asura of his stature.

The great asura fought with Indra's shakti with club in his hand, then Aindri also struck Ranktabija with her thunderbolt. Blood flowed quickly and profusely from him who was wounded by the thunderbolt. From the blood rose up (fresh) combatants of his form and valour. As many drops of blood fell from his body, so many persons came into being, with his courage, strength and valour. And those persons also, sprung up from his blood, fought there with the Matrs in a more dreadful manner hurling the very formidable weapons. And again when his head was wounded by the fall of her thunderbolt, his blood flowed and therefrom were born persons in thousands. Vaisnavi struck him with her discus in the battle; Aindri beat that lord of asuras with her club. The world was pervaded by thousands of great asuras who were of his stature and who rose up from the blood that flowed from him when cloven by the discus of Vaisnavi. Kaumari struck the great asura Raktabija with her spear, Varahi with her sword, and Maheshvari with her trident. And Raktabija, that great asura also, filled with wrath, struck everyone of the Matrs severally with his club.

From the stream of blood that fell on earth from him when he received multiple wounds by the spears, darts and other weapons, hundreds of asuras came into being. And those asuras that were born from the blood of Raktabija pervaded the whole world; the devas got intensely alarmed at this. Seeing the devas dejected, Chandika laughed and said to Kali, 'O Chamunda, open out your mouth wide; with this mouth quickly take in the drops of blood generated by the blow of my weapon and (also) the great asuras born of the drops of blood of Raktabija. Roam about in the battlefield, devouring the great asuras that spring from him. So shall this daitya, with his blood emptied, perish. As you go on devouring these, other fierce (asuras) will not be born.'

Having enjoined her thus, the Devi next smote him (Raktabija) with her dart. Then Kali drank Raktabija's blood with her mouth. Then and there he struck Chandika with his club. The blow of his club caused her not even the slightest pain. And from his stricken body wherever blood flowed copiously, there

Chamunda swallowed it with her mouth. Then Chamunda devoured those great asuras who sprang up from the flow of blood in her mouth, and drank his (Raktabija's) blood. The Devi (Kausiki) smote Raktabija with her dart, thunderbolt, arrows, swords, and spears, when Chamunda went on drinking his blood. Stricken with a multitude of weapons and bloodless, the great asura (Raktabija) fell on the ground, O King. Thereupon the devas attained great joy, O King. The band of Matrs who sprang from them danced, being intoxicated with blood.

Here ends the eighth chapter called 'The Slaying of Raktabija' of Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya-Purana, during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

## Chapter 9

### The Slaying of Nishumbha

The king (Suratha) said: 'Wonderful is this that you, adorable sir, have related to me about the greatness of the Devi's act in slaying Raktabija. I wish to hear further what the very irate Shumbha and Nishumbha did after Raktabija was killed.' The Rishi said: After Raktabija was slain and other asuras were killed in the fight, the asura Shumbha and Nishumbha gave way to unbounded wrath. Enraged on seeing his great army slaughtered, Nishumbha then rushed forward with the chief forces of the asuras. In front of him behind him and on both sides of him, great asuras, enraged and biting their lips, advanced to slay the Devi. Shumbha also, mighty in valour, went forward, surrounded, with his own troops to slay Chandika in this rage, after fighting with the Matrs. Then commenced severe combat between the Devi on one side and on the other, Shumbha and Nishumbha who, like two thunderclouds, rained a most tempestuous shower of arrows on her. Chandika with numerous arrows quickly split the arrows shot by the two asuras and smote the two lords of asuras on their limbs with her mass of weapons.

As Nishumbha, the afflicter of the devas, was advancing with the dart in hand, Chandika pierced him in the heart with a swiftly hurled dart. From his (Nishumbha's) heart that was pierced by the dart, issued forth another person of great strength and valour, exclaiming (at the Devi) 'Stop.' Then the Devi, laughing aloud, severed the head of him, who issued forth, with her sword. Thereupon he fell to the ground. The lion then devoured those asuras whose necks he had crushed with his fierce teeth, and Kali and Sivaduti devoured others.

