

# GOSPEL OF SRI RĀMAKRISHNA - PART 21

SWĀMI DAYATMANANDA

ॐ जननीं सारदां देवीं रामकृष्णं जगदगुरुम् ।

पादपद्मे तयोः श्रित्वा प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः ॥

Jananim Sāradam devim Rāmakrishnam jagadgurum।

Pādapadme tayoh shritvā pranamāmi muhurmujuh ॥

ॐ तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनं

कविभिरीडितं कल्मषापहम् ।

श्रवणमङ्गलं श्रीमदाततं

भुवि गृणन्ति ते भूरिदा जनाः ॥

Om tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanaṁ

kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham ।

śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ

bhuvi gṛṇanti te bhūri-dā janāḥ ॥

We had a wonderful Navaratri Puja. The word Navaratri means 'Nine nights'. Beginning, only pratama, dwitiya, the Divine Mother is worshipped in nine different forms with nine different names in nine different ways. Each night with one one name. Pratamam Sailaputri, dwitiyam Brahmacharine, like that nine different and at the end of the ninth day, Siddhi datri, Maha siddhi datri, Gowri - these are the names of the Divine Mother. How many names does the Divine Mother really possess? Infinite names. Of that we have got thousand names, many people chant during this very sacred occasion, it is called Lalita Sahasranama. One of the most beautiful names of the Divine Mother with deep Vedantic significance. So, we had a wonderful time. Yesterday was Vijayadashami. Vijaya means victory over evil. The whole essence of

this Navaratri is that if we take shelter at the feet of the Divine Mother then she will come and then fight for us and subdue the evil and grant us only good. Everyday in the Ramakrishna Order, we sing three songs in most places and four songs in a few places - Khandana is one, Om Hrim Ritam is second, Sarva mangala is the third, Prakritim paramam is the fourth. Khandana bhava bandhana, Om Hrim Ritam - these two were composed exclusively as the Evening Aratrika Hymns by no other than Swami Vivekananda himself. And the last one, Prakritim paramam was composed by Swami Abhedanandaji, a beloved monastic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Not only he composed it, at the time when Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was alive, but he also came and sang, hymned the Divine Mother beginning with Prakritim paramam, etc. and then, Mother was so pleased. She blessed Swami Abhedananda.

But the third one is the most significant - Om Sarva mangala mangalye, three verses summarize the entire vedantic philosophy. I will just give a very simple meaning before I go into the details of why we worship God as Mother and God especially as Durga or Kali and what is so special about this Navaratri / Durga Puja. Navaratri means Mother Durga's Puja. Before I come, I have to tell you that this is supposed to be the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna class but I am deviating because of this Navaratri for two reasons: The first reason is that Sri Ramakrishna had very deep connection with Mother Durga and there were several mystical incidents which I will mention in due course. Second important reason is that Hindus, from time immemorial have been worshipping God as Mother and especially, God as Divine Mother. Even though we are not very understanding about the creation, preservation and dissolution, all these three are done only by the Divine Mother. This has been so beautifully brought out in this hymn, Sarva Mangala mangalye in the second verse:

Srishti Sthiti vinashanam sakti bhute sanatani

Gunashraye gunamaye narayani namostute

Whenever we think of creation of the world, which includes me, you, and everybody, whether we are good people, evil people, we are children of the Divine Mother. In this world, it is only the mother who gives birth to children. If God has created, necessarily he has to become a Mother to all of us. And that is why She is hymned in the second part of this Sarva Mangala mangalye, as 'Srishti'. And it is the same Mother who also nourishes, who sustains, without whom we can never live. And in the end, She is also the one who destroys. In Indian philosophy, destruction means always destruction of evil. So, evil means avidya. Avidya means ignorance. The Divine Mother being 'sarva mangala mangalye' can never make any being non-existent just as clay cannot destroy any pot or any product of clay because any product of clay is none other than clay. It is impossible for the cause to destroy the effect. But then, what is this destruction? This destruction is to destroy all avidya within us and slowly turn our minds towards God and in the end, give us the knowledge, "My Children! You have a Mother. And I am your Mother. But you were in this samsara since caurāsi lakh jeevan (eighty-four lakh births), means innumerable not counting, hundreds of thousands of

