

GOSPEL OF SRI RĀMAKRISHNA - PART 22

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-jīvanam

kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham ।

śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ

bhuvi gṛṇanti te bhūri-dā janāḥ ॥

In our last class, I briefly talked about the qualities of the Divine Mother. Why? Because Hindus take a very special pride in worshipping God as Mother. And these are called motherly qualities. Even an ordinary mother exhibits to an extraordinary degree these qualities that we find even in the animals. That is why in the Chandi, the Mother is manifesting in every creature, both male as well as female. Of course, especially in the females.

ya devi sarva bhuteshu matru rupena samsthita

So, special seven qualities like the Source or Origin, the Closeness, the nourishing aspect, the equal distribution of love, complete forgiveness, Leela, etc. I also talked

about why in the Dashanami Sampradaya, our Ramakrishna Order is part of that sampradaya and this Dashanami sampradayis, they never worship any other God or Goddess excepting Saraswati because she has to give True Knowledge (diyo yonah prachodayat) and Shiva, the emperor of sannyasis (both as Yogeshwara and also Yogishwara). Then, I mentioned that Sri Ramakrishna himself worshipped the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and awakened in her the Divine Motherhood. She was specially incarnated so that she could look after helpless children like us. What this helplessness is, I will be talking about shortly. And then at the end of the worship, Sri Ramakrishna hymned taking three verses from this Chandi, beginning with 'Sarva mangala mangalye' ending with 'Saranagata dinarta paritrana parayane'. Then, I mentioned that this particular book called Durga Saptashati (Sapta means seven, Shati means hundred). This Durga Saptashati is a book like Gita consisting of about seven hundred verses. It is also called Devi Mahatmyam or Chandi. It is obtained in the Markandeya Purana and the Divine Mother's glory has been so beautifully depicted here. And then I also mentioned that in this book there are three wonderful stories as well as four most marvelous hymns. I also hinted that our Puranic stories are not cock-and-bull stories for the entertainment of people. They are meant to convey the deepest vedantic truths in the simplest language possible that even children can understand. Of course, children understand the stories, they will be interested. A story not only contains significance like Aesop's fables, Panchatantra, Balamitra, etc. but at the same time, they also help us with memory. Our memory is very important. Once we remember the story then the significance / symbolism behind the story can also be easily related. That is the methodology of sutra literature. Just what we call a simple sentence associated with a huge story, remember the sentence and like the body that is tied to that, you pull the tail and the whole body will come out. And so, behind the stories there is a deep symbolism. Also behind the stotras, there is a deep philosophical significance. But before we go further, let me summarize, let us keep these four points in mind so that with this in the background we can try to understand the symbolism which we are going to discuss:

First, God with the help of Mahamaya had created this entire universe. Vedanta tells us that we have all come from God. Symbolically called 'amritasya putrAh' - we are children of immortality. How? Because we are created by God. And God cannot create without the help of Shakti / Yogamaya. God cannot even incarnate without this Yogamaya. In the Bhagavad Gita, the most marvelous philosophical, devotional, puranic literature obtainable anywhere in this world, Bhagavan Krishna says,

prakritim svam adhisthaya

sambhavami atma-mayaya

Without maya, there is no creation, there is no birth. So, even if God has to incarnate, He has to take the help of His own Shakti. Two points here - One is without the help of Shakti, called in Vedantic literature - Maya, called in the Puranic literature by the devotees - Mahamaya, the great Mother, without that it is impossible. Second, it

belongs to God. Vishnumaya. In Sri Ramakrishna's words, Brahman and Shakti are inseparable. And that is why in the Soundaryalahari, Sankaracharya starts with this

Shivah Shaktya yukto yadi bhavati

If Shiva is separated from Shakti, not united with Shakti, then He will not exist, He will not be able to manifest, He won't be able to do His job. So also Vishnu; so also Brahma. This is what we call in Vedanta, Ishwara. Ishwara is nothing but married Brahman. Mrs. Brahman is another name for Mahamaya. Without Mrs., it is impossible to do anything. So, the first point is, God with the help of Mahamaya, had created this entire universe. We are part of that universe. Therefore, we also have been created by Mahamaya. Created means, She herself has become, manifesting as us. Second, what is this samsara? this world? this universe? Viswam? Jagat? The Samsara is nothing but suffering and troubles. Tritapa we call it - Adhyatmika, Adhi bhautika and Adhi daivika. That is why, every single second, we are trying, struggling to get out of this limitation. We breathe because we want to live. We eat because we want to live. And our entire life, why do we want to earn money? So that we can reduce the limitations of poverty, of hunger, of housing, of dress, etc. So, more facilities are there. So, this Samsara is nothing but suffering and troubles. That is why, Bhagavan Buddha had summarized in one sentence - Life is full of suffering. That is one of the very first of four aryan noble truths. But this very Samsara is the greatest vehicle for obtaining either Dharma or Artha or Kama or the most important Mukti / Moksha. So, according to Vedanta, Moksha is the Parama nishreyasa. That is the Parama purushartha. That is the second point - Samsara is nothing but trouble and this trouble actually is a boon which awakens us and then takes us to God. If there had been no suffering we would never have felt the need for progressing. We will be like carpets or footrugs. Third point - Therefore, every scripture, especially Hindu scriptures, advocate the pursuit of spiritual life. That is called Moksha. Fourth point - For attaining Moksha, we need the grace of God. But the grace of God can be obtained only by the grace of the Divine Mother who is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of this universe