Here ends the ninth chapter called 'the Slaying of Nishumbha' of Devi Mahatmya in Markandeya-Purana during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

## Chapter 10

### The Slaying of Shumba

The Rishi said: Seeing his brother Nishumbha slain, who was dear to him as his life, and his army being slaughtered, Shumbha angrily said. 'O Durga who are puffed up with pride of strength, don't show your pride (here). Though you are exceedingly haughty, you, resorting to the strength of others, fight.' The Devi said: 'I am all alone in the world here. Who else is there besides me? See, O vile one, these Goddesses, who are but my own powers, entering into my own self!' Then all those, Brahmani and the

rest, were absorbed in the body of the Devi. Ambika alone then remained. The Devi said: 'The numerous forms, which I projected by my power here - those have been withdrawn by me, and (now) I stand alone. Be steadfast in combat.' The Rishi said: Then began a dreadful battle between them both, the Devi and Shumbha, while all the devas and asuras looked on. With showers of arrows, with sharp weapons and frightful missiles, both engaged again in a combat that frightened all the worlds.

The daitya-king, wounded by the blow of her palm fell on the earth, but immediately he rose up again. Seizing the Devi, he sprang up and mounted on high into the sky. There also Chandika, without any support, fought with him. Then the daitya (Shumbha) and Chandika fought as never before, with each other in the sky in a close contact, which wrought surprise to the Siddhas and sages. Ambika then, after carrying on a close fight for a very long time with him, lifted him up, whirled him around and flung him down to earth. Flung thus, the evil-natured (Shumbha) reaching the earth and raising his fist, hastily rushed forward desiring to kill Chandika. Seeing that lord of all the daitya-folk approaching, the Devi, piercing him on the chest with a dart, threw him down to earth. Pierced by the pointed dart of the Devi he fell lifeless on the ground, shaking the entire earth with its seas, islands and mountains.

When that evil-natured (asura) was slain, the universe became happy and regained perfect peace, and the sky grew clear. Flaming portent-clouds that were in evidence before became tranquil, and the rivers kept within their courses when (Shumbha) was stricken down there. When he had been slain, the minds of all the bands of devas became overjoyed, and the Gandharvas sang sweetly. Others sounded (their instruments), and the bands of nymphs danced; likewise, favourable winds blew; the sun became very brilliant; the sacred fires blazed peacefully and tranquil became the strange sounds that had risen in different quarters.

Here ends the tenth chapter called 'The Slaying of Shumbha' of Devi- Mahatmya in Markandeya-Purana, during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

## Chapter 11

### Hymn to Narayani

The Rishi said: When the great lord of asuras was slain there by the Devi, Indra and other devas led by Agni, with their object fulfilled and their cheerful faces illumining the quarters, praised her, (Katyayani). The devas said: 'O Devi, you who remove the sufferings of your suppliants, be gracious. Be propitious, O Mother of the whole world. Be gracious, O Mother of the universe. Protect the universe. You are, O Devi, the ruler of all that is moving and unmoving. You are the sole substratum of the world, because you subsist in the form of the earth. By you, who exist in the shape of water, all this (universe) is gratified, O Devi of inviolable valour! You are the power of Vishnu, and have endless valour. You are the primeval maya, which is the source of the universe; by you all this (universe) has been thrown into an illusion. O Devi. If you become gracious, you become the cause of final emancipation in this world.

Salutation be to you, O Devi Narayani, O you who abide as intelligence in the hearts of all creatures, and bestow enjoyment and liberation. Salutation be to you, O Narayani, O you who, in the form of minutes, moments and other divisions of time, bring about change in things, and have (thus) the power to

destroy the universe. Salutation be to you O Narayani, O you who are the good of all good, O auspicious Devi, who accomplish every object, the giver of refuge, O three eyed Gauri! Salutation be to you, O Narayani, you who have the power of creation, sustenance and destruction and are eternal. You are the substratum and embodiment of the three gunas. Salutation be to you, O Narayani, O you who are intent on saving the dejected and distressed that take refuge under you O you, Devi, who removes the sufferings of all!

Salutation be to you, O Narayani, O you who are good fortune, modesty, great wisdom, faith, nourishment and Svadha, O you who are immovable O you, great Night and great Illusion. Salutation be to you, O Narayani, O you who are intelligence and Sarasvati, O best one, prosperity, consort of Vishnu, dark one, the great nature, be propitious. O Queen of all, you who exist in the form of all, and possess every might, save us from error, O Devi. Salutation be to you, Devi Durga! May this benign countenance of yours adorned with three eyes, protect us from all fears.