lives. Since all these lives, you have been as if very very far away from me. Why? Because of my own leela, I created this, I want to play hide-and-seek. I have been hiding myself in the form of the body, in the form of the mind, in the form of this external world. But even if you seem to forget me, I can never forget. I want you children to call me Mother. And I want to hug you, I want to suckle you, I want to keep you always with me for my own joy. You may seem to enjoy life without me. But I can never be enjoying anything without you. So, I will let you play for sometime by hiding myself. But ultimately, I will destroy your ignorance and turn you to myself. And then behold! When you look at me, cry 'Ma', and come running to me, tears of joy will be flowing from my eyes, my child has come to me! ". This particular hymn, I will just give you a hint, it starts with 'sarva mangala mangalye'. Why two words? One 'mangala' will do. 'mangala' means auspiciousness. You are the source of all auspiciousness. Whatever good happens in this world, whatever happiness man can derive, squeeze in this world through the objects of the world is named in Vedanta, as Preyas. Even to get Preyas, man requires Divine Mother's grace. But 'sarva mangala mangalye' - the very source of every preyas in this world, the ultimate preyas in this world is called 'shreyas'. That is called Mukti, that is called Liberation and I am the source. Brahmananda is called Shreyas; Brahmananda manifests as Vishayananda - the sense pleasures, Medhananda - intellectual pleasures, Kalananda - aesthetic pleasures, Dharmananda - moral pleasures, and Brahmananda ultimately. They are not five different types of happiness. They are five degrees of happiness, of which the lowest is Vishayananda. So, evolution starts with Vishayananda, progresses or evolves into Medhananda, further progresses into Kalananda, then progresses still further into Dharmananda - moral happiness, dharmic happiness and then finally, merges in Brahmananda. This is the process of Srishti means 'starts', then Sthiti means 'gradual evolution', 'progress', and finally ends with Brahmananda, that is called Laya. Earlier, it is called Pralaya and later on, it is called Atyantika Pralaya. When a man is bestowed by the Divine Mother with Vidya or True Knowledge; 'Dhi' (DhiyoyonaH prachodayAt), he realizes that the cause and effect are one and the same, there is no effect but the cause is manifesting with name and form, so seem to be separate from the cause. There is absolutely no difference, like the pot may think 'I have gone to pot. And I think I am a pot'. And that is called going to pot. Really, the pot has never been anything but clay. The whole universe is nothing but Brahma. There is nothing separate from the Brahman. So, that is why these three verses, She is the giver of both Preyas and then, Shreyas. Not the other way around. First, She evolves through Preyas and then ends in Shreyas. And that is called Srishti is Preyas; Sthiti is gradual progress in Ananda and Laya is completely becoming one with the knowledge - I, Mother, Brahman are one and the same. So, this is how we have to understand God as the Mother.

And before I go a little further, I will tell you something. In Puranic literature, this same Divine Mother who is hymned as Srishti-Sthiti-Vinashini is hymned as what is called Creator-Sustainer-Destroyer: Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva. Now observe carefully -

Brahma's counterpart, his Shakti is Saraswati. Saraswati means Jnana. The Goddess of Wisdom. If I have knowledge of music, knowledge of scriptures, that is Mother manifesting in me. If you have knowledge of science, that is Mother manifesting. If someone has got musical knowledge, that is Mother manifesting. It is not that She is separate, She has knowledge and She gives knowledge; She is Knowledge and She is manifesting in this form. Like I explained, Annapurna is not a woman sitting somewhere and giving food. Anna-poorna: She is the embodiment of Anna whether it is Corona, Mosquito, Tiger, Human being, Elephant, Whale, every creature is sustained by the food and that is Annapoorna sustaining. So, Mother Saraswati is the Goddess of, Embodiment of Wisdom. And that wisdom when it is manifested with Chaitanya, Brahma here represents Chaitanya and Saraswati represents Shakti. Wherever there is activity, there must be two things: the intentioner, the doer as well as the knowledge of what I want to do, why do I want to do and how do I need to do. That is called Saraswati. So, the source of Brahma's creation is Saraswati.