Srishti Sthiti Vinashanam sakthi bhute sanatani

Gunashraye gunamaye narayani namostute

If we understand these four points, then we have understood the entire summary of every scripture in this world. Coming back, those four points apply to this Devi Mahatmyam / Durga Saptashati. In this particular book (called by three names - Devi Mahatmyam, Durga Saptashati, Chandi), there are three stories and four hymns of incomparable beauty. Not only beauty, but the deepest philosophy. Now, I will be talking about the inner symbolism of these three important stories. Not in this particular talk only, but slowly. But in this particular today's talk, I will talk about the story, the background of the story, the first story of Madhu and Kaitabha, and the inner symbolism of this one.

So, let me start first of all with the background of how the Chandi starts. This Devi Mahatmyam / Chandi is divided into three parts: Pratama charitra (First story), then Madhyama Charitra (Second story), then Utthama Chaitra (Third story or Last story). And then, there must be a background. And that is what very briefly I will discuss. And I will also, in between, insert the most interesting meaningful remarks about it. The story starts like this: There was a king. His name was Suratha. He was a great king, very loving king. And he used to look upon his people, the entire kingdom as if they were born out of his own body, that means like his own children. He was intelligent, he was philosophical, and he was strong, but at some point there were some enemies. Who are the enemies? They are called kolas, vidhwamsinas (destroyers) like the army of Genghis Khan, whatever comes on the path, they burn, butcher, kill, destroy and then make the earth a living hell. They conquered this king and slowly they penetrated into the kingdom and then the people were so ungrateful that many of them, his ministers, his close relatives, including his own family members joined those. That is why Adi Sankaracharya in his Bhaja Govindam stotram,

Yavadvittoparjana saktaH stavannija parivaro raktaH

pascajjivati jarjara dehe vartam ko'pi na prcchati gehe

A family will be enquiring after us only so long as we are capable of providing them, nourishing them, looking after them. The moment we become old, (ko'pi na prcchati gehe) nobody enquires about it. This is a very common experience, if they do not throw us out, then we are very fortunate. Let us say that one!

So, this King had been literally kicked out of his kingdom and then, he had no option but to run into a deep forest and there, there was a great sage called Sumedha. And he took shelter in the ashrama as a guest. But the real conversation did not take place. The king was brooding over how his fate had changed overnight. But something strange was happening. The king was thinking... [Now and then, I will also give you a background history from the very book itself].

SvArocisentre pUrvam caitra vamsasamudbhavah

Suratho nAma rAjA' bhUt samaste ksiti mandale

Great king, he was born of the Chaitra vamsa, his name was Suratha. Then what did he do?

Tasya pAlayatah samyak prajAh putrAnivaurasAn

As if all the people of his kingdom, equally like his own children, then what happened was his ministers and everybody, as I mentioned, joined his more powerful enemy and then he entered into the ashrama of Sumedha who was a great sage. And then he stayed there for sometime. He was brooding, what happened to him did not disappear from his mind.

chintayatha tatha tatra mamatva akrishta manasaH

mat puruvaiH pAlitam pUrvam mayA hInam purAmitat

I will not but I will give you a gist which is more important for us. This King started brooding, “Well, I loved all of them. I looked after all of them. And I also accumulated, and made the kingdom prosperous. My treasury is full of money. What are my servants, my former ministers doing? Are they looking after the kingdom? Or are they simply looting the money and lining the pockets of people. And I had a favorite elephant. Is someone looking after it? What is going to be its fate? It used to love me.”