When satisfied, you destroy all illness but when wrathful you (frustrate) all the longed-for desires. No calamity befalls men who have sought you. Those who have sought you become verily a refuge of others. Who is there except you in the sciences, in the scriptures, and in the Vedic sayings to light the lamp of discrimination? (Still) you cause this universe to whirl about again and again within the dense darkness of the depths of attachment. Where raksasas and snakes of virulent poison (are), where foes and hosts of robbers (exist), where forest conflagrations (occur), there and in the mid-sea, you stand and save the world. O Queen of the universe, you protect the universe. As the self of the universe, you support the universe. You are the (goddess) worthy to be adored by the Lord of the universe. Those who bow in devotion to you themselves become the refuge of the universe. O Devi, be pleased and protect us always from fear of foes, as you have done just now by the slaughter of asuras. And destroy quickly the sins of all worlds and the great calamities, which have sprung from the maturing of evil portents. O Devi you who remove the afflictions of the universe, be gracious to us who have bowed to you. O you worthy of adoration by the dwellers of the three worlds, be boon-giver to the worlds.

The Devi said: O Devas, I am prepared to bestow a boon. Choose whatever boon you desire in your mind, for the welfare of the world. I shall grant it. The devas said: ' O Queen of all, in this same manner, you must destroy all our enemies and all the afflictions of three worlds.' The Devi said: 'When the twenty-eighth age has arrived during the period of Avaisvata Manu, two other great asuras, Shumbha and Nishumbha will be born. Then born from the womb of Yashoda, in the home of cowherd Nanda, and dwelling on the Vindhya mountains, I will destroy them both. Thus whenever trouble arises due to the advent of the danavas, I shall incarnate and destroy the foes.'

Here ends the eleventh chapter called 'Hymn to Narayani' of Devi-Mahatmyam in Markandeya Ppurana, during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

Chapter 12

Eulogy of the Merits

The Devi said: 'And whoever with a concentrated mind shall pray to me constantly with these hymns, I shall without doubt put down every trouble of his. 'And those who shall laud (the story of) the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha, the slaughter of Nishumbha likewise and those also who shall listen with devotion to this sublime poem on my greatness on the eighth, the fourteenth and on the ninth days of the fortnight with concentrated mind, to them nothing wrong shall happen, nor calamities that arise from wrong doings nor poverty and never separation from beloved ones. He shall not experience fear from enemies, or from robbers and kings, or from weapons, fire and floods. Hence this poem of my greatness must be chanted by men of concentrated minds and listened to always with devotion; for it is the supreme course of well-being.

May this poem of my glories quell all epidemics, as also the threefold natural calamities. The place of my sanctuary where this poem is duly chanted everyday, I will never forsake and there my presence is certain. When sacrifice is offered, during worship, in the fire-ceremony, and at a great festival, this entire poem on my acts must be chanted and heard. I will accept with love the sacrifice and worship that are made and the fire-offering that is offered likewise, whether they are done with due knowledge (of sacrifice) or not. During autumnal season, when the great annual worship is performed, the man hearing this glorification of mine with devotion shall certainly through my grace, be delivered without doubt from all troubles and be blessed with riches, grains and children. Hearing this glorification and auspicious appearances of mine, and my feats of prowess in battles, a man becomes fearless. Enemies perish, welfare accrues and the family rejoices for those who listen to this glorification of mine. Let one listen to this glorification of mine everywhere, at a propitiatory ceremony, on seeing a bad dream, and when there is the great evil influence of planets. (By that means) evil portents subside, as also the unfavourable influence of planets, and the bad dream seen by men turns into a good dream.

It creates peacefulness in children possessed by the seizures of children (i.e., evil spirits), and it is the best promoter of friendship among men when split occurs in their union. It diminishes most effectively the power of all men of evil ways. Verily demons, goblins, and ogres are destroyed by its mere chanting. This entire glorification of mine draws (a devotee) very near to me. And by means of finest flowers, arghya and incenses, and by perfumes and lamps, by feeding Brahmanas, by oblations, by sprinkling (consecrated) water, and by various other offerings and gifts (if one worships) day and night, in a year-the gratification, which is done to me, is attained by listening but once to this holy story (katha) of mine.

The chanting and hearing of the story of my manifestations remove sins, and grant perfect health and protects one from evil spirits; and when my martial exploit in the form of the slaughter of the wicked daityas is listened to, men will have no fear from enemies. And the hymns uttered by you, and those by the divine sages, and those by Brahmanas bestow a pious mind. He who is (lost) on a lonesome spot in a forest, or is surrounded by forest fire, or who is surrounded by robbers in a desolate spot, or who is captured by enemies, or who is pursued by a lion, or tiger, or by wild elephants in a forest, or who, under the orders of a wrathful king, is sentenced to death, or has been imprisoned, or who is tossed about in his boat by a tempest in the vast sea, or who is in the most terrible battle under shower of weapons, or who is amidst all kinds of dreadful troubles, or who is afflicted with pain - such a man on remembering this story of mine is saved from his predicament. Through my power, lions etc., robbers and enemies, flee from a distance from him who remembers this story of mine.