Then, come to Vishnu. His role is to maintain the Law. Brahma creates and creation does not require anything excepting Knowledge that is why he does not have any weapon. But Vishnu requires, to protect / to sustain / to punish / to train or to correct people and bring them to the right path. So, he requires weapons. So, he has got Chakra and then, Gadha, etc. But to maintain one requires a tremendous amount of money. That is why Lakshmi is that maintainer. Money means the necessary power to keep some people happy because they are traveling in the right path, some people are traveling in the wrong path. For them, they need to be corrected. This is B.K. Skinner's Carrot and Stick methodology to train us / to condition us so that we behave properly. But without Lakshmi, Vishnu is completely useless. That is why Brahma and Saraswati, Vishnu and Lakshmi, Shiva and Parvati / Durga / Kali are inseparable. I will just give you a small hint - you see Mother Kali's image. Where is she standing? On Shiva. Why is she standing? Because Mahakali is the Shakti, Shakti manifests in time. That is why she is called Kali. Kali means embodiment of Kala. And Shiva is timelessness. Time is always a chunk of timelessness. And Time cannot stand without timelessness. This is symbolically represented by Mother Kali standing on Mahadeva. Anyway, this is just a hint.

Coming back, we are all children of the Mother. She has two powers - Vidya and Avidya. Now, never mistake Avidya means deluded. That is the Vedantic language. A devotee never accepts it and should never accept it. Avidya is preparation; Vidya is actual practice. Without preparation, no fitness is obtained. So, we must physically, intellectually, morally, aesthetically, we must prepare before we turn Preyas into Shreyas. And that process is called Avidya, Karma kanda in the Vedas. The purpose of Karma kanda is not destroy us but to prepare us, so that we will obtain, we can enter into, we can take up the course of Ph.D (Permanent Head Damage / madness) - what does that mean? When a worldly person thinks he is very wise but by Divine Mother's grace, he is possessed of Shraddha and he becomes mad. Who is calling him mad? The worldly people. The Avidya people. But madness means he is possessed of one idea

that I want nothing but my Mother. That is called Ph.D. But to enter into Ph.D, we have to understand the nature of the world, that it is not very pleasant, appears to be pleasant but upon coming into close contact, it gives nothing but Tapatraya. When a man, after eighty-four lakhs of births understands this fact, that means he is evolving, comes to the right understanding, turns his face towards Shreyas, towards the Divine Mother, and that is Her grace. That is called 'sarva mangala mangalye'. Then, no one is able to obtain Mother; nobody can really even turn one's face towards Mother unless Mother graciously grants that knowledge. That is why we pray everyday to Gayatri 'dhiyo yonaH prachodayat'. But out of her grace, she bestows that understanding. That is why in the third verse 'sharanagata dhinarta paritrana parayane sarvasya arti hare devi narayani namostute'. So, I can only talk very briefly about this Shakti tattva, the true philosophy of Shakti is so deep, you will be able to understand very nicely because I'm going to put you, very briefly, why Indians especially Hindus worship God as Mother. So, today's topic would be 'Why is God worshipped as Mother?'"

First of all, She is the source of Creation **Srishti**, Sustenance **Sthiti** and Destruction **Vinashanam**, sakti bhute sanatani - without her Shakti, without her knowledge, without her grace, these three are not going to happen. It is only because of her power, Srishti takes place. It is because of her grace, Sthiti takes place. It is because of her knowledge that we are her children, this Laya takes place. And without her grace, our Buddhi cannot understand this. When she awakes us, and that is the essence of the story are going to get to, very soon, without Divine Mother's grace, Sri Ramakrishna tells, Swami Brahmanandaji tells, it is impossible for anybody either to get Preyas or Shreyas, either to have Bhukti or Mukti. Let me first narrate that story - one day, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was at Varanasi. At the same time, Swami Brahmananda was also at Varanasi. And one day, we do not know why, the Holy Mother sent some devotee to Swami Brahmananda whom she used to look upon as her own son and used to call him as Rakhal. Rakhal means a friend of Krishna in Brindavan, a cowherd boy. So, she sent the word, "Rakhal, why is it the Mahamaya (Divine Mother) has to be worshipped?" Immediately, Rakhal Maharaj stood up, and with folded hands said, "Unless Mahamaya destroys our ignorance and opens the door to Mukti, nobody can obtain Mukti". Having uttered these words, he went into ecstatic state, started dancing and that dance will not stop until Holy Mother came and said, "Rakhal, here is prasad. Please take my child". And immediately, that mind came down and joyfully, accepted prasada and bowed down before the Holy Mother. So, this is the philosophy. That is why Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Mother Kali so that to worship God as Mother is much easier than to worship God as Father.