Now, here is the point. He knew that he was helpless. He should have hated them, “You fellows! So long as I was looking after you, you were doing Salam every second. The moment somebody came, you simply looked the other way, welcomed the other fellows, kicked me out.” He should have been developing vairagya towards them. I will never again think about it. But Mahamaya again, again and again. He was only brooding. Why? Mamatva akrishta manasaH. His heart was completely overpowered by mamatva. What is mamatva? Terrible amount of delusion - mine mine mine. Literally, it is a landmine. Anybody says it is mine, it is a landmine according to Vedanta. So, this is how a beautiful description is going on. Then, what happened? Few days later, another man also came running. He was a merchant. His name was Samadhi. I will explain the meanings of the words slightly later. His name was Samadhi; he was a very rich person but in his case, not the enemies but his own family members waited enough time for this person to work hard and accumulate money. As soon as money was accumulated, this head of the family was simply dragged out of the house and kicked literally. He had nowhere to go, he also heard about this ashrama. He came to this Ashrama, he was also thinking about it. And then, both of them started talking. What were they talking about? They were great philosophers but completely helpless. They were people of discrimination but completely helpless like anyone of us. So, what was the remark I wanted to make? These stories, they are not simply stories to be found in the Puranas or scriptures. They are day-to-day life that is going on here, whether it is the entire country, or particular state, politicians, family members, quarrels between family members, this is endemic. This pandemic is going on everywhere in this world. So, these two: King called Surata and the merchant called Samadhi: ‘Surata’ means a person who is well-balanced physically, mentally and emotionally. A man who is not easily swayed from losing his balance. He is a very balanced person. And then, what is the meaning of ‘Samadhi’? The Vaishya was a great devotee, greatest philosopher and he was longing for Moksha but as a duty he was earning money. These two people met here. And why we interpret this way will be explained later one. So, they started staying as guests, naturally they were introduced to each other and naturally they tell, ‘Who are you? Why did you happen to come here?’ So, they asked each other. The Sage’s name is Sumedha. ‘Medha’ means right understanding. ‘Sumedha’ means absolute understanding. What does it mean? To understand logically something completely in the right manner is called ‘Medha’ but to realize the truth and know instinctively that this is the truth, that is called

‘Sumedha’. That means he was a Rishi, he knew the Truth, that means he realized God.

So, they were telling each other their stories. That is the background. But what were they thinking? “How come that we have been thrown out by our own people?” Instead of hating them, instead of trying to forget them, instead of running away from them as much distance as possible, our minds are inevitably, helplessly drawn to those people. Our whole time is spent thinking only about their welfare. What a stupid thing! A person has deceived me, and I am incapable of kicking them out of my mind, I am thinking, “Are they happy? Do they require something? If I am not there, will they be able to manage themselves? I would have rendered them service.” This is called Mahamaya. So, this is what they are trying to do here. These people are trying to make themselves, this particular thought has come into their minds. So, what were they talking about here?

soham na vedmi putranam kushalakushalatmikam

pravritim svajanam ca dharanam ca trasamthithah

They are thinking about “our children, our family members, whether they are happy, healthy, they are also maintaining their health properly, and how they are leading their lives, how our wives are there?”

kim nu tesham grhekshemam?

Are they keeping very well? Everything is going on nicely?

kim nu sampratham akeshemam?

Are they experiencing any difficulties?

katham te kim sadvritah?

Have they become better people now? Or are they becoming worse? dirvruttAh kimnu me suta?

Then, the King was asking the merchant.

yaih nirasto bhavan luptai utra dharadhi virtanaih

teshu kim bhavata sneham anupadnati manasam

My friend, you have been kicked out by your own family members. Yet, you are thinking “te bhavatah sneham”, it has completely bound you. Why is it? Then, the merchant was replying, “Whatever you said is absolutely true”. Then, here is the psychological truth which all of us experience.

kim karomi? I am helpless. What can I do?

na padnati mama nishtutrutam manah

My mind refuses to come under control and stop thinking about them.

kim me tan navi janapi janan api mahamate

yat prema pravanam chittam vigunoshapi bandhushu

bandhushu means all those people related to me; viguneshu, evil people; jananapi I know I should not think about them. I know what they have done to me and yet, as if I am forced to think only about them. Why? Why is it? mahamate. Oh! most intelligent person!

Then, the Muni who was narrating this story, Markandeya (in Markandeya Purana) was saying, they both approached the sage called Sumedha and then what did they address him?

Bhagavan stva aham prashtum icchami ekam

O Lord! Great Sir! We would like to ask you a question. Please reply to us and make our minds understand.

dukhaye yanme manasa swachittha ayatatham vina

We are completely out of control of our minds. And then both of us have been kicked out

tat kenaitan mahavaga yan mogho jnaninor api mamasya ca bhavatyasha vivekandhasya mudatha

This is the crux of the philosophy of this particular Chandi. Both of them were questioning this great Guru. He says:

tat kena etan mahabhaga yan mohah jnaninor api - We are Jnanis, intelligent people endowed with discrimination. We know that we should not think about them, the world is like that.