The Rishi said: Having spoken thus the adorable Chandika, fierce in prowess, vanished on that very spot even as the Devas were gazing upon her. Thus O King, the adorable Devi, although eternal, incarnating again and again, protects the world. By her this universe is deluded, and it is she who creates this universe. And when entreated, she bestows supreme knowledge, and when propitiated, she bestows prosperity. By her, the Mahakali, who takes the form of the great destroyer at the end of time, all this cosmic sphere is pervaded.

She indeed takes the form of the great destroyer at the (proper) time. She, the unborn, indeed becomes this creation. She herself, the eternal Being, sustains the beings. In times of prosperity, she indeed is Lakshmi, who bestows prosperity in the homes of men; and in times of misfortune, she herself becomes the goddess of misfortune, and brings about ruin. When praised and worshipped with flowers, incense, perfumes, etc., she bestows wealth and sons, and a mind bent on righteousness and prosperous life.

Here ends the twelfth chapter called 'Eulogy of the Merits' of Devi-Mahatmya in the period of Markandeya-Purana, during the period of Savarni, the Manu.

### Chapter 13

#### The Bestowing of Boons to Suratha and Vaisya

The Rishi said: I have now narrated to you, O King, this sublime poem on the glory of the Devi. The Devi is endowed with such majestic power. By her this world is upheld. Knowledge is similarly conferred by her, the illusive power of Bhagavan Vishnu. By her, you, this merchant and other men of discrimination, are being deluded; and others were deluded (in the past), and will be deluded (in the future). O great King, take refuge in her, the supreme Isvari. She indeed when worshipped bestows on men enjoyment, heaven and final release (from transmigration).

Markandeya said (to his disciple Bhaguri, O great sage, King Suratha who had become despondent consequent on his excessive attachment and the deprivation of his kingdom, and the merchant, having heard this story prostrated before the illustrious Rishi of sever penances and immediately repaired to perform austerities. Both the king and the merchant, in order to obtain a vision of Amba, stationed themselves on the sand-bank of a river and practised penances, chanting the supreme Devi-sukta (hymn to the Devi).

Having made an earthen image of the Devi on the sands of the river, they both worshipped her with flowers, incense, sacred fire and libation of water. Now abstaining from food, and now restraining in their food, with their minds on her and with concentration, they both offered sacrifices sprinkled with blood drawn from their own bodies. When they, with controlled minds propitiated her thus for three years, Chandika, the upholder of the world, was well pleased and spoke to them in visible form.

The Devi said: What you solicit, O King, and you, the delight of your family, receive all that from me. Well-pleased I bestow those boons to you both. . Markandeya said: Then the King chose a kingdom, imperishable even in another life, and in this life itself, restoration of his own kingdom wherein the power of his enemies is destroyed by force. Then the wise merchant also, whose mind was full of

dispassion for the world, chose the knowledge, which removes the attachment (in the form of) 'mine' and 'I'. The Devi said: O King, after slaying your foes in a few days, you shall obtain your own kingdom and it shall last with you there. 'And, when you are dead, you shall gain another birth from the Deva Vivasvat (Sun), and shall be a Manu on earth by name Savarni. And, O the best of merchants, I grant you the boon, which you have desired of me. (Supreme) knowledge shall be yours, for your self-realization. Markandeya said: Having thus granted them both the boon that they desired, the Devi disappeared forthwith, as they were extolling her with devotion. Having thus gained the boon from the Devi, Suratha, the foremost of Kshatriyas, shall obtain a new birth through Surya and shall be the eighth Manu named Savarni.

Here ends the thirteenth chapter called 'The bestowing of boons to Suratha and Vaisya' of Devi-Mahatmya in Markandeya-Purana, during the period of Savarni, the Manu. Here ends the Devi-Mahatmya of 700 Mantras.

Om Tat Sat

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## Madhu and Kaitabh

From the Mahabharata

Vana Parva, Section CCII

Translated by Tantra Siddha Maha Yoga Shastrishree Dr. Rupnathji.

Addressing Markandeya

Yudhishtira said: O holy one, O thou possessed of the wealth of asceticism, who was this Daitya (Dhundhu) of great energy? Whose son and whose grandson was he? I desire to know all this.