Anthropologists, Sociologists who have studied society, have come to this wonderful conclusion that those societies which anthropologists studied, they divided societies into patriarchal societies and matriarchal societies. Patriarchal societies means societies which worship God as Father, and the Judaic religions / Abrahamic religions / Semitic religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - they worship only God as Father

and there are variations of how they worship. Whereas our Hindus, etc. they belong to the matriarchal society that is, Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Mother Parvati, though we have Father, our Mother is closer to us. I will share a small story which I might have told you several times - One day at five minutes to Seven, a boy was furiously seen running and he bumped because he did not notice, into a gentleman. And the man got annoyed and said, "Boy! Don't you look where you are going?" The boy apologized and said, "Sorry Sir! I am in a hurry". And the man asked, "Why are you in a hurry?" "Because I have to reach my home before seven" "Why do you need to reach your home before seven?" "Because my mother is waiting to beat me up" "Oh! you are so eager to be beaten by your mother?" The boy said while running, "It is not like that Sir. If I reach after Seven, my father is going to beat me up. It is far better to be beaten up by the mother than by the father". That is our concept from the very beginning. She is only all-compassionate, etc. and this special characteristics of God as feminine / masculine, there is no gender difference. It is only qualitative difference, characteristic difference. So, scriptures tell us that there are at least seven characteristics of Divine feminine. That is we are talking about Mother. What are these things? [very briefly] Because these are wonderfully extolled in our Puranas. As you know, how many puranas are there? Thirty-six puranas are there. Eighteen main, primary puranas, mukhya puranas; and eighteen upa-puranas. And all the puranas can be classified into three categories: those who extoll Vishnu as the greatest God - they are called Vishnu puranas, those who extoll Shiva as the greatest - Shiva puranas; those who extoll Devi as the greatest deity - that is called Devi Puranas. So, Devi Bhagavatam, Markandeya purana, such puranas are called Devi Puranas. Bhagavatam, Vishnu purana, etc. are called Vishnu puranas. And Shiva purana, Skanda purana, etc. are called Shiva puranas. So, these puranas extensively explain to us why God has to be considered as the Mother. It is not about man or woman, or what is called sex or gender, it is all about certain characteristics. And the Divine Mother has seven characteristics which any reasonable person can understand. What are they?

First, the source. When we look at this world, we do not see a single object, a single living creature that has not come out of the Mother. No man ever gives birth, it is only the woman. And she conceives, nourishes, she protects, and then she suckles and she is the first Guru and the whole life, she loves her children like anything. So, this is called the very source - there is a word in Sanskrit called **Yoni**. **Yoni** means the source from which everything comes. The very cause, the reason why an object / effect comes out. So, she is the womb, the origin of all beings. As the Upanishads tell us,

yato va imani bhutani jayante

yena jatani jivanti

yatprayantyaabhisa nvishanti

Taittreya says from whom all the beings originate, and they are sustained by the very source. And they go back to the very source. tad brahmeti - that is Brahman. tapasa

brahma vijijnasasva - through self-surrender you come to know about that Brahman. That is the first reason why God is to be worshipped as the Divine Mother.