But, yat mohah - we are overcome by delusion like Arjuna was overcome by delusion

mama asya ca - both mine as well this King

vivekandhasya mudatha - our viveka is completely covered with darkness

Then, the rishi Sumedha replies, "My Friend! You also have knowledge. All animals have knowledge. Look at these parent birds. They themselves are suffering from terrible hunger and yet, day and night, they are braving so many dangers. They are gathering food to feed their young ones (chavasinchusu). The young ones are crying with their open beaks, they carry whatever they can and in the process, many of them die also and instead of looking after themselves, they are looking after their children. How come this is happening? It is a beautiful question that all of us have to question ourselves and say that we are also in that condition. We ourselves are suffering so much. Instead of attending to our own suffering, instead of trying to understand the

causes of our suffering, instead of trying to remedy them, we are thinking about our husbands, our wives, our children, our friends, this is called terrible delusion. This is how the story starts.

Then, Sumedha is telling that all this is because of one great universal power. That power is called Mahamaya. And then, these people, they ask, "Great Soul! (Mahamedha!) you are talking. Who is this Mahamaya? How does she delude all of us? What are her glories and please tell about her as if we do not know anything about Mahamaya. As if she is deluding the whole world and we are only part of that world." That is how the story of Durga, Kali, etc. comes here. So, the Muni is telling, "Let me tell these people". The King was asking, "Bhagavan kahi sa Devi?" "Who is that Devi?" "yam bhavan Mahamayeti abhrutvan!" So, you tell us that there is one Mahamaya. Who is that Devi? katham utpanna? How did She originate? sa karma? What does she do? O Dhwiya! Please inform us because we are completely ignorant. yat prabhava ca sa devi? What is her glory? her greatness? What is her real nature? yat udbhava? Where from did She originate? tat sarvam - Everything about that Mahamaya shrodhum icchami - we would like to hear from you. And then, who are you? You are not an ordinary person, brahmavidam varah - you are the greatest soul among the knowers of Brahman. You are a sarvagna - you know everything. We are completely ignorant people. Please tell us about this. Then, the rishi says,

nityaiva sa jaganmurtih taya sarvamidam tatham

tathapi tat samupaktih bahudha shroyatham mama

This Jaganmata, this Mahamaya is eternal (ajo nityah sasvatoyam). she is never born. She is ajah, unborn. She is nityah, she is eternal; sashvatah, she is forever. But, just as Bhagavan Kirshna says "yada yada hi dharmasya...", when the virtue goes down and the vice is on the increase, I incarnate myself with the help of Mahamaya which is called Deivi Maya which consists of Sattva-Rajas-Tamas and then, I try to bring back the virtue and balance, subdue means 'even God cannot kill evil (adharma) because dharma and adharma are not two separate things. If only there were to be dharma, there would be no world. If there were only good people, tell me, how will you know he is a good person? When you see a hundred bad people, and you see one good person, "Ah! this person is totally different". If you do not know what is darkness, you will not know what is light. If you do not know what is suffering, you do not know what is happiness. If you do not know what is evil, you can never recognize what is good. So, it cannot be eliminated. Swami Vivekananda says, "Many people who think and are convinced that slowly we are increasing in our knowledge and a day will come when all evil will disappear and that this world will become Swargaloka". Actually, it will become narakaloka because if everybody is good means everybody is dead. Only a dead person is a good person. There is some beautiful conversation - there was a nice person. One day he was sitting in the park and his friends saw him, joined him, sat down and said, "You know, such and such a person is praising you highly". Then, the man was shocked! "How come? I am not yet dead. Only dead people will be praised as

good, no living person will ever be praised either because of jealousy or because of ignorance”. It is only evil we criticize, rarely we come across people who are appreciative. Ok, this is the background.