Markandeya said: O monarch, know everything as it happened, O ruler of men, as I narrate the particulars truly, O thou of great wisdom!

When the world became one broad expanse of water and creatures mobile and immobile were destroyed, when, O bull of the Bharata race, the entire creation came to its end. He who is the Source and creator of the Universe, viz., the Eternal and unfading Vishnu, He who is called by Munis crowned with ascetic success as the Supreme Lord of the Universe, that Being of great holiness, then lay in Yoga sleep on the wide hood of the snake Sesha of immeasurable energy, and the Creator of the Universe, that highly blessed and holy Hari, knowing no deterioration, lay on the hood of that snake encircling the whole Earth and as the Deity lay asleep on that bed, a lotus endued with great beauty and effulgence equal unto that of the Sun, sprang from His navel.

And from that lotus possessed of effulgence like unto the Sun's sprang the Grandsire Brahma, that lord of the worlds who is the four Vedas, who has four arms and four faces, who is invincible in consequence of his own energy and who is endued with mighty strength and great prowess and as the Lord Hari of wondrous frame, possessed of great lustre and decked with a crown and the Kautubha gem and attired in purple silk, lay stretched for many a yojana on that excellent bed furnished by the hood of the snake itself extending far and wide, blazing, O king, in his beauty and the lustre of his own body like a thousand Suns concentrated in one mass.

He was beheld some time after by two Danavas of great prowess named Madhu and Kaitabha and beholding Hari (in that posture) and the Grandsire (Brahma) with eyes like lotus leaves seated on that lotus, both Madhu and Kaitabha wandered much and they began to terrify and alarm Brahma of immeasurable prowess, and the illustrious Brahma alarmed by their continuous exertions trembled on his seat, and at his trembling the stalk of the lotus on which he was seated began to tremble and when the lotus stalk trembled, Kesava (Vishnu) awoke.

And awakened from His slumber, Govinda (Vishnu) beheld those Danavas of mighty energy, and beholding them the Deity said unto them: Welcome, ye mighty ones! I am gratified with you! Therefore, I will grant you excellent boons!

And thereupon both those proud and mighty Danavas, O king, laughingly replied unto Hrishikesa (Vishnu), saying: Ask boons of us, O divine one! O thou that art the Supreme Deity, we are disposed to grant thee a boon. Indeed, we will grant thee a boon! Therefore, ask thou of us anything that comes to thy mind.

Thus addressed by them the holy one spoke: Ye brave ones, I will accept a boon from you. There is a boon that I desire. Both of you are possessed of mighty energy. There is no male person like unto any of you, O you of unbaffled prowess, submit ye to be slain by me. Even that is what I desire to accomplish for the good of the world.

Hearing these words of the Deity, both Madhu and Kaitabha said: We have never before spoken an untruth. No, not even in jest. What shall we say of other occasions! O thou foremost of male Beings, know that we have never been firm in truth and morality. In strength, in forms, in beauty, in virtue, in asceticism, in charity, in behaviour, in goodness, in self-control, there is no one equal unto either of us. A great danger, O Kesava, has approached us. Accomplish thou, therefore, what thou hast said. No one can prevail over Time. But, O Lord, there is one thing that we desire to be done by thee. O thou best and foremost of all Deities, thou must slay us at a spot that is absolutely uncovered. And, O thou of excellent eyes, we also desire to become thy sons. This is the boon that we desire, know then, O chief of the gods! Let not that O Deity, be false which thou had at first promised to us.

The Holy One then replied unto them saying: Yes, I will do as you desire. Everything will be as ye wish.

Markandeya continued: Then Govinda began to reflect but uncovered space found He none and when He could not discover any spot that was uncovered on earth or in the sky, that foremost Deity then

beheld His thighs to be absolutely uncovered. And there, O king, the illustrious Deity cut off the heads of Madhu and Kaitabha with His keen-edged discus!

Markandeya said: The illustrious Dhundhu, O king, was the son of Madhu and Kaitabha, and possessed of great energy and prowess, he underwent ascetic penances of great austerity and he stood erect on one leg and reduced his body to a mass of only veins and arteries, and Brahma, gratified with him, gave him a boon. And the boon he had asked of the lord Prajapati (Grandsire Brahma) was in these words: Let no one among the gods, the Danvas, the Rakshasas, the Snakes, the Gandharvas and the Rakshasas be capable of slaying me. Even this is the boon that I ask of thee.

And the Grandsire replied unto him saying: Let it be as thy wishest. Go thy way.

DR. RUPAK NATH (DR. RUPAK NATH)