Second reason is her closeness. A baby is closest only to a mother, whether it is male or female. So, the physical aspect is very obvious. As soon as the mother gives birth, the nurse hands over that baby and she takes the child to her bosom and starts suckling. From that time onwards, they smell each other, it is a big story, scientific story, how the mother has a special capacity to smell the baby, the baby has an even more special capacity to smell the mother, that is why when a child is restless and the mother is not nearby, you bring some old clothes smelling of the mother's body and wrap the baby around with that. Immediately, she is comfortable and goes to happy, peaceful sleep. So, physical aspect, "closeness" is obvious but the organic dependence for long months in the mother's womb. And the symbiotic psychical exchange which goes on in the weeks, before and after the birth, with the mother meeting the child's demands as much as the child needs, her supply for nourishment, protection, comfort, stimulation, or even mere presence and physical contact. It is a well-known fact. I have seen a particular scene - when I was in Cherapunji, North-eastern part of the country, we had a big ashrama there, for five years. We have a dairy and out of love and out of curiosity, I used to visit the dairy now and then, because that is called living close to nature. So, what happened? The cows constantly give birth and then sometimes, the cows die, the calves die but it is all a hilly area. Early in the morning after bringing the milk, the cows are driven out. Nobody goes with them, they know where to go. They graze the whole day and come back. So, one evening we all went and saw a cow has given birth to a calf. Of course, immediately we made it suckle, and then that night passed. Next day, at about 9:00, 9:30 I went just to see the new calf. A wonderful thing happened at that time. The cows, after milking the cows, they were let out and they all went. At about 9:00 9:30, this small one day old calf started crying "Mmbaaa..." It probably must have been hungry. Probably it was fed milk, but Indians never feed sufficiently. They just use these calves as starting machines, that is all. After that, they pull them away. The voice that was coming out was very feeble. But I do not know what happened, I was struck with wonder that that mother had heard which was one or two miles away, it heard the baby's cry, with an uplifted tail it started running towards the calf and it dashed into the cow shed and then suckled the calf until it was satisfied. I read about it in the Homa, God is like that cow, we are like the children and the Mother is always waiting for the slightest whimper of the baby and immediately She will come to us. And I would not have understood this statement until I witnessed that wonderful thing. So, She is what we call closeness and everything.

Third characteristic - All-encompassing love. Nobody can compare a mother's love. She is ready to give her very life. And what is the speciality? Even in an ordinary mother, her love is incomparable towards her children. But in God's love, there is no trace of partiality. How can that be love, we ask. God's reign falls upon the just and upon the unjust; upon the clean places, upon the unclean places; in countries which

are inimical, countries which are friendly - God's love knows no partiality. It is alike and that is the proof of his impartial love, all-encompassing love. If that is the case, what to speak about the Divine Mother? Why did she kill these Asuras? Out of her great love, Chandi - the book itself raises this question "O Mother! By your very will, you could have destroyed all the asuras. Why did you yourself have participated in this massacre?" And then, Chandi itself gives the answer, "O Mother! With your own hands, if you destroy, what do you destroy? The Avidya, Ajnana. And then you clean them up, and then you take them into your bosom so that these children of Thine can also get Mukti or Moksha. That is why you yourself have participated". And that is the story we get there.

Then, Forbearance. Who can compare the mother's forbearance with anything? Divine Mother must be inexhaustibly forbearing. How many evils, wrongs, mischieves we do and with infinite patience she bears everything. And the human mind cannot understand this forbearance.

Then, forgiveness. A child may do any bad thing, any wrong thing and thousands and thousands of children, we all do it. But as Sankaracharya hymns in one of his greatest stotras to the Divine Mother,

Kuputro Jaayeta - There may be many evil, bad sons

Kvacid-API - Never is it seen

Kumaataa Na Bhavati - There is never a bad mother. It is impossible.

So, She can forgive anything, she is forgiving. What is the lesson? We might have done many things in the past, we need not regret. Simply say, "O Mother! We have done a lot of wrong things. Please forgive." Once only you tell 'forgive'. Like Rama, anybody once says, "O Lord! I have done many things wrong. I take refuge in you. I belong to you." Once he says, thereafter I will never leave that person. That is why one of his names is Achyuta. 'chyuta' means to give up. 'Achyuta' means never to give up. Once we say, "God! We belong to you", we may give him up, we may try to give him up but he will never let our hands go because he understands, "This is my child. He is ignorant. And he called me Papa, Mama and I will never give him up." That is forgiveness.

And sarva mangala mangalye - Auspiciousness. Whatever Mother does, even if it appears to be severe punishment, even if it appears to be virulent Covid, it is only out of her auspiciousness, everything is for the good of her children, the whole world is Mother's child. And we must strongly believe and understand that nothing happens, it is all Mother's will, no one else is responsible. Then, what is the last one? It is the last but not the least, it is only for our sake.