Now, the rishi tells how this Divine Mother, that means if we are talking about Vishnupurana, how Vishnu, even though He is eternal, he incarnates himself for Dharmasthapana now and then. Similarly, as I mentioned earlier, this is about the glory of the Divine Mother. Puranas are of three types: those who praise and extoll Vishnu - they are called Vishnu Puranas; those who extoll Shiva are called Shivapuranas and those who extoll Devi are called Devi puranas. We have, by the way, eighteen major puranas and eighteen minor puranas. And Vyasa Deva is supposed to be the author of all thirty-six puranas, Mahabharata, Bhagavatam, and of course dividing the Vedas into four categories, etc. Now, coming back, what Vaishnavas call incarnation of Vishnu is what Shaktas or devotees of Divine Mother call as “The Divine Mother incarnates whenever dharma goes down”. The rise of evil people means the rise of adharma. Always remember dharma and adharma (virtue and vice) or good and evil have absolutely no meaning if they are not manifest in a living being. Remember, this is one of the greatest philosophical, vedantic truths. A red color does not exist excepting in an object. You cannot separate and say, “This is redness and it is an object”. There is no object called redness. Redness is a viseshana, an attribute, a quality. A red flower, a red shirt, a red building, so also every quality. He is a good man if there is no such thing called goodness, per se. Here, dharma means it must manifest in a person like Yudhishtra, like Harishchandra. Satya manifested in Harishchandra, in Kshudiram, etc. Similarly, adharma also cannot be found separately excepting in a person. That is why, whether it is Sadam Hussain, or Hitler or Genghis Khan, or these rakshasas called Ravanaasura, Kamsasura, Hiranyakashipu, etc., it must manifest. Here is a story with this background of how Rishi Sumedha narrates:

Bhagavan Vishnu created Brahma and then he assigned him the job of creation and promptly went into Yoga Nidra. While Vishnu was sleeping, two demons came out of the earwax, impurity of the Vishnu (Vishnu karna mala udbhavau). Two have come, they were called Madhu and Kaitabha. Vishnu was sleeping; they could not see the Divine Mother. They saw Brahma; Brahma wanted to create but these asuras wanted to destroy. Brahma represents truth, dharma, etc. Only dharma creates, adharma always destroys. Creator means dharma. So, adharma wanted to destroy dharma. And Brahma saw, he was helpless because he was dharma. Dharma is weak in the beginning. So, he saw, and then he looked at Vishnu, his creator, his protector. What was the protector doing? He himself was sleeping. Now, Vishnu cannot fight with them. Even if Brahma shouts, he cannot be woken up. But Brahma knew that there is a power even beyond Vishnu which is controlling Vishnu, which has put Vishnu to sleep. So, he understood and then he started, “If I want to be saved from these two, there is no way excepting obtaining the Mother’s grace”. So, he started saying hymns with all sincerity, with utmost devotion. And then, very soon Mahamaya appeared to him and

then she understood. She need not be told why Brahma had hymned. So, what did she do?

Ya devi sarva bhuteshu nidra rupena samsthita

She put Vishnu also to sleep. And then, immediately, she withdrew herself from Vishnu in the form of Nidra. That means, Vishnu became awakened. He immediately saw these two asuras, Madhu and Kaitabha. They were about to finish off Brahma, the creative aspect of God. And Vishnu fought with them for five-thousand years (pancha varsha sahasrani). And so valorous were these, after all, they were his children you know, you have to remember that even evil people are the children of Bhagavan only, Divine Mother only. So, after all, they came out of his ears, and they were also chips of the old block as we say, they fought with their father for five-thousand years and then, they appreciated, "Old man! Even though you are old, you still have so much vigour! and we will give you a boon." That also, the Divine Mother deluded them to give a boon. Remember, who can give a boon? Only people with extraordinary power (only God). These people were almost like God (God-like), that is why they could give. And Vishnu, being the old chip, old block, he was more intelligent because he had more experience, he said, "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you! I only want this much - may both of you be killed by me". Then they awoke and said, "What stupid fellows we are. Without thinking we gave a boon". But they are truthful people. When they say, "We will give a boon", they will have to give a boon. What did Vishnu say?

vadyatam maya

May both of you be killed by me.

Then, they put a small condition thinking they will escape. Everywhere at that time, there was water, that's what we say the Noah's Arc was created and the whole world was flooded. At the time of Pralaya, it will be filled with waters, of course it is called causal waters (Karana Jala) but we will talk about it some other time when the occasion comes. Then, they said, "Ok. Ok. We have given the boon, we are not people to withdraw it or tell a lie. You kill us where there is no water". And then, Vishnu looked here and there and he took both of them on his thighs which were above water, he finished them both, and then he blessed Brahma. This was not said in the book but I think he must have gone back to his yoga nidra and then. Brahma started creating. That is the end of the first story.