Playfulness - Leela. The whole Srishti-Sthiti-Laya is a divine leela. That is why in the Lalita Sahasranama, it is said



mithya jagat adhishtana muktida mukti rupini.

mithya jagat adhishtana - She is the director of this entire world drama. The whole universe is what is called Brahmanda leela. That is why God is called Sri Ranganatha (He is the director of this entire world). That is why Sri Krishna is called Leela manusha vigraha. The entire Srishti-Sthiti-Laya, everything is a Leela. So, she is playing hide-and-seek for whose pleasure? For our pleasure and for Her pleasure. If we know She is playing, then the drama will not give one-hundred percent happiness. We must really feel. When we are watching a cinema, it is an absolute reality but at the back of our deep unconscious, we know it is only a cinema. How do we know? Because if we enjoy any cinema, after we come out we recommend it to our friends, and if necessary pay for it and go and see it again. Why? Even though it is painful, we know that it is an artistic pain, it is a leela pain. These are some of the things.

Now, we are coming into the real talk. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Sri Sarada Devi as the Divine Mother. That is called Shodashi Puja. Now, I am going to tell you why in these sannyasi organizations, we have to worship and sing the hymns of the Divine Mother. Probably many of you do not know, Sannyasins are of two types: those who belong to the Advaita sampradaya tradition and those who belong to Dvaita sampradaya, Dvaitic traditions like Ramanujacharya's, Madhvacharya's, Ramayath sadhus, etc. Now, Ramakrishna Order Swamis, Sri Ramakrishna himself was a disciple of Totapuri Maharaj and he got initiated into Mahamantra. Now, in this Advaitic sampradaya which was created by Sankaracharya and he created especially ten names. That is why it is called Dashanami (meaning ten names) sampradaya - Giri, Puri, Bharathi, Saraswathi, Aranya, Tirtha, etc. And Sankaracharya has created four special ashrams in four corners of India - Sringeri, Puri, Jyothir Mada near Badarikashrama and near Dwaraka. And he made one of his disciples in-charge and commanded them to propagate Advaita to these four corners of India. And then, Advaita Sannyasins are initiated not into Ishta Devata mantra but into Mahavakya that is, to say 'I and God is One' 'Aham Brahmasmi' 'Tat tvam asi' 'Ayam atma Brahma' 'Prajnanam Brahma'. Now, what is important is any ashrama belong to Dashanami sampradaya can only worship two forms of God - one is Shiva because he is the Sannyasi Raja, he is the emperor of Sannyasins, Yogishwara, and Saradamba, Saraswati because She is the Mother of Wisdom, embodiment of Wisdom, giver of wisdom, giver of Jiva-Ishwara Aikya Jnanam. Only She can give. So, we cannot worship anybody else. But in the Ramakrishna Order, we worship Durga, we worship Kali, we worship Ganesha, we worship every possible God and Goddess including Jesus Christ, including the Prophet Mohammed also. Why? Because Sri Ramakrishna had expanded that unique Advaitic vision. He himself worshipped God only as the Divine Mother. Throughout his sadhana, he worshipped God mainly as the Divine Mother, Kali. That symbolism is marvelous but I will not go during this series. Now, Sri Ramakrishna practiced Tantric sadhana. And in that Tantric sadhana, as a culmination of it, once he worshipped his own wife looking upon her as the Divine Mother Tripurasundari. And that is called, when the girl is sixteen years old, she is called Shodashi Bala. At that time, one has to

worship the Divine Mother as Shodashi. And Kali Puja occurs twice a year. One is which is going to come, after near about a month on the Amavasya day and another is in the month of May which is called Phalaharini Kali Puja. Phalaharini means 'not one who enjoys fruits', 'one who destroys karma phala, both good and evil'. And where there are no good and evil karma phala, man is instantaneously free, that means he attains his Mukti. On that night, Sri Ramakrishna told his nephew, "I want to worship the Divine Mother. Prepare in my own room." Hriday did not understand, he prepared the whole thing and then after that he called Holy Mother. She became semi-conscious and ascended on the Peeta, on which Mother Kali was supposed to be, and she sat and she went into Samadhi. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped her, and in the end, he offered all that he obtained at the feet of the Holy Mother and took these three slokas, 'sarva mangala mangalye', 'srishti-sthiti' and 'saranagata dinarta' and prayed, "O Mother! Please remain in this lady's body and do good to the whole world from now onwards and I have offered you at your feet, all that I have obtained as a result of twelve years of spiritual sadhana" And so, he awakened the Divine Motherhood in Holy Mother and later on, Sri Ramakrishna left her as the Divine Mother and all the earnings of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual powers are in her hands. If our Holy Mother wishes, then She will grant any one of us that Mukti. And She is granting according to our receiving capacity. This is the origin but at that time Ramakrishna Mission did not exist. And that is why, as soon as Ramakrishna Mission was formed by Swamiji, slowly 'khandana bhava bandhana', 'Om Hrim Ritam' then 'Sarvamangala'. Later, Swami Abhedananda composed the especially most marvelous hymn, 'Prakritim paramam'. So, these are the four hymns usually sung at the time of Vespers at our Ramakrishna Order.

Then, as I mentioned just now, the Dashanami Sampradaya Sadhus do not worship but we not only belong but we expand our vision and say that Sri Ramakrishna is sarva deva devi swaroopa and Holy Mother is also sarva deva devi swaroopini. Now, Swami Vivekananda at the beginning, was dead against any type of worship because he saw whole India is full of these temples and very poorly maintained, morning till evening God is woken up and he is granted first-class food and curtain is falling, curtain is opening, whole day this Baba-ism going on, so he said we will keep it to the minimum. And he was dead against introduction of any of the other worships. But once it happened just three-four days before Durga Puja, Swami Vivekananda had a vision that Mother Kali from Dakshineswar is coming to Belur Math in the form of Durga, conveying thereby, 'I would like to be worshipped as Durga'. For what purpose? Not for her purpose but for all children like us. So, Swamiji understood. And what happened before Swamiji? Swami Brahmanandaji had a vision that Mother Durga was being worshipped at Belur Math. He understood but out of fear of Swamiji and everybody was scared of Swami Vivekananda because he was a first-class orator and while scolding also, his oratory was incomparable. So, everybody was terribly frightened, scared. So, Swami Brahmananda, even though he was a Nirvikalpa Samadhi experiencer, he was scared to death. But after Swamiji had that vision,

probably the Divine Mother being a wise lady understood 'my appearing to Brahamananda is not going to work out. I better myself directly approach Naren and then beg him whether he could accommodate my request.' So, Swamiji was overwhelmed, he came and called Raja Maharaj and said, 'Raja! I had this vision.' Raja Maharaj said, "Yes, yes. I too had it. But because of fear of you, I could not tell you. So, let us worship." But at that time, how to worship? Where is the image? Where are the preparations? Because it requires at least three months earlier preparations for Durga Puja, believe me. Later on, I will tell you some other time. So, one Brahmachari Krishna Lalu was sent to one particular area in Calcutta which is called Kumartuli where thousands of images are made, people come to buy according to their capacity. Krishnalal went there, perhaps hoping, 'Maybe, there will be a small image of Durga'. But to his astonishment, he found a huge image of Mother Durga. And then he asked, "Is it for sale?" And the owner said, "Yes." "How come Durga Puja has come and this image is not taken?" And he was explained that a rich man had ordered it, but some disaster had taken place in his family, he could not worship so he sent news, "You better sell it to somebody else". That was when this Brahmachari went, joyfully purchased it and it would have cost a lot. But it was very cheap because the rich man had paid for it, and brought it to Belur Math and installed it. Now, Holy Mother was in Calcutta. And then Swamiji invited. Mother came and stayed at Belur Math which normally, women were not allowed to stay in those days. In the Math itself she stayed with her companions. Everyday she used to come and witness the Durga Puja. At the end, when Mother Durga was to be immersed, Holy Mother came and gave some donation also, that Ten rupee note is still preserved in Belur Math I think. She said, "Every year, Mother Durga will come for the welfare of the world". So, that was the origin of Durga Puja in a Dashanami Sampradaya Matha. So, we worship the Divine Mother all the time. Now before I close, a few points I want to make. First of all, when our concept of God is always based upon some scriptures. Please keep this in mind. It is a very important point. Supposing somebody has become a devotee of Vishnu. How did he get his understanding about Vishnu as God? It is purely based upon puranas like Bhagavatam, Vishnu Purana and that has been expounded by Hari-Katha people, elders, etc. and we hear about it, we conceive of God as expounded and explained in those scriptures and we have a concept of this Vishnu, so also Shiva, so also Divine Mother Durga. And what is the source of our understanding about Durga? It is based upon one particular section of Markandeya Purana. This Markandeya Purana has a separate section of seven-hundred slokas approximately. That goes by three names: Chandi is one name, Durga Saptashati is another name, Devi Mahatmyam is another name. And in this section, the origin, glory, special characteristics and special powers of the Divine Mother is there. Our concept of Mother Durga is completely based upon that. So, this Durga Saptashati has got seven-hundred slokas nearly. And this book is divided into three parts (stories). Next class, I will expound the inner symbolism and allegories of the stories but I am giving the background history now. These stories are not ordinary stories. Every story in the Puranas, in the Mahabharata, Ramayana and in this Durga Saptashati, has an exoteric (outer meaning) and an esoteric (inner