As I mentioned, it has a deep symbolic significance. What is the significance? Who is Brahma? Who is Vishnu? Who is Mahamaya? Who are these Madhu and Kaitabha? First of all, Vishnu is what we call, Nirguna Brahma. Nirguna Brahma cannot create. Therefore, he has to assign the job, he has to seek the help of Mahamaya called Shakti. In Advaita Vedantic literature, it is called Maya. But in Dwaitic literature, She is called Parvati, She is called Lakshmi, She is called Saraswati. That is why Brahma cannot do anything without Saraswati. What is Saraswati? Brahma's knowledge is Saraswati. What is Mahalakshmi? Ok. What is Brahma's job? Creation. That is why he does not

have any weapons. What is the job of Vishnu? Sthiti. Karana. He is the law maintainer. Therefore, he requires weapons. But weapons themselves will not do because he has to reward people who are good, punish people or correct them with weapons. He cannot use weapons for destroying his devotees (good people). So, for doing that one, to sharpen, throw away the old weapons and buy the latest AK-47s etc., he requires money. That is why Lakshmi is the Shakti which helps Vishnu to maintain. And then Shiva, he has to withdraw people, give them modern dresses, new dresses, that is called Laya. That is why he must have Trishula. Why Trisula? You destroy the physical body and give a new body. He is a good person: destroy his evil mind and give him a new mind, spiritual mind. Finally, you destroy all the old samskaras which is called Karana Sharira and with one stroke - the gross, the subtle and the causal bodies (because God doesn't deal in retail, he only deals wholesale), that means the entire delusion, Mahamaya, samsara, avidya has to be destroyed with one stroke. That is why he has this Trisula (it is called Trident). Otherwise, if he has one dent, he has to separately kill, waste a lot of time and by that time he kills one body, another body will spring like Rakta-beeja.

Anyway, coming back... So, Shiva requires Kali or Parvati, Vishnu requires Lakshmi and Brahma requires Saraswati. What is Saraswati? Shakti. What is Lakshmi? Shakti. What is Parvati or Kali? Shakti. What is Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva? Chaitanya. Chaitanya plus Shakti, that is what is called as Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer. Ishwara is nothing but Brahman plus Shakti.

Now, coming back to our story: Brahma wants to do his job of creation. Creation always requires Sattvika buddhi. Then, what happened suddenly? This Mahamaya has to do both Srishti, Sthiti and Samhara. She has both rewarding power as well as punishing power. These two demons have come. What are the two demons? Madhu and Kaitabha. Madhu means honey (sweet). Kaitabha means bitter. And they are born out of the earwax. It means when we are crude human beings, without samskaras, we are slaves of our ears. In Bengali, they call it kaan pathla (weak ears). What does it mean? It means somebody says, "You are so beautiful. You are so intelligent. You are so great!" vande magadhi, kings are praised in this world. The same fellows, if they are not paid, they will say you are the worst fellow in the world. And the same fellows who are praising his father "You are unparalleled in this world" As soon as the old man is gone, now they are praising the new one, "You are the Indira, Chandra, Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara" etc. It is their paid job like people who are called paid weepers. When somebody dies in a family, there is a certain caste section of people, they do not weep themselves if their mother, father or somebody dies, they pay money and bring these people. The more money you pay, the more strongly and longer and loudly also, they weep. These fellows do stuti. We are all slaves of Stuti (mAna) and Nindha (apamAna). We never want to hear, never want to be criticized, that is called Kaitava. If somebody praises, even if we know very well, we do not possess those qualities, still we would like to hear them, we would like to entertain them, they are called flatterers. So long as we are slaves to our sense organs, ears means not merely

ears, slaves to the eyes, nostrils, to the tongue, and to the skin. All the enjoyments that we go through, we are slaves. Things are favorable, we are happy; things are unfavorable, we are unhappy. We are slaves to the vagaries of the mind. They represent Madhu and Kaitabha. What does Brahma represent? Creative energy. Each one of us is potentially divine. Remember, it is not making a pot, it is not making a house, it is not writing a book, or writing a poem, or sculpting an image, it is to say we want to bring the inherent perfection into manifestation and of all the manifestations, the greatest manifestation is to know who we really are. That is the greatest creative act - to know I am this. Remember the psychological fact. Only a master can manifest an infinitesimal part of his knowledge as either beautiful music, or poem, or literature, or any scientific knowledge, etc. So, this Brahma means creativity. Brahma means Vedas. Brahma means vedic knowledge. Brahma means that Mahavakya (Aham Brahmasmi) and we want to bring it out but it is not coming. Spiritual knowledge is overpowered by worldly knowledge. So, how to bring about? We need the grace of Vishnu. What is Vishnu? He represents discrimination. He represents Buddhi (dhiyo yonah prachodayaat, Medha!) But what is happening to Vishnu? He is overpowered by Tamasic nature of the Divine Mother. Nidra (Sleep) belongs to Tamasic nature. But what is the way? Only God's grace. In this case, who is the God? Mahamaya, the Divine Mother. Brahma has that much knowledge, without God's grace, it is impossible for me to know who I am. So, immediately, he started praising the Divine Mother, and Mother was highly pleased. She bestowed her grace by withdrawing her tamasic and rajasic powers. Sattva guna becomes awakened, improves and almost hundred percent. And with that, man understands "Oh! So long I have been a slave to the sense organs, to praise and blame (mana, apamana, sita, ushna jaya, apajaya, sukha, dukkha). No! The truth is everything is God. If I am God, the whole world becomes God. So, he becomes, by the grace of the Mother, awakened! Utthishtatha! Jagrata! Prapyavaran Nibodatha! And he manifests divine power.