meaning). We have to explore the inner meaning otherwise, we will have a very crude concept of God as the Divine Mother. As I have mentioned previously, seven characteristics like source, closeness, nourishment, etc. Now, these three stories are marvelous. What is the story? That we are all in this world and we are completely possessed by Avidya. And Avidya manifests in the form of egotism, in the form of complete slavery to our sense organs and complete lust (kama) and krodha, etc. So, these three stories consecutively, is a story of Brahma's creation where evil people means evil qualities are manifest in the form of Madhu and Kaitabha. Second story is a manifestation of pure unadulterated egotism in the form of Mahishasura, stubborn and non removable like a buffalo. Buffalo, even if you beat it, it won't move anywhere. Third story is about Kama and Krodha (Shumbha and Nishumbha). They represent Kama and then Krodha. How do we know? Because the Divine Mother manifests accordingly to remove the evil and help the Atman to get rid of the dross and attain mukti. So, in the third story, I am just giving a hint, the Mother assumes the form of Miss Universe. Of course, you all know, Miss Universe is elected every year. What is that Miss Universe? Where for many years, a lady is missed excepting for a few days, that is why she is called Miss universe. Anyway, Divine Mother nicely decorated herself, lipsticks and all those, latest fashions, sat on the highest pedestal so that she will attract the notice of everybody and invariably, she made it a point to be seen and the attendants of Shumbha and Nishumbha, Chanda and Munda, they saw her and ran, reported. And naturally, their lust increased and when she was not available, their anger was roused and there was a battle. And in that form, she cleanses her children's draws and then gives them Mukti. Mahishasura - egotism. Egotism changes its shape in so many ways. But in the first story, Brahma wanted to create this world. He got the commission from Vishnu. After giving the commandment to Brahma, "Now, you create the world because I created you. Why I created you is because I understood (I am a wise man) otherwise I have to do myself. Now that I have got an assistant, now I will put all the responsibilities and burden upon you. Now, you create". Poor Brahma was about to create, suddenly what happened? After giving the commission Vishnu promptly went to deep sleep. And he was not getting up. From the earwax of this Vishnu, two demons called Madhu and Kaitabha came. They saw Brahma and they wanted to finish him off. Brahma (Creator) was helpless. Then, what to do? He required the help of Vishnu but he was sleeping. Why was he sleeping? Because the Divine Mother mesmerized him - Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu nidra rupena samsthita. So, Brahma hymns the Divine Mother, Tvam Swaha tvam svadha tvam vasatmika... Beautiful hymn, very first charitra we will get. And the Divine Mother blessed Brahma and then withdrew her power of sleep and then Vishnu got up, he saw Madhu and Kaitabha, he understood what the problem was, he fought with them for five thousand years. And he fought so well, Madhu and Kaitabha had become very egotistic, but they were his people, they said, "O Vishnu! You are a grand hero. You can fight with us. You are equal to us. We are pleased with you. We will grant you a boon. You ask for a boon." What is the boon? Foolish fellows. Then, Vishnu promptly, clever fellow, said, "You are so gracious. Only grant this boon - may you be killed by me" "Oh no! What foolish

fellows we are! What type of boon we gave this fellow. Now, we have to die. But they put a condition (where there is no water) that means there is no cause, then only you kill us. Immediately he gathered them into his lap, above water, and finished them off. Then Brahma became free to create. Create what? That is the story we will talk about in our next class.

**Om Jananim Sāradam devam Rāmakrishnam jagadgurum |**

**Pādapadme tayoh shritvā pranamāmi muhurmuhuh ||**

**May Sri Rāmakrishna, Holy Mother and Swāmi Vivekānanda bless us all with Bhakti.**