So, as soon as these enemies have been killed, now what is the symbolism of "You conquer us, you kill us?" That means our mind, at some point, with all its powers, is the only power, if we use it for good purpose, then we progress spiritually. If we use the same energy for the wrong purpose, we go down. That is the meaning of this beautiful story. You cannot kill half of your mind but you conquer them, you kill them, you transform the evil actions, the adharmic samskaras into dharmic samskaras. And for that, discrimination has to work. Vishnu represents Buddhi in the form of Viveka, Vairaghya, Shama dhamadhi satka sampathi and finally, mumukshattvam. And as we progress in spiritual life, this very mind which has been pulling us down for so long, now it becomes our greatest helper. And that is the meaning of conquering Madhu and Kaitabha. As soon as that happens, our inner spiritual awakening takes place - Uthishtatha! Jagrata!! Then, we practice spiritual discipline. Remember, each one of us is a Brahma. We want to know who we are. That is called the true activity of creation - creative activity. And then, this opposition is there in the form of Tamas (Nidra, Indulgence, Laziness, Wrong understanding, Misconception, etc.) and then we need

the grace of God. But ultimately, the grace of God can come only from the Divine Mother. So, the lesson is you worship the Divine Mother. As soon as you worship the Divine Mother, Her grace will come. In what form?

Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu buddhi rupena samsthita

Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu vidya rupena samsthita

Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu daya rupena samsthita

Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu chetane tyavidiyathe (Viveka, vairaghya, sama damadhi satka sampathi)

Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu sakti rupena samsthita (We need sakthi, power, strength even to become a good cook, good statesman, good president of America, we need Shakti)

All these qualities will be bestowed by the Divine Mother. And that is the inner symbolism. We are all Brahmas. But we are overpowered at this moment by the old wrong negative samskaras, adharmic samskaras. We are slaves to our sense organs. The only way is to take refuge in the Divine Mother and she out of her grace, she withdraws all our Tamas and Rajas, we develop our Sattvika buddhi and then, vieka, varaghya, etc. will come and we will fulfill our mission in life, which is to know that I am none other than that Divine Mother, that Parabrahma.

I will conclude this speech with a few quotations from this first story itself (Pratama charitra). First stotra itself - it is called Brahma Stotra. Brahma hymning to the Divine Mother. It starts like this:-

ब्रह्मोवाच

त्वं स्वाहा त्वं स्वधा त्वं हि वषट्कारः स्वरात्मिका ।

सुधा त्वमक्षरे नित्ये त्रिधा मात्रात्मिका स्थिता ॥२॥

Brahmo[a-U]vaaca

Tvam Svaahaa Tvam Svadhaa Tvam Hi Vassattkaarah Svara-[A]atmikaa |

Sudhaa Tvam-Akssare Nitye Tridhaa Maatra-[A]atmikaa Sthitaa ||2||

Tvam Svadhaa - You are the Mantra called 'Swadha'. 'Svaahaa' means when we offer to the Devatas (Indira, Chandra), at the end we have to say, 'Indraaya Svaaha! Ramakrishnaya Svaahaa! Krishnaya Svaahaa! Sarada Devyai Svaahaa!' etc. But when we are addressing our ancestors, then we have to say, 'Svadhaa'. Tvam vassattkaarah - When we are addressing some other deities, we have to use the word 'vassattkaarah'. 'Tvam Sudhaa' - you are amrita. 'Tvam akshare' - you are the imperishable. 'Nitye' - you are the eternal.

अर्धमात्रास्थिता नित्या यानुच्चार्या विशेषतः ।

त्वमेव सन्ध्या सावित्री त्वं देवि जननी परा ॥३॥

Ardha-Maatraa-Sthitaa Nityaa Ya-Anuccaaryaa Vishessatah |

Tvam-Eva Sandhya Saavitri Tvam Devi Jananii Paraa ||3||

And then 'artha maatraa sthitaa nitya' you manifest in the form of artha maatra. What is artha maatra? Remember, Omkara has got four syllables in it - 'A' 'U' 'Ma', etc. And then the fourth one is 'Mmmmm' that is called the Artha Matra, that is real Omkara. That is called Turiya avastha, 'You are That'. Then 'Tvameva Sandhya' 'Savitri Tvam' - You are Sandhya Devi, you are Savitri. 'Devi Janani Para' - Parasakthi; You are the Supreme Mother.

त्वयैतद्धार्यते विश्वं त्वयैतत् सृज्यते जगत् ।

त्वयैतत् पाल्यते देवि ! त्वमत्स्यन्ते च सर्वदा ॥४॥

Tvayai[aa-E]tad-Dhaaryate Vishvam Tvayai[aa-E]tat Srijate Jagat |

Tvayai[aa-E]tat Paalyate Devi ! Tvamatsy-Ante Ca Sarvadaa ||4||

You create this world, You maintain this world and You also sustain this world.

महाविद्या महामाया महामेधा महास्मृतिः ।

महामोहा च भवती महादेवी महासुरी ॥६॥

Mahaa-Vidyaa Mahaa-Maayaa Mahaa-Medhaa Mahaa-Smrtih |

Mahaa-Mohaa Ca Bhavatii Mahaa-Devii Mahaa-Surii ||6||

Then,

त्वं श्रीस्त्वमीश्वरी त्वं ह्रीस्त्वं बुद्धिर्बोधलक्षणा ।

लज्जा पुष्टिस्तथा तुष्टिस्त्वं शान्तिः क्षन्तिरेव च ॥८॥

Tvam Shriis-Tvam-Iishvarii Tvam Hriis-Tvam Buddhir-Bodha-Lakssannaa |

Lajjaa Pussttis-Tathaa Tussttis-Tvam Shaantih Kssantir-Eva Ca ||8||

Tvam Shrii - You are the Lakshmi; Tvam Ishwari - You are the Kali, Parvati; Tvam Hri - You are the Divine Mother and you are also Buddhi. You are Modesty (Lajja); You are Sustenance (Pussti); You are complete satisfaction (Tussti); You are Peace that passeth all understanding (Shanti); You are Forbearance (Kssanti) itself.

सौम्या सौम्यतराशेषसौम्येभ्यस्त्वतिसुन्दरी ।

पराऽपराणां परमा त्वमेव परमेश्वरी ॥१०॥

Saumyaa Saumyatara-Ashessa-Saumyebhyas-Tva[u-A]ti-Sundarii |

Paraa-[A]paraannaam Paramaa Tvam-Eva Parame[a-Ii]shvarii ||10||

Saumya - You are the sweetest, softest thing in this whole world. Not merely the softest, among all the softest.

Saumyatarā-Ashessa-Saumyebhyas - there are many soft things in this world, sweet things in this world. Of them, you get the first prize.

Ativa sundari - You are the Miss Universe. And you are the supreme than the supremest.

Everybody, O Mother! try to praise you, hymn you, but what power I have got?! You have given me little power, with that power only I can understand you and with that power only I can hymn you, I can praise you. Remember, Shiva Mahimna Stotram? O Shiva! Your glory is so great that,

असित गिरि समं स्यात् कज्जलम् सिन्धु पात्रे

सुरतरुवर शाखा लेखनी पत्रम् उर्वी ।

लिखति यदि गृहित्वा शारदा सर्वकालं

तदपि तव गुणानां ईश पारं न याति ॥ ३२ ॥

asita-giri-samaṁ syāt kajjalaṁ sindhu-pātre

sura-taruvara-śākhā lekhanī patramurvī |

likhati yadi gṛhītvā śāradā sarvakālaṁ

tadapi tava guṇānāmīśa pāraṁ na yāti || 32 ||

Even Saraswati cannot write because you are infinite.

So, this is the Sthuti of Brahma. Mother was pleased. This is a wonderful Sthuti, we can also use it. Like that, there are another three Sthutis which are deep philosophically, and directly tell us about our Swaropa. If I am the Devi (aham devi), then who is different from Devi? The whole world is nothing but the Divine Mother. That means, we are the mahamedha, mahasmriti, mahamoha, mahamaya, maha Durga, mahalakshmi, mahasaraswati, buddhi, everything that we attribute to the Divine Mother, we are That. That means we become Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi; Sarvam idam Brahma mayam - everything is Brahman). This is the background story of how this world is mesmerized by the Divine Mother. And there are a few points we will discuss in our next class. Even though I take a little time, every sentence is very precious. So many ideas are rushing forward but I have to confine myself within the time limit. As I have told earlier, these are not puranic stories, these are day-to-day events that happen in the world, that happened and will happen in the world in each one of our lives. How these Puranas are related directly with each one of our life

stories, how we can get out of this limitation through Mayamaya's grace? These we will discuss in our next classes

Om Jananim Sāradam devam Rāmakrishnam jagadgurum |

Pādapadme tayoh shritvā pranamāmi muhurmuḥuh ||

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